

THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA OR AWAKENED INDIA

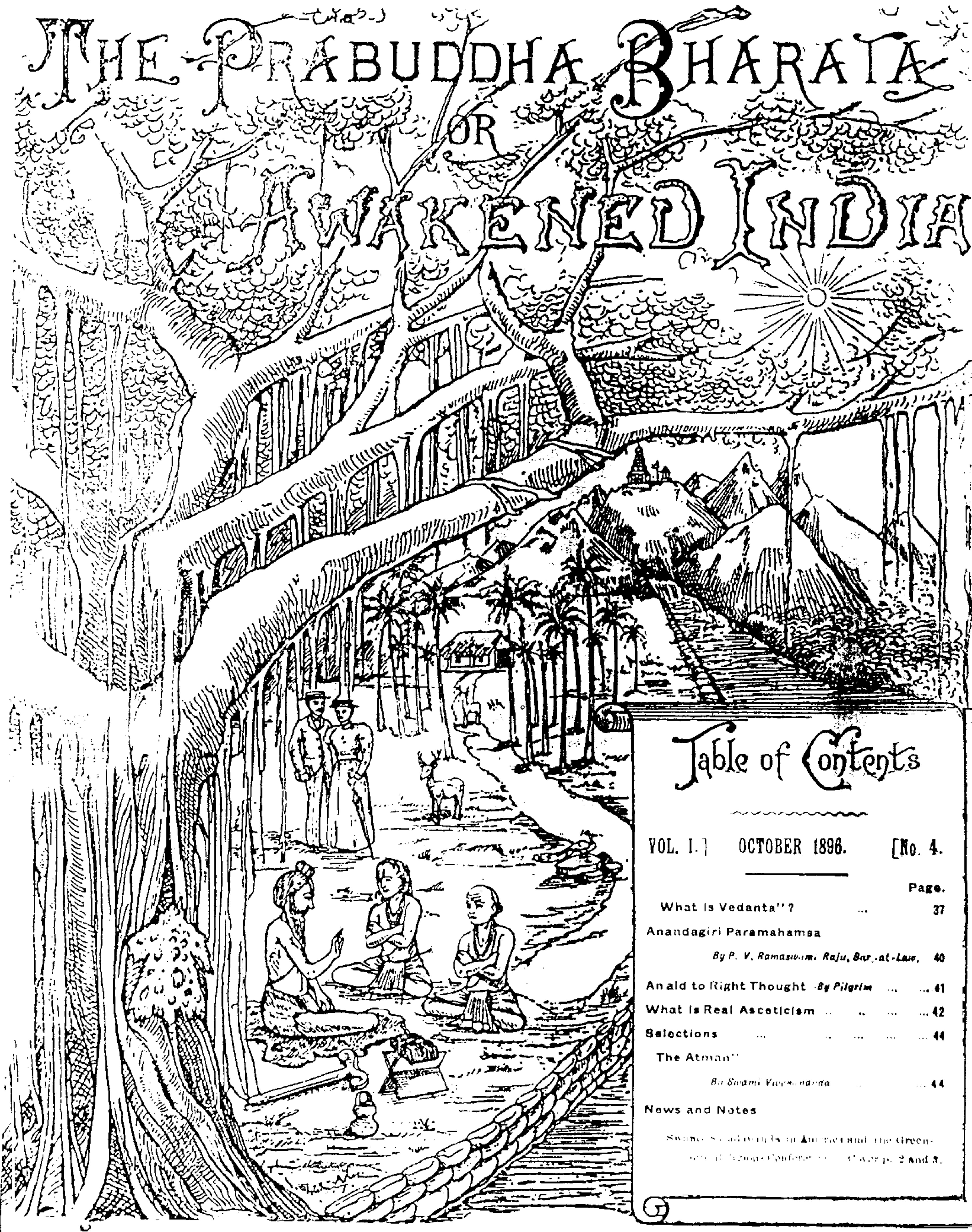


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News and Notes.

SWAMI SARADANANDA IN AMERICA.

The Greenacre School, after two seasons' lectures, has come to occupy a place of its own. It is not, indeed, a school in any strict sense of the word. Greenacre is a place of inspiration, presenting the charm of woods and wide river-views, encouraging out-door life and bringing one close to nature. The principle of the school is peace; its method is less instruction than interchange of spirit and experience. Sympathy is the word of life at Greenacre.

At the conference held in July last, the lectures were grouped about the topics of Peace, Comparative Religions, Education, Home, the History of Man, Evolution, Nature, Art and Sociology.

The Study of comparative religions began with Mr. James's lecture on the 6th of July on the value of the study of religions. He said that the chain which binds every creature of the universe to every other human creature is religion. The present time has witnessed a ferment of interest in this subject. A great impetus was given by Max Muller's translations. On the 7th Dr. James lectured on the Origin of Religions, and Mr. James on Chinese Theism. This was followed by a discourse on Vedantism by the Swami Saradananda.

The first lecture of the Swami Saradananda was listened to with great interest. In spite of the severe storm, about seventy persons were present. The Hindu teacher has the impassive fascination of his race and, although this was his first public lecture in the English tongue, he made himself heard and understood with great clearness and force. His theme, "The Philosophy of the Vedanta," though at first thought remote from common interest, was developed with practical and pertinent application to popular thinking. The philosophy of the Vedanta aims to answer the great question, "What is that thing by learning which we learn the whole truth?" "Vedanta" means the latter part of the Vedas, or sacred books of Hindu faith. But the Vedas refer not only to these scriptures, but to the sum of revealed knowledge of the past and the future. The Hindu doctrine of inspiration has no rock of literal infallibility to go to pieces on, but gives room for all the light that may break forth from the Eternal Word.

The Hindu thinks this knowledge (Veda—to know) is stored in the universal mind and is eternal. The Vedic literature is divided into two parts: one, the work portion, deals with ceremonials and is now extinct. The other, the knowledge portion, holds the Upanishads, and teaches that there are three principles—God, the soul and cycles. God is the sum total of souls, the human soul is the same essentially as God, but appears different on account of illusion. The cycles refer to the belief that all the material world and thought are created out of primal matter by cosmic energy. This is not a creation out of nothing, for "something cannot come out of nothing," and created things will involve again to the primal thing. Our perceptions take place through the external organs first and then the nerve centres and the mind, and the reaction from the central principle produces perception. Behind all this is a background of higher principle—*purusha*—on which as on a screen everything is focused, and which is unchangeable and absolute, while mind and body change.

The theory of *Karma* is based on the truth that the soul is eternal and has no beginning. Souls are not created but appear as outward only by illusion. In reality there is but one soul, which we find by driving off ignorance. If it be asked what is the utility of this philosophy, the answer is that utility is not the test of truth. Ignorance is the mother of all misery, the evanescent cannot bring lasting happiness. It cannot enable man to realize union in present society, but it may strive to make society compatible to raise it up. All societies are based on truths, never truths on societies. To the objection that this perfect existence would reduce us to the conditions of stocks and stones the answer is that there

are more than two kinds of existence, that above the conscious is a super-conscious existence, and it is to that, not to the lower unconscious existence, we are directed. All founders of religions have claimed their truth, not by argument, but by having seen, perceived, realized their truth; and they have done this through this super-conscious existence. The one theme of the Vedanta is the search after this absolute sublime undivided existence. "Thou art that" is its one assertion. When a spiritual director said to a pure disciple "Thou art that," the disciple at first thought that he referred to his body, but found that his body changed. Again the same truth was repeated and the disciple thought his mind might be meant. But that too changed. And to his further question the teacher said: "Search for yourself; you are that." An impure disciple thinking the body was himself went into all sorts of wickedness. Only a pure life can receive the truth, and so there is a fourfold method of practice including the quenching of all desire, earthly or heavenly, to love good and God, not for happiness' sake, but for their own sake, to attain belief in God, to acquire concentration and to learn to discriminate what is real.

After an interesting discussion in which the profound principles were brought out with still more telling force, a letter was read from Professor Max Muller, which is of such value and interest that it should be preserved here. "You are working," he wrote to Miss Farmer, "for what all founders and reformers of religion have been working, to make men and women feel their divine brotherhood, and bring them to look on earth as but another name for heaven. The wise people will tell you that this is impossible, but no harm is done by doing what seems impossible. Goethe used to say that 'care is taken that trees should not grow into the sky,' but the pine that tries to grow into the sky is none the worse for it. That there should be one flock and one shepherd seems impossible now, but the very wish for it does good, particularly if we learn to understand that the sheep of other flocks and other shepherds are not all black sheep. As the Brahmins say, 'If the effort has been much and it does not succeed, what blame is there? We must learn to wait, we must have the courage to do small things—that is the true test and proof of faith.'"

After this Mr. Dickerman spoke on Ancient Egypt.

The Swami Saradananda gave his second address on the morning of the 9th. His hearers were gathered under a large pine tree at some distance from the usual assembly place, and the teacher sat at its base. The quiet shade, surrounded by light, the distant views over land and water, the wind singing its monotone as only pines can make it sing, the dark-skinned, finely cut face, all united to give a setting to the discourse that fitted peculiarly with its calm, mysterious meaning. The American paper continues—"To follow the Oriental mind into the realm of metaphysics is to the Occidental like an ethereal swimming lesson."

"To hear a native teacher speak of far-off ideas and theories is itself a stimulus and refreshment to the mind. It is like reading in the original what one first became familiar with through a translation. The familiar has a new vitality, a power of meaning inexpressibly potent, and an essential force when it comes direct from the spring. We see one who has been through the severe course of speculative discipline required of Hindu teachers, is himself the best exponent of its significance, one who, with the confidence and assurance of the adept, not so much argues as declares his faith." The Swami that day claimed that the Yoga discipline was necessary, as a science is necessary to the attainment of truth. Its experimental evidence in fairness should be studied through genuine and undoubted instances, before it is doubted because of impostors. It has its miracles, its fruits of sainthood, that cannot be gainsaid. And its method of training for the attainment of the perfect, the so-called super-conscious, existence deserves to be followed just as in any of our sciences, in chemistry and astronomy, preliminary rules of practice have to be faithfully learned and observed before its end will be obtained.

(Continued on cover page 3.)

News and Notes.—(Continued.)

The method of attaining this existence may in some cases cover but a short time. It is supposed that some souls have in previous existence had such training that their lesson in this may be quickly learned. Some have finished it in a few days, one in three days, but in any case a faithful continuance will bring the result, and the longest time necessary is twelve years. Its steps involve training not alien to what in common life brings success. It requires concentration so that the mind is entirely in the control of its possessor; and this is only another way of saying what a wise teacher said of the educated man—that he was an educated man who could take his mind between his thumb and finger and make it do his will.

In discoursing on Taoism Mr. James explained that repose was its watchword. Mr. Jehangir D. Cola of Bombay expounded the religion of Zoroaster. To call the Parsees fire-worshippers is to misunderstand their belief. They regard fire as a symbol of creative energy. The lecturer closed with the following prayer of Zoroaster. "May Ahura Mazda, then, out of his rich store grant unity and immortality with his righteousness and power, long life, the full enjoyment of the good life to all who are faithful to him in word and deed."

The 9th of July was signalized by Dean Robinson's profound study of religious Unity. He opened with a fine statement of the nature of peace. The essential unity of all religions is summed up in the statement that knowledge is not only power, but peace, producing the universal concord through which the created and uncreated become forever one. The Rev. Mr. James completed his survey of the philosophy of Laoze. Dr. James continued his class work in the early history of religions, studying the nature of Fetichism, which is also a child-like effort toward a scientific explanation of the universe. A Japanese student, of Buddhism, Mr. Nakamura read an essay on Buddhism.

The class work on the morning of the 10th instant included the discussion of the ethics of the Vedānta philosophy by the Swāmi Sārādānanda. The week's study of ethnic religions was closed with Rev. Dr. Guthrie's lecture in the afternoon on the Central Doctrine of Christianity.

On the evening of the 12th of July, Rev. Mr. Goodwin of England spoke on Buddha. He defended Buddhism from the charge of materialism on the ground that the absence of the mention of God and Soul in Buddha's teaching proved rather that Buddha felt the incompetency of the human mind to grasp the Infinite.

On the afternoon of Sunday the 13th instant, Rev. Helen Anderson, of Boston, minister of the Church of the Higher Life, spoke to a large audience upon the "Christ Ideal." That light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world will shine through us if we remove obstructions and become receptive to its silent penetrative influence.

On Monday afternoon the philosophy of Pestalozzi was interpreted by Mr. Butterworth. On the tablet erected to his memory stand these words:

Benefactor of the poor at Neuchâf,
Father of orphans at Stans,
Founder of the Public School at Herthoud,
Educator of humanity at Yverdon,
All for others—for himself, nothing.

After a few well-chosen words of thanks from Miss Farmer, some charming music from three charming young girls formed a fitting close to lecture and introduction to the first meeting of the class interested in learning of Rev. Mrs. Van Anderson of the Christ life. The rain fell softly on the tent roof as her earnest voice spoke of human capacity to apprehend truths, of Jesus standing before us as the human life manifesting God, of our need to study his life and to find in his life the history of our own. As she grew more eloquent in her personal appeal to the larger self which displaces the lesser and the soul consciousness, the God consciousness which may, if we will, put down the self of grief, of anger and of selfishness, the sun burst from the clouds and touched the river as if in the assent of a benediction.—Abstracted from American papers.

A writer in the *Boston Evening Transcript* under date July 14, says, "The Swāmi Sārādānanda of India continues his study classes under the pines. Yesterday he spoke of the Prāṇāyāma, which is the control of the *prāṇa* or primordial energy which is manifesting itself in everything and evolving all this manifold universe by its action upon the primordial matter, the *ākāśa*. This evening the Swāmi will form and instruct a class in Raja Yoga practice at his tent; and if the secret of his serene and beautiful calmness of gaze and manner can be taught to the restless West, it will be a lesson well worth the learning."

Swāmi Vivekānanda.—We hear that Swāmi Vivekānanda is to attend the Ethical Conference to be held at Zurich. He leaves Switzerland for Kiel, Germany, to pay a visit to Prof. Deussen who has invited the Swāmi.

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ब्रह्मविदामोतिपरम्.

“He who knows the Supreme attains the highest.”—*Tait. Upa.* II. 1. 1.

VOL. I.
No. 4.

MADRAS, OCTOBER 1896.

PUBLISHED
MONTHLY.

“What is Vedānta?”

A CHRISTIAN Missionary remarks, “What is Vedānta? One man gives one answer and another a different one. It seems to me to be a name to conjure with and no more. Vedānta is usually regarded as pure pantheism; but the modern use of the term is different. What do the promoters of ‘Awakened India’ mean by it?”

From the above remarks, it is seen what an amount of confusion exists in regard to the proper definition and scope of the philosophy which goes by the name of Vedānta. This confusion is not confined to our Christian brethren alone, but it also extends to some of the highly intelligent and learned Sanskrit scholars, Eastern and Western alike.

These scholars are learned in the sense that they have devoted their whole life-time in trying to have only an intellectual grasp of the subject, but never had any practical experience or realization in life of the great truths taught in it. Truly, it may be said, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.” While these scholars thus differ from one another in the understanding of the subject, it is pleasant to see that there is no material difference among the teachings of the great teachers of humanity, who having realised those truths in practical life each in his own way, have given expression to the same truths but in a manner suited to the condition of the people among whom they lived. Mere learning is one thing and practical realization is another. Those only who have striven to learn these truths from practical teachers—who are still to be found in fair numbers in this pre-eminently religious country—have not failed to see clearly for themselves the sublimity of the Vedāntic teachings.

Roughly speaking, the students of the Vedānta may be said to be of three kinds. First, those who undertake the study of the Vedānta with a view to realize

for themselves the “grand truth,” the “unity” underlying the incessantly changing and unreal phenomena of this world, and thus get liberation or salvation. They seek for themselves a practical guide or *guru*, and devote their whole life to attaining that realisation by constantly listening to the teachings of the *guru* (*Śravaṇa*), by pondering over the truths heard (*manana*) and finally by striving to realise those truths by means of constant meditation according to the methods taught by the *guru* (*Nidhidhyāsana*). Such sincere persons are called “*Mumukshus*”, and they will sooner or later get at the truth; and it is for them alone that Vedāntic works really exist. Among such *Mumukshus* there never has been any material difference in opinion as regards the teachings of the Vedānta; whereas, among those who have tried to learn it from books, there ever has been a disagreement even on some fundamental point or another connected with the subject. It is the same with respect to Christianity or any other religion. For instance, where men have tried to learn religion from books and scholars as in Protestant countries, the only result has been the creation of innumerable sects; on the other hand, where religion is acquired from practical teachers and saints as in Roman Catholic countries, there has been unity. That is why among the Roman Catholics the lay people are not allowed to read their scriptures, and that is why in Vedāntic works very great stress has been laid on *Śravaṇam* or hearing a *guru*’s teachings rather than on the reading of those works.

The second class of students are those who undertake the study for making a livelihood, or for earning “name and fame”, or as an intellectual recreation. It is to this class that the generality of Vedāntic scholars belong. They have tried to get only an intellectual grasp of the subject, and their knowledge though vast is more or less misty. They generally lose themselves in vain disputations or learned discourses, and very rarely get at the truth. We may well say with the great Tamil poet, philosopher and saint, Tāyānavar, “Blessed are the

ignorant. For, what shall we say of our plight, who are learned and yet know not the truth? Learning is so mighty that if any one were to lay great stress on the importance of *gnāna* or knowledge (for salvation), we can establish, on the contrary, that *karma* (rituals) alone is all-important, and *vice versa*. Again, if a great Sanskrit scholar comes (for discussion), we silence him with any amount of quotations from Tamil literature, and similarly if one clever in Tamil literature were to come, we shut him up by citing a few stanzas in Sanskrit. But, can this learning, oh Lord! which enables us to confound and silence all, can this learning lead us to salvation?"

Lastly, come those that study the Vedānta with the mere idea of criticising its teachings. They only look at the apparent superficial discrepancies that are met with at the outset, and condemn the whole system. From them the truths of the Vedānta will ever remain hidden; for, they only see in it what they wish to see, and hence make no progress in understanding the deeper truths. It is only such persons that criticise the Vedānta so freely; and, generally speaking, the greater the ignorance of the subject, the louder and more incisive is the criticism. To this class of students belong some of our Christian brethren, a specimen of whose criticisms on that gem of books, The Bhagavadgita, —one of the authoritative works on the Vedānta—can be had at any Christian Tract Depot. That is why the Vedānta is a stumbling block to many of our Christian Missionaries and our Social Reform friends. Therefore, the only way they can understand the Vedānta is to approach it with a sympathetic attitude, find out the best practical examples of its votaries—who are fortunately not very rare—and learn from them the truth, getting the doubts that may arise cleared by free discussion. The necessity for such a teacher and guide will be obvious when one considers, how, in spite of the simplicity and lucidity of the language of these Vedāntic works, there is such a misconception of the ideas expressed. Take, for instance, the idea of *Renunciation* of this world as the surest way to salvation. A literal understanding of the principle has evoked many a criticism, and led many to doubt the soundness of the principle. Many are the homes that have been rendered desolate by this blunder about *renunciation*. But from the very early times the great teachers of humanity have warned mankind against this physical renunciation (Vide *Pitfalls in the Vedānta* in the second issue of this journal). As Swāmi Vivekānanda says, "The Vedānta teaches that the world should be renounced but not on that account abandoned. To live in the world and not be of it is the true test of renunciation." With the above remarks as to the course one has to pursue in trying to understand the truths of any religion, we may pass on to the consideration of the question. "What is Vedānta?"

The Vedānta is the philosophy contained in the Upanishads, The Brahma Sūtras and the Bhagavadgita. These three are called the Prasthānatrayasās or the three legs on which that philosophy rests. It is known as the Vedānta, because it claims to be the end of the Vedas.

The Vedas used in the broadest sense mean knowledge; and knowledge is infinite and eternal, and no limit can be set to it in this eternally mysterious and infinite world. So are the Vedas infinite and eternal. They comprise all that has hitherto been known, as well as all that may hereafter become known. In a restricted sense, the term is used to denote spiritual knowledge, as in spiritual knowledge all other knowledge is fulfilled; and hence also it is applied to the Hindu Scriptures, which contain the essence of all knowledge. All the inspired outpourings of sages ancient and modern, all the Bibles, Zendavastas, Dhammapadas and Koran yet given to humanity, as well as all the arts and sciences are included in the term Vedas; and the Christs, Buddhas and Sankaras of the future can speak nothing but the Vedas. As has been observed by Swāmi Vivekānanda, "The Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous how a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so it is with the laws that govern the spiritual world; the moral, ethical and spiritual relation between soul and soul, and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and will remain even if we forgot them." In other words, it is the accumulated experience of ages handed down to posterity in all climes and in all ages. That these experiences differ according to surrounding circumstances too varied and too numerous to mention, ought to be conceded by every thinking person; and the Vedas include all these varied experiences or knowledge. And Vedānta means the end of knowledge.

Here perhaps it may be asked, "If the Vedas denote the unlimited fund of knowledge, as it is said to be, is it not rather surprising that a certain philosophy should claim to be the end of this seemingly endless Vedas?" The contradiction however is only apparent. All knowledge is of two kinds: the one concerns itself with the outward properties or attributes of things as perceived by the senses and the intellect, *i.e.* the knowledge of the Phenomenon; and the other deals with the inner nature, the underlying reality or the essence of things—the Noumenon. The former will ever remain imperfect, as, in proportion to the advances made in various Sciences which have been dealing with the knowledge of this phenomenal aspect of this world, the unknown has not only been receding further and further

but has also been growing bigger and bigger. We analyse water, and find it is made up of oxygen and hydrogen; but what is oxygen and what is hydrogen—who can say? Where there was one thing unknown before, there are two things now; and the mystery of nature has got thickened instead of being solved.

"Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind."

The man of science is as wise to-day as he was centuries ago as regards the great problems of life and existence. Science examines the world with a frantic eagerness but does not get at the bottom; it furiously knocks itself against a barrier beyond which it cannot go.

If, however, instead of looking at the phenomenal aspect of things, we proceed to examine their inner nature—the noumenon, we find that all the differences in the world are differences of "time, space and causality," or of "names and forms" (*nāma* and *rūpa*); and that these "names and forms" or "time, space and causality" are, deeply considered, but forms of the mind, *i. e.*, appearances are pictures projected by the mind; and that where the mind is subdued and at rest, the inner unity, the ultimate substratum of this phenomenal universe reveals itself. This common unity, this underlying essence is God, timeless, spaceless, and causeless; and the world from this standpoint is nothing but God manifesting Himself in different names and forms. There is not an atom outside Him. "In Him the world lives, moves, and has its being." "He is the wise man who sees everything in God and God in everything."

This is objected to on the ground that it is Pantheism. We say it is not. For, Pantheism is defined as "the doctrine that the universe taken or conceived of as a whole is God, or the doctrine that there is no God but the combined forces and laws which are manifested in the existing universe." It is plain that the Vedānta never denies the existence of God; for, it emphatically asserts that there is but One Existence, which is God. Nor does it say that the combined forces and laws which are manifested in the existing universe go to make up the conception God. Then what does the Vedānta mean, when it says that we should see God in everything? It means that if we calmly analyse this phenomenal world, we see that all the differences in the world are resolvable into differences of *name* and *form* only, or, as it has been termed in Europe, differences of "time, space and causality." If from any object we take away the *name* and *form*, what remains is the inner essence or reality. "It is the Atman beyond all," as Swāmi Vivekānanda eloquently puts it, "the infinite, beyond the known, beyond the knowable; in and through That we see this universe. It is the only reality. It is

this table; It is the audience before me; It is the wall; It is everything, *minus* the *name* and *form*. Take the form of the table, take away the name; what remains is that It. * * * It is the name, and form that make the difference. It is the name, the form, the body, which are material, and they make all this difference. If you take off these two differences, of name and form, the whole universe is one. There are no two, no three, but one everywhere. Out of this one Infinite Existence all these are manifested through name and form." The same idea is expressed even more lucidly when he says, "There is but One unit Existence, and that One is appearing as manifold. This Self, or Soul, or Substance, is all that exists in the universe. That Self, or Substance, or Soul, is, in the language of non-dualism, the *Brahman*, appearing to be manifold by the interposition of name and form. Look at the waves in the sea. Not one wave is different from the sea, but what makes the wave apparently differ? Name and form; the form of the wave, and the name which we give to it, 'wave.' That is what makes it differ from the sea. When name and form go, it is the same sea. Who can make any difference between the wave and the sea? So this whole universe is that One unit Existence; name and form have created all these various differences." So long as one's attention is fixed on the outer attributes of matter, upon the changes brought about by name and form; one cannot see the inner essence. But the moment one's attention is turned from this heterogeneous world of names and forms to the inner essence, one sees and ought to see God in everything; for God is that inner essence of all existing things. We must remember that the Vedānta does not say, for instance, that the tree we see before us is God. So long, of course, as we look upon the tree as tree, it is nothing more than a tree; but when we dive deep, leaving the name and form behind, and try to realize the inner essence of the tree, we see nothing but God. And that is what the Vedānta means when it asks us to see God in everything. The difference between the Vedānta and Pantheism may be thus summed up: According to Pantheism, God is the sum or totality of phenomena; while, according to the Vedānta, God is the underlying essence of phenomena—which are but the result of name and form superimposed upon the essence.

Therefore, of the two kinds of knowledge,—of the phenomena and the noumenon—that which finds the world, the whole existence in its essence to be God is *wisdom*—the true knowledge, which is itself the end of all other knowledge; for, "when we know Him all the world is known." Though the knowledge of the outer phenomenal world is ever on the increase, and though this knowledge may be a great help in attaining to the true knowledge, yet all men have, at some time or other, to find out that such knowledge can never become perfect, and, that to reach the truth that can satisfy the heart,

they have to pass beyond appearances, beyond names and forms. In other words, knowledge can have rest only in wisdom (*Gnāna*); and a person is said to have attained the end of knowledge, when he has attained the realisation of his own Self, or found the end of all knowledge in wisdom.

Few men, however, perceive this; and fewer still have the requisite courage to overcome the mind which presents this terrible dream-vision of an infinitely differentiated world. They are therefore content to carry on their traffic in the phenomenal world. Unable to seek wisdom, they pursue knowledge. Though the majority no doubt are ever seeking knowledge, yet there are a few who have found its end in wisdom.

Thus we see that the Vedānta is really the end of knowledge—wisdom, as it professes to be; for its greatest triumph is that it dives beneath the vision of names and forms, and reveals the inner essence of the universe as God, thereby unfolding at one stretch the full meaning of the universe. It is therefore supreme knowledge or wisdom, and richly deserves the name.

Having thus briefly given the definition and scope of the Vedānta in its Advaita Aspect, we are content to draw the attention of our readers to the lecture on "Ātman" by Swāmi Vivekānanda reprinted elsewhere in this issue, for the explanations of some of the salient points of the three steps (Dwaita, Visishtadwaita and Advaita) which Indian religious thought has taken in regard to God, soul and sin.

Anandagiri-Paramahansa.

In the Himālayas—at Hrishikes—where the Chandra-bhāga flows into the Ganges—there is a shrine dedicated to Chandramouliswara. This shrine, which is a work of art in that expanse of nature's beauty and sublimity, has a terrace on which sat a young man of about twenty-three years of age surrounded by a large circle of *Sanyāsīs* many of whom were much older than he was. They were all extremely attentive. He was discoursing on the merits of the *Karma Yoga* portion of the *Bhagavadgītā*. In the assembly there was an elderly lady who was intently gazing on the face of the youthful sage, and a few paces from the lady sat an elderly gentleman who was gazing on the young *Sanyāsin* with equal attention. It was about eight in the morning. The sun was struggling up the heavens, which were enveloped in one of those thick mists which from time to time take possession of those mountainous regions and add to their naturally weird appearance. The Ganges flowed with a copious tide and with that rapidity which more than in any other place characterizes the river at Hrishikes. "Who is this youthful sage?" asked a pilgrim of a *Sādhu* or anchorite close by. The *Sādhu* replied—"Do you not know Paramahansa Anandagiri, whom all the world knows?" The pilgrim apologized for his ignorance and the *Sādhu* proceeded as follows:—"In a city of great political importance in North-western India there is a family of great affluence and power. This family was represented by a lady and gentleman of exceptionally good charac-

ter. They had no issue till they had passed their fortieth year. Then an only son was born. He was educated in Sanskrit. Great care was bestowed on his education. All that parental attention and tenderness could do, coupled with wealth and influence, was done. The young man developed into a great scholar. In *Sāhitya* (literature), *Tarka* (logic), *Mīmāṃsā* (one of the *darsanas* or systems of philosophy), *Vedānta* (the system of philosophy that teaches the ultimate aim of the Vedas) and the various *Kalās* (arts) and *Vidyās* (sciences) he became an adept. At the same time the young man acquired the habit of thinking as much as practicable about things and saying what he wished to say in as few words as possible. He was extremely courteous to people, and his sympathy with those who were in distress was unbounded. Many were the instances in which he gave away the very clothing he wore to relieve the poor and helpless. The animals of the locality which he lived, had their own share of his bounty. Dogs, cats, birds of various kinds—all had their dainties given to them from time to time by Swayambhū—for that was the pet name by which he was known among his friends and relations. Finding that Swayambhū was a deeply meditative character and that, though a man of very few words, yet, he spoke always to the point and as lucidly as one could do, the learned flocked round him. The poor among the learned—for the poor among the learned and the issueless among the wealthy are proverbially numerous—found in him a liberal patron. Swayambhū had attained his twentieth year. His parents grew anxious about his marriage. For three years thereafter they went about seeking for a bride. One was found, who suited Swayambhū in every respect. Finally the parents of Swayambhū visited the parents of the would-be bride to fix the day for the wedding and make all the preliminary arrangements in the matter. There were great rejoicings about the coming marriage at the bride's quarters, for the bride's parents were equally wealthy and powerful as the bridegroom's. After settling the day of the wedding, the parents of Swayambhū returned to their city. When they approached their mansion they found Swayambhū seated on the outer verandah of the house, with a tonsured head and a piece of *Kāshyā* or ochre-coloured garments round his loins. The sorrow of his parents can be easily imagined. Their son had become a *Sanyāsin* or anchorite renouncing completely the pleasures of the world, and bidding a final adieu to its concerns was evidently preparing to depart from the parental mansion. 'Alas, what have you done, child!' said the parents in accents of bitter grief. 'I have done what I may have to do later on in life some day—I have simply taken time by the forelock. I shall go to the Himālayas and spend the remaining days of my life in the service of my god.' So saying Swayambhū got up, and walked out of the abode. 'Wait son, yet a minute,' said the parents, 'till we follow you to your abode in the Himālayas, wherever that may be—life without you will be no life at all to us.' Swayambhū's parents did as they said. They made instant arrangements about their worldly affairs; and leaving them to the care of trustworthy agents, accompanied their son to this place where the Chandra-bhāga meets the Ganges. Yonder you see a circle of huts—they have been got up at the expense of Swayambhū's parents for the use of the anchorites that visit the sacred spot from time to time. Swayambhū's merits as a devotee and philosopher have acquired for him the name of *Anandagiri-Paramahansa*. Very old men have fallen at his feet, with tears in their eyes, on hearing the words of wisdom that fall from his lips. Maharajahs have visited him from time to time in the period that he has been here, and stood before

him with folded hands listening to his discourses on the *Gītā* and other works relating to the *Uttaramīmāṃsā*. The wealthy and the poor are received here with equal attention, and many are the instances in which the wealthy have offered to share their wealth with the poor after they had been in the company of the Paramahansa for a few days. Many are the instances in which wealthy men have become anchorites after visiting the Paramahansa. This Paramahansa Anandagiri is like a messenger from heaven among us. His greatness is inscrutable! so concluded the sage. Every word of his seemed to be true. The mountains around, in silent veneration, seemed to say, "Great is Paramahansa Anandagiri of Hrishikes!"

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An Aid to Right Thought.

"Always and always higher, from the throng
Lawless and witless, lead his feet aright
Life's perils and perplexities among,
To the white centre of the sacred light."

PROVERBS. *Prayer to the Moses.*

It is a very natural and deep-seated feeling to desire, by external act or repeated words, to impress upon the mind the relative importance of a future life and the high wisdom of trying to realise its secrets.

All the rituals of all the religions of the world are but an exemplification of this.

The student of practical Vedāntism may think that he has passed beyond these things, and that he is now in possession of a motive power that can never alter; nevertheless, such aids to right thinking cannot always be put aside in the earlier stages. For, indeed, who does not feel the impossibility of always keeping the heart at its highest pitch of enthusiastic devotion, and the will at its maximum of determined energy? There must be moments of weariness when the heart grows despondent and the spirit droops, and when any ceremonial would be readily accepted and performed as a help to restore the dying energy.

With the knowledge that there exist in nature more subtle forces than the ordinary man is cognisant of, the student may even be tempted to fancy that there are incantations of power which might save him the trouble in restoring the proper equilibrium, but he must learn that nothing can take the place of the strenuous energy of the will, and that in himself alone lies the power to lift himself again to the level from which he has fallen. No! the ceremonials and incantations of those who aspire to practise Rāja-Yoga must all be performed within.

But various hints may be given to the student which may help him to attain the proper equilibrium, and to keep it throughout the day. Such a help he will find to be in fixing the mind on the main questions of existence the first thing in the morning. Before he gets up let him thoroughly wake himself and ask himself three questions. What am I? Why do I work? How do I work? Each one will find his own words to answer these questions, but the general meaning of them all will be somewhat as follows.

What am I? I am a fragment of the all-pervading Deity, entombed in the flesh, and working out through slow and painful progress its evolution towards liberation and re-union.

Why do I work? I work to reach the home from which I started—the pure state of unconditioned being—the richer for having fulfilled my mission in the vale of tears.

How do I work? I work by striving to allow neither good nor evil fortune to disturb the perfect serenity of my soul; by detachment from all earthly desires; by keeping the ultimate goal steadfastly in view; by doing good to all sentient creatures, and so extending the sympathy and pity for all that endures life; and by using every earthly act that has to be performed, as an act of sacrifice and devotion to the Deity within.

Those unacquainted with the Eastern wisdom may be apt to remark that such thoughts altogether transcend ordinary morality, and such indeed is the case. What the various exoteric religions of the world blindly grope after, Vedāntism if properly understood leads to with scientific accuracy, and what is commonly known by the name of 'Saintship' is but a step in the progress.

The student should also remember that individual, like national development, must, as Matthew Arnold puts it, proceed simultaneously along many parallel lines; to act otherwise is to produce a mal-proportional nature, be it in nation or in man. In other words, to quote one of our teachers, "the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life, none alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards, all steps are necessary to make up the ladder." Of what use are devotional rhapsodies or transcendental aspirations, unless to nerve you for the work of life? The mere delight in emotion is like enjoying a view from an eminence over some beautiful country, with, far away on the horizon, the misty heights of the Celestial Mountains, for which you are bound, but, unless used as a stimulus to face the heat and toil of the journey across the plain, you will never reach the mountains, and the mere emotion becomes little better than an intellectual narcotic.

But true is it that "Bhakti," though the last of the three gates of perfection, is also the first, for without devotion whence can come the motive to seek for the unseen? And how can there be any true progress without the necessary prelude of an intense realisation of the ultimate goal? The devotional feeling however must be used as a stimulus, not enjoyed as a sedative.

Similarly "Gñāna" and "Karma," knowledge and work, without the fire of "Bhakti" are unable singly to conduct to the Supreme. The student on the path of "Karma" may attain felicity among the Devas, but he cannot hope to reach the stupendous heights of the all-perfected humanity, unless he develops on his upward way some germs of devotion, which, however, it is almost impossible that he should fail to do. Indeed, a truer way of stating the question will probably be that, though the predominating element in every soul will attract each to a separate pathway—one to the path of knowledge—one to the path of work or duty—and one to the path of love or devotion, yet no soul of a true disciple is entirely without the other two elements, while the union of all three in perfect equilibrium must ever be the object before the disciple's mind. —(Adapted "From the Problems of The Hidden Life" —By Pilgrim.)

He, to whom all things are one, and who reduceth all to one, and seeth all things in one, may be steadfast in his heart and abide in peace with God. —Thomas à Kempis.

What is displeasing to thee do not to thy fellow-man. This is the whole law, the rest is but commentary. —The Talmud.

Forward, till you see the highest Human nature is divine. —Tennyson.

What is Real Asceticism.*

THE river Jumna has become classical by its associations. Much larger rivers like the Amazon, the Missouri and the Mississippi dwindle into littleness by its side; and tradition which is the crystallised poetry of national life has connected it with the name of Krishna, and thereby lent to it an extraordinary amount of sacredness and glory.

One fine evening, so the story goes, Râdhâ and Krishna were sweetly playing together on its silver sands, when the cool breeze of the hour brought with it a rich stream of Vedic music. Râdhâ, surprised at the sound, asked her lover whence it came, and Krishna replied, 'My dear, it seems to come from an *âsrama* in the neighbouring woods where a *Sanyâsin* lives and does penance.' Râdhâ said, 'Really, these *Sanyâsis* renouncing their homes, wives and children and living in the forest seem to be the holiest of men: they deserve the grace of heaven best and are sure to obtain it foremost, while a householder living in the midst of his family gets engrossed with its cares, and however pious he may be, can never attain *Moksha*.' Krishna coldly replied, 'may be,' and began carelessly to play on his favorite flute. Râdhâ was, however, too deeply impressed with the forest life and its poetic associations to let go the topic, and continued her praises of ascetic life. 'There is something sacred,' said she, 'in the orange robe and the humble roof of the *Sanyâsin*, and a man living in the company of tall trees and large rivers must certainly be grand himself, and God is better contemplated in the solitude of the forest than in the midst of family strife. I can conceive, my lord, of no holier men than these *Rishis* of the forest,' and she added, 'shall we go, my lord, to visit the holy sage who at this hour so full of calmness and repose recites the Vedic Rik? For, the very sight of these holy men is purifying, as the *Sâstras* say.' Krishna replied, 'Râdhâ my dear, your wish is always my wish, and we shall go to the yonder *Rishi*; but to combine pleasure with devotion, we shall go to him with a funny tale. I shall disguise myself as an old hunter, but you will be the rich and beautiful princess you already are, and we shall seek in his abode a night's shelter against the beasts of prey. I shall tell him a strange story about ourselves at which you ought to take care that you do not smile.'

So saying, he assumed to the infinite amusement of the lotus-eyed Râdhâ the guise of an old hunter with wrinkled cheeks, grey hairs, hunch-back and weary feet, and began to walk forth supported on the arms of the young princess.

The *âsrama* was situated in a retired corner of the forest close to the brink of a beautiful rivulet that branched off from the Jumna. It was a low but artistically shaped hut; and everything about it was neat and tidy, and bespoke of care and taste on the part of its owner. The furniture consisted of several mud vessels, household utensils, woodcutter's implements, neatly shaped wooden seats, and softly tanned tiger and deer skins all of them arranged with considerable housekeeping skill. Outside were a number of tall trees overhanging the hut and lending to it a picturesque temple-like appearance. There were orange robes hanging on the branches of the trees and ennobling them with a saintly aspect. It was a little after sunset when the Yâdhava pair reached the *âsrama*, and the moon had just begun to spread her silver beams.

* The first portion of this was originally contributed to *The Thinker*.—Ed.

The monarch of the *âsrama* was a middle-aged man with a beard more than decent for his years. He was very fair-looking and neatly dressed in attractive orange robes which shone with a peculiar brightness in the infant moonlight. He sat on a broad stone seat outside the hut facing the east; and no sooner did Râdhâ and Krishna behold him, than they respectfully fell at his feet. The monk blessed them, and inquired who they were and where they came. Krishna said, 'O most holy one, this fair princess before you is the daughter of the king of Suvrâjâ who came with her and a large retinue on a hunting expedition to these woods, where this morning a band of wild elephants scattered their company and set them flying in various directions. The princess got parted from her father, and when she was running across the woods without knowing where her way was, she perceived a huge tiger pursuing her as if allured by the charms of her person. She would have fallen a prey to the wild animal and her beautiful body torn to pieces by its bloody fangs, had it not happened that at that critical moment I was there, and with some remnant yet left of the skill in archery for which I was quite famous in earlier days, aimed a happy dart at the animal's neck and killed it. Then I heard her tale, and taking pity on her forlorn state undertook, in spite of my age, to conduct her to her father. We wandered all the day without finding any trace of the hunting group, and, being weary with toil and grief and afraid of the dangers of the forest, request shelter of you for the night in your holy abode. Your holiness is sufficient guarantee for our safety in every way, and it is only God that has afforded us such a secure resting place at this hour.' The monk expressed sympathy for the princess in her distress and generously offered them the desired shelter. He showed a great hospitality towards his guests and supplied them with such refreshments as he had in stock, he praised the old hunter for his courage, chivalry and kindness, was very attentive to his comforts, and kindly gave him a drink which he said would be greatly refreshing. The crafty hunter thankfully accepted the drink and in half an hour pretended to have fallen asleep and loudly snored. The princess also took her bed in a corner of the hut. Scarcely had an hour elapsed in this way, when the monk approached the princess and gently awoke her. She woke and finding the *Sanyâsin* on his knees by her side, wrathfully asked him what he was about. 'Pardon me, O fair one,' said he, 'for my impudence. Never, never in my life have these eyes beheld beauty like yours—so captivating, so divine. No mortal can resist the power of thy boundless charms; and how, O my beloved, how can I be calm while such a priceless treasure lies so near me?' 'Is this your penance, your holiness, your renunciation, O pitiable man,' exclaimed the princess in surprise and wrath, 'you vile miscreant, your Vedic learning, your holy attire, your sage-like aspect, is it all a disguise, a sham, a pretext? Do you know?'—'Excuse me, Madam,' interrupted the monk, 'penance is painful, and at the best only endured, not enjoyed; and as for holiness and renunciation, they exist only in name, and nowhere in reality. I took to this painful lonely forest life only out of disgust, because my wife, who was beautiful, though not one-thousandth as much as you are, deserted me. God has been extremely kind to me in having thrown you, O peerless one, in my way in such happy circumstances. The moon is unendurably beautiful and waits only to be shamed by your face, and the old fool lies there snoring. The drink I have given him is a strong intoxicant and will not suffer him to rise for three more days. Now is the hour, now, O sweet angel, not royal but divine, now is the——' 'Vile wretch.'

exclaimed Râdha ; and she could say no more, her utterance was choked with anger. But hardly had the above words been pronounced, when the apparently sleeping intoxicated old hunter suddenly started up in the shape of a fiercely hissing, infuriated and terrible serpent, and raised a dreadful hood towards the miscreant monk, who frightened beyond measure took to his heels. The hunter-serpent-Krishna pursued him for a while, till flying with desperate swiftness he disappeared in the woods.

Râdha and Krishna were soon together again, when Râdha said, 'How foolish I was ! I was deceived by outward appearances. Renunciation does not consist in—' but before she had finished, Krishna cried out, 'Hold me, Râdha O dear, hold me. I am being dragged away, I do not know by what, hold me, hold.' Râdha surprised beyond measure, caught his arm and held him there, but strange to say felt herself also dragged along with Krishna. She tried her best to keep herself firm, but to no purpose. Something, a mysterious nameless something, was dragging them on, they did not know where, at least Râdha did not. She felt the electric power of the current that was sweeping them onwards, but could not know whence it came and where it took them. She implored Krishna to account for the strange phenomenon ; and on being repeatedly urged by her, he said, 'I myself do not know ; perhaps some devotee drags us on to him by the nameless power of his love', and playfully added, 'You see how hard it is to be a God.' Thus conversing they were dragged on into a beautiful orchard, where to Râdha's great disappointment she beheld not any bearded monk, or humble devotee absorbed in steady meditation, but a gay young man reposing on a softly cushioned cot and enjoying the sweet moonlight in the midst of six young damsels, who were half-naked and, vying with each other in pleasing him, were performing a circular dance, *râsa mandala*, around that august personage. 'Is this your worshipper, my lord,' Râdha sneeringly asked ; but Krishna coolly said, 'We shall wait and see.' Indeed, they had hardly to wait, for, no sooner was their presence known, than the half-naked young damsels covered themselves in haste and fled away with shame and confusion ; and the apparently gay young man sprang forth from his seat with joy, and bowing down before Râdhakrishna, said, 'O God, my lord, welcome art Thou, welcome.' My humble heart I offer Thee as thy seat, let my tears of joy wash Thy holy feet and let my love, O Lord, be Thy acceptable feast. All my penance is a zero before Thy infinite grace. Boundless is that grace, O Lord, and unparalleled except by Thy boundless power ; and my feeble tongue longs to spend itself in extolling that infinite power and grace, pines to die a martyr to Thy boundless glory—glory, which, in my feeble childish fancy, I may liken to a vast immeasurable unfathomable ocean of milk. The sun, the moon and the flood of stars above and below are like the wavelets of that ocean, and conflagrations and deluges are its occasional storms. The sky, the sea and mountains and rivers, which we, in our littleness, are wont to call great, are droplets, in that mighty measureless ocean. The law of its tides, the music of its mighty roar and the immeasurable wealth of its undiscovered depths, not even gods can understand. My feeble eyes lose themselves like rain drops in the ocean, in the beauty of Thy face and form ; and if my mind and senses quail even before Thy surface-show as rocket shot against the sky, if there is nothing but Thyself to be likened to Thee, how can I know Thee, O Lord, except by becoming Thine ownself ? The Vedas say, "Thou art all forms yet formless, all motion yet motionless, all names yet nameless, all time and space

yet timeless and spaceless, greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest." Thou appearest to me now as a man ; but when I look into Thee, Thou risest grander and grander, till all the stars and suns and moons and seas and lakes and men and beasts are seen to be the work of Thy fingers ; and when I look closer yet, Thinn art Thyself found to be this earth and all this boundless universe ; and when I look still farther into Thee, all these multitudes of worlds disappear, and there is found to be nothing but eternal light, eternal love and eternal bliss. Grant me, O God ! to know Thee as Thyself, to know Thee as Thou canst not be known.' No sooner had the prayer crossed the lips of the gay young man, than himself and Krishna electrically rushed together into a mutual embrace ; and where they were, there appeared to the wonder-filled vision of Râdha, a mass of burning light, which slowly grew and devoured star after star, until the earth and all the worlds floated in it for a while as dust in the sunbeam, and finally died a nameless death into a spaceless column of brightness. Neither Krishna nor the gay young man was to be seen ; and to Râdha, to whom alone was it given to see the unseeable, there was one universal noiseless music and ineffable measureless joy, one bright eternal light, before which starlight, moonlight and sunlight were as darkness—one bliss in the enjoyment of which her thought expired. A few hours more, and the enraptured Râdha awoke from her dream-like vision, and found herself in her palace in the arms of her ever-beloved Krishna. 'Enchanter of enchanters,' said she, 'Thou hast taught me what true renunciation is. It is not the flying away from wife and children in body and thinking of them in mind, not the exchanging of houses for groves and the music of women for the song of birds. To renounce is a matter of the mind ; for physical things are never renounced, so long as the body, the grossest physical thing, lasts. The *Samsara* to be given up is inside, not outside ; for the fluctuations of the mind (*Chitta châlana*) anger, lust, desire, &c., form the real *Samsara*. To look at you, and in your light to abandon all attachment for the outer world, to be in it and at the same time out of it, is to realise you ; and in the enjoyment of that realisation, to forget all forms and names—this is true *Sanyâsa*. The hypocritical monk left the things of the earth in body, but kept them in his mind. The gay young man lived in them in body, but gave them up in mind. The one was away from God even in the solitude of the forest, the other was with God in the very midst of music, women and dance. That is why, O Krishna, the former did not know you even when you went to him and fled away from you in shame and fear, while the latter dragged you over to him and lost himself in you with prayer and bliss.

"Who is a *Sanyâsin* ? He is the real *Sanyâsin*, who leaving off all *dharma*s and the attachment of I and mine, and taking refuge in *Brahman*, is convinced through practical realisation of great sayings (*Mahâ-rûkya*) like 'That art thou,' 'All this is *Brahman*' and 'There is here nothing like, many,' that he is himself *Brahman* and moves on in the world in undisturbed and changeless *Samâdhi*. He alone is worthy of worship ; he is the real *logi*, the real *Paramahansa*, the real *Atadhîta* and the real *Brahmagnani*.

(*Nirâlamba Upanishad*.)

Here *Sanyâsa* or renunciation is identified with the realisation of self ; and in conformity with this the story may be understood in the following way :

Râdha represents *Chit Sakti* or the faculty of wisdom, and Krishna is *Svarûpu* or *Atman*. The hunting (i.e., running after, worldly pleasures), the mad elephants of the

forest (the calamities of the world), the tiger (fear) are all false to Râdha and Krishna but taken to be real by the monk (*rajas* or desire). Man, indeed, daily runs after the deer (pleasure), but too often meets with the mad elephant (disaster), and is pursued by the tiger (fear); but all the three—pleasure, pain and fear, form a mere tale in the light of the *Swarûpa* which like a hunter chases fear, the result of mistaking the illusion, away. Râdha being the faculty of wisdom, *i. e.*, *Buddhi*, turned away from the *tâmasic* illusion of the world towards Krishna or Self, can, therefore, afford to smile at the false tale of the tiger and the elephant. Though turned towards the self she is not, however, totally freed from doubt, and temptation is the result. That is why she is taken to the monk (*rajas*), though already above *tamas* (ignorance or illusion). The nearness of the self or the approach to realisation, already made by the fact of *Buddhi* or intellect having become wisdom, saves her; and the *Swarûpa* plays the serpent and threatens away desire. (*Gîtâ*, V. 59). After the overthrow of *rajas*, *Sattwa* alone remains (*tamas* having already been got over), and it drags on to it the *Swarûpa* and the faculty of realising it, *i. e.*, Krishna and Râdha. *Sattwa* is represented as a gay young man, for its nature is cheerfulness, and the soft cushioned seat is *Sukh âsana* in its true sense (see *Aparoksha anubhûti*). The six damsels are the mind and the senses, which play round the pure *Sattwa* though in vain. They are half-naked and try to tempt, for if fully revealed they will rouse disgust and can never tempt. When Râdha-Krishna or Upâsanâ Mûrti, *i. e.*, self, as consciously apprehended by wisdom, approaches, they all fly away; and then *Sattwaguna* and the *Swarûpa* unite together into a nameless, formless *Jyôti*, which Râdha or wisdom no longer consciously perceives, but swoons away in seeing. Here is the *Sanyâsa* of the *Upanishads*.

When the above *Nirvikapla Sâmadhi* or *Nishthâ* is over wisdom returns to a conscious life, but freed from doubt and future possibility of temptation rejoices in her light and her love to the self, in all its manifestations—hunter, serpent, l's'wara and *Brahman*.

Selections.

MANKIND SHOULD BE GRATEFUL EVEN FOR THE IMPERFECTIONS OF GREAT MEN

Lord Rosebery in concluding his address at Glasgow in connection with the centenary of Robert Burns on the 21st of July last, said:—

“Mankind is helped in its progress almost as much by the study of imperfection as by the contemplation of perfection. Had we nothing before us in our futile and halting lives but saints and the ideal, we might well fail altogether. We grope blindly among the catacombs of the world, we climb the dark ladder of life, we feel our way to futurity, but we can scarcely see an inch around or before us. We stumble and falter and fall; our hands and knees are bruised and sore, and we look up for light and guidance. Could we see nothing but distant unapproachable impeccability we might well sink prostrate in the hopelessness of emulation and the weariness of despair. Is it not then, when all seems blank and lightless and lifeless, when strength and courage flag, and when perfection seems as remote as a star, is it not then that imperfection helps us? When we see that the greatest and choicest images of God have had their weaknesses like ours, their temptations, their hour of darkness, and their bloody sweat, are we not encouraged by their lapses and catastrophes to find energy for one more effort, one more struggle? Where they failed

we feel it a less dishonour to fail; their errors and sorrows make, as it were, an easier ascent from infinite imperfection to infinite perfection. Man after all is not ripened by virtue alone. Were it so, this world were a paradise of angels. No! like the growth of the earth, he is the fruit of all the seasons; the accident of a thousand accidents, a living mystery, moving through the seen to the unseen. He is sown in dishonour, he is matured under all the varieties of heat and cold, in mist and wrath, in snow and vapours, in the melancholy of the autumn, in the torpor of winter, as well as in the rapture and fragrance of summer, or the balmy effluence of spring—its breath, its sunshine, its dew. And at the end, he is reaped—the product, not of one climate, but of all; not of good alone, but of evil; not of joy alone, but of sorrow. Perhaps mellowed and ripened, perhaps stricken and withered and sour. How, then, shall we judge any one? How, at any rate, judge a giant, great in gifts, and great in temptation; great in strength and great in weakness? And when we thank heaven for the inestimable gift of Burns, we do not need to remember wherein he was imperfect. We cannot bring ourselves to regret that he was made of the same clay as ourselves.”

“The Altman.”

A LECTURE BY SWAMI VIVEKA'NANDA.

- (1) *The Differentiated: Personal God.*
- (2) *The Partially Differentiated: Immanent God.*
- (3) *The Undifferentiated: Impersonal God.*

Many of you have read Max Müller's celebrated book, “Three Lectures on the Vedânta Philosophy,” and some of you may, perhaps, have read in German Professor Deussen's book on the same philosophy. From much that is being written and taught in the West about the religious thought of India one school of Indian thought is principally represented, that which is called *Advaitism*, the monistic side of Indian religion; and sometimes it is thought that all the teachings of the Vedas are comprised in that one system of philosophy. There have, however, been various phases of Indian thought, and perhaps this non-dualistic form is in the minority as compared with the other phases. From the most ancient times there have been various sects of thought in India, and, as there never was a formulated or recognized church or any body of men to designate the doctrines which should be believed by each school, people were very free to choose their own form, make their own philosophy and establish their own sects. We, therefore, find that from the most ancient times India was full of religious sects. At the present time I do not know how many hundreds of sects we have in India and several fresh ones are coming into existence every year. It seems that the religious activity of that nation is simply inexhaustible.

Of these various sects, in the first place, there can be made two main divisions, the orthodox and the unorthodox. Those that believe in the Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas, as eternal revelations of truth are called orthodox, and those that stand on other authority, rejecting the Vedas, are the heterodox in India. The chief modern unorthodox Hindu sects are the Jains and the Buddhists. Excepting these, the orthodox Hindu sects comprise nearly the whole of the Hindu population of India at the present time and all admit the authority of the Hindu Scriptures, the Vedas. Some of them declare that the Scriptures are of much higher authority than reason; others, again, say that only that portion of the Scriptures which is rational should be taken and the rest rejected.

They, also, form various sects. These sects were divided into three groups—the Sāṅkhyas, the Naiyāyikas and the Mīmāṃsakas. Of these three groups two, the Sāṅkhyas and the Naiyāyikas, although they existed as philosophical schools, failed to form any sect. The one sect that now really covers India is that of the later Mīmāṃsakas, or the Vedāntists. Their philosophy is called Vedāntism. All the various philosophies are based on the Vedāntas, the Hindu Scriptures, but the monists took the name to themselves as a speciality, because they wanted to base the whole of their theology and philosophy upon the Vedas and nothing else, and in the course of time they prevailed, and all the various sects of India that now exist can be referred to some form of these Vedāntists. Yet these Vedāntists are not unanimous in their opinions.

We find now that there are three principal variations among the sects. On one point they all agree, and that is that they all believe in God. All these Vedāntists also believe the Vedas to be the revealed word of that God, not exactly in the same sense, perhaps, as the Christians or the Mahomedans believe, or the Buddhists, but in a very peculiar sense. Their idea is that the Vedas are an expression of the knowledge of God, and, as God, is eternal. His knowledge is eternally with Him, and so are the Vedas eternal. There is another common ground of belief; the belief in the creation in cycles; that the whole of this creation is appearing and disappearing; it is projected and becomes grosser and grosser, and that at the end of an incalculable period of time the whole thing becomes finer and dissolves, and subsides, and then comes a period of rest. Again, it begins to appear. They admit one material, which they call *ākāśa*, something like the present ether theory of the scientists, and a power which they call *prāṇa*. About this *prāṇa* they declare that by its vibration all the universe is produced. When a cycle ends, all this manifestation of nature becomes finer and finer and dissolves back to that *ākāśa*, that ether, which cannot be seen or felt, yet out of which everything is manufactured. All the forces that we see in nature, either as gravitation, or attraction, or repulsion, or as thought, as feeling, as nervous motion—all these, various forces resolve into that *prāṇa* and the vibration of that *prāṇa* ceases; in that state it remains until the beginning of the next cycle. *Prāṇa* then begins to vibrate, and that vibration acts upon the *ākāśa*, and all these forms are thrown out in regular succession.

The first sect about whom I want to speak to you is that which we style in India the "Dualists." The Dualists are those who believe that God, who is the Creator of the universe and its Ruler, is eternally separate from nature, eternally separate from the human soul. The souls, according to all the different theories, are eternal. God is eternal; nature is eternal; so are all souls. Nature and the souls become manifested and change, but God remains the same. According to the Dualists, again, this God is personal; in that He has qualities, not that he has body. No sect believes that God has body, only that He has human attributes; He is merciful; He is just; He is powerful; He is almighty; He can be approached; He can be prayed to; He can be loved; He loves in return, and so forth. In one word, He is a human God, only infinitely greater than man; He has none of the evil qualities which men have. "He is the repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities;" that is their definition. This God is creating this universe out of nature. He cannot create without materials, and nature is the material, out of which He creates this whole universe. Some of the Dualists are what they call the "Atomists," who believe that this

nature is nothing but an infinite number of atoms, and God's will acting upon these atoms, creates. The Vedāntists deny the atomic theory; they say this theory is perfectly illogical. Supposing there were atoms, according to the theory atoms must be indivisible. They are like geometrical points, without parts or magnitude, but something without parts or magnitude, if multiplied an infinite number of times, will remain the same. Anything that has no parts will never make something that has parts; any number of zeros added together will not make one single whole number. So, if these atoms are such that they have no parts or magnitude, out of such atoms the creation of the universe is simply impossible. Therefore, according to the Vedāntic dualists, there is this nature, which they call indiscrete or undifferentiated, and out of that God creates this universe. The vast mass of Indian people are dualists. Human nature ordinarily cannot conceive of anything higher than this. We find ninety per cent. of the population of this earth of ours who believe in any religion are dualists. All the religions of Europe and Western Asia are dualistic; they have to be; they cannot think of anything which is not concrete. Man naturally likes to cling to that which his intellect can grasp. That is to say, he can only conceive of higher spiritual ideas by bringing them down to his own level. He can only grasp abstract thoughts by making them concrete. This is the religion of the mass of mankind all over the world. They believe in a God who is entirely separate from them, as it were, a great king, a high, mighty monarch. At the same time they make Him purer than the monarchs of the earth; they give Him all the good qualities and remove the evil qualities from Him, as if it were ever possible for good to exist without evil; as if there could be any conception of light without a conception of darkness.

With all dualistic theories the first difficulty to present itself would be, How is it possible that, under the rule of a just and merciful God, the repository of an infinite number of good qualities, there can be so many evils in this world? This question has arisen in all dualistic religions, but the Hindus never invented a Satan as an answer to it. All of these sects, with one accord, lay the blame on man himself, and it was easy for them to do this. How? Because, as I have just now told you, they do not believe that souls were created out of nothing. We see in this life that we shape and can form all our future: every one of us, every day, is trying to shape to-morrow. To-day we fix the fate of to-morrow; to-morrow we will fix the fate of the day after to-morrow, and so on. It is quite logical that this reasoning can be pushed backward, too. If, by our own deeds, we shape our destiny in the future, why not apply the same rule to the past? If, in an infinite chain, a certain number of links, repeated alternately, eternally recur, then, if one of these groups be explained, we can explain the whole chain. So, in this infinite length of time, if we can cut off one portion and explain that portion and understand it, then, if it be true that nature is uniform, the same explanation must apply to the whole chain of time. If it be true that we are working out our own destiny here within this short space of time, if it be true that everything must have a cause as we see it now, it must also be true that that which we are now is the effect of the whole of the past; therefore, no other person is necessary to shape the destiny of mankind but man himself. The evils that are in this world are caused by none else but ourselves. We have caused all this evil; and, just as we constantly see misery resulting from evil actions, so we can also see that much of the existing misery in the world is the effect of past wickedness in man. Man alone, therefore, according to this theory, is

responsible; God is not to blame; He the externally merciful Father is not to blame at all. "We reap that we sow."

Another peculiar doctrine is that every soul must eventually come to salvation. No one will be lost. Through various vicissitudes, through various sufferings and enjoyments, in the end, each one of them will come out. Come out of what? The one common idea of all Hindu sects is that all souls have to get out of this universe. Neither that universe which we now see and feel or even that which we can imagine, is the right, the real one, because both are mixed up, with good and evil. According to the dualists, there is beyond this universe one where there is only happiness and only good and, what is much dearer to them, where there will be no more necessity of being born and reborn, of living and dying. No more death there; no more disease. It will be eternal happiness, where they will be in the presence of God for all time and enjoy God forever. They believe that all beings, from the lowest worm up to the highest angels and gods, will all, sooner or later, come to that world where there will be no more misery. But this world will never stop; it goes on infinitely, although moving in waves and falls. Although moving in cycles, it never ends. The number of souls that are to be saved, that are to be perfected is infinite. Some are in plants; some are in lower animals; some are in men; some are in gods, but all of them, even the highest gods, are imperfect, are in bondage. What is the bondage? The necessity of being born and the necessity of dying. Even the highest gods die. What are these gods, again? They mean certain states, certain offices. For instance, Indra, the king of gods, means a certain office; some soul which was very high has gone to fill that post in this cycle, and after this cycle he will be born again as man and come down and the man who is very good in this cycle will go and fill that post in the next cycle. So with all these gods; they are certain offices which have been filled alternately by millions and millions of souls, who, after filling that office, all came down and became men. Those who do good works in this world, help others, but with an eye to reward, hoping to reach heaven or to get praise of their fellowmen, must, when they die, have the benefit, the reward of these good works, so they become these gods. But that is not salvation; salvation never will come through this hope of reward. Whatever man desires the Lord gives him that. Men desire power; they desire prestige; they desire enjoyments as gods, and they get these desires fulfilled, but no effect of work can be eternal; the power of any work will be finished after a certain length of time; it may be long, but after that it will be finished, and these gods must fall down again and become men and will be given one more chance for liberation. The lower animals will come up and become men, become gods, perhaps, again become men, or go back to animals, until will come the time when they will get rid of all this desire for enjoyment, this thirst for life, this clinging on to the "me and mine." This "me and mine," according to the Hindu sects, is the very root of all the evil in this world. If you ask a dualist whose child this will be if it is not mine, he will say, "It is God's;" if my property is not mine, "It is God's." Everything should be held as God's.

Now, these dualistic sects in India are great vegetarians, great preachers of non-killing of animals. But their idea about it is quite different from that of the Buddhist. If you ask a Buddhist, "Why do you preach against killing any animal?" he says, "We have no right to take any life," and if you ask a dualist, "Why do you not kill any animal?" he says, "Because it is the Lord." So the

dualist says that this "me and mine" is to be applied to God and God alone: He is the only "me," and everything is His. When a man has come to that state that he has no "me and mine," when everything is given up to the Lord, when he loves everybody and is ready even to give up his life for a little animal, without any desire for reward, then his heart will be purified, and when the heart has been purified then into that heart will come the love of God, which is inherent in every soul. This God is the very centre of attraction for every soul, and the dualist says, "If you take a needle and cover it up with clay, that needle will not be attracted by a magnet, but as soon as the clay has been washed off, the needle will be attracted by the magnet." God is the magnet, and the human soul is the needle, and his evil works the dirt and dust that cover it. As soon as the soul is clear it will come by its natural attraction to God and remain with Him forever, but will remain eternally separate from God. Each soul, if it wishes, can take any form; will be able to make a hundred bodies if it wishes or to have no body at all, if it so desires. It will be almost almighty, except that it will be unable to create; that belongs to God alone. None, however perfect, can manage the affairs of this universe; that belongs to God. But all souls, when they become perfect, become happy forever and live eternally, with God. This is the dualist's statement.

One other idea the dualists preach. They protest against the idea of praying to God. "Lord, give me this and give me that." They think that should not be done. If man must ask some material gift he should ask inferior beings for that; ask one of these gods, or the angels or a perfected being for such things. God is only to be loved. It is almost a blasphemy to pray to God, "Lord, give me this and give me that." According to the dualists, therefore, what a man wants sooner or later he will get, by praying to one of the gods, but if he wants salvation he must worship God. This is the religion of the masses of India.

Above them are what we call the qualified non-dualists, with whom the real Vedānta philosophy begins. They make the statement that the effect is never different from the cause; the effect is but the cause reproduced in another form. If this universe is the effect and God the cause, it must be God Himself—it cannot be anything but that. If any nature exists separate from God Himself, it also will be infinite; so will be time and space. Thus multiplied, there will be millions of infinite and independent existences, which is not reasonable. They start, therefore, with the assertion that God is both the efficient and the material cause of this universe; that He Himself is the Creator, and He Himself is the material out of which the whole of nature is projected. The word which is "creation" in your language is, in Sanskrit, exactly "projection," because there is no sect in India which believes in creation, as it is regarded in the West; a something coming out of nothing. It seems at one time there were a few that had some such idea, but they were very quickly silenced. At the present time I do not know of any sect that believes this. What we mean by creation is projection of that which already existed. Now, this whole universe, according to this sect, is God Himself. He is the material of this universe. We read from the Vedas. "As the *āṇandābhi*, spider, takes the thread out of his own body and draws it in, even so this whole universe has come out of that Being.

If the effect is the cause reproduced, the question is, How do we find this material, dull, unintelligent universe produced as the manifestation of God, who is not material, who is eternal intelligence? How, if the cause is pure and perfect, is the effect quite different? What do these

qualified non-dualists say? Theirs is a very peculiar theory. They say that these three existences, God, and nature, and the soul, are One. God is, as it were, the soul; and nature and souls are the body of God. Just as I have a body and I have a soul, so this whole universe and my soul also are the body of God, and God is the soul of my soul. Thus God is the material cause of the universe. The body may be changed—may be young or old, strong or weak—but that does not change the soul at all. It is the same eternal existence, manifesting through the body. Bodies fall off one after another, but the soul does not change. Even so this whole universe is the body of God, and in that sense it is God. But the change in this universe does not affect God. Out of this material He creates this universe, and at the end of a cycle His body becomes finer, it contracts, and at the beginning of another cycle it becomes expanded again, and out of it evolve all these different worlds.

Now, both the dualists and the qualified non-dualists admit that the soul is by its nature pure, but through its own deeds it is made impure. The qualified non-dualists express it more beautifully than the dualists, by saying that the soul's purity and perfection become contracted and again become manifest, and that what we are now trying to do is to re-manifest the intelligence, the purity, the power which is natural to the soul. Souls have a multitude of qualities, but not that of almightiness or all-knowingness. This is the nature of the soul. It has become contracted through past misdeeds; every wicked deed contracts the nature of the soul, and every good deed expands the nature of the soul, and these souls are all part of God. "As from a mass of fire millions of sparks fly, of the same nature, the same ingredients, yet not the same, so even from this infinite Being, God, these souls have come. Each has the same nature, yet not the same." Each has the same goal. The God of the qualified non-dualists is also the Personal God, the repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities, only He is interpenetrating everything in the universe. He is immanent in everything and everywhere, and where the Scriptures say that God is everything they say that that means that God is interpenetrating everything, not that God has become the wall, but that God is in the wall. There is not a particle, not an atom in the universe where He is not, both internal and external. The souls are all limited; they are not omnipresent; each soul is very, very limited, but they get expansion of their powers and become perfect. No more is there birth and death for these souls; they live with God forever.

Now we come to the Advaitist, the last, and what we think the fairest flower of philosophy and religion that any country in any age has produced, where human thought attains its highest expression and even goes beyond the mystery which seems to be impenetrable. This is the non-dualistic Vedantism. It is too abstruse, too elevated, to be the religion of the masses. Even in India, its birth-place, where it has been ruling supreme for the last three thousand years, it is not able to permeate the masses. As we go on we will find that it is difficult for even the most thinking man and woman in any country to understand Advaitism. We have made ourselves so weak; we have made ourselves so low. We may make great claims, but we naturally want to lean on somebody else. We are like little, weak plants, always wanting a support. How many times I am asked for a "comfortable religion;" very few ask for the truth. Fewer still dare to lean on the truth, and fewest of all dare follow truth in its practical bearings. It is not their fault; it is all the weakness in the brain. Any new thought, especially of a high

kind, creates a disturbance, wants to make a new channel as it were, in the brain matter, and that unhinges the system; throws men off their balance. Then come a hundred sorts of surroundings, a huge mass of ancient superstitions, paternal superstition, class superstition, city superstition, country superstition, and beyond this all the vast mass of superstition that is innate in the human being. Yet there are a few brave souls in this world who dare conceive the truth, who dare take it up, and who dare follow it up to the last end.

What does the Advaitist declare? He says, if there is a God, that God must be both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. Not only is He the Creator, but He is also the created. He Himself is this universe. How can that be? God, the pure, the spirit, has become this universe? Yes; apparently. That which all ignorant people see, this universe, does not exist. You and I and all these things we see, what are these? Mere self-hypnotism; there is but One Existence, the Infinite, the ever-existing One. In that Existence we dream all these various dreams. It is the *Atman* beyond all, the Infinite, beyond the known, beyond the knowable; in and through That we see this universe. It is the only reality. It is this table; It is the audience before me; It is the wall; It is everything, minus the name and form. Take the form of the table, take away the name; what remains is that It. The Vedantist does not call It either He or She; these are fictions, delusions of the human brain; there is no sex in the soul. People who are under illusion, who have become like animals, see a woman or a man; living Gods do not see men or women. How can they who are beyond everything have any sex idea? Every one and everything is the *Atman*—the Self—the sexless, the pure, the ever blessed. It is name and form that makes the difference. It is the name, the form, the body, which are material, and they make all this difference. If you take off these two differences of name and form the whole universe is One; there are no two, no three, but One everywhere. You and I are one. There is neither nature, nor God, nor the universe, only that One Infinite Existence, out of which, through name and form, all these are manufactured. How to know the Knower? It cannot be known. How can you see your own Self? You can only reflect yourself. So all this universe is the reflection of that One Eternal Being, the *Atman*, and, as the reflection falls upon good or bad reflectors, good or bad images are cast up. So, in the murderer, the reflector is bad and not the Self. In the saint the reflector is pure. The Self—the *Atman*—is by its own nature pure. It is the same that is reflecting itself from the lowest worm to the highest and most perfect beings, the One Existence of the universe. The whole of this universe is One Unity, One Existence, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. We are looking upon this One Existence in different forms and creating all these images upon it. To the being who has limited himself to the condition of man this world is what he sees. To the being who is on a higher plane of existence it may become like heaven. There is but one Soul in the universe, not two. It neither comes nor goes. It neither reincarnates nor dies, nor is born. How can it? How to die? Where to go? All these heavens and all these earths, and all these places are vain imaginations of the mind. They do not exist; never existed in the past and never will exist in the future.

I am standing here, omnipresent, eternal. Where can I go? Where am I not already? I am reading this book of nature. Page after page I am finishing and turning over, and one dream of life goes away. Another page of life is turned over; another dream of life comes, and it

goes away, rolling and rolling, and when I have finished my play I let it go and stand aside, throw away the book, and the whole thing is finished. What does the Advaitist preach? He dethrones all the gods that ever existed, or ever will exist in the universe and places on that throne the Self of man, the *Atman*, higher than the sun and moon, higher than the heavens, more infinite than this infinite universe itself. No books, no Scriptures, no science, can ever imagine the glory of that Self, that appears as man, the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed, ever exists, or ever will exist. I am to worship, therefore, none but my Self. "I worship my Self," says the Advaitist. Whom to bow down to? I salute my Self. Whom to go to for help? Who can help me, the infinite being of the universe? These are fools' dreams, brain hallucinations; whoever helped any one? Never. Wherever you see a weak man, a dualist, weeping and wailing for help from somewhere above the skies it is because he does not know that the skies also are in him. He wants help from the skies, and the help comes. We see that it comes; but it comes from within, and he mistakes it as coming from without. Sometimes a sick man is lying on his bed, and he hears a tap on the door. He gets up and opens the door. Nobody. He goes back to his bed, and again he hears the tap. He gets up and opens the door. Nobody. At last he finds that it was his own heart beating, which he interpreted as a knock at the door. Thus all this vain search after the gods above, gods of the skies, gods of the water, after it has completed the circle, comes back to the point from which it started—the human soul—and man finds that the God for whom he was searching in every hill and dale, for whom he was seeking in every little brook of water, in every temple, in little churches, in worse heavens, that God whom he was even imagining as sitting in heaven and ruling the world, is his own Self. I am He, and He am I. None but I was the God, and this little I never existed.

Yet, how could that perfect God have been in this delusion? It never was. How could a perfect God have been dreaming? He never dreamed. Truth never dreams. One cloud is there; another comes and pushes it aside and takes its place. Another comes and pushes that one out. The very question where did this illusion arise is absurd. Illusion arises from illusion alone. There will be no illusion as soon as the truth is seen. Illusion always rests upon illusion; it never rested upon God, the Truth, the *Atman*. You are never in the illusion; it is illusion that is in you, before you. "As before the eternal blue sky clouds of various hue and color come, they remain there for a short time and again disappear, leaving it the same blue, eternally standing, even so are you, eternally pure, eternally perfect; you are the veritable gods of the universe; nay, there are not two, there is but One." It is a mistake to say you and I; say "I." It is I who am eating in millions of mouths; how can I be hungry? It is I who am working in an infinite number of hands; how can I be inactive? It is I who am living the life of the whole universe; where is death for me? I am beyond all life, beyond all death. Where to seek for freedom, for I am free by my nature? Who can make me bound, the God of this universe? What are these books for me? These Scriptures of the world are but little maps, wanting to delineate my glory, who am the only existence of the universe. Thus says the Advaitist.

"Know the truth and be free in a moment." All the darkness will vanish. When man has seen himself as one with the infinite Being of the universe, when all separateness has ceased, when all men, all women, all angels, all gods, all animals, all plants, the whole universe has been melted into that oneness then all fear disappears. Whom

to fear? Can I hurt myself? Can I kill myself? Can I injure myself? Do you fear yourself? Then will all sorrow disappear. What can cause me sorrow? I am the One Existence of the universe. Then all jealousies will disappear; of whom to be jealous? Of myself? Then all bad feelings disappear. Against whom will I have this bad feeling? Against myself? There is none in the universe but me. And this is the one way, says the Vedantist, to this knowledge. Kill out this differentiation; kill out this superstition that there are many. "He who, in this world of many, sees that One; he who in this mass of insentiency sees that One Sentient Being; he who in this world of shadow catches that Reality, unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, unto none else."

These are the salient points of the three steps which Indian religious thought has taken in regard to God. We have seen that it began with the Personal, the extra cosmic God. It went from the external to the internal cosmic body, God immanent in the universe, and ended in identifying the Soul itself with that God, and making one unit Soul of all these various manifestations in the universe. This is the last word of the Vedas. It begins with dualism, goes through the qualified monism and ends in the perfect monism. We have seen, also, how very few in this world can come to the last, dare believe in it, and fewer still dare act according to it. Yet we know that therein lies the explanation of all ethics, of all morality and all spirituality of the universe. Why is it that everyone says, "Do good to others?" Where is the explanation? Why is it that all great men have preached the brotherhood of mankind, and greater men have preached the brotherhood of all lives? Why is it so? Because, whether they were conscious of it or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal superstitions, was peering forth the eternal light of the Self, denying all manifoldness, denying that there are two existences in the universe and asserting that the whole universe is but One.

Again, the last word gave us one universe, which, through the senses we see as matter, through the intellect as souls and through the spirit as God. To the man who throws upon himself veils, which the world calls wickedness and evil, this very universe will change and become a hideous place; to another man, who wants enjoyments, this very universe will change its appearance and become a heaven, and to the perfect man the whole thing will vanish and become his own Self.

Now, as society exists at the present time, all these three stages are necessary; the one does not deny the other; one is simply the fulfilment of the other. The Advaitist, the qualified Advaitist, does not say that dualism is wrong; it is a right view, but a lower view. It is not wrong. It is on the way to truth; therefore hurt none; let everybody work out his own vision of this universe, according to his own ideas. Hurt none, injure none, deny the position of none; take man where he stands, and if you can, lend him a helping hand and put him on a higher platform, but do not injure and do not destroy. All will come to truth in the long run, "when all the desires of the heart will be vanquished, then this very mortal will become immortal;" then the very man will become God.

Thought is best, when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights nor pain nor any pleasure—when she has as little as possible to do with the body, and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after true being.—Socrates.

He sees with equal eyes as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;
Atoms or systems into ruin hurld,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.—Pope.