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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXXIII

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No. 3

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

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA*

श्रीरामकृष्णोपदेशावलिः ।*

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

कृपणेषु यथाऽर्थेषु स्पृहास्ति बलवत्तमा ।
तथैव तव लोभोऽस्तु श्रीहरेः पादसेवने ॥१॥

1. Just as a miser has strong yearning for wealth, may you have similar longing for the service of Lord Hari.

फलोदये क्षयं यान्ति यथा पुष्पदलानि वै ।
ज्ञानोदये तथा ह्यत्र मानमोहमदान्धताः ॥२॥

2. Just as the petals fall off from the flower when the fruit starts growing, in the same way the blindness caused by vanity, infatuation and lust disappears when real knowledge manifests in the heart.

हृदाकाशमिदं यावत् वासनातमसावृतम् ।
ब्रह्मसूर्योदयस्यास्मिन् तावद्वै सम्भवः कुतः ॥३॥

3. As long as our hearts are clouded by the darkness of desire, how is the dawn of Brahmajñāna possible?

तावत् गुञ्जति भृङ्गोऽयं यावत् पुष्पं न गच्छति ।
पुष्पालिङ्गनमासाद्य निःशब्दो मधुपस्तदा ॥४॥
तथायं पण्डितस्तावत् वादतर्कपरायणः ।
पाण्डित्यघोषणायोच्चैः शास्त्रार्थकथनोत्सुकः ॥५॥
शास्त्राणां प्रतिपाद्यस्य सर्वेषामीश्वरस्य तु ।
यावन्न लभते भक्तिं पादपङ्कजयुग्मयोः ॥६॥
यदा तु तत्कृपालेशात् तद्भक्तिं लभते पराम् ।
तदाऽऽलोकननिर्वृत्या निश्चेष्टो जायते तदा ॥७॥

4. A bee hums until it sits on a flower, but no sooner it embraces a flower than it becomes silent.

5 & 6. Similarly, a scholar is zealously fond of high-sounding arguments and expounding scriptural texts, so long as devotion does not manifest in his heart for the lotus feet of God who is the main subject of discussion in all the scriptures.

7. When he attains true devotion through His grace, then, being satisfied by His vision, he becomes quiet.

* See *Vidyodaya* (a Sanskrit monthly), *Bhātpara* : The Oriental Nobility Institute, September-October (Bhādra), 1896, pp. 193-99. The Sanskrit rendering is by Swami Ramakrishnananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The English translation is ours.

A GOD-LOVING AND GOD-BELOVED MIND

(EDITORIAL)

Every grown-up person understands to some extent what love is. With its abode in the lover's heart and tongue in his eyes, this undying and bewitching spirit often possesses him and directs all his physical and mental faculties to the object of his love. Hardly is there anyone bereft of love. Even a brute who mercilessly kills men, women and children, is found to have lent his heart to someone. From time immemorial, this alluring theme of love has always provided food for the imagination of the poets and writers, and given birth to numerous poems, songs and novels. Moreover, many a heart has been broken, brain deranged, and life led astray or lost, in this dangerous game of love. That is why those who have had their nerves shattered while playing it, are scared at the very mention of its name. Still there are always some lucky souls in this world, who succeed in achieving the object of their love ; and they say that those who have lost it are unskilled in the art, and are pessimists. But they too sooner or later realize : that 'love is lame at fifty years' ; and that the 'joy of love is too short, and the sorrow thereof, and what cometh thereof, dureth over long'.¹ A blow received through mundane love has at times served as an eye-opener to some. For instance, saints like Bhartṛhari, Bilvamangal and Tulasīdās were first caught in the snares of worldly love, and later on a thunder-stroke resulting from it awakened their conscience and turned their love Godwards. Rightly has Alfred, Lord Tennyson said :

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown

1. Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Book X, ch. 56.

To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.²

Such is the fate of all worldly love because both the lover and the beloved are constantly changing in body and mind, and are transitory existences. When a man is convinced of its vanity by his own experience and observation, there is a possibility of his mind becoming God-loving. At least an opportunity is open for him to utilize this powerful faculty of love for his own salvation by directing it to God.

A God-Loving Mind :

In St. Antony's opinion : 'All rational beings, whether they be men or women, have an organ of love, by which they can embrace both the Divine and the human. Men of God love what is of God ; men of the flesh love what is of the flesh. Men who love what is of God, purify their hearts from all impurities and the affairs of this transient world, . . .'³ But in order to have such a God-loving mind an aspirant should have a firm understanding that 'vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,' except to love God and serve Him alone.⁴ Real love for God does not fall from heaven all on a sudden without preparing the proper ground for it. That is why the Indian sage Nārada prescribes some preliminary disciplines to fertilize the soil of the heart. In the first place he asks the aspirant to renounce all worldly objects physically, and attachment to them mentally ;

2. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'To J. S.', IV.

3. *Early Fathers from the Philokalia*, trans. E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, London : Faber and Faber Ltd., 1973, (hereafter *Early Fathers*), pp. 47-48.

4. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price, Middlesex : Penguin Books Ltd., 1968, (hereafter *Imitation*), p. 27.

and to do uninterrupted loving service to God, by hearing and singing His glory, even while engaged in the ordinary activities of life.⁵ Such a discipline is necessary for a beginner because all the divine qualities in man are governed by his 'will', and the 'will' is in turn controlled by what it loves. Therefore, unless an aspirant is convinced of the futility of worldly treasures and the utility of loving God, his mind cannot turn Godwards. It is well said, 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'⁶ Unless and until God becomes our sole treasure, how can our hearts pant for Him? Love for God is, therefore, the last emotion of the human heart. It won't take root in man until he has finished his playing with mud pies, and the worldly emotions cease to overcome him.

Some saints are of the opinion that this wonder-child of Divine love is born only when the Holy Spirit descends in the heart, and no human can give life to it.⁷ St. Antony also says, 'A mind cleaving to God by love is an invisible blessing, given by God to the worthy for their good life.'⁸ And although Nārada prescribes disciplines for the manifestation of Divine love to beginners, he too is of the opinion that such devotion, is 'attainable by the grace of God and godmen alone.'⁹ But he says that spiritual disciplines make an aspirant worthy of such grace, as purity is the necessary condition for grace. Nārada has emphasized this point saying: 'Devotion, nevertheless, manifests itself in one—whoever it be—when one has made oneself fit for such manifestation by spiritual disciplines.'¹⁰ The

disciplines help the aspirant to strip his heart of all worldly passions, and make his mind God-loving. St. Antony corroborates this fact saying: 'A God-loving mind is found among the chaste, the just, the righteous, the good and pure, the merciful and devout. The presence of [such a] mind is the support of man in his relationship with God. [He further says:]... A God-loving mind is the light of the soul. He whose mind loves God is enlightened in heart and sees God with his mind.'¹¹ All these teachings of the saints leave no doubt that Divine love can never manifest in one's heart without Divine grace which in turn descends only in the heart purged of all worldly passions.

God-Loving Saints:

Swami Vivekananda has rightly pointed out that 'holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character.'¹² His statement is perfectly true, because genuinely dispassionate and God-loving minds are found amongst the followers of all religions. For instance: Christianity has produced great souls like St. Thomas à Kempis, St. Francis de Sales, Brother Lawrence, St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Rose of Mary, and many others: amongst the Sufis are God-lovers like Abú Hashim, Dhu'l-Nun-al-Misri, Rāb'a of Basra, Mansur al-Hallāj, Jallálu'd-Din Rúmi and others; and in its brilliant galaxy of God-loving minds Hinduism includes numerous stars like the Gopis (cowherd women) of Vrindavan, Śrī Caitanya, Mirābāi, Āndāl, Tukārām, Jñāneśvar, Sri Ramakrishna and others. Jalálu'd-Din Rúmi goes to the extent of saying: 'The sect of lovers [of God] is distinct from all others. Lovers have a

5. See *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, (hereafter *Nārada*), III. 35-37.

6. Matthew 6 : 21.

7. See St. Francis de Sales, *The Love of God*, trans. Vincent Kern, London : Burns & Oats, 1962, Book 1, ch. vi.

8. *Early Fathers*, p. 28.

9. *Nārada*, III. 40.

10. *Nārada*, IV. 53.

11. *Early Fathers*, p. 35.

12. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama*, (hereafter *Complete Works*), I, 1970, p. 24.

religion and faith of their own.¹³ Truly, if we study the lives of these God-lovers, we find many characteristics common in them. For instance, like Mirābāi, (a Hindu), Rābi'a (a Sufi) and St. Rose of Mary (a Christian) did not believe in earthly marriage. Although Mirābāi was married to a Prince of Rajasthan (India), she said in her song: 'Mine is Giridhara Gopāl alone and none else; He, on whose head is a crown of peacock feathers, is my husband.'¹⁴ While Rābi'a said, 'The bonds of wedlock have descended upon me. I am not my own, but my Lord's, and must not be unfaithful to Him.'¹⁵ Needless to say, all God-lovers do not take Him as their husband, but one common point in all of them is that they give all their heart and all their soul to Him, and to none else. Furthermore, all of them may not take God in His personal aspect alone, but in His impersonal aspect as well. Some, like the Gopis of Vrindavan, love the impersonal through the personal. This is evident from their statement made when Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared during the Rāsa-Play at Vrindavan. In their song they said, '*Na khalu gopikā-nandano bhavān, akhila-dehinām-antarātmadrk*—Surely You are not merely a son of a cowherd woman (Yaśodā), but the Witness of the internal organ of all embodied beings [i. e. the Atman].'¹⁶ This clearly reveals the attitude of the Gopis to Lord Kṛṣṇa. And whatever be the attitude (personal or impersonal), a God-loving mind completely melts in God as a result of its intense love for Him. Saint Jalālu'd-Dīn

Rumi narrates his experience in his song as follows :

Lovers and beloved
have both perished ;
And not themselves only,
but their love as well.
'Tis God alone who agitates
these nonentities,
Making one nonentity
fall in love with another.¹⁷

This phenomenon of Divine love has been well explained by Swami Vivekananda in his lectures on Bhakti Yoga, as follows : 'We all have to begin as dualists in the religion of love. God is to us a separate Being, and we feel ourselves to be separate beings also. Love then comes in the middle, and man begins to approach God, and God also comes nearer to man. . . At last, however, comes the full blaze of light, in which this little self is seen to have become one with the Infinite. Man himself is transfigured in the presence of this Light of Love, and he realizes at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, the Lover and the Beloved are One.'¹⁸

A God-Beloved Mind :

In the above statement Swamiji has pointed out that as a devotee approaches God more and more through love, 'God also comes nearer and nearer to man.' This means that a God-loving mind is loved in turn by God. In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa clearly tells Arjuna as to whom He loves most. He says : 'Of them, the wise man, ever steadfast, (and fired) with devotion to the One [namely God] excels ; for supremely dear am I to the wise and he *is dear to Me*.'¹⁹ The

13. F. Hadland Davis, *The Persian Mystics*, I, London : John Murray, 1912, (hereafter *Per. Mys.*), p. 73.

14. मेरे तो गिरिधर गोपाल दूसरो न कोई ।
जाके सिर मोर-मुकुट मेरे पति सोई ॥

15. *Per Mys.*, p. 15.

16. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (hereafter *Bhāgavatam*), X. xxxi. 4.

17. *Per Mys.*, p. 80.

18. *Complete Works*, III, 1970, p. 100.

19. *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā*, (hereafter *Gītā*), VII, 17.

Lord has further elucidated this point to Arjuna later in the following words :

He who hates no creature, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'I and mine', even-minded in pain and pleasure, forbearing, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, and possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me—he who is thus devoted to Me *is dear to Me*. He by whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, who is freed from joy, envy, fear and anxiety—he *is dear to Me*. He who is free from dependence, who is pure, prompt, unconcerned, untroubled, renouncing every undertaking—he who is thus devoted to Me, *is dear to Me*. He who neither rejoices, nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, *he is dear to Me*. He who is the same to friend and foe, and also in honour and dishonour; who is the same in heat and cold, and in pleasure and pain; who is free from attachment; to whom censure and praise are equal; who is silent, content with anything, homeless, steady-minded, full of devotion—that man *is dear to Me*. And they who follow this Immortal Dharma, as described above, endued with Śraddhā (faith) regarding Me as the Supreme Goal and devoted—they *are exceedingly dear to Me*.²⁰

Hereby, Lord Kṛṣṇa has pointed out in clear terms the characteristics of a God-beloved mind. God loves those who are pure and who love Him and Him alone.

God—A Jealous Lover :

In worldly life, a lover may tolerate his beloved loving his or her relatives, but 'God', says a Christian mystic, 'is a jealous lover. He is at work in your spirit and will tolerate no meddlers.'²¹ St. Thomas à Kempis also tells us the same thing in his *Imitation*

of Christ. He says, 'Your Beloved [God] is of such a nature that He will not share your love with another; He desires your heart for Himself alone, and to reign there as a King on His throne.'²² In Hindu mysticism such one-pointed devotion to God is known as '*Ananya-bhakti*, or *Eka-bhakti*, or *Avyabhicāriṇi-bhakti*'. Leaving mysticism apart, even according to the earthly standard 'love is not love when it is mingled'; 'love is not love which alters'. It is pure unadulterated love that everyone expects. So God is not to be blamed for His expectation.

Devotion, according to the Christian mystics, is always dualistic in nature. They say, 'The only other one He [God] needs is you. And all He asks of you is that you fix your love on Him and let Him alone.'²³ Hindu mysticism has, however, gone a little ahead in this respect, as it has been seen before through Swamiji's statement. According to the Hindus, God cannot tolerate the separate individuality of a loving mind. It is said in the *Bhāgavatam* that when the Gopis became proud of themselves as being the only fortunate consorts of the Lord during the Rāsa-Play, Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the scene 'to curb their vanity, and in order to shower His Grace on them'.²⁴ This shows that God wants a God-loving mind to completely lose itself in Him.

Some devotees may feel at times that God never responds to their love in spite of their devotion at His feet and sincere spiritual struggle. But it is not true, because Lord Kṛṣṇa tells His beloved Gopis about His own love for His devotees. He says: 'I, for my part, O friends, do not [visibly] reciprocate the love of even those individuals who love Me, in order that they could ever think of Me in the same way as a penniless person would, on a treasure found by him being

20. *Gītā*, XII. 13-20.

21. *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ed. William Johnston, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973, (hereafter *Cloud*), p. 47.

22. *Imitation*, p. 76.

23. *Cloud*, p. 47.

24. *Bhāgavatam*, X. xxix. 48.

lost, . . . Indeed, in order to ensure thus your constant devotion to Me, O fair ones, I remain out of sight [for some time], though loving you invisibly, . . . you who have for My sake ignored all worldly decorum as well as the Vedas and deserted your own people.²⁵ If we have faith in these words of the Lord, we shall never feel despondent while leading the spiritual life. Lord Kṛṣṇa has assured us that He loves His devotees invisibly and waits till the devotees' love becomes one-pointed. In the *Gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa has told Arjuna that all His devotees—*ārta*, the distressed, *jijñāsu*, the seeker of knowledge, *arthārthī*, the seeker of enjoyment, and *jñānī*, the wise—are noble indeed, 'but the wise man I regard as My very Self; for with the mind steadfast, he is established in Me alone, as the Supreme Goal.'²⁶ From this we can safely conclude that God loves all

His devotees in general, but the wise one in particular.

The Ultimate Gain :

And what does a God-loving mind gain ultimately? What is the utility of loving God? The answer has been given by Nārada in the following words: 'Gaining that [love for God], man realizes his perfection and becomes immortal and thoroughly contented. Attaining that, man no more desires anything; nor grieves; nor hates anyone; nor relishes anything [of this world]; nor exerts himself for attaining anything earthly. Realizing that, man becomes intoxicated and fascinated, as it were, because he is completely immersed in the enjoyment of the Bliss of the Atman, the truest and highest Self.'²⁷ Whatever a man seeks in this world and never gets, is attained ultimately by a God-loving and God-beloved mind. The treasure he wins in the end is the highest.

²⁵ *Bhāgavatam*, X. xxxii. 20-21.

²⁵ *Gītā*, VII. 18.

²⁷ *Nārada*, I. 4-6.

THE GREAT LIE*—I

A LECTURE BY SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

I

Those who are acquainted with the teachings of Vedānta will understand what I mean by the 'great lie'. There is a well-known Sanskrit verse spoken by a great teacher in answer to a request that he explain the ultimate truth as briefly as he could. He said, 'I shall tell you in half a verse what is contained in thousands of scriptural texts: *Brahma satyam jagannmithyā, jīvo brahmaiva nāparah*—Brahman is

real (or true), the world is false, and the individual soul is nothing but Brahman Himself.'¹ Here he did not merely tell what the great truth is, but also what the great lie is. And in this lecture I would like to emphasize the great lie.

Vedantists are fully convinced that whatever has an appearance of the manifold, whatever is limited, whatever is of time and

1. The Sanskrit verse reads in full:

*Ślokārdhena pravakṣyāmi
yaduktam granthakotibhih,
Brahma satyam jagannmithyā
jīvo brahmaiva nāparah.*

therefore subject to change, does not exist. It is just an illusion from which we are suffering; it hasn't the slightest existence in any sense. That is the one truth Vedanta continually emphasizes. '*Ekamevādvayam brahma neha nānāsti kiñcana*—There is only Brahman, One without a second; not the slightest trace of the manifold exists here.'² Why do you think this particular word 'here, *iha*', was used? Because this world where people speak and hear others speak is the world of phenomena, and it goes without saying that in this world one *perceives* the many. The questioner and the answerer are both experienced as existent, and yet in the face of that experience it is maintained: '*neha nānāsti kiñcana*—even here the manifold does not exist in the slightest.'

If you say, 'I am perceiving the manifold; therefore I have to say it exists,' our sages say no. They point out that sometimes we seem to perceive a thing and assume that it exists; yet it really does not exist. That is called error or hallucination. If I mistake a tree stump in the dark for a man or, if I am ghost-ridden, for a ghost, it does not mean that a man or a ghost really exists there. We know that we succumb to error. Error is a peculiar thing which seems to be sustained by experience but which does not thereby assure the existence of anything. That is why it is called error. Vedantists have not fallen into the trap of thinking, 'I thought I perceived something, therefore it existed.' No, I may perceive the manifold; yet I know that it is only a hallucination or an illusion. So Vedanta says: '*neha nānāsti kiñcana*—the manifold does not exist here even in the slightest.' To accept the existence of the manifold is the great lie from which we suffer.

Now, you can ask, 'Why is it that we have an illusion? Who told this lie to whom?'

That has been one of the greatest puzzles of our philosophy, and our philosophers have of course devoted a great deal of time and thought to trying to determine who spoke this great lie and who received it. As is customary with thinkers, there have been differences of opinion. Some have said the lie originated with Brahman and that He was also the receiver of it. As you can well imagine, such an answer has raised a host of objections. How can Brahman, who is pure truth, ever entertain something which is error? And how could He be the receiver of it? If Brahman is fully and infinitely true, then He could have no place for error in Him. And even allowing that He has entertained such error, He could not be deceived by it; so He could not be its receiver. Others have said it originated from Brahman, but the receivers were the individual souls, and they suffer from the consequences. Still others have said, 'No, both the giver and the receiver of the lie is the individual soul. Brahman has nothing to do with it.' Of course, that answer does not satisfy us, because all individual souls seem to participate in a sort of cosmic error. The manifold which I perceive is also the manifold which you perceive and participate in. It seems therefore that this manifold universe, or whatever you call it, is not your private universe; it is somewhat independent of you, and all individuals are more or less dwelling in it. So how could it be said that the lie was given by the individual to himself? I may tell a falsehood; that doesn't mean that others would also tell it; nor does it mean that others have to suffer the consequences of it.

So all the answers to the question of who told the lie to whom hang in mid air: each answer seems to have some merit, and each some demerit. If you try to eliminate the defects and make a sort of comprehensive answer out of these several positions, you cannot do it; you will end in

2. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 464.

self-contradiction. This is as it should be ; how can you make any sense out of that which is itself an error ? It is error for the very reason that it does not contain that which belongs to truth—coherence and consistency. There is some element at its very heart which gives rise to further inconsistencies. So how can you find a very convincing solution to its origin ? Well, of course, many people feel a profound dissatisfaction with that kind of philosophical answer. For me it is just wonderful ; I find that is the kind of answer we really need. The other answers, those which satisfy me—I who am seventy-five per cent ignorant, if not more—could not be right. A right answer would satisfy only an illumined intelligence. So when you find that philosophies and religions give an answer that satisfies you—you who are half knowing and half ignorant—be suspicious of it. It is half true and half false. I myself like an answer which is a challenge to me. I am forced to pursue its truth, and in that pursuit I lose, say, twenty-five per cent of my ignorance. I continue to pursue it until at last all my ignorance is left behind and I grasp the truth. That's the kind of answer I like ; nor is it an evasive answer. You can say this about the Vedantists—particularly Vedantists of the Monistic school—they never evade any question. It has been the fate of Monistic Vedanta to have to meet the challenges of every other school of thought. The qualified-monistic view, the dualistic view, the pluralistic view, and the different versions of these schools are all very different from the monistic view. And it has so happened that the farther they are from Monism the sharper their logic. For example, dualistic philosophies have all developed very keen and complicated systems. Monists have had to meet all their arguments ; they cannot evade any kind of question ; they have to face it.

You may say that monists have not answered all the questions ; yes, the Hindus frankly admit that there are many questions one cannot answer—not that they can *never* be answered, but that they cannot be answered in this present state of the mind, which seems to be a somewhat dogmatic state. Now, I do not mean that the present mind is not adequate, but, rather, that it has a sort of stubbornness about it. It persists in holding to a certain view about itself and in remaining as it is. *We will not change ; we want everything brought down to our level and fitted to the dimensions of our own narrow and gross being.* So philosophers say, 'I cannot give you an answer to your question.'

But when the mind is able to receive it, then an answer is sometimes given just by a look, and it is understood. In a most beautiful poem Shankara said :

*Citraṁ vaṭatarormūle
vṛddhāḥ śiṣyā gururyuvā ;
Gurostu maunaṁ vyākhyānaṁ
śiṣyāstu Chinnasaṁśayāḥ—*

'There is a strange sight under the pipal tree. A young teacher is seated there surrounded by elderly disciples. The teaching imparted by the teacher is silent, and all the doubts of the disciples are being dispelled.'³ That certainly is a strange sight ! First of all, the teacher is younger than the disciples. Explaining this, Swami Vivekananda once said that teachers have to attain the status of teacher when they are still young ; otherwise their bodies would not be able to stand the impact of the power necessary to communicate spiritual truth to their disciples. So the guru here is young, *gururyuvā*. As regards the disciple, a person can learn anything and

3. Acārya Śankara's '*Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotram—Hymn to Dakṣiṇāmurti*', 12 ; see *Altar Flowers*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1968, p. 14.

everything at any time of his life—even at the dying moment. In fact, most people probably learn their most valuable lessons while they are dying. The other strange thing was that the teacher did not speak; the explanation, *vyākhyānam*, was silent, *maunam*. But the effect was there: all the doubts of the disciples were dispelled. Yes, there comes a time when just one impulsion of thought, or one word, is enough to prove some point to you. When Sri Ramakrishna would come down from his Samadhi, he would sometimes speak indistinctly in a peculiar language which nobody could understand in itself, but whose *meaning* one or two could grasp. Or sometimes he would utter just a word or two with great difficulty, and those words would carry profound truth to the disciples. So it is never maintained that some questions cannot be answered at all. They can be answered, but to understand the answer there has to be a certain preparation.

The profound truths that monistic philosophy teaches may not be understandable to our own stubborn intelligence, which wants to remain limited; yet even at this moment we have another intelligence to which the answer is quite apparent and the truth quit explicit. It is not that you have to acquire that other intelligence in some future time or that you have to build it up through exercise and so on; no, you have it now, but you do not allow it any opportunity to function. That is where your stubbornness comes in. And because of your supposed inability to perceive and understand things, many systems of thought have posed the idea that there are different grades of reality. When such schools have been forced to explain the unitary basis of all these realities, they have said that one is original and the others are derivative. One system says, 'God has become this universe'; another, 'God has created this universe.' They say that all these phenomena are real and that our perceptions of

them are true perceptions of reality; therefore we should not feel that we are suffering from any kind of illusion. All such philosophies have been built up because we do not allow our intelligence to function fully, which it has the right to do. That full intelligence is in everyone *now*, even in a worm or an insect, not to speak of a human being. It is in relation to this fact that the monists say: '*neha nānāsti kiñcana*—the manifold does not exist here in the slightest.'

Well, even if we cannot with assurance ascribe the present state of affairs either to ourselves or to anyone else, we cannot deny that there is somewhere a hoax perpetrated upon us. Why can we not deny it? Because we cannot take the present version of our experience to be consistent, and therefore we cannot take it to be real. Our present version is contradicted by its own basic nature; nothing about it is sure. For instance, you think there is infinite space outside you in which an infinite number of things are occupying their legitimate places. Do you know that this whole viewpoint proceeds from your restless mind? If you allow your mind to quiet down, you will find that your sense of a third dimension is tied to a sense of distance: one thing is five light-years distant, another is five miles distant; here is the earth and there is the sun and beyond is the Milky Way, and far beyond that are other galaxies, and so on. This whole outlook comes out of the restlessness of your mind—of your 'I', the perceiver. If you allow your mind to quiet down—and we all have the authority and the ability to do so if we really want—you will be surprised to find that this whole universe is two-dimensional.

Now, that is a very strange thing to say, but it is literally true. The sense of distance goes away. The sense of time also goes away. In our present state we have a sense of future time; there is always an expectation that something new will come

and after that some other thing will come, and there will be no end to it. Even that sense of time stops, just as the sense of distance or space stops. Both stop, and the whole universe becomes reduced to a two dimensional picture. That experience has been attained by many mystics in a very high state of realization when the mind becomes utterly quiet. For instance, when you hear a sound you ordinarily locate it somewhere outside—near at hand or at a distance. In a deep state of meditation—or when the mind is quiet, whether in meditation or not—it seems as if all sounds are rising in your own consciousness; there is no sense of distance at all. In other words, the sense of space has become greatly attenuated, and also the sense of time. You can well imagine what a different view you would then have of the universe. This is just one example of what happens when the mind becomes quiet. And we can make the mind quiet now.

But there is a peculiarly vicious circle about our present state. I think there are things outside me; so I pursue those things. I give reality to this sense that there is a vast world, a real world. I pursue that world, and therefore it keeps my mind churning, and because my mind remains churned, I continue to see the universe in this erroneous way. Somewhere you have to break through this circle, and when you have done it, you have solved the problem. Either you have to quiet your mind, or you have to recognize that this universe is of no account to you. If you cannot do either of these things, you will just go round and round, round and round.

The great lie can be said, therefore, to exist in our own minds. Probably some of you are asking whether the mind itself is not also part of the lie. Yes, the mind is part of the lie; that is true. But our philosophers say that the mind has two aspects—restless and quiet. They say there

is a mind that is absolutely quiet; it exists, but it is quiet. Some ask here, 'Can the mind exist without being active? The mind would not have any purpose unless it is serving some end, which of course requires activity on its part. So if it ceases to be active, can it exist at all?' The question is justified. In answer, they say that when the mind is very quiet it dwells upon the quiet Being, God, who does not change. The mind has a purposiveness there; yet it is not active as we know it. Here, in the smaller state, the mind is active in regard to changing things, limited and gross things. That lower, smaller mind is different from the quiet mind, which is dwelling on God—the infinite, calm being.

Our philosophers make this distinction between these two minds, and they tell us that we have both these minds *now*. What we have to do is somehow to transfer our interest from the lower, or active, mind to the inactive, quiet mind. Most of our teachers say that it is better not to think in terms of the mind itself, but in terms of the object of the mind. Why? Because in our present state our mind is not so much interested in itself as in the things it experiences. You will find that you can manage the mind better if you follow its present tendency. So you dwell upon this calm Being, God. As a result, you will come to the calm mind. The moment you arrive at it, you become free of the present mind which glories in all kinds of limitations. And when you become free of that limited mind, you begin to appreciate why phenomenal reality has been called *mithyā*, 'false', or a 'lie'.

Yes, it is a lie. When the mind is changing from the lower mind to the higher mind, a time comes when you find that you are not going from reality to reality; rather, you find you have been suffering, as it were, from a nightmare. As long as you suffered from it you thought it was real;

but now you are waking up. This waking is not only releasing you from the agony of the nightmare but also giving you the sense that it never existed. It was an unreal something—a distorted view of reality that had no substance in itself—yet you thought it was real, and you suffered from it. You have that growing sense within you.

Some of you might ask, 'If that is so, why is it that those who follow other schools of philosophy, such as Dualism and so on, do not also perceive the world as unreal?' Yes, they, too, have perceived it. If you ask an advanced dualistic devotee if he considers this world to be unreal, he will say, 'Oh, yes.' Of course, he will not say, that the world does not *exist*, he will say that it hasn't any meaning for him any more. In other words, his philosophy is not very straight. But, practically, he is taking the attitude that the phenomenal world is non-existent for him. Chaitanya, a great prophet of devotion, said, 'I do not care for men. I do not care for wealth. I do not care for beautiful maidens, nor do I care for great learning. This is my prayer O Lord—in every birth, in every life, may I have reasonless devotion. Without any reason, may my heart be full of love for

You.'⁴ He didn't care for anything else; the world had become practically non-existent for him; yet, philosophically, he said, 'Yes, the world is real. God created the world. He Himself has become this world.' He gave an illustration: There is a legendary gem which has the merit of producing gold. Wherever it is, it continually produces any amount of gold around itself; yet it remains exactly what it was, it is unaffected. Similarly God remains intact, and yet produces this universe in a miraculous way, just as the legendary gem produces gold. Well, of course, you can neither prove nor disprove such statements. But the fact remains that a real devotee does recognize the unreality of this universe; God is the only reality in his life, even though, philosophically, he will fight the proposition that this world is unreal. It is not true, therefore, that mystics of other persuasions have not perceived the unreality of this world; they have, only they do not want to think philosophically straight about it.

(To be concluded)

4. Śrī Caitanya's 'Sikṣāstakam—Eight Slokas of Instruction', 4; see *ibid.*, p. 99.

THE WAYS OF PHYSICISTS AND MYSTICS

DR. FRITJOF CAPRA

Modern physics has had a profound influence on philosophical thought, because it has revealed an unsuspected limitation of classical ideas, and has necessitated a radical revision of many of our basic concepts. These changes in our concepts of reality have been widely discussed by physicists and philosophers over the past decades, but very seldom has it been noticed that they all seem to lead in the same direction, towards a

view of the world which is very similar to the views held in Eastern mysticism. A detailed analysis of the principal theories of modern physics shows that the underlying philosophical concepts are closely related to the basic ideas of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism.

The world view which was changed by the discoveries of modern physics had been based on Newton's mechanical mode of the

universe in which the material world was seen as a multitude of different objects assembled into a huge machine. Such a mechanistic conception of the world is useful for the description of most physical phenomena we encounter in our everyday life and thus appropriate for dealing with our daily environment, and it has proven extremely successful as a basis for classical science and technology. Beyond the dimensions of our everyday environment, however, the mechanistic concepts lose their validity and have to be replaced by concepts which turn out to be very similar to those used in the mystical traditions of the East. The material world appears not as a machine made up of a multitude of objects, but as a harmonious 'organic' whole whose parts are only defined through their interrelations. The universe of the modern Physicist, like that of the Eastern mystic, is engaged in a continuous cosmic dance; it is a system of inseparable, interacting and ever moving components of which the observer is, him- or herself, an integral part.

These similarities may seem strange at first sight. How can the same world view arise, one might ask, in two areas that seem to be so totally different; an exact science with a complex mathematical formalism, and religious philosophies which are mainly based on meditation and insist that their insights cannot be communicated by words? However, a closer look at the way of the physicist and that of the mystic shows that they have a great deal in common in spite of their very different approaches.

To begin with, the method of enquiry is thoroughly empirical in both fields. Physicists derive their knowledge from scientific experiments, mystics from meditative insights. Both are observations, and in both fields these observations are acknowledged as the only source of knowledge.

The parallel between scientific experiments and mystical experiences may seem surprising

in view of the very different nature of these acts of observation. Physicists perform experiments involving an elaborate teamwork and a highly sophisticated technology, whereas mystics obtain their knowledge purely through introspection, without any machinery, in the privacy of meditation. Scientific experiments, furthermore, seem to be repeatable any time and by anybody, whereas mystical experiences seem to be reserved for a few individuals at special occasions. A closer examination shows, however, that the difference between the two kinds of observation lies only in their approach and not in their reliability or complexity.

Anybody who wants to repeat an experiment in modern subatomic physics has to undergo many years of training. Only then will he or she be able to ask nature a specific question through the experiment and to understand the answer. Similarly, a deep mystical experience requires, generally, many years of training under an experienced master and, as in the scientific training, the dedicated time does not alone guarantee success. If the student is successful, however, he or she will be able to 'repeat the experiment'. The repeatability of the experience is, in fact, essential to every mystical training and is the very aim of the mystics' spiritual instruction.

A mystical experience, therefore, is not any more unique than a modern experiment in physics. On the other hand, it is not less sophisticated either, although its sophistication is of a very different kind. The complexity and efficiency of the physicist's technical apparatus is matched, if not surpassed, by that of the mystic's consciousness—both physical and spiritual—in deep meditation. Scientists and mystics, then, have developed highly sophisticated methods of observing nature which are inaccessible to the lay person. A page from a journal of modern experimental physics will be as mysterious to the uninitiated as a Tibetan

mandala. Both are records of enquiries into the nature of the universe.

A further similarity between the ways of the physicist and mystic is the fact that their observations take place in realms which are inaccessible to the ordinary senses. In modern physics, these are the realms of the atomic and subatomic world; in mysticism they are non-ordinary states of consciousness in which the sense world is transcended. Mystics often talk about experiencing higher dimensions in which impressions of different centres of consciousness are integrated into a harmonious whole. A similar situation exists in modern physics where a four-dimensional 'space-time' formalism has been developed which unifies concepts and observations belonging to different categories in the ordinary three-dimensional world. In both fields, the multi-dimensional experiences transcend the sensory world and are, therefore, almost impossible to express in ordinary language.

Once the parallels between Western science and Eastern mysticism are recognized, a number of questions will arise concerning their implications. Is modern science, with all its sophisticated machinery merely rediscovering ancient wisdom known to the Eastern sages for thousands of years? Should physicists, therefore, abandon the scientific method and begin to meditate? Or can there be a mutual influence between science and mysticism; perhaps even a synthesis?

I think all these questions have to be answered in the negative. I see science and mysticism as two complementary manifestations of the human mind; of its rational and intuitive faculties. The modern physicist experiences the world through an extreme specialization of the rational mind; the mystic through an extreme specialization of the intuitive mind. The two approaches are entirely different and involve far more than a

certain view of the physical world. However, they are complementary, as we have learned to say in physics. Neither is comprehended in the other, nor can either of them be reduced to the other, but both of them are necessary, supplementing one another for a fuller understanding of the world. Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science; but man needs both. Mystical experience is necessary to understand the deepest nature of things, and science is essential for modern life. What we need, therefore, is not a synthesis but a dynamic interplay between mystical intuition and scientific analysis.

So far, this has not been achieved in our Western society. At present, our attitude is too *yang**—to use Chinese phraseology—too rational, male and aggressive. I believe that the world view implied by modern physics is inconsistent with our present society which does not reflect the harmonious interrelatedness we observe in nature. To achieve such a state of dynamic balance, a radically different social and economic structure will be needed; a cultural revolution in the true sense of the word. The survival of our whole civilization may depend on whether we can bring about such a change. It will depend, ultimately, on our ability to adopt some of the *yin* attitudes of Eastern mysticism; to experience the wholeness of nature and the art of living with it in harmony.

* According to traditional Chinese thought, the dynamic interaction between the archetypal polar opposites—*yin* and *yang*—forms the basis of all manifestations in nature. *Yin* represents the dark, cool, feminine, yielding aspect of nature; and in thought it represents the mystical, the intuitive. *Yang* represents the bright, hot, masculine, aggressive aspect of nature; and in thought it represents the rational, the intellectual.—*Ed.*

THE ART OF VEDANTIC WRITING IN THE WEST

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

'Art may err, but nature cannot miss.' How to art a difficult subject like Vedanta for the West? The writer or speaker should be artless, spontaneous; must renounce skill and be nearer to nature than to culture. Nay more: Most of the Vedantic categories like God, world, soul, practise 'aloofness'. Brahman is not this, nor that. God is neither the doer, nor the enjoyer; nor is he involved in demerits or merits of man. The world is neither real, nor unreal nor both. The soul to be really soul should give up the Jīva-attitude and should become witness, should practise aloofness, *sākṣī-bhāva*¹ and so on. Aloof they stand, as tempted spectators. How to capture in words written or spoken such aloofness? One should practise the *artless art of aloofness*. And this in all contexts and specially in the West where the teachers of Vedanta have to interpret Vedanta to Christian audiences, to some extent adopting their terminology, but not too much either as then Vedanta may become Christianized. A Western Christian desires to know and learn Vedanta as such and not Vedanta Christianized.

Wide Theology:

The memorandum of Association of the Ramakrishna Mission poses as its first objective: 'to impart and promote the study of the Vedanta and its principles ... and of Comparative Theology in its widest form.' This objective is the guiding light both for Indian and foreign preachers of Vedanta of the Ramakrishna Mission.

For Catholics and Protestants, except the liberal Protestants and the new sects that have sprung up, theology when it becomes wide is no theology at all. In the theologi-

cal colleges where the clergy is trained, though in the early stages theology is taught, the last stage of study is consecrated to theology and not to philosophy. The idea is that philosophical problems or conflicts should be settled by appealing to the court of theology. Theology is supreme and philosophy is subsidiary. It is just the contrary in Vedanta. Philosophy is supreme and theology is secondary. To give an example, a teacher like Saṅkarācārya in commenting on a passage about heaven and hell says that these are not geographical regions, but inner states of man, states of mind. Here, he is philosophizing the theological concepts of heaven and hell. When philosophy supercedes theology, it becomes unacceptable for the Church. Then on what is faith founded? it asks. This kind of 'liberalizing' theology is the enemy of faith.

Theology, Christian theology is revealed religion. It is the word of God, conserved in holy texts. It is not natural theology that bases itself on experience and reason. Theology is supported by pillars of dogmas and mysteries. Dogma is a doctrine recognized by the Christian Church and the faithful should adhere to it. Original sin is a dogma. That sin is an empirical error and not a theological dogma, which is the Vedantic view, is not acceptable to the Church. Mystery is a dogma which the faithful should accept even if he does not understand.

In the early centuries of Christianity when discussion on dogmas and mysteries was taboo and even anathema, the interdiction was directed towards the awakening in the minds of the faithful an unquestioning faith. Today except in the case of a few, kindling of unquestioning faith is out of question. People today want to know what they believe

1. The attitude of a witness.

in. Foundations of faith can be laid only on an experience that a human individual can have. If the preacher teaches, 'Believe in God, God is Love,' the teaching should be followed by the affirmation 'Everyone of you can love Him, for this love is inherent or hidden in all the human loves you are capable of.'

Here the God in heaven of the Christians is no longer a mystery and need not be spoken of in terms of mystery. He can be experienced. No doubt He reveals Himself fully in the highest form of spiritual experience that is Samādhi. It would appear that Christ did not want to make the God in heaven, the heavenly Father, a mystery. Witness, for instance, how he speaks of Him: 'In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'²

The Father's house is not a geographical region. It is the ultimate spiritual experience which Christ had and to which he invited his disciples. There is no more the language of mystery, but of experience.

Dogma and Symbol:

A Christian of culture will agree that what he wants is not Christianized Vedanta, but a liberalized Christianity. What does this liberalization mean? The more a Christian is cultured, the less he believes in dogmas of the Church. He will agree that an intelligent way is to replace the dogma by the symbol which preserves the spiritual content of the dogma. The symbol proposes to man a line of thought, whereas the dogma imposes. The following incident will illustrate my point: A few years ago the present writer was representing Hinduism in an inter-religious Congress in Paris. A sequence came in which the discussion turned round the role

of dogmas in constructing faith. A Christian participant said that to 'enter the house of God, man should use the door of dogma. Only through the door of dogma one can enter.'

When my turn came, I said that I would enter by the door of dogma, but come out also by the same door! I drew attention to the idea that the door instead of being a dogma can be a symbol. The founder of Christianity can have no objection to my view. Witness, for instance, the words of Christ: 'I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find vast pastures.'³ Here the door is the symbol of the Spirit which Christ is. Once we enter the house of God and gain the experience of God, we can come out into the vast 'grazing-ground' of the world. The world then becomes a mansion of mirth and not a house of misery.

The Christian participant said that my interpretation was far-fetched.

The Impersonal Religion:

The *apauruṣeya*⁴ doctrine of the Hindus is another context where the Hindu preacher has to practise intelligently the artless art of aloofness. This doctrine says Hinduism is not founded by any Incarnation or Divine personalities. The high truths were always there and the Incarnate (*mantra-draṣṭās*) only 'discovered' them, 'saw' them and revealed them. This puts the founders of religions like Buddha and Christ as second only to the Truths. The religions they founded, Buddhism and Christianity, become personal religions whereas Hinduism stands out as Impersonal religion, *apauruṣeya*. Says Vivekananda: 'No book, no person, no Personal God.'⁵

3. John 10:9.

4. Not set up by human hands.

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Complete Works*), VIII, 1971, p. 127.

2. John 14:2-3.

Says the Christian: But then, you have the idea of *iṣṭam* (chosen Deity). Even your absolutistic Vedanta cannot dispense with it.

My reply to it was that *iṣṭam* is not a person, an anthropomorphic Divinity, nor a historical prophet born in such and such a place. When we say Ramakrishna or Krishna is my *iṣṭam*, chosen Divinity, he is taken as the highest spiritual experience and not as a historical person. I pointed out also that the *apauruṣeya* idea is not simply a Vedantic one. Just see the sentence of St. Augustine: 'Christianity existed before Christ.'

Universal Salvation:

The universal salvation or *sarvamukti* doctrine was formulated in a systematic form by Appayya Dīkṣita (thirteenth century A.D.), a distinguished Advaitin of the Śaṅkara school. Appayya says that the idea is not invented by him for the first time, but is found adumbrated in the numerous works of Śaṅkara.

Stated in simple terms it is this: The saints and Jīvanmuktas (liberated men) cannot attain complete salvation so long as one soul remains on the earth unliberated. The non-liberation of a single individual signifies that the cosmic ignorance (Maya) is not fully destroyed. We may break a thousand mirrors, and gone with them *their* reflecting power. But what about the other mirrors that exist and many more that can come?

The implications of this doctrine are immense. First of all, it impinges on the liberated men to come back to the world again and again till the last man is liberated. The great ones like Buddha and Ramakrishna have pronounced themselves to the same effect. But as the last man unliberated will be always there, there cannot be liberation for any in the traditional sense of the term, liberation like stopping the cycle of births and deaths or like going to paradise. Liberation is on this earth, in living the life.

The second coming of Christ as he himself

testified to his disciples, which we quoted above,⁶ illustrate a *sarvamukti* promise, though the idea that he is coming to save the last man is not spelt out. Christ repeating that the Kingdom of God is here and now, is in parallel line with the idea that the liberated have to find liberation here and not elsewhere. But strangely enough, every time in a relevant context I mentioned the idea of universal salvation in inter-religious congresses the mention was met with silence. Asked why it was so, a Christian scholarly friend with Hindu *saṁskāras* (impressions) replied that the very idea of universal salvation is unacceptable to the Church. Saints merit *videhamukti*, salvation after death. There is no question of their second coming as belief in rebirth is taboo. That Christ can come is his personal freedom and choice. The just who lived a good life receive grace after death on the Day of Judgement, and those of bad lives suffer in purgatory.

The belief in grace or purgatory at the end of human life or human time reveals the Christian notion of time as linear. Death is the end of time, the end of the line. No return as in the Greek thought, nor spiral as in the notion of cycles (*yugas*) repeating. The notion of time has much to do with the notion of salvation, cosmic or otherwise. The Hindu notion of time is spiralic, the beginning and end lost in the Infinite. The spiralic curve of time which is a dimension of Maya, winds up. It has as its central axis the ultimate Reality, Brahman, to maintain it; without Brahman it will crumble down. The circumference of the spiral is equidistant from the centre, whether the former is high or low. So then, for those who are conscious of their identity with Brahman, the liberated ones, there is nothing like down or up, hell or paradise. They do not aspire to go to paradise. They are always happy and liberated in the spiralic

6. See John 14:2.

world of Maya, living the identity with God. The other souls though non-liberated, are also on the way to liberation.

Conclusion:

There are contradictions, a lot of them, in Hinduism. But then, can a thought be formulated without contradictions? 'Mixing up the true and the untrue (spirit and matter) flows the eternal thought-current of the world', says Sankara in the beginning of his *Brahma-Sūtra Commentary*. Maya is built on contradictions, says Vivekananda; it is contradiction, but it is a statement of fact. This statement of fact dictates a mode of conduct, an awakening capable of englobing or encompassing the contradictions: they are there as a starting point, not as the goal. Maya immunizes us against contradictions and conflicts.

When Vivekananda in his talk on 'Is Vedanta the Future Religion?' said, 'No book, no person, no Personal God. All these must go,'⁷ he was specifying what Vedanta was, after indicating in the same talk what Vedanta is not. He said that three things are necessary to make a religion: 1) the book, 2) veneration for some person and 3) it 'must believe that it alone is the truth;

⁷. *Complete Works*, VIII, p. 127.

otherwise, it cannot influence people.'⁸ And then before stating that Vedanta has no need of all these three, that is, no book, no person, no personal God, Swamiji very meaningfully talks of liberalism. 'Liberalism dies because it is dry, because it cannot rouse fanaticism in the human mind, because it cannot bring out hatred for everything except itself. That is why liberalism is bound to go down again and again. It can influence only small numbers of people. The reason is not hard to see. Liberalism tries to make us unselfish'.⁹ One of the great contributions of Vedanta is this heroic liberalism, suicidal liberalism, which is courageous to dig its own grave, so that the best and undying in it can live. Was he not capturing one of the most liberalizing moods of Vedanta when Vivekananda said, no book, no person, no Personal God? With the same liberalizing enthusiasm he could have said, 'Well, suppose Vedanta did not exist at all. What then? Man remains.' Man who is capable of silencing the contradictions by the artless art of aloofness, and of hearing the voice of the Divine in his heart, man for whom Vedanta is life and life Vedanta, Man, Timeless and eternally free.

⁸. See *ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

⁹. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

'Brahman and Sakti are inseparable. Unless you accept Sakti, you will find the whole universe unreal—'I', 'you', house, buildings, and family. The world stands solid because the Primordial Energy stands behind it.'

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA



PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

DR. BEATRICE BRUTEAU

In the province of Auvergne in France, where Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was born, there are folktales of the Seeker who pursues some one Prize which constitutes the Secret of Being and the Ultimate Beauty. The hero finds what he seeks, but he is wounded in the process. In the end he has either to relinquish his prize or to live without being able to share it. It is the outline of Pierre Teilhard's own life.¹

Pierre was born May 1, 1881, the second son of Berthe Adele de Dompierre d'Hernoy, a distant relative of Voltaire, and Emmanuel Teilhard de Chardin, a wealthy landlord of Clermont-Ferrand. The family of eleven children studied under English and German governesses, were taught their Catholic religion by their mother, and absorbed natural history from their father.

Pierre, quiet and pensive, different from the other children, entered on his quest for the Secret of Being at the age of five. Sitting by the fire as his mother trimmed his hair and threw the clippings on the flames, the child saw part of himself being destroyed.

1. See Mary Lukas and Ellen Lukas, *Teilhard: The Man, the Priest, the Scientist*, Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1977 (hereafter *Teilhard*), p. 14. This is an excellent biography, supplying historical backgrounds and local colour, rich in intimate detail. I have relied heavily on it in the preparation of this article.

'An awful feeling came upon me at that moment,' he later wrote. 'For the first time in my life I *knew* that I was perishable!'² Therefore, he set out to find something that was not perishable.

At first he collected bits of metal. But the day that he discovered that iron rusted, the original horror returned, and he sought again, this time fixing on stone. Finally, in the Jesuit school of Notre Dame de Mongre at Villefranche-sur-Saône, where he went in 1893, Pierre learned to identify the Imperishable One with the God taught in the Catholic religion. Everything else, he acknowledged, passes away.

Nevertheless, Pierre's love for the Earth reasserted itself and in his mature efforts to reconcile this human passion with his ascetic religion, the quest for the Ultimate Beauty had to be resumed. He entered the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in March 1899, completing the long training with his ordination to the priesthood in August 1911, and his final vows in May 1918.

Taking up natural science as his specialty in the Society, Teilhard felt that he had there a foundation for his sense of the unity of the world. He delighted in physics, in geology, and in biology, where he discerned a

2. *Teilhard*, pp. 23-24.

'Single Soul' expressed through the multiplicity of forms. He adopted from Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* the notion of *durée* (duration), the temporal dimension in which the *élan vital* rises, spreads, and advances in novelty.

But while Teilhard was revelling in his mysticism of space and time, the Catholic Church was formalizing its most rigid positions, limiting its thinkers more and more to certain selected views: Thomism in philosophy, literal interpretations in Scripture, and absolute loyalty to the decrees of the Church Councils. New ideas, which appeared as people learned more of the natural world, of history, and of one another, were regarded by the official Church with suspicion, and its intellectual members were sorely pressed to maintain both their personal integrity and their fidelity to their religious community. In the decades of his maturity this was the dilemma which tortured Teilhard and led to the fate that forbade him to publish his discovery of the Secret of Being and the Ultimate Beauty.

The experience of the Great war, 1914-1918, in which Teilhard served as a stretcher-bearer, only deepened his need to identify more clearly the single source of security, for though Spirit might be indestructible, what of all the beautiful forms of Matter, and especially what of those marvellous compositions of Spirit and Matter, the particularly fragile human beings, whom he carried, dead and dying, from the front lines of the battle?

In 1916 he wrote 'Cosmic Life', in which he first outlined his vision of a universal organizing energy which gathers the minute particles of matter into more and more complex unities until it produces the self-conscious human being, who, uniting with other human beings, reaches out toward a Single Personal Goal, where all evil will disappear and Matter will be absorbed into Spirit. In a subsequent essay he argued that the forces making for unity have become so strong in the human soul that it cannot be dissolved

but will survive the death of its body.

This was not the traditional Catholic view of the genesis of man, who was held to have been created directly by God in the Garden of Eden; he fell from that estate of preternatural bliss through sin, the guilt and baneful effects of which were passed on to all his progeny. Teilhard had his own speculations about that 'Original Sin'. Acceptance of a literally historical 'Adam' and 'Eden', he regarded as impossible, for science had shown that humanity had evolved from lower life forms. But 'sin' could be interpreted as present from the 'origin' in the tendency of matter to disintegrate and become disorganized. The Creative Unifying Principle had always to struggle against this tendency, which appeared on the biological level as disease and death, and on the moral level as wickedness.

These ideas Teilhard innocently but imprudently wrote down in a paper called 'Three Possible Representations of "Original Sin".' It proved to be his 'original sin', indeed, for although he was also being attacked by more conservative colleagues for his adoption of the evolutionary point of view, it was this paper, which found its way somehow to the Jesuit General in Rome, that precipitated Teilhard's troubles.

In 1924 another decree had been issued by the Holy Office (for the Preservation of the Faith) at the Vatican, warning Catholic intellectuals against the 'dangerous' spirit of inquiry abroad in the modern world. Teilhard was not the only one to suffer. Many promising young thinkers were silenced for failure to conform to the prevailing philosophy. Authors now honoured—such as Pierre Charles, Pierre Rousselot, Maurice Blondel, Auguste Valensin³—were threaten-

³. Charles turned conservative in his later years; Rousselot's life was made so miserable that he went into the front lines (World War I) desiring to die and was killed (*ibid.*, p. 62); Blondel and Valensin lived out their lives full of hurt from their Church's persecution of them.

ed, deprived of their teaching posts, and their writings condemned. Teilhard himself was ordered to sign a pledge that he would never again say or write 'anything contrary to the Church's traditional position on Original Sin'. He attempted to counter this order with a modified version of his views which he hoped would be acceptable to the authorities. But the Jesuit General, Vladimir Ledochowski, was adamant. Teilhard was not only to sign the pledge, but he was to give up his teaching post at the Institut Catholique, and to leave France.

The state of Teilhard's soul on receipt of this news can be judged from the letter he wrote to Valensin: 'Oh, my friend, help me! . . . If I show defiance I will betray my fundamental faith in the fact that everything that happens to me is animated by God. . . . I'll compromise the religious value of my ideas. . . . I'll be accused of pride, estrangement from the Church, who knows what else! . . . Which is the more sacred of my vocations—the one I followed as a boy of eighteen? or my real vocation, which I discovered when I was a man? . . . How can I obey this order without making myself the victim of the very formalism I've always stood against? . . . Tell me, my friend, that it would not be wrong to yield to the orders of my superiors!'⁴ For Teilhard knew the professional and social ignominy into which he would fall if he defied his superiors or left the Society.

As Valensin advised, Teilhard signed, choosing to regard this physical act as a gesture of fidelity rather than of real assent to the propositions. As he wrote to Edouard Le Roy, he had not changed his ideas or his sense of mission in the least. 'I stand condemned', he said to Paul Rivet, 'by dolts and ignoramuses!'⁵

Although he thereafter spent many years

doing field work as an archeological geologist in China, Teilhard continued to feel that his roots were in Paris. He never came to know the great Asian civilizations in their own terms. His struggle was with the European heritage; it set the parameters of his life and defined his options. He wrote to Le Roy, 'I . . . have just one choice: to be a perfect religious, or to be excommunicate.'⁶

In an attempt to convince his superiors of his piety, Teilhard wrote the *Divine Milieu* in 1927, but even this effort backfired. His representation of the material world as the medium through which God could be reached was regarded as irreligious. He was ordered to confine himself strictly to his scientific work, or even that would be denied him. Faced with this ultimatum, unable to exercise his special gift of reconciling science and religion, and thus unable to make his peculiar contribution to the world and to the Church, how was he to find the meaning of his life?

The world needed his kind of vision, Teilhard felt, and even the divine enterprise needed it. Everywhere he saw people groping to find a new synthesis of ideas and values, a new level of community, and a deeper experience of the Absolute. If religion is to speak to these needs, Teilhard said, it must purify itself of 'verbal theologizing, quantitative sacramentarianism and oversubtle devotional practising. . . . The time has come for us to save Christ from the clerics, in order to save the World.'⁷ In this way Teilhard tried to give meaning to his remaining a Jesuit, saying that 'If I were to desert the place

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

7. *Le Sens Humain*, 1929. For an English translation, see P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Toward the Future*, trans. Rene Hague, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, (hereafter *Toward the Future*), p. 38.

that Life has assigned to me, I would betray the World.⁸

'The World' became Teilhard's area of concern, although he did not, to any appreciable degree, extend his idea-categories and value orientations by adding to the general pattern of the Christian European male the experiences of other people, civilizations and cultures. He did expand these ideas and values, and even inverted them on a certain level, but at bottom his tradition held firm. For instance, he continued to hold that temporal life has a goal, that goal is total unification in and around Christ, to be achieved in some sense through 'the Church', although he denied that the material world must be forsaken, that the means for the unification were exclusively supernatural, and that 'the Church' must be static and refuse to express her message in terms of the naturally growing knowledge of the human race.

He wrote off the massive traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism as shortcuts to Unity by suppression of the multiple, ending with an abstract, non-loving God, and an unconscious absorption into the vacuum of Nirvana.⁹ He ignored the political revolution going on in China right under his nose and exemplifying not only all the principles of evolution but his own projected 'groping' after a 'totalization' that would move humanity forward a step.

In the case of sexual relations—always a prominent consideration when the value of 'the world' is at issue—Teilhard held that chastity, like everything else, is evolving, and that the relation of man to woman will transcend the purposes of procreation to rest on a spiritually meaningful plane.

However, the basic orientation of his culture is still governing, for he does not perceive the significance of women in and for themselves as builders of the Earth, nor does he ask how this whole issue appears from a woman's point of view, but he speaks only of the value of 'the Feminine' to males as 'inspiration' and as a force 'to be made use of' in order to reach God.¹⁰ There are dark areas in even the brightest minds, and for all Teilhard's devotion to 'the Whole' and 'the Totality', he neglected huge components of that Whole.

Visualizing the coming unification of mankind became more and more Teilhard's mission. 'The Age of Nations is now over,' he proclaimed to his friends in privately circulated papers in 1930. 'The time has come for men to shake off their ancient prejudices and turn, as one Man, to building the earth.'¹¹ In the face of the growing political tensions in both China and Europe in the 1930s, he called for the formation of a 'Human Front' in which all might join to promote the entire race.

10. Teilhard's own relationship with Lucile Swan, the American Sculptress, is perhaps a case in point. He happily enjoyed her company (most chastely) while they were both in China, spending every afternoon with her for several years, without, apparently, considering what this relationship meant in terms of *her* life. He emphasized how his self-denial gave added thrust to his spiritual life but did not examine the values at stake from her point of view. When he returned to France from China, he planned to visit her in America (they had been separated during the war but had written frequently) but changed his mind at the last minute when he found he could get a more convenient boat to France. Later, in Europe, when she put rather too much pressure on him, he began to avoid her and accepted instead the ministrations of Rhoda de Terra, who was less demanding. Rhoda seems to have asked only one thing of him, that she be allowed to attend his mass, and this he refused. See Teilhard, *passim*.

11. P. Teilhard de Chardin, *Building the Earth*, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania: Dimension, 1965, p. 54.

8. Letter to the Abbe Gaudefroy, 1929; Teilhard, p. 110.

9. See Beatrice Bruteau, *Evolution toward Divinity: Teilhard de Chardin and the Hindu Traditions*, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1974, especially pp. 2-3.

Evolution is now in our hands. We have become conscious, even conscious of being conscious; we know that we are evolving, and therefore we can control and direct our own evolution. In fact, Teilhard dared to say, we will *not* evolve any further in the direction apparently chosen by Nature—the direction of more complex unities—except by *freely* electing to do so.

By the 1940s Teilhard thought he could see signs of the coming 'planetization' in the great 'collective' movements, alliances for war or for benevolent work for humanity. Propelled by the organizing energy of love (as distinct from the entropy-subject energies of the physical world), people would seek to unite with one another on deeper and deeper levels and in terms of higher and higher ideals. Eventually they would join 'centre to centre' through the mediation of the Supreme Ideal, 'Omega', or the Cosmic Christ.

All this Teilhard wrote into his master work, *The Phenomenon of Man*, in which he set forth his whole theory of the evolution of the world, both within and without, through increasing complexity and consciousness, by means of compounded 'creative unions', to its culmination in the total spiritual unity of perfectly differentiated persons, detached from their material matrix and absolutely indestructible. This manuscript, like the *Divine Milieu* and all his other pieces, was refused clearance by the Jesuit censors, and although copies of it were privately circulated, it was not published until after Teilhard's death in 1955.

The war and especially the fall of France, caused Teilhard great distress, but he strove to maintain his interior peace and practised peaceableness with the various political factions then living in Peking. Happiness, he told some of his compatriots, is attained by accepting with love and gratitude whatever life presents to us. Quoting geologist-philosopher Pierre Termier, he would say,

'Everything that happens is adorable.' His custom of always finding something positive to remark about even the most despicable people prompted his friend, Pierre Leroy, to exclaim, 'If you met the Devil in the street, you'd think of something nice to say!'¹²

When the war ended, Teilhard at long last received permission to return to France. It had been six years since his last brief visit, and he was sixty-five years old. Staying with the Jesuit community that edited the magazine *Etudes*, he entered into the intellectual and social life of liberated Paris. His companions were the most advanced thinkers of the day, both clerics and lay people. He learned that the war had encouraged those who felt the Church should enter into the modern world, in its scientific research and in its struggles for social improvement. Believers had found friends among non-believers during the Resistance and now they shared a commitment to humanity that escaped sectarian definitions.

In his absence, Teilhard's various essays had been surreptitiously circulated among such people and he now had quite a following. Among those who approached him to express their admiration was Mlle Jeanne Mortier, who offered to act as his secretary. She collected all his papers, took charge of making copies (often several hundred) and distributing them to those who could be trusted to receive them sympathetically.

Teilhard was in great demand as a lecturer, having a strong appeal to young Catholic intellectuals and liberal thinkers of more mature years. He shared platforms with such notables as the Abbé Pierre (founder of the Community of Emmaus), Nicholas Berdyaev and Emmanuel Mounier.

But the official Church remained obdurate. Teilhard's book *The Phenomenon of Man*, was rejected. He tried twice to revise it and make it acceptable, but to no avail. When

¹². Teilhard, p. 201.

a new Jesuit General (Jean-Baptiste Janssens) was elected in 1946, he hoped again, only to be disappointed again. The conservatives were strongly entrenched in Rome, whence they reached out to destroy the influence of any teacher whose ideas they disapproved. Other creative thinkers were removed from their posts all around him, and Teilhard's friends begged him to be careful what he said in public and to Jesuit visitors. However, Teilhard frequently did just the opposite, persisting in believing that his ideas were so persuasive in themselves that anyone possessed of intelligence and good will would see their value the same as he himself did. Nevertheless, he saw that it was prudent that he again remove himself from France, and he made plans to join an archeological dig in South Africa.

This trip had to be postponed, for on the first of June 1947, Teilhard suffered a massive myocardial infarction and was hospitalized for several months. It was a great setback for him. 'It takes all of my philosophy and faith', he wrote the Abbé Breuil, with whom he was to have gone to Africa, 'to make constructive use of this heartbreaking event.'¹³

The constructive influence of the event in fact was to turn Teilhard's mind more strongly toward the future. In a new essay he suggested that a truly *human* faith would be one which combined 'the rational force of Marxism' with 'the human warmth of Christianity.'¹⁴ Both attitudes were needed to meet the economic and social problems of the post-war world. And when he returned to work, one of the first things he did was to present a paper to a Jesuit convention, outlining the forces moving humanity toward the future and criticizing the Jesuit seminary system for resisting those forces instead of working with them. This only added to the

scandal he was accumulating about himself. Father Janssens again ordered him to restrict himself to purely scientific subjects.

In February 1948, Teilhard took advantage of a grant from the Viking Fund to visit the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York. He stayed with the Jesuits responsible for the magazine *America*, but they were not comfortable together. The American Jesuits felt that Teilhard kept strange company and moved too freely, while he regarded the American Church as rigid and unimaginative, 'hiding the world rather than revealing it.'¹⁵ Lecturing in New York, he found that his secular contacts suffered from their own version of the same general malady: the humanists and scientists were as estranged from one another as the Church and the world.

His colleagues at the Wenner-Gren recognized this problem and were concerned about it. Hoping for Teilhard's help, they asked him to come to the United States again the following year to give a series of lectures at Columbia University. But when Teilhard requested permission of the Jesuit Provincial of New York for the return visit, it was denied.

Unwanted by his religious order in France, refused by them in New York, what was Teilhard to do? Depression settled over him and when he reached France in June, he was lost in anguish. An invitation from the General to come to Rome and discuss his problems raised his hopes again, and he prayed to abandon himself to the will of God. Nevertheless, he knew that he would go 'to stroke the tiger's whiskers.'¹⁶

And so it proved. Father Janssens was gentle, but the final results of their conversations were still negative. No, Teilhard could not accept a post offered him at the Collège de France; no, he could not publish the *Divine Milieu* or the *Phenomenon* of

13. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

14. 'Three Things that I See'; See *Toward the Future*, pp. 148 ff.

15. *Teilhard*, p. 253.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

Man; no, he could not give the lectures at Columbia University. All these things would be too embarrassing for the Jesuits. Besides, his religious superior admonished him, Teilhard was putting his interests in the wrong place; the Church's concern was not with this world, but with the heavenly world beyond.

Deeply hurt and shocked, Teilhard told friends, 'My General doesn't want to understand!' 'Those people in Rome are living on another planet!'¹⁷ So depressed now that he did not even want to work, he succumbed to pleurisy and was again hospitalized.

After some months he began again to write, this time comparing modern man's resistance to the implications of evolution to the horror that greeted Galileo's announcement that the Earth was not the centre of the universe but a satellite of a local star. Neither of these scientific revelations need destroy the essence of religion. Why cannot the Christ of glory, who is sought 'on high', be attained by accepting our place in the scheme of things and working to fulfil humanity 'in the future'?

In 1950 Teilhard resumed writing and lecturing on scientific subjects and on May 25 of that year he was elected to full membership in the French Academy of Sciences. Receptions were given in his honour and articles about him appeared in the press. One in particular, in *Figaro Littéraire*, suggested that his works (even though unpublished) had laid the foundations for a religion of the future. And an anonymous book, entitled the *Redemptive Evolution of Pèrre Teilhard de Chardin*, was widely read.

In August 1950, Pope Pius XII issued his encyclical, *Humani Generis* (Concerning the Human Race), ordering religious superiors and bishops to suppress teachers of

the theory of evolution.¹⁸ Five of the French Jesuits' best theologians were immediately deprived of their professorships, and similar measures were taken in other religious communities. It was the end of what little revitalization had taken place in French theology since the war.

The intellectuals were aghast and besieged Teilhard for comfort. He entered the fight, writing to Rome to protest the dismissal of the theologians and asking for modifications in the Church's official positions. He sought out the author of the *Figaro* article and gave him further material. He arranged to have his writings privately multiplied and distributed. More articles about him appeared in the public press. Not unexpectedly, all this activity drew the wrath of the French bishops upon him, and he was obliged once more to seek a refuge abroad.

The Wenner-Gren Foundation came to his rescue, sending him to South Africa. Before he left, conscious that his health was frail and his chances of obtaining permission to return to France slender, he executed a simple document leaving all his writings to Jeanne Mortier in the event of his death. If this had not been done, or if she in turn had not undertaken the tremendous task of gathering a committee of scholars to oversee the arrangement and publication of his works, we today might never have heard of Teilhard de Chardin or had the opportunity to read his essays.

Teilhard felt well and enjoyed himself doing field work in South Africa, but when he consulted his superior about returning to France, he was regretfully informed that the

18. The Church's complaint was not necessarily against *all* evolution, but against any theory which suggested that the present human race, the one to which Christian salvation is offered, did not derive from a single set of parents, Adam and Eve. Unless this 'monogenetic' descent is held, it becomes impossible to trace the inheritance of original sin, and thus it would be uncertain who was in need of salvation.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 274.

Provincial would be obliged to send him to a country retreat and prevent him from disseminating his ideas. He was advised to seek a scientific job in America.

In November 1951, Teilhard moved to New York, his last residence. For a time he lived with the Jesuit community at St. Ignatius parish, but when the house was to be remodelled, he and some others had to find rooms in hotels. He obtained a position with the Wenner-Gren Foundation as a research associate, helping to choose the projects the Foundation would fund and to check on their progress. Meanwhile he continued his writing and kept up his social contacts with sympathetic lay people. He was quite frail now and highly dependent on Rhoda de Terra, an old friend from his China days, for all his psychological and practical needs.¹⁹

A year passed uneventfully but meaninglessly and Teilhard pleaded with his superior to be allowed to come home. The Provincial's only reply was an invitation that Teilhard share with him his current thought. Teilhard's response was an essay proposing a reinterpretation of the symbolism of the cross that would reconcile religion and the aspirations of contemporary humanity and so make the Church meaningful to the modern world: God has entered into this world so deeply that He has penetrated it even unto despair and death, carrying not only the sins of the guilty but the pressures of evolution, and thus He gives courage and strength to all people to persevere in the great efforts that must be made to complete the grand design.

The religious orders of France had other troubles just then (especially the worker-

19. Mrs. de Terra had taken an apartment near Teilhard in Paris and looked after his shopping, medical care, and other errands, as well as his social life. She travelled with him wherever he went, to care for him. When he moved to America, she again took a residence near him and continued her service.

priest movement), and Teilhard's superior was reluctant to burden himself with an additional problem. He advised waiting another year. Teilhard tried to accept this ruling with equanimity, but his depression and anxiety grew. He wrote a fellow Jesuit in France, 'I feel I'm coming apart inside!' ²⁰ Again he petitioned for permission to come home, but again it was denied.

With the spring of 1953, Teilhard felt a little better and wrote a new essay on the 'Energy of Evolution', developing the theme that the whole universe is a single stuff in which all properties are at least latent, all energy interactions possible. The more advanced interactions become visible only late in the process of unfoldment. At each level of growth the universe displays 'tangential' energies which are subject to disintegration and decline of their powers, but what draws the universe on, from one level to a higher, is 'radial' energy, which promotes organization and complexification and holds its creations safe, in the long run, from destruction. This radial energy is a kind of cosmic 'love' which creates new forms by uniting previous ones, and it is ultimately the act of the Cosmic Christ, Christ-the-Evolver. Thus the heart of religious teaching is the key to scientific understanding, and scientific inquiry is acquaintanceship with Christ, as benevolent social action is co-operation with the Living God. Love of God and action in the world, far from being antithetic, are identical. 'Less and less', Teilhard wrote a friend, 'do I see any difference now between research and adoration.' ²¹

When summer came, he made his tour of Wenner-Gren projects in Africa and returned to New York, satisfied he had done a good job in setting up a network of investigations into the origin of the human race.

20. *Teilhard*, p. 323.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

In June 1954, Teilhard made his last trip home to France. Immediately he was invited to give a lecture on archeological work in Africa; word of the invitation was somehow flashed to Rome, and the General ordered Teilhard to go back to America at once. He did, however, deliver the lecture, and even managed to visit his family place in Auvergne while petitioning for a reversal of this order.

Rome's answer to all his petitions was No: he could not stay in France, he could not publish anything, he could not reply to his critics. This was now the end of all his hopes. His message would not be delivered in his lifetime. 'Now I understand,' he wrote his superior, 'and I know how to obey.'²² He was seventy-three years old.

He returned to America, resolved to make his remaining contribution to the work of God in the world by practising absolute fidelity to the Church. His intellectual fire went out, a great gentleness settled over him, and he lived in continual prayer. He told Leroy, 'I'm less anxious than I used to be... I really feel that now I'm always living in God's presence.'²³

His final essays dealt with the coming theological revolution, the recognition of the 'trans-Christian God we have all been waiting for', the cosmic incarnation of the Divine Word. And he prophesied a great Church Council that would open the way to new thought in every area. Once that had been done, the renewed Church would radiate the religion of the future. It was to this Church that he now felt 'deeply linked'.

Everything in him was converging toward its culmination. He prayed for one last sign that, while rejected by men, his life

and work were received and blessed by God. How wonderful, he remarked to friends, if he could die on Easter Day.

Easter Sunday, April 10, 1955, Teilhard spent happily in St. Patrick's Cathedral and in the home of friends. At six o'clock he was abruptly struck down by a cerebral hemorrhage and died within a few minutes. Only a small handful of friends attended his funeral, and his body was silently buried at the Jesuit novitiate of St. Andrew-on-Hudson, where (until recently) even his name was misspelled on the tombstone.

Teilhard's vision, however, did not remain entombed. By his death his works were released. With the publication, that same year, of the *Phenomenon of Man*, his thought burst on the world like a rocket, carrying upward by its light and power crowds of souls who had been languishing until this moment. The *Divine Milieu* followed, then the essays, gathered into volumes. Translations appeared almost at once. Books about Teilhard sprouted like mushrooms. Magazines were founded, devoted to his thought. Almost every major nation established a Teilhard organization to study and disseminate his ideas. Conversions were plentiful, lives were changed. People to whom religion had become meaningless, if not inimical, saw a way to synthesize its deepest values with the world in which their lives were embedded. People active in creative secular works glimpsed a principle that lighted their road into the future.

To date the established Church remains unconvinced; the Jesuits have shown their brother no honour. Teilhard felt he would have to carry his message to the 'Gentiles', and the Gentiles have received him enthusiastically. However, Teilhard also knew that the processes of evolution move exceedingly slowly, and its effects may not become visible until they are nearly mature. Even now in many hidden ways, ramifica-

22. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 339

tions of his insights may be breeding offspring in the least suspected places. And we, through our own patience and continued efforts, may yet see human spirits

ascending and converging toward that Secret of Being and Ultimate Beauty which the hero of Auvergne sought in his lonely quest.

THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS—1893 SOME NEW FINDINGS*—I

SWAMI BALARAMANANDA

The concept that 'Truth is one, men call it by various names',¹ is as old as the Vedas; the question, 'hath not one God created us?'² cropped up in the human mind at times in the past; and the broad idea that various spiritual paths lead to the same goal,³ was already recorded ages ago in the Scriptures. In spite of all this, the followers and preachers of every religion have been fanatics, and with feverish attachment stuck to the belief that theirs

alone is the true faith leading to salvation. This deadly fanaticism has caused much bloodshed and slaughter in this world. Still, there were always some men who believed in the harmony of religions. Emperor Akbar made an attempt to harmonize all religious faiths. His dream is best described by Tennyson in his 'Akbar's Dream' in the following words:

I dreamed
That stone by stone I reared a sacred fane,
A temple; neither Pagod, Mosque, nor
 church,
But loftier, simpler, always open-doored
To every breath from Heaven; and Truth
 and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt
 therein.⁴

But, as Swami Vivekananda says, 'Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlour-meeting.'⁵ Akbar's idea, broad though, remained only a dream. Mr. Hebeavitarnh (also called Anagarika) Dharmapala^{5a} claimed in his letter to Dr. Barrows

* About the reports from the Chicago newspapers which have been partly reproduced in this article, it may be mentioned that most of them were copied down by a Mr. Jacob Fisher and typed *in toto* by the late Mallika Clare Ross (later on Mallika Clare Gupta) for the use of the Ramakrishna Mission, at the request of the late Swami Jnaneswarananda, the then Minister in charge of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Chicago. Some more reports were afterwards collected by Swami Yogeshananda and other monastic and lay members of the same Society. Extracts from these reports and other archives of the Society are being published in this article with the kind permission of Swami Bhashyananda, the present Minister in charge of the Society. (It is a matter of great regret that Mrs. Mallika Clare Gupta did not live a little longer to see her laboriously typed reports published through this article, as she passed away at Calcutta on 6 January 1978.) Needless to say, the admirers of Swami Vivekananda will surely feel grateful to those who did this labour of love.

1. *Rg-Veda Samhitā*, I. 164. 46.

2. Malachi 2:10.

3. See *Siva-mahimnah-stotra*, 7.

4. Quoted in Dr. J. H. Barrows' *The World's Parliament of Religions*, Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893 (hereafter *World's Parliament*), I, p. 11.

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Complete Works*), I, 1970, p. 19.

5a. The Managing Editor of the *Maha Bodhi*, Calcutta, informs us that 'H. Dharmapala stands for Hebeavitarnh Dharmapala. When he participated in the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago, he was not a monk. He was Anāgārika

that twenty centuries ago, the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka believed in the harmony of religions, and held a congress of religions in the city of Pataliputra (modern Patna), in India. In this letter Dharmapala quotes: 'King Piyadasi [Asoka] honours all forms of religious faiths. . . .'⁶ But Swami Vivekananda says, 'Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith.'⁷ Thus, noble-minded men have always thought of the harmony of religions, and they tried to some extent to preach their idea, but it remained only their wishful thinking.

By mid-nineteenth century, science grew into its youth, and with the natural rashness and pride of the age, started knocking hard blows against religion. The men of science were not prepared to believe anything based on mere beliefs and dogmas. They were proud of their rational way of thinking, and, in their bombarding speeches, condemned the theories about creation and God, propounded by religion. Although Christianity was their main target, all the religions based on the sandy foundation of mere beliefs and dogmas, were shaken to the basis by their violent attacks. Mankind became as it were divided into two rival groups, namely, the men of science and men of religion. The scientists, unlike those of the twentieth century, leaned towards atheism and materialism, and so did the men who followed them blindly. Science became a threat to the religious world as a whole, and was gaining ground gradually.

All the religions were in peril, and a dire need was automatically created for the advent of some one who could give a scientific basis suitable for the age, to religion. And in fulfilment of His promise that 'whenever religion will be in peril, I shall

manifest Myself'⁸ in human form, the Creator of this world appeared on earth, in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, who, following the scientific method of experiment, observation and inference, proved to the world the existence of God, and the truth that all religions are the different ways leading to Him. Until then the concept of the harmony of religions was only a theory. Sri Ramakrishna practised besides Hinduism, the spiritual disciplines according to other religions like Christianity and Islam; and 'from actual experience [like a religious scientist], he came to know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying to teach the same thing, the difference being largely in method and still more in language. At the core, all sects and all religions have the same aim; . . .'⁹ A solo drama of the Parliament of Religions was in a way first enacted by the Lord Himself in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, just when the scientists were charging the fort of religion. No religion could face the challenge of science single-handed; and the thinking men of the world were more and more turning towards science for solace, rather than to religion. A necessity was felt by the men of religion all over the world to face the challenge boldly, and to strengthen the fort of religion once again.

The cause demanded that all religious men come together and compare notes; but how could they unite? They had been quarrelling for ages among themselves! Who could bring them together? Who would bell the cat? God was more worried about this problem than men. Such an instrument was already under preparation, and it was Vivekananda, apparently the chief disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, but in reality his another form. 'Ramakrishna had lived for the making of Vivekananda' in

Dharmapala only.' Anāgārika, according to Buddhist tradition, means a novice. He became a monk in his later life.

6. *World's Parliament*, I, p. 8.

7. *Complete Works*, I, p. 19.

8. *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā*, IV, 7.

9. *Complete Works*, IV, 1972, p. 174.

order to preach the harmony of religions to the world. Nay, the Master himself entered into the form of his disciple, and 'a Soul named Ramakrishna-Vivekananda' was ordained to do this difficult task. Besides Sri Ramakrishna, 'no one ever before in India [or in the world] became Christian and Mohammedan and Vaishnava by turns.'¹⁰ So, none else could perform this task more efficiently than his own apostle Vivekananda. Rightly did the Swami say about himself, 'the power behind me is not Vivekananda but He the Lord.'

When the Divine instrument was ready, there was need for the proper occasion, and also for one who would manage this stupendous undertaking ably. For achieving this, the Lord chose Hon. Charles Carroll Bonney as an instrument, and the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 as the suitable occasion, for this purpose. Mr. Bonney was a reputed lawyer of Chicago, and President of the World's Congress Auxiliary of the Columbian Exposition which was organized in Chicago for celebrating 'the fourth centennial anniversary of the landing of the great discoverer'¹¹ [Columbus] on New World shores.' Although 'to several men belongs, and by several score has been claimed the credit of giving at least inchoative shape to the project' of the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago, the credit for the success of the Parliament of Religions can be given to Mr. C. C. Bonney; and through him, naturally to his associate Rev. Dr. John Henry Barrows. Swami Vivekananda recognized this fact. In praise of Mr. Bonney, Swamiji, in his letter to the Raja of Khetri, wrote: 'What

a wonderful achievement was that World's Fair at Chicago! And that wonderful Parliament of Religions where voices from every corner of the earth expressed their religious ideas! . . . Mr. Bonney is such a wonderful man! Think of that mind that planned and carried out with great success that gigantic undertaking, and he, no clergyman, a lawyer, presiding over the dignitaries of all the churches—the sweet, learned patient Mr. Bonney with all his soul speaking through his bright eyes. . . .'¹² Regarding Dr. J. H. Barrows, the Swami, in his letter of October 28, 1896, to the *Indian Mirror*, has written: 'Dr. Barrows was the ablest lieutenant Mr. C. Bonney could have selected to carry out successfully his great plan of the Congresses at the World's Fair, . . . It was the great courage, untiring industry, unruffled patience, and never-failing courtesy of Dr. Barrows that made the Parliament a grand success.'¹³

Mr. Bonney was hardly aware of the divine plan behind the Parliament of Religions; nor had he consciously thought of organizing the religions of the world to face the onslaught of science. It was a divine necessity for the age. About his dream of the Parliament of Religions, he said: 'I became acquainted with the great religious systems of the world in my youth, and have enjoyed an intimate association with leaders of many churches during my maturer years. I was thus led to believe that if the great religious faiths could be brought into relations of friendly intercourse, many points of sympathy and union would be found, and the coming unity of mankind in the love of God and the service of man be greatly facilitated and advanced.'¹⁴ Although Mr. Bonney's inspiration and brain were behind the Parliament, it was Rev. Dr. J. H. Barrows, the Chairman of the

10. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Calcutta: Sister Nivedita Girls' School, I, 1967, p. 160.

11. According to recent findings Columbus merely rediscovered America. See *Reader's Digest*, October 1977, 'Who Really Discovered America?' by Thomas Fleming, pp. 50-54.

12. *Complete Works*, VI, 1972, pp. 249-50.

13. *Ibid.*, V, 1970, p. 121.

14. *World's Parliament*, I, p. 185.

General Committee who practically carried out the whole plan.

Early in June of 1891, the General Committee sent out a Preliminary Address, and on 25 February 1892 was dispatched the first report to the world, which received a wide response everywhere, from all religious communities. The news of the Parliament reached India in the first quarter of 1892, when Swami Vivekananda was travelling through Gujarat; and since then Swamiji had almost tentatively fixed in his mind to participate therein. He, however, did not finalize it until early next year when he received a command from On High. It was only after he became convinced of the fact that he was divinely ordained for this task, that he declared to his brother-disciple Swami Turiyananda at Mount Abu prior to his departure to America: 'Hari Bhai, I am going to America. Whatever you hear of going on there [the Parliament of Religions], is all for this [striking his chest].'¹⁵ As a matter of fact, Swamiji was not even officially registered as a delegate to the Parliament at this time; nor had any religious organization proposed his name as their representative; he had no proper credentials either, for getting an opportunity to speak in the Parliament. Hardly could Dr. Barrows imagine that through Vivekananda, Divinity was representing Itself in the Parliament of Religions. Mr. John Henry Wright, a Harvard Professor, had rightly said to him, 'To ask you Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine!' And in his letter of introduction to Dr. Barrows, the Professor had written: 'Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together.' And really, in the end Swamiji proved to be 'an orator by divine right'.

15. Swami Jagadiswarananda, *Swami Turiyananda* (Bengali), Calcutta: Udbodhan Karyalaya, B.S. 1361, p. 41.

Professor J. H. Wright was relatively instrumental in putting Swamiji on the platform of the Parliament of Religions; but to speak of the Swami himself: 'He had no personal feeling in the matter, save such as were related to the carrying out of the mission entrusted to him by his Master and perceived by him as command from On High.'¹⁶

Many details about the happenings before, during and after the Parliament are already known to the readers of Swamiji's *Life*, and the *New Discoveries*.¹⁷ There is no need to tell the whole story again, so that more space can be devoted here for what has been heretofore unknown.

While Swamiji was busy securing a place for himself as a representative of 'Hinduism' in the Parliament—at times being lost in the streets of Chicago, and once even spending the night in a wooden box—, the *Chicago Evening Journal* of September 9, 1893, wrote a long article on the objectives and programme of the Parliament of Religions, which read:

MEN OF MANY CREEDS

CONGRESS OF LEADING WORKERS FOR RELIGIONS

Parliament to be opened at the Art Palace [actually Art Institute] Monday [September 11], in which representative men from all parts of the world will take part—opposed by Presbyterians and American Churchmen.

All the great religions of the world are to be placed side by side and compared with each other at the World's Parliament of Religions, which is to begin next Monday, a seventeen days' session at the Art Institute. The ultimate and far off object of this gather-

16. Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1965, p. 299.

17. Marie Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries* (for short, *New Discoveries*), Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1958.

ing of the best religious thought of the nations of the earth is a unity of conviction on all questions pertaining to humanity's better nature—one religion for a common people. The very character of the gathering precludes the possibility of the formulation of any declaration or resolutions, although each faith and doctrine will have the fullest presentation that can be given it by human understanding. . . . Of one thing the attendant of the sessions and the subsequent reader of the proceedings may be assured—he will not hear, neither will he see, any religion attacked. . . . More than 300 addresses and papers on as many topics, will be presented to the Parliament, and not less than thirty denominational presentations will be made by the many Congresses, at each of which the papers and addresses will be numerous enough to declare the belief of the Congress and fully set forth the good work done for the world by the body that Congress represents. . . .

. . . The Chicago Parliament will be unexampled in the history of the world. Men of almost every clime and of every shade of religious belief, each impressed with a sense of the oneness of human need and spiritual aspiration after God, seeking to know all the truth, will meet to compare their faiths and become if possible a loving brotherhood of common humanity blessed with the utmost degree of spiritual light. The delegates will be men whose hearts have outgrown the bounds of creed, who have dropped the word 'heathen' from their speech and thought, and who expect to acquire from the comprehension of the religion of others a sympathy which makes all men kin. So soon as men begin to know other faiths truly, at first hand, they modify their views of them and their spiritual attitude toward them. Thus, truth promotes brotherhood. . . . It will go far toward establishing a unity of conviction and clearing away the rubbish of misunderstanding; removing prejudices, promoting friendliness and furthering the belief that all truth is from the one God, and that all religion, as a subjective experience, is a disclosure of the abiding presence of a living God in the souls of men. The comparison of religions is expected to show an element of good in each, as a result of the efforts of the best minds to express the profoundest convictions of humanity on the greatest of themes; to disclose, as nothing else could, how near men are to each other in their dependence on the Supreme

Being, and how complete their failure to find peace through human devices. . . .

The Parliament will, it is hoped, mark a new starting point in the history of humanity, call a truce in theological strife, deepen the spirit of human brotherhood, and lead men to study whether the elements of a perfect and ultimate religion have yet been recognized and embodied in any of the great historic faiths.

While, in one sense, approval of the idea of a Parliament has been world-wide, yet the plan has not reached a successful inception without opposition. Antagonism has come from various, and in some cases, unexpected quarters. . . .

The article is quite long and gives in detail the seventeen days' programme of the Parliament. Two days later in its editorial the same paper wrote :

We do not think it possible to overestimate the interest, if not the importance, of the Parliament of Religions which meets today at the Art Institute. The occasion and the gathering are unique in history. In the nineteen hundred years of the Christian era, or in the much longer history of the older and more extensive religions, there has never before been a gathering of the representatives of all the religious creeds professed by civilized man. . . .

The permanent importance of the Parliament, considered as a factor in religious history, is quite another matter and depends largely on the point of view. . . . Religious unity, if we may judge by all recent manifestations in the religious world, is still so far away as to seem like a dream. It is not to be summoned out of the future by any Parliament. But this Parliament will not therefore be a failure. The delegates have come together in peace; they will part with increased tolerance and respect. . . .

. . . We look for great results from this great gathering; and not at once; not, perhaps, in near future. But in the wisdom of that Providence which men of all creeds profess to worship, and whose movements are slow but sure, the energy here concentrated will be felt upon all the world, and its effect will be for the unification and uplifting of mankind.

A reporter of another Chicago paper, the

Chicago Record, appears to have dashed into the parlour of Dr. Barrows, most probably on September 10, and met Swamiji there. In his report published on the next day, he writes:

Four leaders of religious thought were sitting in Dr. Barrow's parlor—the Jain, George Condin, the missionary who has passed sixteen years in China, Swami Vivekananda, the learned Brahman Hindoo, and Dr. John H. Barrows, the Chicago Presbyterian. These four talked as if they were brothers of one faith.

The Hindoo is of smooth countenance. His rather fleshy face is bright and intelligent. He wears an orange turban and a robe of the same color. His English is very good. 'I have no home,' said he. 'I travel about from one college to another in India, lecturing to the students. Before starting for America I had been for some time in Madras. Since arriving in this country I have been treated with utmost courtesy and kindness. It is very gratifying to us to be recognized in this Parliament, which may have such an important bearing on the religious history of the world. We expect to learn much and take back some great truths to our 15,000,000 faithful Brahmins.'

When Swamiji said to him that 'we expect to learn much', he surely meant about the material developments in the West, which were being exhibited in the World's Fair. This is what he often said in his speeches that India has to learn from the West.

The Parliament in Session

The session of the Parliament of Religions started on the morning of September 11, 1893, at the Hall of Columbus of the Art Institute, then a newly constructed building on Michigan Avenue, Chicago. About this the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* wrote the next day:

CREEDS IN COUNCIL

Formal Opening of the Parliament of Religions

The dream of the poet has become a reality, and here by the shores of the inland lake in the metropolis of the West the vision has materialized.

The Parliament of Religions that convened yesterday morning in Columbus Hall of the Art Institute presented a spectacle that has never been equalled in the history of the world. . . . Here, in the invigorating atmosphere of this young continent, the learned men of these old Eastern nations came to exchange confidences with the leaders of thought from Europe, and to shake the hand and feel the heart throb of the versatile and practical American at home.

SUGGESTIVE AND PICTURESQUE

When the great gathering of foreign dignitaries from almost every nation and every religion filed into the Hall of Columbus and everyone was seated on the platform, it suggested a unanimity of purpose, and an earnestness of desire to sink creed and racial difference and to get back to those common ties of humanity that bind and link men in a world-wide brotherhood.

It was a picturesque as well as a solemn and touching assemblage. The big oak doors of the Art Institute were besieged by visitors as early as 9 o'clock, eager to secure seats in the auditorium or the gallery of Columbus Hall. When the doors were thrown open there was a wild scramble to gain access to the body of the hall, but only the little white badge of membership was recognized; and the less fortunate people had to march upstairs. There was perfect order however. A slimly built young lady with a smiling face was sufficient to perform the double duties of usher and policeman at the main entrance from the vestibule. Dr. Barrows and his secretary Mr. Piper were early on hand to give information and receive the many distinguished visitors, as were also President Bonney, Secretary Young, and the members of the Committee of organization.

AN INFORMAL RECEPTION

About ten o'clock strangers from every clime began to arrive, and for the next half hour President Bonney's Office was turned into a reception room, where Chinese in their mandarin robes and pigtails, Japanese in picturesque garb of chaste colors and varicolored head-dresses, Indians in their gaudy gowns of red, orange, and green; Germans, Russians, and Scandinavians, natives of Britain, and her dependencies, and half a dozen interpreters mingled and mixed in a medley of universal brotherhood. . . .

Meanwhile the big hall had filled, until, when the procession headed by President Bonney and Cardinal Gibbons entered, there was not a vacant seat on the floor or in the gallery, and even standing room was at a premium. Following Mr. Bonney and the Cardinal came Mrs. Potter Palmer and Mrs. Charles Henrotin. Then a procession of bishops, archbishops, priests, and princes, both by title and by right, men and women of every race and color. . . . When they had all secured seats it was found that the following were on the platform: [In the list mentioned here Swami Vivekananda's name is nineteenth, and it reads:] Swami Vivekananda, a Monk of the orthodox Brahmanical religion, India.

Fitting for the occasion, the Parliament session started with a prayer sung to the Almighty God, the stanzas of which were selected from the Psalms and Bishop Ken's Doxology; two of them read:

Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and he destroy.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. . . .¹⁸

After singing the hymns, Cardinal Gibbons led the audience in reciting the Lord's Prayer;¹⁹ and thereafter started the addresses of welcome. The first to deliver his welcome address was Mr. C. C. Bonney, who was followed by Dr. J. H. Barrows and other dignitaries of the Committee. In response to the addresses of welcome spoke many delegates, like Archbishop Dionysios Latas, P. C. Mozoomdar, Commissioner Pung Kwang Yu, Prince Serge Wolkonsky, Rev. Reuchi Shibata, Count Bernstorff, H. Dharmapala, Mr. Virchand Gandhi, Prof. Tcheraz, Prof. Chakravarti, Dr. Momerie. Then came the turn of Swami Vivekananda

to deliver his address. About him Dr. J. H. Barrows writes.

Swami Vivekananda, of Bombay, India, was next introduced. When Mr. Vivekananda addressed the audience as 'Sisters and brothers of America', there arose a peal of applause that lasted for several minutes. He spoke as follows:

SPEECH OF MR. VIVEKANANDA

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of the millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects. . . .

. . . I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions to be true. I am proud to tell you that I belong to a religion into whose sacred language, the Sanskrit, the word exclusion is untranslatable. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. . . . I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn . . . : 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to thee.'

. . . I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this Convention may be the death knell to all fanaticism, to all persecutions with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.²⁰

After Swamiji, three more speakers responded to the addresses of welcome. The effect of Swamiji's speech was, however, unique, which the Chicago newsreporters did not fail to detect impartially. And it is but natural; for, the whole show was arranged for him according to the divine plan, as the Swami himself had said to his

18. *World's Parliament*, I, pp. 66-67.

19. See Matthew 6:9-13.

20. *World's Parliament*, I, pp. 101-02. For the complete version of his address, see *Complete Works*, I, pp. 2-4.

brother-disciple prior to his departure. This was the first of his total six known speeches given at the main session of the Parliament, in spite of its crowded programme. Before entering into further details about them, it will be worthwhile to see what the Chicago newspapers said about Swamiji's address on the first day. The *Chicago Herald* wrote on September 12 :

Swami Vivekananda of Bombay, India was introduced after Rev. A. W. Momene [Dr. Momerie] of England had spoken briefly. When Mr. Vivekananda had addressed the audience as 'Sisters and brothers of America', there arose a peal of applause that lasted for several minutes. He spoke as follows: [Then follows the version of the Swami's address].

The *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* of the same date wrote :

Said the Chairman: 'Great Britain is indeed great; great on the floor of this Parliament. We are to hear again from the Empire of India, and I am glad to present to this assembly Swami Vivekananda.' (Applause). Swami Vivekananda said. . . . [Swamiji's address follows].

An additional information in this paper is that after the Swami finished his address, there was 'applause' again. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* of the same date reports the text of Swamiji's address under the heading: 'IS A DEATH-KNELL TO PERSECUTION'. This paper also reports that after the address was over there was 'applause'. The *Chicago Times* of September 12, did not publish the text of Swamiji's address, but wrote about him as follows :

MEN OF MANY FAITHS

The face and dress which attracted the most notice, . . . was that of Swami Vivekananda, a young man exceptionally handsome and with features that would command attention anywhere. His dress was bright orange, and he wore a long coat and regulation turban of that color. Vivekananda is a Brahmin monk, and Prof. Wright of Harvard is quoted as saying that he is one of the best educated men in the world.

The *Chicago Record* of the 12th reported Swamiji's address in brief, and published a line-drawing of the Swami. Though it gives

a little wrong information about the Swami, and prints his name wrongly, it tells us that 'during his speech he was frequently interrupted by hearty cheers.' This shows how Swamiji's words touched the hearts of the audience.

Although Swamiji did not speak at the main session of the Parliament on September 12, from a report published in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* the next day it is revealed that he was present on the platform to hear other delegates. The *Inter-Ocean* wrote :

Foreign nations, and especially the picturesque nations of the East, were not so strongly represented on the platform of Columbus Hall yesterday morning as on the previous day at the opening exercises. The venerable Bishop Dionysios Latas of the Greek Church, his portly form wrapped in a black silk cloak and decked out in his high, broad-crowned cap and massive gold appendages, had a front seat on the platform. The handsome and learned Brahmin monk, Suame Vivikendi [Swami Vivekananda], clothed in his rich orange robes and heavy turban, dropped into a back seat at the right of the Chairman. . . .

From this report one can conclude that most of the Eastern delegates were not present on the platform on 12th morning.

It may be mentioned here that the programme for all the seventeen days of the Parliament's main session was already fixed and announced in the papers, prior to Swamiji's being accepted as a delegate. As many as 180 participants were given due time and dates either to present their papers—in person or *in absentia*—, or to deliver addresses; the total number of which was nearly 236. On all week days, the programme was divided into three sessions, held in the morning, afternoon and evening; and each of these sessions was presided over by some dignitary of the Parliament. On Sundays, sessions used to be only in the afternoon and evening, the morning time being left free for the Christians to attend the Church services. Although Swamiji

must have been the last to come for participating in the function, he received kind attention from the Parliament authorities, and was given a place in the already crowded schedule of the Parliament. On studying the proceedings, we understand that out of the numerous delegates assembled there, only twenty got a chance to respond to the welcome addresses on the first day; and only twenty-three could deliver the fairwell addresses on the last day. Everyone, however, got the opportunity to place his thoughts before the Parliament, at least once. Even more popular speakers like Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar and Mr. Dharmapala spoke not more than four to five times. But, including his opening and closing addresses, and reading of the paper on 'Hinduism', Swamiji spoke six times at the main session. From the report of the proceedings it is revealed that out of so many Oriental and Occidental delegates, no one had the rare privilege of addressing the Parliament six times, like Swamiji. On three occasions, he spoke mainly in response to somebody's request, as we shall see later. It can be safely assumed, however, that although Swamiji did not speak on some days, he must have attended the Parliamentary sessions and listened to the speeches and papers of other delegates, whenever he could. And from a report published in the *Chicago Tribune* of September 14, we learn for the first time that Swamiji even presided over the evening session of the Parliament on the previous day. The report reads:

ELEVATES THE SOUL TO WISDOM

A man in the orange gown of a Buddhist [sic] monk presided at the evening meeting. He was Swami Dvivedi [Vive] Kananda of Hindustani [Hindusthan]. As at the meeting earlier in the day, more people applied for admission than could be accommodated. The speakers of the evening were the Rev. Walter Elliott, a Paulist monk of New York; the Rev. Phillip Moxom of Boston, and the Rev. Samuel M. Warren of Cambridge, Mass. . . .

This speaks of the honour singularly accorded to Swamiji by the organizers of the Parliament, in spite of his being an Oriental, and a non-Christian delegate. Even though the reporter made mistakes in reporting the matter, it leaves no doubt that it was Swami Vivekananda who presided over the session that evening. The names of the speakers tally with those given in Dr. Barrow's *World's Parliament*,²¹ in which it is not mentioned who presided over the evening session.

Next, Swamiji spoke at the main session on Friday, September 15, just before the close of the afternoon session, at the request of Dr. F. A. Noble of the Union Park Congregational Church, Chicago, and member of the General Committee, who presided over the afternoon session that day. In this connection Dr. Barrows writes: 'Just before the close of the afternoon session, the Chairman invited some remarks from the Hindu monk Swami Vivekananda, of Bombay, who responded with a little fable intended to illustrate the variance among men of different races and religions.'²² Swamiji told the audience the story of 'a frog in a well', and concluded by saying:

I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.²³

The Chicago papers were not silent about Swamiji. Next day the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* wrote: 'Swami Vivekananda, a royal looking Hindoo gorgeous in his golden

²¹. See *World's Parliament*, I, p. 116.

²². *Ibid.*, p.118.

²³. For the full version see *Complete Works*, I, pp. 4-5.

turban, and who has come to be known as the "Prince of gentlemen in the orange garb", was called upon. He made a brief address and then the session adjourned until evening.' The *Chicago Times* of the same date only mentions that '... Swami Dvivi Kananda, the representative of the Brahmin faith' was amongst the other speakers. The *Chicago Herald* tells us a little more:

EACH IN HIS OWN LITTLE WELL

HINDU MONK OF THE BRAHMO-SAMAJ [sic] TELLS AN APT AND INTERESTING FABLE

Just before the close of the afternoon session, the Chairman called on Swami Vivekananda of Bombay, a monk of the Brahmo-Somaj [sic], for remarks, who was enthusiastically received, and responded with a little speech. He said— [Here the paper published the brief speech, and after quoting the story, it mentions '(Laughter)'; and during as well as at the end of the speech, there was '(Applause)'.]

From Dr. Barrows' *World's Parliament* (pp. 123-26) we understand that Mr. H. Dharmapala, the General Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society and the delegate of the Southern Buddhist Church of Ceylon, Colombo, read his paper on 'The World's Debt to Buddha' in the afternoon session on Monday, September 18. His paper was too long, and continued in the evening session of September 19. Mr. Dharmapala was friendly to Swamiji, and Swamiji was kind enough to give a patient hearing to his long paper. This is revealed from the report of the *Chicago Herald* of September 19, which reported: 'In the afternoon session yesterday, both the hall and the platform were fully occupied by interested listeners during the presentation of the four papers which constituted the programme. Among the learned gentlemen who had seats on the platform were: Rev. H. R. Harwers of England, . . . Joseph Cook of Boston,

Swami Vivekananda, the Bombay monk. . . .'

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* of September 19, wrote about Swamiji:

Swami Vivekananda [sic] of India, whose orange and cardinal robes and full face, with its unchanging smile, have marked him as a striking figure on the platform during the sessions of the Parliament, is a learned Buddhist [sic] who has travelled from one end of his country to the other. Vivekanda [sic] learned yesterday for the first time that Christian ministers of the gospel were paid regular salaries for preaching what they considered to be the truth. This information was the source of great surprise to the follower of the 'Light of Asia', who said that he could hardly understand how it was that Americans could accept money for preaching the word of their God, as in his country the members of the priesthood found it at variance with their teaching to accept money for anything but the bare necessities of life.

'We have no income', said he, 'except that of charity, and no use for money except to purchase food and raiment. We are taught that the doing of good deeds is its own reward and to receive money as a recompense for that duty appears to us akin to sacrilege.'

It may be mentioned here that the Chicago newspapers have referred to Swamiji as belonging to 'Brahmo-Somaj' or as a 'Buddhist Monk'. They might have mistaken his friendship with the followers of these faiths like P. C. Mozoomdar and H. Dharmapala. It is not surprising, of course, if newspapers make such mistakes.

Then came the memorable day for the Hindus, the golden day on which Swamiji read his paper on 'Hinduism'. It was Tuesday, September 19, in the afternoon session that Swamiji read out this paper after three delegates had finished their addresses and reading papers. Rev. F. A. Noble was in the chair. This most popular paper was published either in full or in summarized form in the Chicago papers, like the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, *Chicago Daily Tribune* and *Chicago Herald*. The text of this paper is available in the Com-

plete Works of Swami Vivekananda²⁴ and also in separate booklet form. What was not known about this day's event is that, before Swamiji started reading his paper, he gave a brief but heart-stirring speech. This speech of Swamiji's was partly published in the Dubuque, Iowa, *Times* of September 29, 1893, and quoted by Marie Louise Burke in her *New Discoveries*.²⁵ The full version of the same as available in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* of September 20, reads :

Afternoon Session of Sept. 19—
Congress of Religions

HINDOO CRITICISES CHRISTIANITY

MR. VIVEKANANDA SAYS RELIGION OF VEDAS
IS RELIGION OF LOVE
SAYS CHRISTIANITY IS INTOLERANT

Dr. Noble presented Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, who was applauded loudly as he stepped forward to the center of the platform. He wore an orange robe, bound with a scarlet sash, and a pale yellow turban. The customary smile was on his handsome face and his eyes shone with animation. Said he :

We who come from the East have sat here on the platform day after day and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. We look about us and we see England, the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot on the neck of 250,000,000 Asiatics. We look back into history and see that the prosperity

²⁴. There are some minor variations in the version of the paper on 'Hinduism' published in the Chicago newspapers and that in the *Complete Works*. For instance, towards the end of the paper a part of the sentence reads in the *Complete Works* (I, p. 20), 'the borders of the Sanpo'; while in the newspaper report (and also in *World's Parliament*, II, p. 978) it reads, 'the borders of the Tasifu'. On investigation we found that neither 'Sanpo' nor 'Tasifu' gives any meaning. On studying Swamiji's handwriting it was revealed to us that the word 'Pacific' in the Swami's hand often looked like 'Tasifu'. We, therefore, feel that the correct reading may be 'the borders of the Pacific'.

²⁵. See *New Discoveries*, pp. 81-82.

of Christian Europe began with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow men. At such a price the Hindoo will not have prosperity.

I have sat here today, and I have heard the height of intolerance. I have heard the creed of the Moslem applauded, when today the Moslem sword is carrying destruction into India. Blood and the sword are not for the Hindoo, whose religion is based on the law of love. (When the applause had ceased Mr. Vivekananda went to read his paper, a summary of which follows :) . . .

Swami Vivekananda wrote to his disciples and brother-disciples in India that the Parliament, of Religions was arranged to prove the superiority of Christianity, and to make a 'heathen show'. As a matter of fact, no intolerant remarks were expected on the platform of the Parliament which had gathered to bring about the harmony of all religions. But somehow this could not be avoided. When the Eastern delegates heard from the Christian delegates attacks against their faiths, they paid them in the same coin. The *New York Tribune* (quoted in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of September 19, 1893) had rightly pointed out : 'Two classes of people will be disappointed in this great religious gathering—those who have thought that out of it might be evolved some sort of universal or cosmic religion, and those who have expected that Christianity would confound all other religions. Neither of these things will happen. Everybody who has taken part in it will go home with his faith unimpaired. The gain from the Parliament will not lie in the fact that it has upset men's faiths, but that it has impressed upon those who have followed its discussions some of the larger aspects of religion that underlie all the great faiths of the world.'²⁶

On September 20, Swamiji was again on the platform to deliver the concluding

²⁶. *The Chicago Inter-Ocean*, September 19, 1893, p. 6, col. 4.

address of the evening session, which has been partly published in the *Complete Works*²⁷ under the title 'Religion Not the Crying Need of India'. This was not, however, the only theme of his speech; nor was there any fixed subject given to him that day. From Dr. Barrows' *World's Parliament* we learn that: 'He concluded his speech by a few remarks on the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation.'²⁸ The speech has been partly published in the book, but we do not know what 'remarks about reincarnation' Swamiji made in conclusion.

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of September 21, reported the brief soul-stirring speech of Swami Vivekananda, with vivid details. Rev. Dr. Alfred Williams Momerie, of London, presided over the session of the Parliament that evening; Rev. D. J. Kennedy, O.S.P., of Somerset, Ohio, read his paper on 'The Restoration of Sinful Man through Christ'; and Mr. William Pipe read Professor Isaac T. Headland's paper on 'Religion in Peking'. The *Inter-Ocean* wrote:

At the close of the reading of Mr. Headland's paper on 'Religion in Peking' Dr. Momerie announced that the other speakers bulletined for the evening had failed to appear. It was 9 o'clock, and the main auditorium and galleries were well filled. There was an outburst of applause as they caught sight of the Hindoo monk, Vivekananda, sitting in his scarlet robe and orange turban upon the platform.

This popular Hindoo responded to the generous applause by saying that he did not come to speak to-night. He took occasion, however, to criticise many of the statements made in the paper by Mr. Headland. Referring to the poverty which prevails in China, he said that the missionaries would do better work in appeasing hunger than in endeavoring to persuade the Chinese to renounce their faith of centuries and embrace Christianity at the price of food. And then the Hindoo stepped back on the platform and whispered to Bishop Keane, of the Catholic Church, a moment.

He then resumed his address by saying that Bishop Keane had told him that Americans would not be offended at honest criticism. He said he had heard of all the terrible things and horrible conditions which prevail in China, but he had not heard that any asylums had been erected by Christians for remedying all these difficulties. He said:

Christian brethren of America, you are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the souls of heathens. I ask you, what have you done and are doing to save their bodies from starvation? (*Applause*). In India, there are 300,000,000 men and women living on an average of a little more than 50 cents a month. I have seen them living for years upon wild flowers. Whenever there was a little famine, hundreds of thousands died of starvation. Christian missionaries come and offer life but only on condition that the Hindoos become Christians, abandoning the faith of their fathers and forefathers. Is it right? There are hundreds of asylums, but if the Mohammedans or the Hindoos go there they would be kicked out. There are thousands of asylums erected by Hindoos where everybody would be received. There are hundreds of churches that have been erected with the assistance of the Hindoos, but no Hindoo temples for which a Christian has given a penny.

What the East Needs

Brethren of America, the crying evil of the East is not religion. We have more than religion enough; what they want is bread, but they are given a stone. (*Applause*). It is an insult to a suffering man dying of hunger to preach to him metaphysics. Therefore, if you wish to illustrate the meaning of 'brotherhood', treat the Hindoo more kindly, even though he be a Hindoo and is faithful to his religion. Send missionaries to them to teach them how better to earn a better piece of bread and not teach them metaphysical nonsense. (*Great applause*).

And then the monk said, he was in ill health today and wished to be excused. But there were thunders of applause and cries of 'go on' and Mr. Vivekananda continued:

The paper just read says something about the miserable and ignorant priest. The same may be said of India. I am one of those monks who have been described as beggarly. That is the pride of my life. (*Applause*). I am

²⁷ See *Complete Works*, I, p. 20.

²⁸ *World's Parliament*, I, p. 129.

proud in that sense to be Christ-like. I eat what I have today and think not of tomorrow. 'Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin'. The Hindoo carries that out literally. Many gentlemen present in Chicago, sitting on this platform, can testify that for the last twelve years, I never knew whence my next meal was coming. I am proud to be a beggar for the sake of the Lord. The idea in the East is to preach or teach anything for the sake of money is low and vulgar, but to teach the name of the Lord for pay is such a degradation as would cause the priest to lose caste and be spat upon. There is one suggestion in the paper that is true: If the priests of China and India were organized, there is an enormous amount of potential energy which could be used for regeneration of society and humanity. I endeavored to organize it in India, but failed for lack of money. It may be, I shall get the help I want in America.

But we know it is very hard for a heathen to get any help from 'Christian people'. (*Great Applause*). I have heard so much of this land of freedom, of liberty and freedom of thought that I am not discouraged. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

And then the popular visitor bowed gracefully and sought to retire with a graceful smile, but the audience cried to him to proceed. Mr. Vivekananda, fairly bubbling with an expression of good nature, then explained the Hindoo theory of incarnation [reincarnation?]. At the close of the address Dr. Momerie said that he now understood why the newspapers had well called this Parliament an approach to the millenium. 'It is the greatest event in the religions history of mankind,' he said, 'it has come from the great heart of the American people, and I congratulate Americans upon it. It makes me wish that I were an American myself.'

And then the English divine was greeted with an outburst of applause which approached an ovation, and one of the most enthusiastic meetings of the Parliament adjourned.

The *Chicago Herald* also reported this electrifying speech of Swamiji in brief, the next day, saying: 'During the evening session Suanj Vive Kananda spoke extemporaneously for a few moments. He said: . . . Mr. Vivi Kananda concluded his speech with references to Hindoo reincarnation.'

Swamiji's words might have entered like arrows into the hearts of some bigoted Christian listeners; but there were also liberal Christians in the audience who rather appreciated them. For these, Swamiji's words acted as eye-openers. One such noble soul was Rt. Rev. John J. Keane, the Chairman of the Committee of Catholic Christians, who endorsed Swamiji's view in his next day's speech. The *Chicago Herald* of September 22, heralded this endorsement saying:

During the morning, Bishop Keane, rector of the Catholic University at Washington, referred to the criticism of one of the Hindu monks on the work of the missionaries in India. 'I endorse', said the Bishop with great impressiveness, 'the denunciation that was hurled forth last night against the system of pretended charity that offered food to the hungry Hindus at the cost of their conscience and faith. It is a shame and a disgrace to those who call themselves Christians.' This sentiment evoked a storm of applause.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* of the same date published a tiny news report about Swamiji. We do not know whether these words of Swamiji form a part of his short speech delivered on the evening of September 20, or part of his conversation with somebody. The report reads:

'Tell your missionaries', said a Hindu a monk, 'tell them to go about from house to house in humble garb; tell them to preach gentleness and mildness and to practise what they preach; tell them to preach Christianity, but tell them not to teach that in order to become a Christian it is necessary to become a carnivore.'

It may be noted that in those days it was rather daring to utter such words, and that too on Christian soil; and unless one had the divine spark in him, one could not dare; nor would anyone listen to his words. One who had come down to establish true religion could alone do this humanly impossible job.

The pious audience of the Parliament next listened to Swamiji's brief address on

September 26 toward the close of the evening session. He delivered this speech at the request of Mr. H. Dharmapala, who had read his paper that day on 'Buddhism'. The text of Swamiji's address is published in the *Complete Works*.²⁹ About this speech, the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* of September 27, reports :

CRITICISM BY MR. VIVEKANANDA

At the conclusion of his paper Mr. Dharmapala asked Mr. Vivekananda, the Brahmin monk to criticise Buddhism. He said that Vivekananda being a priest in a different faith his criticism would not be partial to the Buddhist. Vivekananda is always received with applause in the Parliament, and as he stepped forward at the side of Dr. Momene [Momerie], the Chairman, he was received with generous enthusiasm. The Hindu monk made a masterly plea for truth in whatever faith it might be found. He said that Christ in the Brahman teaching was the same as his faith in Christianity. He had nothing but kind words for Buddhism, and as he gave evidence of his culture in the history which underlies the different Oriental faiths, he closed with that sentiment which has characterized the utterances of all the priests from the Orient and the Occident—a plea for tolerance, and the recognition of essential truth wherever it may be found. The scholarly language in which he clothed his appeal for a fair hearing and a calm consideration of the qualities which have kept alive the faith to which his life's work is devoted struck a responsive chord in the audience, and he retired amid a thunder of applause.

Swamiji in his short speech on Buddhism said :

I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticize Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand only this : Far be it from me to criticize him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views about Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples. The relation between Hinduism (by Hinduism I mean the religion of the Vedas) and what is called Buddhism at the

present day is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and Shakya Muni was a Hindu. . . . Shakya Muni came to preach nothing new. He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy. . . . Again I repeat, Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus. . . . Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. . . . Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmin with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanizing power of the Great Master.³⁰

On the last day of the Parliament (September 27), some delegates delivered their final addresses. Swamiji also was presented before the audience ; and he made his last speech at the main session in the following words :

The World's Parliament of Religions has become an accomplished fact, and the merciful Father has helped those who laboured to bring it into existence and crowned with success their most unselfish labour.

My thanks to those noble souls whose large hearts and love of truth first dreamed this wonderful dream and then realized it. My thanks to the shower of liberal sentiments that has overflowed this platform. My thanks to this enlightened audience for their uniform kindness to me and for their appreciation of every thought that tends to smooth the friction of religions. . . .

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. . . . But if anyone here hopes that this unity would come by the triumph of any *one* of these religions and the destruction of the others, to him I say, 'Brother, yours is an impossible hope.' Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. . . . The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the others and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this : It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men

²⁹. See *Complete Works*, I, pp. 21-23.

³⁰. *Ibid.*

and women of the most exalted character.

In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion would soon be written, in spite of their resistance: 'Help, and Not Fight', 'Assimilation, and Not Destruction', 'Harmony and Peace, and Not Dissension.'³¹

With these fiery words, which only a messenger of the Lord could utter, Swamiji concluded his speech. After quoting this speech in his *World's Parliament*, Dr. Barrows remarked: 'Swami Vivekananda was always heard with interest by the Parliament, but very little approval was shown to some of the sentiments expressed in his closing address.'³²

Whatever might be Dr. Barrows' personal opinion—for he in the heart of his heart belonged to a group who had expected that the supremacy of Christianity would be proved at the Parliament and that Christianity alone would triumph as a true religion on the face of this earth—'the public reaction was different'. One Lucy Monroe in her letter to the *Critic*, published on October 7, 1893, recalled:

... But eloquent as were many of the brief speeches at this meeting . . . no one expressed so well the spirit of the Parliament, its limitations and its finest influence, as did the Hindoo monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the audience, for he is an orator by divine right, and his strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich, rhythmical utterance he gave them.'³³

And a year later the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* wrote:

There was no delegate to the Parliament of Religions who attracted more courteous attention in Chicago by his winning ways, his ability, and his fearless discussion of all questions relating

to his religion than Swami Vivekananda, who represented the Hindoos. . . . he defended the Hindoo religion and philosophy with an eloquence and power that not only won admiration for himself but consideration for his own teachings.³⁴

The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* of September 28, published Swamiji's final address in brief; and before quoting the speech, the latter wrote: 'Swami Vivekananda, the popular and cultured Hindu monk, was applauded when he arose to speak.'

Towards the close of the main session of the Parliament, Mr. Bonney spoke his last words. Besides many other other things, he said:

... The wonderful success of this first actual Congress of the Religions of the world is the realization of a conviction which has held my heart for many years. . . . And now farewell. A thousand congratulations and thanks for the co-operation and aid of all who have contributed to the glorious results which we celebrate this night. Henceforth the religions of the world will make war, not on each other, but on the giant evils that afflict mankind. Henceforth let all throughout the world, who worship God and love their fellow men, join in the anthem of the angels:

Glory to God in the highest!

Peace on earth, good will among men!³⁵

After Mr. Bonney finished his address, the great assembly joined with Dr. E. C. Hirsch in the Lord's Prayer, which was followed by a prayer of benediction delivered by Bishop Keane. In the end the Apollo Club sang 'America', and the first great Parliament was then declared closed.

Although the main drama of the Parliament of Religions was over, it will be worthwhile to see in brief, what the Chicago papers said about its overall result. The *Chicago Evening Journal* of September 28, wrote:

31. For complete version see *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

32. *World's Parliament*, I, p. 171.

33. *Complete Works*, III, 1970, p. 475.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

35. *World's Parliament*, I, pp. 184-85, 186.

Whatever may be the opinion of the participants themselves, to the man on the fence the most remarkable feature of the religious Parliament that has just closed was the fact that men of such diametrically opposite creeds succeeded in swapping opinions for seventeen days without calling each other names or forgetting the amenities due each other as students and gentlemen.

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean* of the same date wrote :

The Great Parliament Prorogued

The term Parliament has taken on a new meaning. From this time on, it will be invested with a significance never before associated with it. No longer confined to politics and one nation, it has been clothed with the drapery of the Spirit and given the wings of man's highest nature and loftiest thoughts. The Parliament at London can boast that it represents a kingdom upon which the sun never sets, the Parliament at Chicago represents the entire religious world.

This Parliament of Religions began its session at the Hall of Columbus Monday, Sept. 11, and closed Wednesday, Sept. 27. It must not be confounded with the Religious Congresses, which began Sunday, Aug. 27, and will continue until Sunday, Oct. 15. . . .

. . . The field of religion is not merely that part of the world under the spiritual husbandry of the Christian churches. The Orient is not so utterly waste and barren as the Occident has imaged. Hereafter, Japan, China, India and Ceylon will stretch out before the mind's eye as a part of the civilized world. . . .

The *Chicago Record* of September 29, had written :

The Parliament of Religions which came to a close Wednesday was, on the whole, a success. Some of the speakers and essayists departed from the original plan and insisted upon bringing forward theological doctrines which always have been and probably always will be in dispute. They displayed a narrowness of spirit which was quite out of place in an assemblage of that kind. Fortunately there were not many extremists present and the discussions were, as a general thing, liberal in thought and temperate in tone.

That much good will result from the Parliament cannot be doubted. The men who took part in it have learned to respect each other and to recognize the fact, as Suaami Vive Kananda said last night, that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world. The meetings have had a broadening and elevating influence, the effect of which, it is hoped, will be made apparent in a closer bond of fellowship between those who have the eternal welfare of mankind at heart. The world will be better because the Congress of Religions has been held. . . .

All these reports go to show, how broadening and elevating was the effect of the first Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in the last decade of the nineteenth century. It has as it were given a new message for the forthcoming generation of the twentieth century. And we see the concrete result at present : The religions of the world are more tolerant towards each other.

(To be concluded)

'All the sins of the body fly away if one chants the name of God and sings His glories'.

—Sri Ramakrishna

AS I KNEW HER

MRS. GERTRUDE EMERSON SEN

It is more than fifty years—way back in March 1927—that I first met Sister Christine. I¹ had built a small house in a village named Pachperwa in eastern U. P. with the plan of staying there for a year to study Indian village life, but the need to collect some money compelled me to make a hasty trip to Calcutta. In a conversation with the American Consul there, he casually asked me if I had ever been out to Belur Math,² and when I said no, he proposed that we might go there the following Sunday. He added that if a young Indian friend of his, Mr. Boshi Sen,³ who was intimately acquainted with many of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, could accompany us, it would make things easier. 'Boshi Sen?' I repeated in surprise. 'I met him in New York four years ago!' Contacted on the telephone, Boshi Sen said he would be only too delighted to go with us.

I had no sooner returned to my hotel than Boshi Sen was again on the line, inviting me to have lunch at his house the next day. 'You will never be able to find the place in this rabbit-warren of lanes in north Calcutta,' he said, 'so I will call for you.'

1. The author, then Miss Gertrude Emerson, was an Associate Editor of the *Asia*, a monthly journal published from Concord, New Hampshire, U.S.A. She had come on a year's leave to India in order to study Indian village life, with a view to write a book on the subject, and settled at Pachperwa, a village in Gonda district of the then United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh).—*Ed.*

2. The Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, started by Swami Vivekananda.—*Ed.*

3. Mr. Boshiswar Sen (1887-1971) was an eminent scientist of India, and founder of the Vivekananda Laboratory of Almora. He met the author for the first time in 1923 at New York, and they were consequently married 'exactly nine years' later at Calcutta.—*Ed.*

On the way, next day, Boshi told me I would be meeting Sister Christine (formerly Christine Greenstidel), an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who had been running a school in Calcutta for Indian girls and young widows together with Sister Nivedita (Margaret Noble), Vivekananda's Irish-English disciple. Sister Christine had lost her health, however, and was now living with him. 'She has given her life for India,' he said, 'and the least India can do for her, is to take care of her now.' He called her 'Mother'.

We entered an open courtyard of Boshi's house, climbed some stairs built against the courtyard wall, and were greeted by Sister Christine at the top. She was tall and thin, and seemed to me to be in her sixties. She was dressed in Western style, with a long skirt and a scarf about her shoulders. Her voice was deep and modulated, and her dark eyes appeared to look through and beyond one. The drooping lid over the left eye gave her face an odd expression. Somehow I at once felt that here was 'a presence'.

This upper room was apparently the only one in the house for receiving guests. Opening onto a narrow veranda overhanging the lane below, it was sparsely furnished, with only a desk, a single chair and a couch, which became Sister Christine's bed at night. A small square opening cut through a recess in the inner wall looked straight down into Boshi Sen's one-man Vivekananda Laboratory, once the kitchen of the house, and through this opening Sister Christine could speak to him at any time. The window was covered by a curtain, and behind it hung her clothes. At the far end, the room led into another small room. This room was the one in which Boshi and his younger brother 'Tābu' had nursed their sick Guru, Swami Sada-

nanda—first disciple of Swami Vivekananda—for two years, until his death in 1911. Now it was the shrine-room where daily worship and meditation were observed. Boshi knelt reverently before his Guru's bed which held his ashes in a round copper box, and a large framed photograph of him propped up against a pillow.

The main room was also the dining-room, and lunch was now ready. We sat down on cushions placed on the polished red cement floor, with our plates in front of us. Sister Christine and I had spoons (a concession to our Western origins), but Boshi rolled his rice and dal into little balls with his fingers and popped them neatly into his mouth. Fruit and coffee ended the simple meal. Seeing that Sister Christine would have difficulty in rising from floor-level, I held her beneath the arms and started to lift her. Frail as she had seemed, her dead-weight was almost too much for me, and I had to exert every ounce of my strength not to drop her!

There was no question of Sister Christine going with us to Belur Math the next day. She was not well enough. But Boshi said they would soon be escaping from the Calcutta heat, already oppressive. They were planning to leave in May for Almora (U. P.), a beautiful spot in the Himalayas, where they had spent the previous summer with two American artists, Earl and Achsah Brewster, all as guests of 'Tantine', Miss MacLeod.⁴ They began to wonder how I could possibly survive the months ahead in my village of Pachperwa, minus every civilized convenience, and suggested that, instead, I join them in Almora! The house which had been rented for them had a guest-room,

and I would be more than welcome to it. I thanked them for their warm invitation, but refused, saying I had made up my mind to live the year out in my village, whatever the difficulties. When I said goodbye, however, I realized I had suddenly acquired two new friends.

Back in the village (Pachperwa), I began to receive letters from Almora, urging me to change my mind, and I began to waver. It was not the heat or mosquitoes which were proving unendurable, but time was running out. I had taken a year's leave of absence from my editorial desk⁵ in New York, and I was supposed to be writing a book about my village experiences. Inadvertently, and without any qualifications whatever, I had become a 'doctor' in the eyes of the villagers. If not a missionary, I *must* be a doctor they said. They began coming to me for help, not only from my own village, but from all the villages round about, and at all hours of the day and night. I sent for a few standard medicines from Lucknow, and sought advice from the district health and sanitary officers, who occasionally turned up from their headquarters at Gonda. They supplied me with an anti-cholera mixture when we were having a cholera epidemic, and also with all sorts of health posters, which I tacked up on the wall of the back veranda. Progress on the book was almost at a standstill, however. Hoping that if I ceased to be a 'doctor' for a few weeks, I might make better headway, I finally left Pachperwa for Almora early in August.

Life in Almora swiftly settled down into a pleasant routine, after we had celebrated Sister Christine's birthday appropriately on the seventeenth of the month. She was decorated with a marigold garland and given some small presents. Ashu, the Bengali

4. Miss Josephine MacLeod was one of the ardent admirers of Swami Vivekananda, whom she had first met in New York in the January of 1895. After the Swami's passing away also, she remained friendly to the Ramakrishna Order, and helped in the Swami's cause.—*Ed.*

5. The Editorial office of the *Asia* magazine, of which the author was an Associate Editor, was at 468 Fourth Avenue, New York.—*Ed.*

cook, made her a birthday-cake for tea, and for dessert at supper we had her favourite apple-sauce. The mornings were then set aside for regular work. Propped up with pillows on the front veranda, Sister Christine was writing her 'Memoirs'.⁶ Boshi was working in his laboratory—no longer in a transformed kitchen as in Calcutta, but in what would otherwise have been the drawing-room at Kundan House! I stayed in my room and managed to type rough drafts of two or three chapters of 'Voiceless India'. When it was not raining, in the afternoons we all went out together, Boshi and I walking, Sister Christine riding in a dandy—a chairlike device carried on shoulder-poles by a team of sturdy hillmen. We explored the wooded paths of the Cantonment, went out beyond Granite Hill, sometimes returned the calls of neighbours, occasionally went to the bazaar to watch some procession, and once went all the way out to Kasar Devi to visit Swami Mokshadananda, or 'Brother Maharaj' as he was called—one of the Swamis of the little Ramakrishna Kutir at Almora, who was temporarily making a retreat in a tiny stone hut surrounded by masses of flowering cosmos on a lonely peak five miles away.

The best time of all was when we gathered in my room after supper at night, and Sister Christine read aloud what she had written in the morning, or they asked me to read from some book of Swami Vivekananda. Discussions and stories followed, and there was much talk about Vivekananda, Sadananda, the Holy Mother, Swami Brahmananda and others whom she or Boshi had known per-

6. These 'Memoirs' of Sister Christine, affectionately entitled by Mr. Boshi Sen as 'Māmloo's Memoirs' (Māmloo being Christine's nickname by Mr. Boshi Sen), have been partly published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of 1931 and 1945; and later published in the *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama. The remaining part is being published in this issue. Sister Christine, it is said, could not complete her 'Memoirs', however.—Ed.

sonally. I heard the story for the first time of how Sister Christine and her friend Mrs. Funke had attended the five lectures given in Detroit by Swami Vivekananda early in 1894, about six months after he had become famous overnight as the outstanding speaker at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. They were then deeply inspired, but had lost track of him thereafter for a year and a half, until suddenly they learned that the Swami was at Thousand Island Park on the St. Lawrence River in New York State, with a group of devoted followers. They set out the next day, and after a journey of several hundred miles arrived at the place late on the rainy night of Saturday, July 6, 1895. Unannounced and unknown to him though they were, Swamiji received them graciously, and asked his hostess kindly to find accommodation for them in the house. It seemed that he was to initiate some of the group on the following Monday. Boshi told me how Swamiji had looked at Sister Christine and said, 'I have not had time to know you. May I read your mind?' 'Yes', she answered at once. 'All of it?' he asked. 'Yes', she said again. 'Brave girl!' he remarked, and he initiated Christine with the others on that day.

I remember particularly her description of one Sunday morning at Thousand Island Park, when Swami Vivekananda kept pacing up and down the upper veranda, saying over and over, as if talking to himself: 'To organize, or not to organize? If I organize, the spirit will diminish. If I do not organize, the message will not spread.' The Swami was thinking aloud about his plans for the future, when he would return to India. The ultimate decision, of course, was organization, and the Ramakrishna Math and Mission came into existence at his bidding. Part of the plan as already foreshadowed was a school in Bengal for girls and young widows—a school Christine would join seven years later,

How gladly she would have followed him to India at once, but she was not free to do so. Her father had brought the family from Nuremberg in Germany to Detroit in the United States, when Christine was only three years old. When she was seventeen, her father died suddenly, and Christine had to take up a teaching position in order to support her mother and younger sisters.

Swami Vivekananda continued to write many letters after his return to India, and they met again in England and America.⁷ Finally after her mother's death, the Swami sent Christine the passage money as a gift from Mrs. Sevier, and she arrived in Calcutta in 1902, just at the beginning of the hot season.⁸ With the special consideration he had always shown for Christine, Swami Vivekananda sent her away almost immediately to be the guest of Mrs. Sevier at Mayavati, in the Himalayas. There came the sad news that Swami Vivekananda had given up the body on July 4, 1902. Never was she to see him again! 'If I had been there, I would like to see how death could ever have taken him,' she remarked. 'At the time, I felt as if I really had the power to shake the very stars in their courses!'

But Sister Christine had come to India only to help in Swamiji's work, so she returned to Calcutta early in 1903, and joined

7. Swami Vivekananda went to the West for the second time in the June of 1899, and he had invited Christine and Mrs. Funke to meet him in England. Accordingly, they met their Master there on July 31, and returned with him to America after a fortnight's stay in London. Later on, she met him in the July of 1900, when the Swami went as her guest to Detroit, for a week.—*Ed.*

8. Sister Christine's mother passed away some time towards the end of 1901, and Swamiji appears to have received the news after he had sent Christine a cheque of \$ 480 on December 18, 1901. He therefore wrote to her again on December 25 to condole on her death, Sister Christine ultimately reached Calcutta on April 7, 1902, in response to Swamiji's call.—*Ed.*

hands with Nivedita, who had already started a school there ahead of her. These two Western disciples of Swami Vivekananda were of very different temperaments, though both had the same love and reverence for their Guru. The fiery Irish revolutionary Nivedita greatly attracted the young Bengali intelligencia, more especially because she herself belonged to the ruling race. On Sunday mornings some of them would always be found at 'The Sisters' House', as it was called, carrying on animated discussions. Nivedita was a popular lecturer, and she was often away on lecture tours. She also spent a good part of her time upstairs in her room, writing. Money earned from her lectures and books, she gave to the school. Meanwhile, Christine was left to carry on the heavier part of the routine teaching, downstairs. Despite her quiet manner, she was no less of an ardent nationalist than Nivedita. Once in a Calcutta tram, a student, assuming her to be a hated Englishwoman, deliberately stepped on her foot in passing. Her only reaction was one of joy. How wonderful that Indians were showing such independent spirit! Surely they would soon shake off the foreign rule.

There were many problems to face in those early days. It was not easy to persuade reticent Indian women of the neighbourhood, accustomed to seclusion, to send their daughters to a school run by two Western women. Resistance was slowly overcome, and the girls came. They were taught reading and writing, and also some sewing, painting and modelling, but always stress was laid on basic Indian ideals and values, such as Swamiji had stressed.

Another difficult problem for Sister Christine was the fact that, since she had not actually been born in America, and therefore was only a naturalized American citizen, she was compelled by the law to return to America periodically in order to

keep her American citizenship. She went to America in the April of 1910, and on her return in the beginning of next year, went to Mayavati to spend some months there. It was when she was away at Mayavati that Nivedita died at Darjeeling in October 1911. Sister Christine took the whole responsibility of the School, and carried on the work efficiently with the help of Sister Sudhira, till she left again for America in April 1914. When she was away, World War One suddenly broke out, and this time, due to the impossible transport situation, she was unable to return to India for ten years.

Sister Christine did not waste her time while in America, however. She lectured extensively on various aspects of Indian life, history, philosophy and religion. It was a totally different picture she presented from the familiar one given by the missionaries. She must have often startled her audiences. She described with amusement how at a public meeting which was to be addressed by several speakers, one after another had arisen to introduce himself or herself by saying, 'My name is So-and-so,' 'I am Mrs. So-and-so,' 'I am Miss So-and-so,' etc. When it came her turn to speak, Sister Christine stood up and merely began by reciting well-known stanzas from a hymn of Shankaracharya, as translated from the Sanskrit by Vivekananda :

I am neither the mind,
 nor the intellect, nor the ego,
 nor the mind-stuff ;
 I am neither the body,
 nor the changes of the body ;
 I am neither the senses of hearing,
 taste, smell or sight....
 Nor was I ever born,
 nor had I parents,
 friends and relations....
 I am Existence Absolute,

Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—

I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).⁹

One can well imagine the puzzlement of her audience. Was the lady really sane? But years later in America, I met an artist who remembered having heard Sister Christine lecture once, and he insisted that he distinctly saw a blue light all around her as she spoke!

It was on her return to Calcutta from the long ten-year period of exile that she found herself confronted with new conditions at the school. Although she had trained Sister Sudhira to take her place during her absence, she saw that the management had greatly changed. (As yet there was no Sarada Math in existence and no Sarada Mission Sisters, like the Sisters of today who so ably run what is now officially known as the Sarada Mission's Sister Nivedita Girls' School, with a house of their own in Nivedita Lane.) Christine felt that she had no place in the new set-up. With an aching heart, she resigned. Her health had greatly deteriorated, and she had no money. It was then that Boshi Sen offered her a home in his little 8 Bosepara Lane house, just opposite the old school. It was Nivedita who had originally rented that house for Boshi Sen and his brother to take care of their sick Guru, Swami Sadananda, in whose charge Swami Vivekananda had placed her when she came to India, and who was therefore her brother-disciple.

In the peaceful atmosphere of Almora in 1927, the old life was left behind for Sister Christine. Her karma of work was finished, she said, and now she felt free to follow what she believed to be her real path, the path of Raja Yoga. Her mind had become one-pointed—pointed only toward Viveka-

⁹. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, IV, 1972, pp. 391-92.

nanda, and the Realization he had promised her she would have. 'If only I could have asked him about certain things I need to know now!' she said wistfully one morning. And lo and behold—that very night he came to her in a dream, and gave her the exact answers to all her questions! 'Do this,' he said. 'Don't do that. Do that. Don't do this.' Thus the Guru smoothed the path for her.

While I recognized her spiritual and intellectual qualities, I also saw the loving side of her nature, in the way she would stroke the cheek of any little Indian child who happened to come near her; but on two occasions during my stay at Almora that summer, I was rather astonished at what seemed to me a curious descent from the status of a highly developed soul. A tailor was squatting on the veranda, making her a new dress. When she tried it on one morning, she found many things wrong with it. Almost weeping with annoyance, she scolded the tailor sharply. The second occasion was when a letter came, announcing the death of her old friend Mrs. Funke. The only remark she made, after a few moments of silence, was 'She might at least have left me a little money!' Later, I came to understand better. Her whole life had been one of intense struggle and extreme poverty. There was a time, Boshi said, when she walked over the Calcutta streets with the soles of her shoes utterly worn out. At present she was receiving an annual gift of five hundred dollars from Tantine (Miss MacLeod), but it was scarcely enough to meet her minimum expenses. How, then, could she afford to have a new dress spoiled when she did not know when she would ever have another? As for the money, if only her friend Mrs. Funke had indeed left her a little legacy, how greatly it would have eased her situation! It was against her own stark background that she had spoken as she did, and I felt guilty

for not having adequately recognized the fact. More in keeping with her true nature was the remark that she would gladly live all the hardships and sufferings of her life a thousand times over again, for the wonderful privileges that had been hers!

At Almora, I also did not realize at first the real state of her poor health. Her mind was as clear and lucid as her writing (I envied her ability to put into just the right words and just the right number of words whatever she wanted to say), but her body did not function properly. She could walk barely a few steps at a time in the garden because of a bad heart; and though she took great care of her diet, there were times when she suffered acute acidity. Then, late one afternoon, she had a severe heart attack. With every breath came a cry of agony, and I thought she was surely going to die. It was impossible to get a doctor in a hurry, but Boshi, long used to nursing, seemed to know exactly what to do. He immediately applied a hot cloth repeatedly wrung out in turpentine to her chest, and he ordered me to massage her legs and feet. After some time, her breathing grew easier and the spasms passed. Then she fell asleep. Boshi and I, not speaking, sat watching beside her bed until late into the night. When the doctor came the next morning, he administered some heart stimulant, and after a few days she appeared to have recovered completely.

It was October now, and the snow peaks were back in all their glory. It was cold enough to have a fire lighted in my room for the nightly gathering. I knew there was no further excuse to linger on longer in Almora. Besides, I had promised the villagers of Pachperwa that I would return. (I had also asked for, and received a short extension of my leave, so that I could make up for time lost while away. The day before my departure from Almora, as we

were standing in the doorway between her room and mine, Sister Christine placed both her hands on my head and blessed me. It was an act of extreme grace, giving me of her best, but it seemed to leave her almost as exhausted as I had felt on that day in Calcutta, when I had tried to lift her from the floor.

The leave-taking was not as sad as it would have been, had we not already made a tentative plan, circumstances permitting for Sister Christine and Boshi to break journey on their way down to Calcutta in December, and pay me a little visit. It would not be in the village, which was too far away, but at Balrampur, capital of the Maharaja's estate in which the village lay, about half-way on the branch railway line between Lucknow and Pachperwa. When the day of their arrival was confirmed, I borrowed a car from the tutor of the young Maharaja and picked them up at Gonda, in order to save Christine as much of the tiring train journey as possible. At Balrampur, arrangements had already been made for us to have three rooms at the Maharaja's guest-house, and Christine drew the 'royal' suite!

The real lure was not just a visit to me, but the promise I had held out to Sister Christine of taking her to the ruined site of the famous Jetavana Monastery, built close to the ancient Kosala capital of Srāvastī by Anathapindika, a rich merchant, for the Buddha and the yellow-robed monks of his Order. The humble village of Sahet Maher, only some ten miles or so along a road leading out from Balrampur, had been identified as the former site of the ancient Srāvastī, and in the near-by jungle lay the ruins of the great monastery. Here the Buddha had spent many a rain-retreat; and here, according to the Buddhist annals, he had recited no fewer than 410 of the 550 Jataka stories, or stories of his previous lives; and here also many of his famous parables were told, to bring home his

teachings. Sister Christine knew Buddhist history well, had visited Gaya and some of the Buddhist cave-temples in her earlier days in India, and she shared Vivekananda's profound love for the Blessed One. This it was that had made her willing to undertake the extra strain of a long journey.

The next morning we set out by car, but presently came to a place where, by previous arrangement through the courtesy of the manager of the estate, one of the Maharaja's elephants was waiting to take Sister Christine up the winding path through the forest to all that was left of the great monastery—a few broken walls overgrown with rank foliage and what may have been the floor perhaps of the assembly-hall. Keeping it correctly on her right side, Sister Christine began to circumambulate the platform, reciting something inaudibly to herself in a low voice. Was she reciting the words of that stupendous resolve of the Buddha-yet-to-be, as he sat down under the Bodhi-tree? 'Let my skin, my nerves, and my bones dry up, and my flesh and blood. Let this body dissolve back into primal nothingness, if need be. I move not, un'til I attain Supreme Enlightenment.' Or perhaps she was remembering the touching story of Kisogotami¹⁰

The intensity of Sister Christine's mood lifted us all to a higher plane of feeling, which had not entirely disappeared when I

10. Kisogotami was a young girl of Srāvastī, who went from house to house carrying her dead child in her arms, asking, was there no one who could give her medicine to make him well again? At last she came to the Blessed One at Jetavana, and he, looking at her compassionately, answered, 'Yes, if you can bring me some mustard seed from a house where none has ever died.' Again she went from house to house, begging such mustard seed, but alas, at every house someone had died—a parent, a son, maybe a slave. Then her mind was illuminated. Then she understood: 'Transitoriness is the law of life, all who are born must die.' And leaving her dead child in the forest, she went her sorrowful way.

saw them off the following day at Gonda. If all arising things are ceasing things, then every meeting must have a parting. Would we ever meet again, I wondered, as the train pulled out of the station?

The answer came much sooner than could have been imagined. I was indeed to see Christine—though on only two more occasions—in America!

I had been home in New York less than two months when I received a letter from Boshi, mailed at Madras, saying he and Sister Christine were already on their way to Europe!¹¹ He had submitted a paper, hopefully for publication in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, but his sponsor in London wanted some actual demonstrations to prove the validity of his conclusions. An English friend cabled the money for him to come over, and here they were on the way. He would have to remain in England, however, while Christine would go on alone to her family in Detroit. Then another miracle happened. After six months, this time an American friend, Glen Overton, sent him passage money to come to America, saying his own grocery bill could wait! As his steamer manoeuvred slowly alongside, Sister Christine and I unexpectedly met at the wharf both there to welcome Boshi. '*Wah, Swamiji Maharaj ji ki jai!*' she called out in a loud clear voice, as soon as he became distinguishable, leaning over the rail and waving to us. '*Wah, Guru ji ki fateh!*' And Boshi shouted back the same joyous salutation.

Weeks and months slipped past, until they became almost two years. By working at night after office hours, I had finally finished the book. Then the proofs had to be read. Boshi was in and out of the city, visiting universities, attending scientific meetings and

conferences, until he eventually settled down to do some new research on the electric charge of the protoplasmic particles in single living cells, at New York University. Sister Christine, he told me, was in a nursing home far uptown, close to where he had a room. 'See how Swamiji takes care of her!' he said. 'It is one of the best nursing homes in New York City. It is run by her friends Mrs. LeRoy. She gets all her special diet, and there are doctors and nurses at hand day and night, and she doesn't have to pay a cent! She could never have had this care any place else in the world.' But in spite of the care, there were days when she was very ill indeed. Visitors were turned away. And then one day, early in the morning of March 27, 1930, Boshi phoned me, and in a choking voice said that all was over. Death had come to her release only an hour before. He wanted me to come to the nursing home at once.

When I arrived, having stopped on the way to buy some flowers—that last tribute we offer to the dead—I was taken into a large room where a number of people had already gathered. I did not know any of them. I thought they must be people from the nursing home, or friends of Mrs. LeRoy. On a bed near the window lay the still form of Sister Christine, dressed in white, and the familiar scarf draped around her face. I placed the flowers at her feet. There was a look of great peace on her face. The lines of weariness and pain were no longer there, as if the hand of death had gently erased them. At the very end, her face was illuminated with a divine smile, Boshi said; and, with tears falling, 'Now she has joined Swamiji.' A strange and awkward period followed. Hour after hour dragged on, with no one speaking. No one knew why we were having to wait so long. To break the tension, Boshi suddenly handed me some typewritten pages and asked me to read them aloud. They were a birthday tribute to her

11. The author left India for New York in mid-February of 1928, and Mr. Boshi Sen and Sister Christine left for the West by the end of March, the same year.—Ed.

written by Achsah Brewster, in her own poetic and highly imaginative style, presented in the summer of 1926, which they had all spent together at Almora. At last someone explained that there was trouble about the cremation. According to Hindu custom, Boshi wanted it to be performed the same day, but the city authorities, from whom permission had to be obtained, could not understand why such haste. Was anything wrong? Many telephone messages were exchanged, and someone from the police department even called. It was not until the middle of the afternoon that all formalities were cleared. Now the hearse stood at the door, and in taxis and cars we followed it to the crematorium. The old worn gar-

ment of the body, of no further use to Christine, was committed to destruction, and Boshi was left to collect the ashes to take back with him to India.

After our marriage in Calcutta two years later, and our permanent move to Almora, Sister Christine's room at Kundan House naturally became our meditation room. On top of the little altar-box covered with its white cloth, behind pictures of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Vivekananda and Sadananda, her ashes were placed near those of others who had gone before—Holy Mother, Sadananda and Nivedita; and here they still rest, though with only one of us now to bring flowers and sit in quiet meditation for a while.

THE AESTHETIC AND THE RELIGIOUS IN HINDU SPIRITUALITY

DR. GERALD JAMES LARSON

Both Kant and Hegel, in the history of European thought, were concerned about the problem of the relationship between Art, Religion and Philosophy; and both thinkers gave considerable systematic attention in their writings to this problem—Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*, and Hegel in his *Encyclopedia* and in his lectures on Fine Art and Philosophy of Religion.

Kant argued that Philosophy's primary role is a critical one in the realm of understanding, whereas Religion has its intellectual foundation in the postulates of practical reason or in the moral life. Art, and all that which relates to the aesthetic, functions in an intermediate realm of judgement or taste wherein one experiences feelings of pleasure and pain with respect to the apprehension of sensible objects. Beauty does not give us any cognitive knowledge

of an object, nor does it give us practical or moral guidance. Beauty or the beautiful, rather, provides us with 'wholly disinterested pleasure', a 'universal satisfaction', and a sense of harmony and proportion—but not a harmony and proportion in the artistic form itself but rather in our understanding and experience of the sensible form.

Hegel argued that Art, Religion and Philosophy represent three stages in the manifestation of Absolute Spirit, or *Geist*. Absolute Spirit shows itself or reveals itself in Art, Religion and Philosophy, but in each case the Absolute or Ultimate shows itself in a different mode. In Art, the Absolute Spirit shows itself in sensuous form; in Religion, the Absolute reveals itself in what Hegel called *die Vorstellung*,—i.e., in 'pictorial-thought', or perhaps better, in symbolic, mythical or imaginative thought; and

in Philosophy, the Absolute reveals itself in terms of itself—in other words, in terms of pure thought.

Similar attempts to deal with the problem of the relationship between the aesthetic, the religious and the philosophic have emerged throughout the history of religious thought in India, although in Indian intellectual history the philosophic has tended to be subsumed under the aesthetic and the religious—or to put the matter the other way—the philosophic problem is mainly a problem of relating the aesthetic to the religious. Brahman, or Puruṣa, or Paramātmā is Ultimate, and finally uncharacterizable, but the Ultimate manifests itself or is pointed to in numerous forms, as Īśvara, as Māyā, as Prakṛti, as the creator god, Brahmā, or the preserving god, Viṣṇu, or the destroying god, Śiva. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are referred to as the three forms or modalities (the *trimūrti*) of the Ultimate or Absolute, and these sensible representations or forms both reveal and conceal the Ultimate. Indeed, throughout the traditions of Hindu spirituality, there is a split or opposition between, on the one hand, an incredible diversity of sensible form and creative imagination, and on the other hand, a consistent stripping away of all sensuousness, a yearning for the uncharacterizable, the unnameable, that which is 'released' from all sense embodiment. Yet, paradoxically, the Hindu tradition also asserts that the aesthetic experience of the diversity and particularity of the sensible is on analogy with the religious experience of the stripping away of all sense perception. Poetry becomes, as it were, religious utterance; drama becomes, as it were, sacred action; dance becomes, as it were, the cosmic play of God—an incredible ongoing paradox or dialectic between the aesthetic and the religious.

One of the more striking and well-known representations of this paradox or dialectic

between the aesthetic and the religious in Indian culture is to be found in the mythology and iconography of Lord Śiva, and especially in his representation as Naṭarāja, or Lord of the Dance. As already indicated, Śiva is usually construed to be the destroying god; but within the Śaiva traditions, he is much more than that. He symbolizes the Ultimate or the Absolute; he is the god most often invoked by artists and poets; he is the paradigmatic or primal yogin who meditates on Mount Kaiāsa; and he is the most virile among all the gods. In Śiva one sees both the fullness of God, and the fullness of the finite, human condition, and more than that, one sees the fullness of Hindu spirituality itself in its awesome mystery and power and in its quiet tranquility.

The particular representation of the dancing Śiva that I shall talk about is a South Indian bronze from about the twelfth or thirteenth century A.D. What I propose to do, rather than speak about the paradox or dialectic of the aesthetic and the religious in general terms, is to show the paradox or dialectic in this particular representation, first, by speaking about the context in which Śiva performs his dance or, in other words, the occasion for the dance; and then by speaking about the iconographical content and the symbolic significance or meaning of the dance as represented in this well-known statue of the Naṭarāja.

First, then, the context or the occasion for the dance. The traditional texts inform us that, in fact, there are three different contexts or occasions on which Śiva performs his dance, each one of which is important to be aware of, to get a sense of the contextual richness of Śiva's dance in India's general cultural awareness.

One ancient text, a hymn to Lord Śiva (the 'Śiva-pradoṣa-stotra') tells us about his daily dance at the hour of twilight, a dance that brings to a close the busy activities of

the day and establishes a tone of quiet reflection as evening comes. The text reads :

Placing the Mother of the Three Worlds upon a golden throne, studded with precious gems, Śūlpaṇi [Śīva] dances on the heights of Mt. Kailāsa and all the gods gather round Him. Sarasvatī plays on the *vīṇā*, Indra on the flute, Brahmā holds the time-marking cymbals, Lakṣmī begins a song, Viṣṇu plays on a drum, and all the gods stand round about: Gandharvas, Yakṣas, Patagas, Uragas, Siddhas, Sādhyas, Vidyādharas, Amaras, Apsarases and all the beings dwelling in the three worlds assemble there to witness the celestial dance and hear the music of the divine choir at the hour of twilight.¹

Another text, this time from the Tantric tradition, tells us of quite a different dance. The occasion is midnight and the location is the burning-ground or cremation area. Gods and goddesses have gathered for a midnight revel, and in this context Lord Śīva performs his 'Tāṇḍava' or 'frantic' dance. He begins slowly but eventually he dances wildly, accompanied in his revel by Devī, his consort goddess, together with a troop of little imps, half-divine and half-demonic. This is a dance of *eros* and *thanatos* (death), of creation and destruction. This is an extreme dance in which the full force of life and death shows itself.²

1. Accounts of the dancing Śīva are, of course, numerous. Brief but useful summaries may be found in Ananda Coomaraswamy's *The Dance of Shiva*, New York: The Noonday Press, 1957 (hereafter *Dance*), pp. 66-78; and Heinrich Zimmer's *Myth and Symbol in Indian Art and Civilization*, New York: Harper Torchbook, 1956 (hereafter *Myth and Symbol*), pp. 151 ff. For a treatment of the dance of Śīva within the larger context of Hindu iconography, see T. A. Gopinatha Rao's *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, New York: Paragon Reprint of the 1914 Madras edition, four volumes. The passage cited in the body of the paper from 'Śīva-pradoṣa-stotra' may be found in *Dance*, p. 67. [cf. Śīva-pradoṣa-stotra', 5-6]

2. See *Myth and Symbol*, p. 151 ff.; and *Dance*, p. 68.

A third tradition, and indeed the one represented in the South Indian bronze I shall presently describe, tells us of Lord Śīva's dance in the golden hall of Cidambaram, the centre of the world, a dance which occurs each year, and more than that, a dance which occurs continually in all of us. The myth which describes the occasion for the dance is as follows: Śīva, Viṣṇu and Śeṣa, the cosmic serpent, are told of a group of heretical ṛṣis in the forest of Taragam in South India. These heretical ṛṣis have become very powerful, and their magic threatens to destroy the world. Śīva, Viṣṇu and Śeṣa travel to the south in order to destroy the heretics. When they reach the forest and come upon the ṛṣis, they find them gathered in a circle around a fire, uttering magical incantations or spells of one kind or another. Viṣṇu and Śeṣa realize instantly that these heretical ṛṣis are more powerful than they, and they turn to Śīva for guidance. Śīva agrees to undertake the task of destroying the ṛṣis. As he approaches the ṛṣis gathered around the fire, they see him coming and use their magical power to conjure out of the fire various demonic forms. First, they conjure up a terrible tiger who attacks Lord Śīva, but Śīva grasps the tiger, and with fingernail of his little finger, strips off the skin of the tiger, and wraps it around himself. Secondly, the ṛṣis conjure up a monstrous snake who attacks Śīva, but again Lord Śīva grasps the snake and wraps it around his waist or neck, according to variants in the text. Thirdly, the ṛṣis conjure up an ugly little dwarf, covered with warts, whose name is Apasmāra or 'forgetfulness', and the terrible dwarf, the symbol of ugliness and evil, approaches Śīva. Again, Lord Śīva grasps the dwarf, holds him in the air, throws him upon the ground, steps on him with his right foot, breaking his back, and at that moment begins to perform his dance. The ṛṣis are then vanquished, their power overcome, and Śīva re-establishes

order and truth. Viṣṇu and Śeṣa are deeply impressed with Śiva's incredible power, as are the other gods and goddesses when they hear of the incident, and they implore him to re-enact his dance periodically in order to continually re-establish order and truth. Lord Śiva agrees, and thus, periodically, Lord Śiva performs his cosmic dance at the very centre of the world, in the golden hall of Cidambaram.³

So much, then, for the occasion or context of the dance. In terms of iconographical content let me describe some of the important symbolic elements of this South Indian bronze. I shall begin at the top of the Nāṭarāja figure and work down (see the illustration) :

Some of Lord Śiva's hair is piled up on his head in the fashion of a yogin, but the rest of his long hair is flying out from either side of his head because of the movement of the dance. In his hair are four representations:

First, one finds a *mermaid*, perched on the right side of his flying hair, the traditional representation of *Mother Gangā*, or the Ganges river, signifying Lord Śiva's control of all life-giving waters.

Second, there is a *skull*, signifying his power over death.

Third, a *cobra* is in his hair showing his power over the forces of the earth.

And finally, there is a *crescent moon* in his hair, signifying Śiva's power over immortality.

Lord Śiva is dressed with the jewelry of a traditional classical dancer, and in his right ear, he wears a *linga* or male ear-ring, and in his left ear he wears a circular *yoni* or female ear-ring—the ear-rings suggesting that Lord Śiva finally overcomes the polarity of male and female and represents the androgynous Ultimate.

Each of Śiva's four arms and two legs represents a different activity :

His raised *upper right hand* holds a time-marking drum, the rhythm of which begins the dance.

His raised *upper left hand* holds a little piece of fire, signifying destruction.

His *lower right hand* is making a sacred hand gesture or *mudra* which means 'have no fear'.

The *lower left hand* is pointing both to his raised foot as well as to the little dwarf, Apasmāra.

His *raised left leg* is in poised immobility—a moment of disciplined quietness in the frenzy of the dance's activity, and his *right leg* is breaking the back of 'forgetfulness' or Apasmāra.

The entire image is encircled by what is called the *prabhāmaṇḍala* or the 'circle of fire' which represents the phenomenal, empirical world that is created as a result of the dance. Also, the 'circle of fire' signifies the sacred syllable *Om*, which encompasses all sound.

Finally, the entire image is set on a lotus-pedestal, the symbol of purified thought and truth in Indian art and culture.

In terms of the symbolic significance or meaning of the cosmic dance, the traditional texts tell us that the image represents fundamentally the five sacred activities or powers of God, and indeed the five sacred activities or powers of all of us :

the power to create or *śṛṣṭi* ;
 the power to preserve or *sthiti* ;
 the power to destroy or *saṁhāra* ;
 the power to veil or hide
 or *tirobhāva*,
 and the power to extend grace
 or help or *anugraha*.

The power to create is represented in the raised upper right hand which holds the time-marking drum. The beginning of all creation is an act of 'sounding' or 'resonance', according to Hindu thought, and hence is one of the reasons why the recitation or sounding of *mantras* is so important in Hindu spirituality.

3. See *Ibid.*

The power to destroy is represented in the raised upper left hand which holds the little piece of fire and is on the same level as the upper right hand. Śiva creates the world, but he also destroys the world, and these powers or activities are equally important when meditating on the nature of the Ultimate.

The power to preserve is represented in the lower right hand, which is making the sacred gesture of 'have no fear'.

The power to veil or hide is represented in the right foot breaking the back of the dwarf and bringing into being the circle of fire or this phenomenal world of ignorance and forgetfulness.

And finally, *the power to extend help or grace* is represented by the raised left leg together with the lower left hand pointing to it. The raised left leg and the lower left hand signify that portion of the dance which is unattached and free, a poised quietness in the midst of the dance's overall movement. Moreover, and most strikingly, this poised quietness that Śiva with his grace makes available, is represented in the face of Lord Śiva with its expression of total detachment and final lack of involvement in all of the activity.

Especially intriguing in Śiva's five powers or activities are the latter two of 'veiling' and 'revealing'. As he dances, he creates our world, and in the very act of creation he conceals himself. He becomes hidden. Yet also as he dances, the creation of the world becomes the very expression of himself, that is to say, his act of concealing himself is at one and the same time his act of revealing himself. So, too, it is, the Hindu tradition tells us, of all creative activity. The poet or artist with his creative capacity must express himself, must show his creativity; but in his very act of creative shaping, he must limit, hide or conceal himself. So there is an ongoing dialectic or polarity which shows itself

throughout all of creation—creative imagination showing itself in sensuous form, but a sensuous form which by definition is a hiding, a veiling, a concealing. And yet also in the very hiding or veiling is a suggestion of the sheer creativity which transcends all form and which is the presupposition of all form. So, too, in Śiva's cosmic dance—the rhythm, the movement, which brings into being our world of sensuous form presupposes the dispassionate face and the poised quietness which is the presupposition of our world.

The cosmic dance of Lord Śiva, then, re-enacts continually the paradox or dialectic of the aesthetic and the religious—sensible form showing itself as a manifestation of creative power and creative imagination, and in its very showing of itself, getting caught up in 'forgetfulness', in hiding, in concealing; and yet, in its very hiddenness, suggesting, pointing, yearning for that which is beyond all form, for that quiet tranquil face which embodies the unembodied and brings us to final peace.

Eros and Thanatos
or Life and Death;
Order and Chaos;
Movement and Rest;
Male and Female;
Sound and Silence;
Macrocosm and Microcosm;
Bondage and Release—

all of the polarities of our common life are acted out in Lord Śiva's cosmic dance, and his dance, finally, is our dance. As the Hindu poet puts it:

His form is everywhere:
all-pervading in His Śiva-Śakti;
Cidambaram is everywhere,
everywhere is His dance;
As Śiva is all and omnipresent;
Everywhere is Śiva's
gracious dance made manifest.
His fivefold dances
are temporal and timeless.
His fivefold dances
are His Five Activities.

By His grace

He performs the five acts,
This is the sacred dance
of female and male (Umā-Sahāya),
He dances with
Water, Fire, Wind and Ether,
Thus our Lord dances
ever in the court. . . .
Thus becoming He dances
in our body as the congregations !⁴

I conclude with the lines of another

⁴. *Dance*, p. 71.

Hindu poet who even more explicitly expresses that Śiva's cosmic dance is our own:

The dancing foot,
the sound of the tinkling bells,
The songs that are sung
and the varying steps,
The form assumed
by our Dancing Gurupara,
Find out these within yourself,
Then shall your fetters fall away.⁵

⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA¹

SISTER CHRISTINE

Chapter XIV

KANHERI

While he [Swami Vivekananda] was at Thousand Islands he made plans for the future, not only for his disciples in India and the work there, but also for those of his followers in America, who were hoping some time to go to Ind'ia. At that time we thought these plans only day-dreams. One

¹. Here are the last four hitherto unpublished chapters of Sister Christine's 'Memoirs'. Others have been published before in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of 1931 and 1945, which were from the edited version of the original manuscript recently published serially in the Bengali weekly *Amrita* (Calcutta : Amrita Publishers). In the 22nd April 1977 issue of the *Amrita* (pp. 45-46), the difference between the *Prabuddha Bharata* version and the original manuscript has been pointed out by a Bengali writer ; so it is necessary to clarify here that on scrutiny of the fair typescript of Christine's 'Memoirs' sent to us by Mrs. Boshi Sen of Almora, we found that the *Prabuddha Bharata* version is the version of *this typescript*, which might have been edited later on by Christine herself, and typed neatly. Therefore, *Prabuddha Bharata* need not be misunderstood.—Ed.

day he said, 'We shall have a beautiful place in India, on an island with the ocean on three sides. There will be small caves which will accommodate two each, and between each cave there will be a pool of water for bathing, and pipes carrying drinking water will run up to each one. There will be a great hall with carved pillars for the Assembly Hall, and a more elaborate Chaitya Hall for worship. Oh ! it will be luxury.' It seemed as if he were building castles in the air. None of us dreamed that this was something which could ever be realized.

Of all that group I was the one who was privileged to go to India, though it was not until several years later. After I had been in India two or three years, I found myself alone in Bombay with two or three days at my disposal. For some time, I had had a desire to visit Kānheri,² which I

². According to the latest records of the Maharashtra Government, Kanheri caves are forty-two kilometres from Bombay. These caves are one of the largest groups of Buddhist caves in Western India—more than one hundred in number. Earlier caves belong to the Hinayana phase of Buddhist

knew was not far from Bombay. I knew nothing of this place except that there were some caves there, one of them a Chaitya Hall, which Fergusson in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* has described as a bad imitation of the one at Karli. Surely there was nothing in this to attract one! I wondered at the intensity of my desire, the more so as there were other groups of caves within easy reach of Bombay, but which I had no special desire to see. I wondered at it.

No one seemed able to direct me. Those whom I asked had never heard of Kanheri. After a whole day of inquiry, some one said, 'I think, if you take the train tomorrow morning at seven and go to a place called Borivali, you will find some one who can tell you where Kanheri is.' This I did. I found that Borivali is only twenty-two miles from Bombay. I did not know any Hindustani at that time, but I remembered that the word for cave is *guhā*. There were three bullock-carts at the station, one of them in charge of a lad of seventeen or so, whose looks I liked. I went up to him and said, '*Guhā*'; he shook his head. I repeated, '*Guhā, guhā!*' He kept on shaking his head. Then a brilliant idea struck me and I said, 'Kanheri, Kanheri!' This time he nodded vigorously. Then I said, '*Kitnā* [How much]?' and he held up three fingers saying, '*Tin rupiyā* [Three rupees].' I was delighted and climbed into his cart.

The road led first through a field of stubble and from that into a forest. This forest grew denser and darker the farther

we penetrated into the interior. Behind trees, I could see the dark aboriginal people of the forest with bows and arrows peering at us. The road had become a mere cow-path and then even this track came to an end. Here my young bullock driver stopped. 'From here you must go on alone,' he startled me by saying. I don't know how, but it seemed that we were able to make ourselves understood. So I answered, 'But I can't go on alone I don't know the way. You must come with me.' He replied, 'I can't leave my bullocks.' I, being at that time ignorant of the fact that there were tigers in the forest which might devour his bullocks, suggested that he tie them to a tree and come with me. This he did after a little hesitation.

We went only a short distance and then came to a stream which at that season was almost dried up. On the other side was a small hill. Here we found carved stone steps leading to the top. And what a view there was from the crest of the hill! The ocean on three sides, a forest leading down to the water, carved seats on which to rest, sculptured halls of magnificent proportions. Here it all was—the island with the ocean on three sides, a great sculptured Assembly Hall, the Chaitya Hall built in imitation of the one at Karli, the small cells, containing two stone beds each, the pools of water between the cells, even the pipes to carry water! It was as if a dream had unexpectedly come true. The place was deserted, not even a caretaker. Coming upon this abandoned site, which answered in detail to the fairytale we had heard long before in America, I was profoundly affected. It was perhaps not strange then that I had a very vivid dream that night, in which it seemed that I was in the Durbar Hall with the great assembly of those who lived there in a time long past. I could see the gathering and the

architecture and are excavated in a huge circular rock. The caves were built during the second to ninth century A.D. Caves Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are noteworthy for their massive pillars, sculpture and stupas. Cave No. 3 is known as 'Chaitya Hall'. Cave No. 10 appears to be the Assembly Hall. The view of the Arabian Sea through Cave No. 56 is charming. Even to this day the caves are surrounded by a forest.

one who was instructing the assembled novitiates. I could even hear what was being said and recognized it as a teaching with which I was familiar, although it was different from the form to which I had been accustomed. The impression remained with me all through the next day and for many days to come. In fact, it proved to be indelible. But to my regret, I could not remember the words that were actually said.

I came back to Calcutta still full of this experience which had affected me so deeply. When I told Swami Sadananda the story of the finding of the deserted island with the 109 caves, and explained how Swamiji at Thousand Islands had described the place, he said, 'Yes, Swamiji in his wanderings in western India before he went to America, found these caves. The place stirred him deeply, for it seems that he had a memory of a previous life in which he lived there. At that time, the place was unknown and forgotten. He hoped that some day he might acquire it and make it one of the centres for the work which he was planning for the future. Later, in my wanderings in western India, I too found it, and now you! We have all lived there in the past!' In later years when he was in a position in which he might have acquired it, it was no longer available, for the government had taken it over. Now there is a caretaker at the place. A road has been built, the jungle cut down, and picnic parties may frequently be seen there.

Kanheri is on the island of Salsette, about twenty miles north of Bombay. It is in reality a part of the mainland, from which it is separated by a small stream. The ocean surrounds it on the other three sides. In the early years of the Christian era this island was inhabited by monastic members of the Buddhist Order. The great Chaitya Hall is said to have been dedicated

by the celebrated Buddhaghosa in the year A.D. 4.³ There is an inscription to this effect in the entrance. At that time it must have been one of the great Buddhist centres. Buddhaghosa left Kanheri for Ceylon, and from there went to Burma where he introduced Buddhism. He was the great preacher of that age, remarkable for his eloquence and his power as a missionary. His great work, which has come down to modern times, is the *Mahāmārga*—the Great Way.

Chapter XV

SWAMIJI IN DETROIT—1896

Vivekananda was to visit Detroit once more [in July 1900], but this time for only a short farewell visit.

When asked what preparation he made for speaking, he told us none—but neither did he go *unprepared*. He said that usually before a lecture he heard a voice saying it all. The next day he repeated what he had heard. He did not say whose voice he heard. Whatever it was, it came as the expression of some great spiritual power, greater than his own normal power, released by the intensity of his concentration. This may have been quite unconscious. No written words can convey the vitality, the power, the majesty that came with his spoken words. What might happen to one's ideas, values, personality, if this current of power were let loose upon them! It was great enough to move the world, let alone one little human personality, which was but as a straw upon its mighty current. It was force that could sweep everything

³. Buddhaghosa flourished in early fifth century A.D., and is famous for his *Visuddhimagga* ('Way to Purity'). He belonged originally to a place near Bodh Gaya, and later on travelled to various other places in India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Burma.

before it. Old ideas would change, the purposes and aims of life, its values would change, old tendencies would be directed into a new channel, the entire personality would be transmuted.

What was it which emanated from him which all felt and none could explain? Was it the *ojas* of which he so often spoke, that mysterious power which comes when the physical forces of the body are transmuted into spiritual power? When this happens, man has at his command a power so great that it can move the world. Every word that he utters is charged. One who possesses it may say only a few sentences, but they will be potent until the end of time, while the orator who lacks it may 'speak with the tongue of men and of angels', but it is as nothing, 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' This, according to Swami Vivekananda, explains why the few simple sayings of a humble carpenter are still a power in the world after two thousand years, while all that was said by the scholars and the learned of his time has been forgotten.

Something of this power is lost in the written word, as those know well who were fortunate enough to hear Vivekananda speak. The spiritual force generated at such times was so great that some in the audience were lifted above the normal state of consciousness, so that it was possible to remember only the beginning of a lecture. After a certain point, there seemed to be a blank. The normal mind was no longer functioning: a higher state of consciousness, beyond reason and memory, had taken its place. Long after, perhaps, it would be found that during that period when the mind seemed blank, a specially deep impression had been made.

So popular was he as a lecturer that no place could be found which was large enough to hold all who wished to come. The man who had in vain tried to find a

hall large enough to hold the audiences for the lectures during Vivekananda's second visit to Detroit said, 'He could fill a circus tent!' After giving this course of lectures, he was invited by his friend Rabbi Grossman to speak at the Temple Beth-El on the last Sunday of his stay in Detroit. An hour before the time appointed, the Temple was filled to its utmost capacity and it became necessary to close the doors. Hundreds were turned away. Others, refusing to be shut out, hammered on the doors and tried by every means to gain admittance. Just as the lecture was about to begin the clamour became so great that it seemed as if the mob would storm the place. But when he appeared on the platform a hush fell over the audience. I heard a foreign voice near me gasp, 'How beautiful he is!' And indeed never was beauty more ethereal. At this time the power was not so obvious. It had been transformed into a diviner radiance and a deeper compassion for the world which he was soon to leave. So India often pictures her gods—robes and turbans of concentrated sunlight, complexion of gold, a divine radiance lighting the face, an inner stillness as of a deep pool. He rose and poured forth majestic truths in a voice which completed a beautiful harmony of appearance, voice and message. Not a gesture was there to detract the mind from the intense concentration into which he had plunged his hearers.

Chapter XVI

THE GURU

In America he preached only Advaita. He seldom spoke of his Guru. Few suspected the tremendous influence upon his life of the simple Brahmin of Dakshineswar. Even to those who were most sympathetic, he approached the subject with shyness. But of the profundity of the relation there *could be no doubt*. Through

it, there came to us our first glimpses of the meaning of 'guru'. To this he added all that the scriptures have said, together with the tradition built up by the Holy Men of India throughout the ages. Passing through the crucible of his mind, his loyalty and devotion carried a most profound meaning. It did more than that. It created in us a similar feeling and attitude, and brought to birth a similar relation between us and our guru. It set a lofty standard.

How new these ideas were at that time ! The first great idea was that the guru must be a knower of Brahman. This is the most important qualification, for only the knower of Brahman has the power to transmit spirituality. The transmission of spirituality from guru to disciple was a startling and fascinating idea to the Protestant type of mind in the West. Spirituality can be transmitted ! This then, explains the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. This is why the Church of Rome still believes that the spiritual power of Peter has been transmitted from Pope to Pope. Be that as it may, today in India it is believed, nay, known with certainty, that the guru can transmit his spirituality to a disciple.

Again, 'each has an individual path which is known to the guru'; and his tendencies indicate whether he should take the path of devotion or worship, or of psychic control, or the path of knowledge of the Real, or of unselfish work. All paths lead to the goal, but one of these will present fewer obstacles to the aspirant. Having set the disciple on the path, the guru, like a loving mother, warns him of dangers, explains experiences that might otherwise alarm or dismay. He is the Guardian of the Threshold, not to forbid entrance, but to protect the neophyte against groundless fears. To him the disciple goes for courage. To him the disciple pours out his confidences and tells his experiences. He must

tell them to no one else. His *mantram*, his *ishtam*, his experiences, must be as Swamiji said, 'not secret, but sacred'. There must be the utmost devotion and unquestioning faith in the guru. 'Would you jump out of the window if I asked you to ?' he once asked. He wanted a few disciples who had that kind of devotion. He needed that quality for his work. Again and again he told the story of Guru Nanak [Govind Singh] who, putting his disciples to the supreme test, asked who would trust him even unto death. One came forward. He took him into his tent and in a few minutes the great leader came out, his sword dripping with blood. Again he put their faith in him to test, and again one went into the tent with him and did not come out again. This was repeated until five had gone into the tent not to return. Then he threw open the tent-flap, and they saw their companions unharmed in the tent, and with them a goat which the Guru had killed. Is it to be wondered at that with disciples whose devotion was unto death it was possible for Guru Nanak [Govind Singh] to accomplish the great work he did? For, as Swamiji so often said :

"The guru must be wonderful and the disciple must also be wonderful."⁴

'Worship your guru as God. He will take you to the other shore. Trust him through everything. "Though my guru should visit the tavern and still, my guru is holy Nityananda still."⁵—Have that kind of faith in him.'

4. Cf. 'आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा ।'
Katha Upanisad, I. ii. 7.

5. The Bengali verse runs thus :

'यद्यपि आमार गुरु शुडीबाड़ी जाय ।

तथापि आमार गुरु नित्यानन्द राय ॥

See Swami Saradananda, *Sri-Sri-Ramakrishna-Lilaprasanga*, (Bengali), 'Gurubhava—Purvardha', Calcutta : Udbodhan Office, B.S. 1360, pp. 128.

‘“Only those who go through the *Sushumna* (the path of the Yogis) reach the *Atman*.”’

‘They must go to a guru to learn.’

‘The guru is the vehicle by which the spiritual influence is brought to you.’

Great as he himself was, one never felt inferior in his presence. In some indefinable way he made all who came into contact with him feel great. Was this because he had trained himself to see only the best in others and to make nothing of their faults and weaknesses? It was probably even deeper than that. Realizing himself as the *Atman*, it was his constant effort to see that Divine Self in others. Little faults can drop away, but *That* remains and shines forth. He knew us better than we knew ourselves. How constantly he voiced the highest truth as: ‘The greatest sin is to think yourself weak. No one is greater; realize you are Brahman. Nothing has power except as you bestow it. We are beyond the sun, the stars, the universe.’

IMPRISONMENT IN FLESH

Up and down, up and down ceaselessly. ‘He [Swamiji] is restless, so restless,’ some would say. But it was not the restlessness of the man who does not know what is urging him on, what it is he wants. Only too well did he understand what was actuating him. He could have explained it lucidly, logically. A great free soul, conscious of the reality of his being, of his divinity, felt himself imprisoned in a cage of flesh. The bondage of the body was torture. The lion brought from the jungle, where he roamed at will, never forgets the glory of freedom. Restlessly he paces the short distance allowed by his bars. Here was a mighty free soul caged in flesh. The imprisoned glory struggled to escape. True, we are all caught in this bondage, but there is hardly a human being who knows it. We cling to our captivity. We would not give it up. Few

even understand that ‘shades of the prison house begin to close upon the growing Boy’.

But here before our eyes we saw one who was fully conscious, who realized the Great Freedom beyond, to whom the bondage was torture, who was ceaselessly struggling to break through. For us who witnessed this struggle, no words were necessary. Without any teaching whatever, our eyes were opened. ‘I am not the body, I am not the mind.’ ‘So that is what it means,’ we thought. ‘I am beyond the body with its disabilities, beyond the mind with its limitations, for I am That, I am That.’

* * *

In 1902, I saw him at Belur, a very different Vivekananda from the one whom I had known in America. Here I saw the lion in his natural surroundings. Here it was not necessary to wear the mask of conventions, nor to conform to man-made rules. He had a serenity here which was sometimes lacking in foreign countries. He was among his own. He could be himself and it was an even greater self than we had seen before. He was surrounded by young devotees and brother-disciples, those sons of Sri Ramakrishna, who were now gathered in after long years of wandering. Much of his work was finished. He had given his message in America, in England, and to a lesser degree in Germany and France. In India the roar of the lion was heard from Colombo to Almora. Through the devotion of his young English disciple Goodwin, his message was put into permanent form. He had acquired the plot of land on the Ganges of which he had dreamed in America, and built a shrine for the worship of Sri Ramakrishna and a monastery which was to shelter the children of Sri Ramakrishna—his fellow disciples. He had organized teaching centres, educational institutions, orphanages, famine and flood relief. He was only thirty-nine, and he

knew that his release was near. It came July 4, 1902.

Chapter XVII

He shared the Hindu belief in the saying of the *Gita* that, 'Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, then do I manifest Myself. For the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil and for the preservation of righteousness, I am born anew in every age.' (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IV, 7-8).

Whenever spirituality is at a low ebb and the need of the world is great, God comes in human form. With the advent of the Avatar a great spiritual force comes into the world, a force which protects the good, destroys evil, preserves the Dharma, revivifies religion, draws thousands into the current of living spirituality, and brings new life. This influence is felt not only on the spiritual plane but on the intellectual and physical planes as well. In the realm of intellect, it expresses itself as a revival of art, literature and music, of learning in every field. Men of genius appear and become famous in these realms. There is new life. In the physical world the power is not so intense, but more widespread and apparent. It manifests itself in a greater prosperity, in a renewed love of freedom, and in a more virile national consciousness. The nation enters upon a Renaissance. This power according to Swami Vivekananda continues in force for nearly six hundred years, gradually expending itself until the world again sinks into a state in which its only hope is another manifestation of God—another Avatar. While these are not all of equal rank, each brings an influx of spiritual power, revivifies life on all planes and moves the world. A few instances may illustrate this theory.

Before the coming of the Buddha, India had sunk into a state of materialism. All privileges were usurped by the Brahmins, who decreed that hot oil should be poured

into the ear of the Sudras who so much as heard the secret teaching. The time was ripe for the advent of a new manifestation of God, an Avatar—and the Buddha was born. He came, the Compassionate One, who withheld nothing. 'I have never had the closed fist,' he said. 'All that I know I have taught.' The highest teaching was given equally to the Brahmin and the outcaste, to the holy man and to the thief. All were equal in his sight, as they are in the sight of God. With him came a new influx of spirituality, a mighty force into which thousands upon thousands were caught. Its highest and greatest manifestation was in the realm of religion. There a great revival took place. Great numbers of all ranks gave up the world for the life of renunciation. Princes and barbers, masters and servants, alike entered upon the path. Once having renounced, all were equal. The prince bowed at the feet of his former barber, if it should be that the barber had been initiated first.

This incident is narrated in the Pāli Canon: A number of the most powerful of the Sakya princes had decided to become monks of the Sangha of the Buddha. They were attended by their barber, who was to return to their homes the garments and jewels they had laid aside. As they went on, the barber too felt the impulse to join them in the new life. The princes encouraged him in this resolve, but asked him to go before them and receive initiation first, so that they would be obliged to do reverence to him. Caste restrictions and special privileges were put aside and only he was great, who was great in the 'Kingdom of God'.

The revival was felt on all planes of life, even politically, until under Ashoka, the first Buddhist Emperor, India was a great, united, prosperous empire. But after two or three hundred years the decline began, until at the time of Sankaracharya in the eighth century, Buddhism had reached such

a state of degradation that it had to be destroyed.

Six hundred years after Buddha came Jesus of Nazareth. The Roman was master in the land of his birth. Oppression was rife. So desperate was the situation that all classes of people were expecting the coming of the Messiah to deliver them. But does the Avatar ever come in the guise acceptable to the worldly-minded? This son of a carpenter of Nazareth was 'despised and rejected of men'. Only a few of the humblest followed him. But he was a mighty one, the son of God in very truth, destined to shake the world to its very foundations; for not long after his death, as time is reckoned in the history of nations, came the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, followed by the adoption of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine as the state religion.

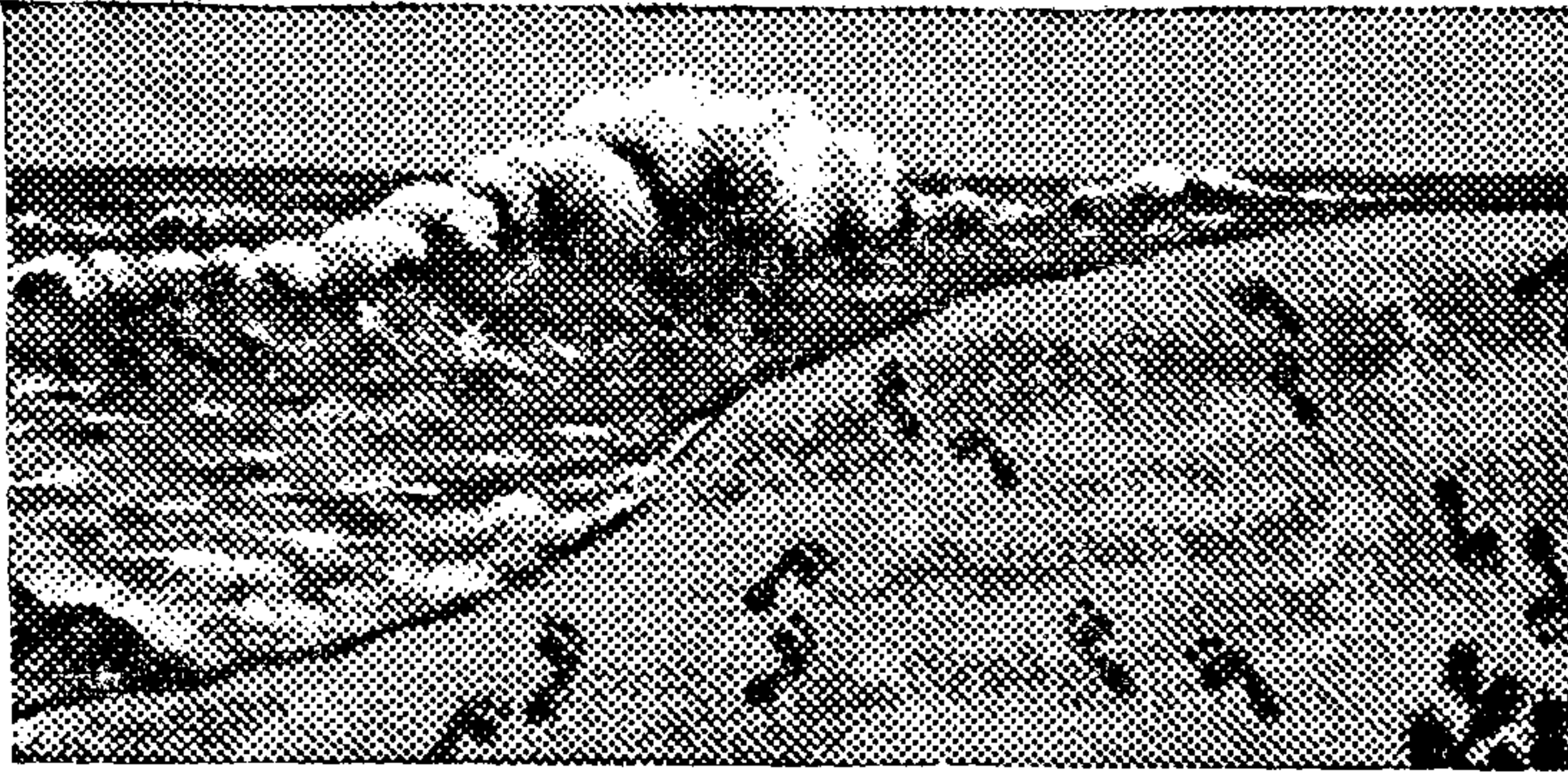
Again, six hundred years later in Arabia came the Prophet Mohammed who lifted his country out of the darkness and degradation into which it had fallen. With him began the rise of the Moslem power which was eventually to sweep over western Asia, northern Africa, and even into southern Europe, as also into India.

Sankaracharya in southern India was another great light who came 'for the protection of the good and destruction of the evil and for the preservation of righteousness.' By this time, about A.D. 800, Buddhism had become degraded. Many evil customs had been added by the depressed races who had adopted it. It was fit only for destruction. He brought back to India the pure lofty teaching of the Atman. Buddhism was driven out of India, the ancient wisdom re-established, and the country entered upon a new chapter in its life.

The thirteenth century in Europe was the great creative period following the 'Dark Ages'. Then came St. Francis of Assisi, 'the troubadour of God'. A wave of spirituality

swept the country, thousands embraced 'Sister Poverty'. In the wake of this power came, first Dante [1265-1321] and Giotto [1266-1336], then later Savonarola [1452-1498] and Michelangelo [1475-1564], Benevenuto Cellini [1500-1571], Bernini [1598-1680] and other great names. The Renaissance had come.

We come now to the twentieth century—with the greatest war in the history of the world waging, brother fighting against brother, millions of the earth's finest and best wiped out, nation against nation in Europe, the East against the West in a death struggle, famine, pestilence, the downfall of religion, materialism rampant, Western civilization in danger of extinction. If ever there was need of an Avatar, it is at this time. Will the need be met in this time of direst need? What are the signs of the times? During the nineteenth century several stars of greater or lesser magnitude appeared in various parts of the world, all of whom did their part, great or small, to save the world from the cataclysm which seems about to overtake it. Each has brought new spiritual light and power. Among the greatest of these are the Bab and Bahauallah, in Persia, and Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in India. Which is the Avatar of this age? We are perhaps too close to these luminaries to know which is the greatest. The Baha'ist will say it is the Bab and Bahauallah, while the followers of Ramakrishna will claim with equal certainty that it is Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Are there signs by which we can tell? Which has given the message most needed at the present time? It must be a message not for any particular nation but for the world. Which has ushered in a new spiritual era, has brought a light which will never be extinguished, has let loose a power which will make a new heaven and a new earth? The future alone can tell.



HUMAN TRENDS

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND THE PROBLEMS OF OUR WORKING CLASS¹—I

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

1. *Human Development : A Long-neglected Subject in India*

What we are engaged in during this modern period of Indian History is—and I put it in one simple phrase—*human development in India*. And human development in India means human development of a seventh of the human race. For, every seventh person in the world is an Indian. This great problem of human development, we should not fail to note, has been taken up by us, consciously, deliberately, and as a matter of national policy, for the first time in our long history, only in this modern period; and behind this national endeavour of ours lies a tremendous urgency; because, for the past several centuries, due to pressure of historical circumstances, we had completely neglected human development in India, including awareness of the very problem itself. That is why, we have inherited a society so riven with diverse hierarchies where millions at the bottom feel only the crushing weight of

the social pyramid, but none of its blessings, and which has brought them to near-animal levels of life.

The very concept of man developing in a human way, achieving human dignity and human worth—this great idea did not agitate our minds for centuries together, except in one limited field, namely, the field of religion. We produced a few great saints, who lived up to and preached this great vision and ideal, and whose influence helped in the uplift of the common people so far as their inner life, their cultural and spiritual life, was concerned: this helped to raise their cultural level and to humanize them, and to produce a few lovable saints from among the common people themselves. They came from the labouring classes, both Hindu and Muslim, including the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The Vedantic clarion call of the spiritual nature of man, irrespective of caste and creed and sex, helped in the achievement of the religious development of man in a wide measure, even in the most unpropitious feudal context of human suppression in all other fields—economic, social and intellectual. That past achievement is a precious

¹. Based on the extempore speech delivered by the Swami at the Business Meeting of the Labour Forum, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, on 26 March 1977.

asset for our nation today, when it is facing the challenge of all-round human development in the more propitious democratic context of the modern age. *I wish to stress this point, and I wish you all to take note of this truth, that the common people of India, the labouring classes, have inherited an invaluable wealth from their past religious life, namely, their culture, their humanity.*

2. *The Indian Working Class : Its Unique Assets*

All of us must take note of this most important fact of the human situation in modern India : that our working-class people are poor only in their pockets and in their intellect, but not in their hearts. They are exceptionally human and cultured ; they have an invaluable richness of inner quality ; the human virtues of hospitality, peacefulness and unselfishness are very much present in them, along with deep faith in spiritual values. When you compare them with the common people of several other countries, you will appreciate better this unique quality of the Indian peasant and working-class. If you go to their houses, if they have only one bread, they will gladly share half of it with you. In spite of poverty, they are also not inclined to drunkenness and crime. These are great human qualities which they have developed through that centuries-long humanizing process of religion—through the *bhakti* and *bhajan* initiated by hundreds of our saints ; and it has achieved profound social results for India in the unique fact, recognized by not only our outstanding national leaders, but also by several observers coming from foreign countries, that *poverty and crime do not go together in India*. It is for us to recognize this truth and its immense national value, and make it the solid foundation for all our human development policies and programmes.

It was Swami Vivekananda who first

pointed out this truth towards the end of the last century that poverty is not a crime in India, that the poor people of India are not necessarily, potentially or actually, criminal people, as they often are in other parts of the world, where to be poor is to be prone to drunkenness and criminality. That is not so in India. Now this may be our certificate to ourselves ; but I am going to tell you that it is not so. Foreign observers of the Indian scene have also made this very remark. I shall only refer to one such, the famous American economist and previous U.S. Ambassador to India, Professor Galbraith. During his discussions with our Planning Commission, he made this remark as reported by Sri Sriman Narayan in his Book *Gandhi: The Man and His Thought* (pp. 39-40) :

In India, I have always found some kind of a lustre in the eyes of the poor peasantry. . . . I have seen in the faces of the poor people in Indian villages a spirit of self-reliance and moral fortitude which, in a sense, enriches their poverty.

Much earlier, in February 1897, when the problems of our working class were not even thought of in our country, Swami Vivekananda had said, in reply to a question by the correspondent of the *Hindu* of Madras in the course of his long interview with the Swami on his return from his triumphant tour of the West :

What are your views with regard to the Indian masses?

Oh, we are awfully poor, and our masses are very ignorant about secular things. Our masses are very good because poverty here is not a crime. Our masses are not violent. Many times I was near being mobbed in America and England, only on account of my dress. But I never heard of such a thing in India as a man being mobbed because of peculiar dress. In every other respect, our masses are much more civilized than the European masses.

What will you propose for the improvement of our masses?

We have to give them secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality.²

Again, during an interview with the correspondent of the *Madras Times*, the same month, the Swami had said (*Ibid.*, p. 223) :

The great thing is to have faith in oneself, even before faith in God ; but the difficulty seems to be that we are losing faith in ourselves day by day. That is my objection against the reformers. The orthodox have more faith and more strength in themselves, in spite of their crudeness ; but the reformers simply play into the hands of Europeans and pander to their vanity.

Our masses are gods as compared with those of other countries. This is the only country where poverty is not a crime. They are mentally and physically handsome.

3. *Elevation of the Masses without Injuring Their Religion*

Now, today we have this type of cultured refined humanity among our poor to deal with. How to help these people? What line of development do they need? So far as their religious development is concerned, we have nothing more to give them except help to strengthen the physical and mental bases of the same through the removal of their poverty and illiteracy. That means giving them modern secular education with a view to strengthening their inborn culture of soul, taking all care that such education does not destroy their long and hard-earned humanness, does not turn them into literate animals. Their inborn culture of soul, with its virtues of hospitality, peaceableness, sobriety and religious faith are

qualities revealing an inner human enrichment, for which the modern world is hungry, and which the modern Western nations are in despair of ever attaining for their own peoples. Hence, Swami Vivekananda exhorted our people in one of his letters from the West to his disciples in Madras in 1894 (*Complete Works*, V, 1973, p. 29) :

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you—'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion'.

So, when we discuss, in association with each other, this problem of human development in India and the problem of our working class, we are confronted with this great question of what is the type of development our working-classes in India need? Obviously, the very first challenge that stares us in the face relates to the economic development of our more than three hundred million people living below the poverty line. When we deal with India, the first and recurring question that crops up is the economic emancipation of these people—the emancipation from a set of social situations where exploitation of man by man has been and still is the central problem. When we study India during the last few centuries, we are amazed to find that our society has perfected not only the usual type of exploitation that is found in other countries, namely, the economic, but also many other types as well. Our caste system

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama (hereafter *Complete Works*), V, 1973, p. 213.

developed into and functioned as an evil centre of exploitation. Similarly, our feudal social structure has been the context of a very intense form of exploitation for ages. We have also indulged in intellectual exploitation of the ignorant common people, and exploitation of women by men and, also, alas, of women by other women!

This is the dark side of our past heritage; and we have to face it today, treating it as a challenge to our national wisdom. And the strength to face and overcome this challenge successfully is available to us from the vision of human dignity and worth upheld in our ancient spiritual insights and in the modern Western humanism, and in the modern Western scientific discoveries. The only objective of all our national developmental programmes is to install man in the Indian context to his inborn right to dignity and honour. This work is going to take us decades to accomplish fully, because the numbers involved are vast and the innate resistances are formidable.

Human dignity has been violated again and again for centuries together in India. In such a context, human development cannot be viewed only in economic terms; the economic approach has to become part of the wider approach of an all-round human development through education widely conceived. Human dignity is achieved by man through mental and spiritual and intellectual awakening and economic strength. When these three values are achieved by a person, he or she automatically becomes dignified; and millions of our people have been deprived of all opportunities to achieve the last two of these values; through this deprivation, they remained at the bottom and were kept down there by the ratio of social forces, feudal and ossified. Because of their illiteracy, ignorance and poverty, they themselves do not know what these forces are that are keeping them down and exploiting them all the time.

4. *Human Development through Secular Education*

Therefore, the first step that we have to take in the field of human development and to effect a revolutionary change in the ratio of these social forces, particularly with reference to our working classes, is the spread of education, *I mean secular education*, which is a powerful factor in raising the status of a human individual. He or she must know the world in which he or she lives, the natural, the social and the political forces acting upon him or her, so that he or she may become awake to the environment in which he or she is living and functioning and capable of suitably changing it. The purpose of secular education is to enable a human being to acquire the capacity to have a grip on the world around, and not to be swept away by its forces. A child in the village is ignorant, weak, helpless, without any hold on his life and destiny. As soon as he goes to a primary school, within a few days something happens to him; he awakes to a consciousness of his own individual worth and dignity, that he is a man among men; he is able to understand that world and, through that understanding, to get a grip, maybe to a small degree, on that world and on himself. We can see this awakening coming to millions of our working classes today in our rural and urban areas; even a little education—secular education—bringing them a sense of human worth, human dignity, a sense of *individuality*.

From the point of view of our Vedanta philosophy, as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, the modern effort to restore individuality to the common people of India is the most tremendous educational work that we have ever undertaken during our long history. And in the light of the same Vedanta, it is also a profound work relating to the necessary initial stages of mass spiritual awakening. Because, ours

is a society where the individual has been submerged in society, submerged in the caste, submerged in the collectivity. *You are an individual with an individual identity and an individual destiny*—this is the silent spiritual message of all secular education to man. In that secular education, we are not only acquiring the three elementary items of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also a little bit of science, a little bit of health and hygiene education, something of social science—in short, some knowledge of the natural and social world in which man lives, including some knowledge of his own body. When this knowledge comes to a human being, two things happen to him or her : he or she *understands his or her own worth and dignity*, which is the first step on the ladder leading to human freedom, and he or she also *gets a grip on the world around him or her* to that extent. Even the elementary education in a primary school that a child gets has a great part to play in rousing man's sense of individual worth and dignity. But education at least up to the eighth standard is necessary in a democracy so as to help a child to acquire this value to a satisfactory extent.

Any education for a whole people to levels higher than that is worthy to be aimed at and achieved. Countries like United States are giving education to almost all their citizens up to the higher secondary standard. That is all the better. By such higher levels of education, we increase the mental resources of the community. As we increase the physical resources by our technology, what we need much more is this increasing of the mental resources of our nation. That resource is available to our country today only from about ten per cent of our population. Even then it is a tremendous resource, compared to hardly five per cent in the previous centuries. We can visualize the

time, within the next 100 years, when this number will go up steadily and cover the whole population, and when we shall have, even after implementing our family limitation measures, between eight hundred million and a thousand million of our population, not as now, but well educated in the secular sense of the term. The energy of mental resources that would then be available to the nation would be simply stupendous.

5. *Human Development through Political Education*

That is the first great blessing coming from human development through secular education. Along with that, there is a new type of human development that we are having in modern India, namely, the rousing of the political consciousness of our people. *We will miss to grasp the uniqueness of modern India, if we fail to take note of this arresting fact.* For throughout the millennia of our long history, our people had no political education, and, consequently, no political awareness, no political individuality. We were all passive *subjects* of some king or emperor or military dictator, not only our working classes, but almost all our people except those of the military classes. But today, for the first time, in this modern period, we have established a democratic republican political state which derives its strength and sanction not from a king, not from an emperor, not from a foreign potentate, as in the past, *but from the people of India*—millions and millions of our people living in diverse regions and at diverse levels of culture and economic development. This is a new significant factor in our national situation—the emergence of man, especially the common man, as a politically significant individual, as a political value, the emergence of man as citizen from man as mere *subject*, or as *prajā*, as expressed in Sanskrit and our other languages. *Prajā* literally means offspring, such as a boy or girl, one

dependent on the parents; and, in the political field, man dependent on the state. All *prajās* are children, politically speaking. But as soon as man becomes a citizen, he sheds his *prajā* stature, his stature of being a protected 'child', and becomes a mature individual, a free responsible individual.

That is the stature of man in modern democratic India; it is, however, more a goal than an achievement, so far as our country is concerned; but, during the last thirty years, we have taken a few significant steps towards that goal. Every forward step in that direction will introduce this second element of strength into our nation, namely, the awakened political sense of millions and millions of the nation's citizens. During the last twenty-seven years, ever since we proclaimed our country as a republic by adoption of our new constitution in 1950, we have been registering this human development through the political education of our common people. Our various elections, Union and State, have contributed to this political education of our people at large; our democratic state is endeavouring to educate our people into the precious value of the freedom of the individual citizen which we never had during the 5000 years of our long history. Even during the recent general elections to the *Lok Sabhā*, we have witnessed the emergence of a measure of political maturity in our common people. What does it all amount to? It amounts to freedom becoming a political fact; it proclaims the realization by the common people of India that they are no more, as mere *prajās*, or subjects, *victims* of political forces and circumstances, but are slowly and steadily emerging as *creators and makers* of their own and their nation's political destiny.

6. *The March of Freedom*

Man as citizen becoming the maker of his political destiny is the meaning and

significance of political democracy. This is what our nation is trying to do today. The various labour laws passed by our Union and State legislatures are designed to protect and improve also the economic status of our working people. But we have to confess that in this field we have done very little yet; even in the field of secular education we have done very little yet. Our democratic state is taking steps, halting though, to transform our political democracy into economic and social democracy; the irritating slowness on this road is due to the drag of our long feudal heritage, on the one hand, and the exigencies of our free parliamentary democratic processes, on the other, where freedom often tends to resist social change and assist the status quo. But we can have the satisfaction that our nation has taken the first significant steps on that long road of human development involving a seventh of the human race, through efforts, endeavours and processes—educational, political and socio-economic—to elevate the common man in India to the status and dignity as a man among men, not as an item among items. That is the revolutionary change that is taking place in our country in this modern period. A feudal India is getting steadily transformed into a democratic India.

It is unfortunately, as I said earlier, a slow process, a halting process, a painful process, but it is still a forward process. *Only if our intelligentsia today can really capture this meaning and significance of the modern period of Indian history, namely, straightening of the back of the common man and helping him to experience the human dignity that is his inborn right, will they get the vision and the energy to accelerate this forward motion and to welcome every opportunity to contribute to its early realization.* Our common people have been too long ground down; they have been too long suppressed from every

point of view. The sense of fear, the lack of confidence in oneself, the lack of energy, the lack of that spirit of hope which means the joyous beckoning of the future—these have been their hallmark for some centuries. All these are the relics of the past ages of oppression and exploitation and general neglect. We have to reckon with these liabilities of our past, when we deal with our human situation today. The political freedom that we achieved in 1947 should not remain at the political level; it will then stagnate and destroy itself. *Political freedom is best when it marches on to conquer the heights of economic, social, cultural and spiritual freedoms.* Swami Vivekananda presented freedom as the central message of our Upaniṣads. In his lecture on 'Vedanta and Its Application to Indian Life', delivered in Madras in 1897, he says (*Complete Works*, III, 1973, p. 238):

And the Upaniṣads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energized through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom—physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual freedom—are the watchwords of the Upaniṣads.

7. Nation-building through Man-making

About twenty-five years ago, we started a community development programme in our country in a big way; I had been associated with it unofficially from the very beginning; even in its eventual failure, it has registered significant results; and anyone can realize the difference now in our social situation from what it was then. Our urban and rural masses were timid, helpless, weak and suspicious, without any consciousness of their own strength. They were just items to be handled by people, either from the government or from the urban groups, or by the exploiting group in the

villages themselves. From that low condition, there have been significant changes for the better during these twenty-five years. During this period, there has also been much progress in our labour movement organizing millions of our working people, though more in the urban and less in the rural areas. We have not yet organized, except perhaps in Kerala, the millions of our working people in the rural areas; but some work in that direction is being done today, including legislation to protect their economic and social rights and interests.

Through all these, we are witnessing a tremendous transformation in the human situation in our country, by which human beings, who were only fractional some decades ago, are slowly becoming integral, and becoming fuller human beings. This is human education; it has to be vigorously pursued from every avenue of approach, apart from, and in addition to, that of formal schooling. The most unsatisfactory situation prevails in this field of formal schooling; even after thirty years of independence, the blessing of universal primary education remains still far away from millions of our people. I have noticed that wherever education is widespread, some tremendous and far-reaching changes have come in the society concerned. I have seen, for example, in a state like Kerala, a high level of political consciousness, of the understanding of the social processes, of response to progressive ideas, only because of the high percentage of education among the common people there. This is true also of other parts of the world. We have to achieve this for the whole of our nation. Secular education, when it is spread far and wide in India, will lead to the emergence of an awakened community, full of energy, vitality, self-confidence and a conscious grip on the social processes. They will cease to be, as I said earlier, *creatures* of the natural and social environments but become its

creators, not victims of history but its makers. That is called human maturity; it discloses the capacity to make one's own judgements and to face the consequences of those judgements; to have convictions and the courage to hold on to them. If one depends every time on somebody else's judgement, he or she is just a child. It is to help man to outgrow this human childhood and make him or her stand on his or her own feet that forms the goal of the secular educational process. This is what Swami Vivekananda termed *nation-building through man-making*.

In India, now, these two processes are going on side by side; but their pace needs to be accelerated. Our working classes need to be provided with every opportunity for education, institutional and non-institutional, and they must be motivated towards acquiring it. That motivation to education comes only by impressing on their minds the vision of total human development, which is more important than, and which also is the end of, and even the means to, economic and social advancement.

8. *Human Development : the Importance of Non-economic Factors*

I have to emphasize, this point that, till now, most of the labour movement in India has been concerned only with the economic aspect of human relations in industry and business—how to increase the purchasing power of the working classes, how to secure for them more salary, more wages. Certainly this is a very important thing to do; but *unless it is treated only as a part, and not as the whole, of the philosophy and programme of human development, and unless the importance of non-economic factors are recognized and given their due place, it will defeat its own purpose.* In our national development, let us begin to ask this question and try to find the answer: can human development be ensured only by

money and more money? If a worker, till now earning one hundred rupees a month, earns three hundred rupees from now, is he or she automatically a better human being?

We have rarely asked this question. This question must be asked by us from now on in the context of the profound need of achieving, so far as man is concerned, along with economic strength, cultural strength as well. That alone can bring *quality* to human life. Quantity can be had by adding money. One may have plenty of money in his or her pocket; but how does one use that money? How can one make financial resources, small or big, achieve human development and fulfilment? That cannot be unless the cultural level of the person is also raised. While at Karachi during the Second-World-War years, I have personally seen the difference that the presence or absence of the cultural factor can make to the quality or otherwise in a man's life. I witnessed a qualitative richness in the life of our Ramakrishna Mission tribal school teacher getting less salary side by side with the dismal life of the tribal people around him getting almost double his salary! We have not so far considered this point in our country, in the modern period, with respect to our working class. I wish to stress this point, because I have observed the lack of appreciation of this particularly after independence—the constant and sole emphasis on the monetary side and the economic aspect, and the neglect of the other more significant aspects of human development. Wage and salary increase is only one of the items of human development, call it the primary one in a country of mass poverty such as ours, but not the sole item.

In his recent book *Gandhi's Social Philosophy*, Professor B. N. Ganguly quotes two citations from *Letters on Historical Materialism* by the great Marxist thinker

Frederick Engels, which are relevant in this connection (p. 334) :

Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people *sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it*. We had to emphasize the main principle *vis-a-vis* our adversaries, who denied it; we had not always the time, the place, or the opportunity to give their due to the *other elements involved in the interaction*. (Letter dated September 21-22, 1890).

While emphasizing the fundamental process of interaction between the base and the superstructure, Engels says [continues Ganguli (*Ibid.*)]

'Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. *But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis*. It is not that the economic situation is *cause, solely active*, while everything else is only passive effect. There is rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity which ultimately asserts itself. . . . *Men make their history themselves, only they do so in a given environment which conditions it*,' (Letter dated January 25, 1894). [italics by Ganguli]

In this connection, I wish to mention that when I go round our country and address gatherings in our public-sector undertakings and discuss working-class problems with their managers and other concerned people, I find that we have labour today earning anything from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1000 a month. But if you ask this question whether, correspondingly, the cultural life of that particular labourer, or his group in general, has improved, you get largely only a sorry answer; more money is coming into the pockets of the workers; but much of that money is wasted. There is no corresponding increase in their quality of life: cleaner home, better hygiene—personal and environmental—, better care of children, better standards of nutrition, happier human relations within the family, finer

cultural pursuits, and more investment of money in the mental sphere of life.

In the sphere of environmental hygiene, our classes as much as our masses, our educated as much as our illiterate citizens, stand in need of urgent upgrading; stand in need of being taught that *using public roads, railway tracks, and open maidans as public toilets is uncivilized as much as unhygienic*.

These things do not come automatically merely by raising the salary or wages of the individual worker. That is where there is urgent need for our trade-union movement to orient itself and its activities to this philosophy of total human development and make special efforts to bring about the cultural enrichment of our working people, in addition to their economic advancement. By collective bargaining, the working class can certainly gain more of wages and salaries; that is beautiful; that is the first objective of a trade union or any other working-class group. But it should be treated as a prelude to the other aspects of human development, which we have largely neglected for decades together. Among these aspects, the most important is the raising of the human cultural level, which alone results in the qualitative enrichment of human life.

In that context, we have to remember what I said earlier, that there is a wonderful cultural legacy available to us from our religious past which has touched and brightened the life of even the commonest people of our country; that touch has raised the *quality* of their life even in the context of their poverty, making them inwardly rich even though their pockets were very empty. *Can we retain the uplifting and enriching touch of that old legacy in the modern period? And can we add to it something of the new values of the modern age?* This is the problem of human development in modern India; and this problem

needs to be seriously considered by our people today.

We may have our people holding diverse religious beliefs or political ideologies; we may have among our people those who do not choose to belong to any religion; there may be some among us who may not like the very word religion. But there will be none who will not respond to the philosophy and programme of total human development, of qualitative enrichment. It cuts across all political, religious and social party divisions. When I discussed with intellectuals in Soviet Russia or Czechoslovakia this subject of human development as raising the quality of human life, and not merely raising the salary and wage levels of workers, they readily appreciated this idea, even while being allergic to the word religion. When we speak of religion, we may have the idea of a bundle of superstitions; we may have the notion of some kind of magic and miracle and mystery; or we may associate it with the evils of a caste-ridden

society. All these have been associated with religion by some group or the other. But today, thanks to Swami Vivekananda and his message of Vedanta, we have the opportunity to understand religion as the science of human development, as the grand science of the inner nature of man, as the science of human possibilities, bereft of all these cheap and weakening elements, and recognize its unique contribution to the qualitative enrichment of human life.

One fact about our society has struck me and it will strike anyone who studies it; and it is that ours is the only country where, due to the influence of our past cultural legacy, nearly 80% of the people do not drink, do not feel the need for the stimulus from intoxicating beverages; whereas, in all other countries, it is a universal phenomenon, here it is a peripheral social phenomenon, with no prestige attached to it.

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A God-Loving and God-Beloved Mind (Editorial): Although the faculty of love is inherent in every living being, only human beings can have a God-loving mind. It is, however, not very easy to have. According to *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*: 'One attains pure devotion at the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, after one's heart becomes purged of all the impurities by performing spiritual practices for thousands of births.' It is true, it takes time to have a firm conviction about the vanity of this world, and glory of the Divine life, and thus to have a God-loving mind; but it is surely beneficial for human beings to strive for it. In this Editorial an attempt has been made to keep before the

readers a graphic picture of a God-loving and God-beloved mind.

The Great Lie—I: The late Swami Ashokananda, Ex-Minister in charge of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, U.S.A., was well known for his writings and as a speaker. 'The Great Lie' is one of his lectures, delivered on June 13, 1954, at the Vedanta Society's Old Temple. The word 'lie' has various meanings according to the dictionary, and one of its meanings is 'a false belief'. According to Vedanta, a belief in the manifold appearance of this world is 'a great lie', and all our suffering is due to this false belief. The truth is:

'*Brahma satyam jaganmithyā ; neha nānāsti kiñcana*—Brahman alone is real, the world is false ; there is no multiplicity anywhere.' The Swami has very lucidly treated this subject in the lecture. We hope it will be interesting and illuminating to our readers.

The Ways of Physicists and Mystics : The author of this short but thought-provoking writing is Dr. Fritjof Capra, Ph.D., of the *Tao of Physics* fame. He is at present a theoretical physicist at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory of the University of California, U.S.A. This article is based on his famous book the *Tao of Physics* which explores the parallels between modern physics and Eastern mysticism. In this write-up the author says : 'I see science and mysticism as two complementary manifestations of the human mind ; of its rational and intuitive faculties. The modern physicist experiences the world through an extreme specialization of the rational mind ; the mystic through an extreme specialization of the intuitive mind. The two approaches are entirely different, . . . but both of them are necessary, supplementing one another for a fuller understanding of the world. Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science ; but man needs both.' We hope our readers will find his thoughts revolutionary but illuminating.

The Art of Vedantic Writing in the West : Swami Vivekananda wrote on February, 17, 1896, to his Madras disciple : 'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds—is a task which only those can understand who have attempted it.' And Swami Nityabodhananda, the monk in charge of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland, is one who has 'attempted' the task in the West. From his own experience, the

Swami is writing on this subject, which may serve as guide-line to those who are preaching Vedanta in the West. He is of the opinion : 'The writer or speaker should be artless, spontaneous ; must renounce skill and be nearer to nature than to culture. . . . One should practise the *artless art of aloofness*. . . . A Western Christian desires to know and learn Vedanta as such, and not Vedanta Christianized.' We hope the thoughtful words of the Swami will prove beneficial to those who are making such an attempt.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin : In this learned article, Dr. Beatrice Bruteau—who was a Founder and Co-ordinator of the Teilhard Research Institute at Fordham University, and presently is the Director of the Philosopher's Exchange of Winston-Salem, N.C. (U.S.A.)—has very lucidly narrated in brief the life and philosophy of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard's revolutionary philosophy of Humanism, received recognition of the thinking world, especially after his death, thanks to Jeanne Mortier who served him lovingly in his later life, and brought his literature to light after his death. Teilhard had to undergo banishment and persecutions all his life for his new way of thinking, namely, 'reconciling science and religion'. Dr. Bruteau writes : 'The world needs his kind of vision, Teilhard felt, and even the divine enterprise needed it. Everywhere he saw people groping to find a new synthesis of ideas and values, a new level of community, and a deeper experience of the Absolute.' We hope, readers will find this writing interesting.

The Parliament of Religions—1893 : Some New Findings—I : Swami Vivekananda's name is closely associated with the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago (U.S.A.) in 1893, in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition. Swamiji's

speeches delivered on the occasion, and the numerous reports about him which appeared in the American and Indian newspapers, have been already published in his biographies and *Complete Works*. Besides these, in the fifties, due to the untiring efforts of Marie Louise Burke (alias Gargi), many new facts about the Swami's life in America came to light through her memorable work *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*. Somehow or other, the Chicago newspapers of those days, which contained a huge treasure of information regarding the Swami and the Parliament, never saw the light of day again. However, the monastic and lay members of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago, like Mr. Jacob Fisher, Swami Yogeshananda, Brahmachari Ganesh and others, dived deep in the sea of dusty yellow leaves, and collected many valuable pearls therefrom. These along with many other archives were later sent to the Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, for publication, by Swami Bhashyananda, the Minister in charge of the Chicago Vedanta Society. We take this opportunity to place them before the readers through this article. We are very much thankful to all those who have done so much labour of love. The newspaper reports have been reproduced as they were, keeping the American spellings, and the wrongly spelled names, in tact. The excerpts of Swamiji's speeches quoted in the article are mainly from Rev. Dr. J. H. Barrows' *The World's Parliament of Religions*. We hope the readers will find this article interesting.

As I Knew Her : Mrs. Gertrude Emerson Sen of Almora had the rare privilege of meeting and staying for some time in the summer of 1927, with Sister Christine at Almora. She also met her later in America, and was present at her funeral. In this short but lucid narrative she has beautifully penned her reminiscences of Sister

Christine, and has freely expressed her views therein. This part of Sister Christine's life was hitherto unknown, and we are thankful to the author for preparing this write-up at our request, in spite of her age and for supplying us some rare photographs of Sister Christine to publish in this issue.

The Aesthetic and the Religious in Hindu Spirituality : In this learned lecture given at the Vedanta Society of Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A., Professor Gerald J. Larson, Department of Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, deliberates on 'the Aesthetic and the Religious in Hindu Spirituality'. The Hindus believe that Truth, Purity and Beauty—*Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*—are the three aspects of the Ultimate Reality. And Prof. Larson points out : 'One of the more striking and well-known representations of this paradox or dialectic between the aesthetic and the religious in Indian culture is to be found in the mythology and iconography of Lord Śiva, and especially in his representation as Naṭarāja, or Lord of the Dance.' The Professor quotes various interpretations of this Cosmic Dance of Śiva from the Hindu scriptures. South Asian religion and thought are the special fields of interest to the Professor. He has also done research work in classical Sāṅkhya and Yoga Philosophy, and also in traditions of Śaivism with special reference to Kashmir Śaivism. We hope our readers will find this lecture interesting and illuminating.

Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda : Sister Christine, formerly Miss Christine Greenstidel of Detroit, U.S.A., and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, wrote these 'Memoirs' at Almora, mainly in the summer of 1927. When the typescript was very kindly sent to us by Mrs. Gertrude Emerson Sen of Almora, at our request, we discovered that 'thirteen' out of the total 'seventeen' chapters available, have been

published first in the *Prabuddha Bharata* (1931 and 1945), and later in the *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati, Advaita Ashrama, 1961. (A chapter on 'Sadananda' was, however, dropped in the second edition of the same published in 1964). The typescript was entitled 'Māmloo's Memoirs', 'Māmloo' being the nickname of Christine given by Mr. Boshi Sen, whom she used to call 'Bābloo'. We are thankful to Mrs. Boshi Sen for making these remaining chapters (14 to 17) of the 'Memoirs' available to us for publication. She is of the opinion that Sister Christine could not complete her 'Memoirs'. Still, we hope, readers will be happy to read in these an untold story of Swami Vivekananda.

Human Development in India and the Problems of Our Working Class—I: A learned and popular speaker like Swami Ranganathananda, President, Ramakrishna Math, Secunderabad, Hyderabad, hardly needs any introduction. He is in great

demand both in India and abroad. The Swami had occasions to speak at Institutions of different types, and has, therefore, earned a vast amount of experience in various fields. During the forties, while at Karachi, he came in contact with some members of the Socialist and Communist parties, and learnt from them about the problems of the Indian working class. He even addressed some labour meetings at Karachi and Bombay. He had many occasions to listen to, and to study and discuss with, people concerned with labour, about matters connected with the welfare of our working class in the general context of human development in India. With so much of association with labour and with men who worked in this field, the Swami gave this lucid talk on invitation at the Business Meeting of the Labour Forum, Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, in the March of 1977. We hope our readers will find it interesting and illuminating.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHICAL IDEALISM: EDITED BY JOHN HOWIE AND THOMAS O. BUFORD, Publishers: Claude Stark & Co., Cape Cod, Mass. 02670, U.S.A., 1975, pp. xiii+290, Price : \$ 15.00.

Idealism as a perspective and philosophy in understanding life, experience and reality, has never been absent or on the wane at any time despite voices of its 'refutation' all through philosophical history in one form or the other. Realism, Empiricism, Pragmatism, Behaviourism, Materialism, Existentialism, Positivism—scientific or logical—, have never been louder than at the contemporary period; and that Idealism can stand up against these forces is evidenced by the publication of this significant volume. As an agent in decision-making about facts of life, and in interpreting the meaning of things held significant in life, Idealism has a value which can hardly be by-passed in any wholesome estimate of experience. The persisting and rigorous advocacy of this value of Idealism in taking a larger

perspective of things and events in and for life—which is universally found except in communist-oriented societies—is reflected in the present volume under notice.

The volume is published in honour of Prof. P. A. Bertocci, a great contemporary idealist thinker and philosopher, who held till recently the Chair of Boden Parker Bowne Professorship in Philosophy at the Boston University. It is a tribute to the eminence of the Professor, who not only inspired many students, but also gathered round him eminent colleagues in the service of Idealism.

Edited and compiled by Professors J. Howie and Thomas O. Buford, the volume contains contributions by thirteen other professors, eminent in the field of philosophy. The subjects or topics covered are many and varied, and have been so ably introduced by the Editors, that a further detailed review is bound to be preposterous. However, it should be said in fairness to the writers that each—while he takes stock of an

existing position, as it were, of a topic or subject—makes a thorough examination of it and advances new perspectives of his own, or evaluates it from the perspectives of Idealism which he adopts. Idealism, which is of different shades—Absolute Idealism, Pan-psychism, Personalistic Idealism, etc.—, takes mind, self, consciousness or God as a basic ground, without accepting which no inquiry is possible nor made. And Idealism has its dialectic of analysis, which opens up the deficiencies of thought based only on the immediate, and shows the necessity of the transcendent or the *a priori* in the estimation of the present. This is shown with logical rigour all through, whether the author is comparing two great minds like Whitehead and Leibnitz, or is developing his own thesis on topics such as Science and Objectivity, Faith and Knowledge, Rationality of Mysticism, Belief in Life after Death, Understanding the Self, Behaviourism, Will, Cultural Autonomy, etc. Incidentally, these are some of the titles of contributions, and naturally the range of subjects covered draws in the names of great philosophers from ancient times—passing from Socrates and Plato through Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel, Royce, Whitehead, Hocking, Skinner to Ryle—for consideration of their positions and for constructive re-appraisals. No significant school or movement escapes without being noticed in some form or the other. In some of these essays we have very distinguishing contributions worth taking note of.

Apart from Prof. A. J. Reck's account of Idealism in America since 1900, the volume itself is evidence of a strong feeling for Idealism in Western Universities. It also provides an indication how in contemporary times Idealism has a bearing on and impact even against its academic rivals. The publication presents new bases of thinking and lines of research for students as well as teachers. It has invaluable academic value.

DR. K. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAO
Head, Dept. of Philosophy
Mysore University, Mysore.

BENGALI

CHINTANAYAK VIVEKANANDA: EDITED BY SWAMI LOKESHWARANANDA AND OTHERS, Publishers: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta, 700 029, 1977, pp. 24+872, Price: Rs. 35/-.

The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture has undertaken to bring out the monumental work

The Cultural Heritage of India in an improved and enlarged edition in eight volumes (as against the original three) of which the first four are published and the fifth is under print; it has also several good booklets to its credit—but all in English. This sumptuous and important present work is its first big undertaking in Bengali, and even a cursory glance at it convinces one that it is a very good beginning and is worthy of the Institute.

The thoughts and activities of the many-faceted Master-thinker (*Chintā-nayak*) Vivekananda, are of tremendous importance and significance in shaping the mind and face of humanity in India and the world. A deep study of his profound thoughts lying scattered in the eight volumes of his *Complete Works* and other allied literature, and bringing them to the attention of thinking humanity, revealing their significance and bearing on the shaping of the future world, is an urgent and imperative need. So far, several scattered and partial studies have been made here and there of one or more aspects of his vast and varied thought, often purely in an academic spirit. What is required is a dynamic and synthetic study, and its presentation as a tonic to the world-soul to influence the life and thought of humanity.

We may consider the present work as a right step in this direction which will stimulate fuller and deeper, as well as more broad-based, comparative studies. Though not exhaustive, this work presents a fairly comprehensive study of the different aspects of Vivekananda as a great thinker. There are twenty-nine contributions in all, arranged under three sections. The first, in eight articles, deals with the source of Vivekananda's inspiration and methodology; his thought in general; his thought-contributions to and significance of his work in India and the West; his role in history; and his relevance *today*.

The second section presents fourteen studies on the different aspects of Vivekananda's thought such as: his philosophy of life; thoughts on religion, on science and religion, on history; his socio-political and economic thought; his thought concerning upliftment of the masses and awakening of women; on education, science, literature, aesthetics; on art and architecture, and on music.

The third section is devoted to comparative studies of his thought and work with other great thinkers and leaders. The seven studies cover: Humanism of Buddha and Vivekananda; his Neo-Vedanta; the relative estimates of the con-

tributions to the Indian renaissance from Raja Ram Mohan Roy up to Vivekananda; the search for a new world order by Marx and Vivekananda; thoughts of Vivekananda and Gandhiji on total social welfare; role of Tagore-Vivekananda-Aurobindo in national awakening; and a study on Vivekananda and Subhas Chandra Bose.

Most of the articles are good well-written studies. The study on Neo-Vedanta needs to be presented in a more comprehensive and dynamic way in the context of modern thought, in the way Vivekananda himself did it and wanted it to be done. Vivekananda being an all-India and world figure, a more broad-based approach is desirable in some of the articles. It must be remembered, Vivekananda was not merely a great thinker, but a creator of profound new

values, and has opened up for the human intellect new vistas of thought, to the world-soul new empyrean heights to soar, and to humanity ways to make the highest truths practicable in society.

On the whole, this work has succeeded in placing before the public a luminous versatile image of Vivekananda to shed light on the life and goal of humanity. An English translation or an augmented English version of the work will be of great benefit to other parts of India and the world.

The printing and get-up are of good standard. The price is moderate. There is a bibliography, an index and a short introductory biography of Swami Vivekananda.

SWAMI MUKHYANANDA
Ramakrishna Math, Belur, W.B.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA CHANDIGARH

REPORT : APRIL 1976—MARCH 1977

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chandigarh is the only accredited branch of the Mission operating in the region covering Chandigarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Started in 1956, it moved to its own premises in 1958, and since then has been rendering service to the people of Chandigarh and its surrounding areas without distinction of caste or creed.

The activities of the Ashrama during the period 1976-77 were as follows:

Spiritual and Cultural: The Ashrama Shrine provides the opportunity and atmosphere for those wishing to meditate and participate in the shrine services. Such services include Rama-Nama-Sankirtan, conducted fortnightly; observance of the birthdays of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak; and special worship on the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda.

The Monk-in-charge held a guided meditation and class on the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* every Saturday evening, and a lecture in English every Sunday evening. On Sunday mornings Shri Bansilal Chhibber and party gave a musical exposition in Hindi of *Ramacharita-Mānas*. Besides these, other weekly sessions were conducted for particular groups seriously interested in spiritual practice and service, and for children to aid in building their character. Personal inter-

views were also given by the Secretary-Swami to those interested in spiritual life.

The *Library* continued its home-lending service to members: out of a total of 1,634 books, 415 books were issued during the year. The *Book Sales* section provided publications of the Ramakrishna Order in English, Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi.

The month of March witnessed the combined public celebrations of the birth-anniversaries of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda. Lectures in Hindi and English, special discourses on *Ramacharita-Mānas* and devotional music, were included in the programme. The theme of the celebration was 'The Life and Message of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, with Special Stress on Regeneration of Man and Nation'. Distribution of fruits, sweets and items of personal need to handicapped children as Narayana Seva also formed part of the programme. The last day of the celebration was specially set apart for children.

On 13 November 1976 the new *Assembly-Hall Extension* was consecrated with Puja, Bhajan and Havan, and was dedicated for public service on the 14th, when a public meeting was held. This much-needed facility provides accommodation for about 350 persons, an office-room, a guest-room and a waiting-hall. From November 1976 to March 1977 a symposium was held on the theme: 'Regeneration of Man and Society'. On Decem-

ber 5, Sri J. L. Hathi, Governor of Haryana, gave the inaugural lecture of the series.

The visit of His Holiness Srimat Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, was a very special occasion of devotional enthusiasm and festivity. During his stay (28 March—2 April 1977) several aspirants were blessed with spiritual initiation; and a large number got the opportunity to have his *darshan* and to discuss personally their spiritual problems.

The free *Homoeopathic Dispensary* continued its service. The total number of patients served was 2,978, of which 602 were new cases.

The *Vivekananda Students' Home*, founded in 1960, provides a calm, homely environment free from political or social narrowness under the personal care of supervising Swamis. Accommodation is available for 40 students.

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF SACRAMENTO

REPORT : MARCH 1976—FEBRUARY 1977

This Centre, located on eight acres of land on the outskirts of the city of Sacramento (1337 Mission Avenue, Carmichael, Sacramento County, California 95608; Phone: 916/489-5137) was started as a branch Centre of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, in 1949, and was affiliated in 1952. It became an independent Centre in 1970, and is under the charge of Swami Shraddhananda.

During the year, daily worship was performed in the morning. A vesper service was held on Sunday evenings. The Swami conducted the Sunday morning service with a programme of worship, meditation and lecture, as well as the Wednesday evening Scripture class and the Saturday evening class on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He also gave several outside talks and lectures at various colleges and schools and to other groups. The Swami gave numerous personal interviews. A Sanskrit class was also taught by the Swami every week.

Special celebrations of the births of Sri Krishna, Bhagavan Buddha, Lord Jesus, Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and Swami Shivananda were held with a special programme of worship, music, readings and talks, followed by serving of Prasad. Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Jagaddhatri Puja, Shiva Ratri and Easter were also observed.

The Society has a library, a reading room and a Sunday School for children. The Santodyan

(garden of saints), a quiet and beautiful four-acre retreat at the rear of the Ashrama premises, has open shrines to honour saints of the different world religions. This peaceful area is extensively used by devotees for contemplation. The monastery of the Society had, besides the Swami-in-charge, one sannyasin, two brahmacharins and three pre-probationers, making a total of six monastic residents.

VIVEKANANDA VEDANTA SOCIETY, CHICAGO, ILL. U.S.A.

REPORT : JANUARY-DECEMBER 1977

In the aftermath of the First National Vedanta Convention, which was held in 1976, the year 1977 saw a continued expansion in the activities of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society. Many school groups came to the Centre for instruction in Vedanta. Both Swami Bhashyananda, the Head of the Society, and Swami Nishreyasananda, who is visiting the Centre from Africa, travelled extensively throughout the United States and Canada, speaking to colleges and Vedanta groups. Swami Bhashyananda, accompanied by two Brahmacharins, made three long trips in a trailer. The first tour went from Chicago to Los Angeles, stopping at several cities in the southwestern part of the United States. At each place they gave talks, showed films, and distributed Vedanta literature. The second trip covered the southeastern part of the country and the third trip contacted groups in Canada and the northeastern part of the United States. A visit to the island of Trinidad by Swami Nishreyasananda, helped greatly in establishing Vedanta on a firm footing there.

The year also saw a continuation of the construction at the Society's Monastery in Ganges, Michigan. Work progressed well on the large structure which is being built to house a shrine, meeting hall and museum. The museum is housed on the second floor and contains items purchased in India on a government grant to enable American students and devotees to see the richness of Indian culture in all its aspects. The museum was opened to the public for the first time at the annual Ganges Festival.

During the year, the Society held classes three times a week and maintained a library, book shop and Sunday School. The Society also celebrated all important feast days, including Christmas, with public Puja and the distribution of offered food. Two probationers from Chicago received Brahmacharya after completion of the

Training Centre at Belur Math and remained in India to help with the Order's work there.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL

The annual Festival of the Vivekananda Monastery and Retreat of Ganges, Michigan, was held on Saturday and Sunday, July 23 and 24. The main portion of the programme was held in the new auditorium, which is being built by the Brahmacharins. More than two hundred devotees and friends were seated in the hall when the first day's programme began at 11 a.m. The Brahmacharins first chanted several Shanti-mantras from the Upanishads. Next, Swami Bhashyananda gave a short welcoming speech, which was followed by two Indian devotional songs sung by a devotee. The formal worship of Shri Ramakrishna was then performed by Swami Yogeshananda, and Prasad was distributed to the guests in an open-air building on the other side of the monastery-retreat grounds.

The afternoon session began with the singing of an English translation of a song from the *Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*, set to music by an American devotee. Mrs. Octavia Harriston, the Chairperson of the Executive Board of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society, gave a short speech welcoming those who attended. Swami Yogeshananda next spoke, briefly outlining the beginning, developments, and future plans of the Ganges Monastery and Retreat. Swami Bhashyananda then gave a short talk on the spiritual value of a retreat and introduced the two guest speakers: Swami Nishreyasananda from Africa, and Swami Swahananda, the present Head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. Both Swamis spoke on the 'Role of a Retreat in Spiritual Life', emphasizing the need, not only for silence and solitude during a retreat, but also the need for the company of other spiritual aspirants. Several more devotional songs were then sung.

Following the lectures, the guests assembled to see the museum of artifacts from India, which

is housed on the second floor of the auditorium. The museum contains furniture, rugs, tapestries, musical instruments, statues, books and other examples of the glory of Indian culture. The articles were purchased with a grant from the Government of India, so that Americans could understand and appreciate the Indian background from which Vedanta comes. Swami Bhashyananda hopes to enlarge the museum in the future.

The Arati hymns were sung in the auditorium at 6 p.m., and supper was served to the guests at 7. After supper, Swami Nishreyasananda gave a one-and-one-half hour programme of films and slides which he had taken around the world. That night, many devotees camped on the monastery-retreat grounds while others stayed in near-by motels.

The shrine-room was opened at 5 the next morning for an hour's meditation before the Mangalarati. Swami Nishreyasananda conducted a half-hour meditation and gave a short talk on 'Techniques of meditation'. Breakfast was served at 7.30 a.m. No activities were scheduled for the early morning, but many guests assembled to help pick blueberries in the monastery's blueberry patch.

At 10.30 a.m., the Sunday service began with several devotional songs. Swami Bhashyananda chanted the opening prayer and introduced the guest speakers. Both Swami Nishreyasananda and Swami Swahananda lectured on 'The Application of Spiritual Values in Daily Life as Taught by Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda'. At the conclusion of the lectures, Swami Bhashyananda spoke again, thanking the people for coming, and made the closing remarks.

Following this, the children of the Chicago Temple's Sunday School gave two skits, one on 'Vyasa and the Milkmaid' and one on 'Father and Son with a Donkey', a tale from the *Panchatantra*. Just as this ended, it began to rain heavily outside. Everyone got into cars to drive up to the dining hall for lunch, then made their departure.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA FALLS ON FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 1978.