

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upan. I. iii. 6.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

VOL. XIX]

MAY 1914

[No. 214]

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

THE LAW OF LIFE AND DEATH.

All things in nature work according to law. Nothing is excepted. The mind as well as every thing in external nature is governed and controlled by law.

Internal and external nature, mind and matter, are in time and space, and are bound by the law of causation.

The freedom of the mind is a delusion. How can the mind be free when it is controlled and bound by law?

The law of Karma is the law of causation.

We must become free. We are free; the work is to know it. We must give up all slavery, all bondage of whatever kind. We must not only give up our bondage to earth and every thing and everybody on earth, but also to all ideas of heaven and happiness.

We are bound to earth by desire and also to God, heaven, and the angels. A slave is a slave whether to man, to God, or to angels.

The idea of heaven must pass away. The idea of heaven after death where the good live a life of eternal happiness is a vain dream, without a particle of meaning or sense in it. Wherever there is happiness there must follow unhappiness sometime. Wherever

there is pleasure there must be pain. This is absolutely certain, every action has its reaction somehow.

The idea of freedom is the only true idea of salvation—freedom from every thing, the senses, whether of pleasure or pain; from good as well as evil.

More than this even. We must be free from death; and to be free from death, we must be free from life.

Life is but a dream of death.

Where there is life, there will be death; so get away from life if you would be rid of death.

We are ever free if we would only believe it, only have faith enough.

You are the soul, free and eternal, ever free, ever blessed. Have faith enough and you will be free in a minute.

Every thing in time, space and causation is bound. The soul is beyond all time, all space, all causation. That which is bound is nature, not the soul.

Therefore proclaim your freedom and be what you are,—ever free, ever blessed.

Time, space and causation we call Maya.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

IN all systems of spiritual discipline in India, *chittasuddhi* is considered to be the *sine qua non* of a higher life of realisation. In English, this word would mean purity of mind and heart; but our ancient psychology has given to the word "chitta" a distinct well-defined meaning, such as the words "mind" and "heart" lack in English. *Chittasuddhi*, properly speaking, implies that purity which, according to Jesus Christ, imparts to man the blessedness of God-vision.

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This *chittasuddhi* denotes that not only the conscious part of our nature should be pure, but also its subconscious part; and it is this fact which accounts for all the difficulty that confronts us in our attempt to purify our nature. The conscious sphere of our nature is constantly having its colour and complexion changed by subtle tendencies of thought, willing and feeling which work from beyond this conscious sphere, and it is only a highly developed habit of self-analysis that can detect their workings. These subtle tendencies are called *sanskaras* in our Vedantic psychology and their roots are buried deep in that supra-intellectual or subconscious part of our nature from which our conscious nature with its individual peculiarities comes to us determined.

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Now the problem of problems before us in our life of spiritual discipline is as to how this subconscious part of our nature is to be brought under our control. This question of control may appear at first sight to be unnecessary, for it may be argued that the real problem before us is to replace bad *sanskaras* by good ones and for that purpose it is quite sufficient if in the sphere of our conscious life we always strive to form good habits of thought, willing and feeling. These good

habits will naturally develop into good *sanskaras* which will then oust the bad ones from the subconscious part of our nature. This is of course the most usual process which people follow in seeking moral and religious progress. But with all the bad *sanskaras* left on one hand to create constant difficulties, the struggle that this process would naturally involve would be tremendous and long, unless fortunately on the other side of the scale there is the constant guidance of a Guru or preceptor whose vision penetrates into our subconscious life, or unless there is the lasting impetus of a sudden spiritual conversion brought on in some cases by unexpected events in life.

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Over and above, therefore, a constant effort in the sphere of our conscious life to form good *sanskaras*, it is necessary as a general rule to strive to bring under control the subconscious part of our nature, and evidently the first thing to do in that respect is to send the light of the Spirit, that is ceaselessly flooding out through our self-consciousness, back to the subconscious depths of our being. This is the essence of all meditation. Self-consciousness is like the axis round which the globe of our life, both conscious and unconscious, revolves; and the pity of the thing is that this axis radiates the light of the Spirit only at one point at a time, so that when the ordinary conscious pole of this axis is brought under that light, the subconscious pole is quite out of sight and vice versa. Now the supreme problem of spiritual progress consists in acquiring the ability to focus the light of the Spirit through any point in this axis of self-consciousness, for from this to perfect self-control or perfect control over our entire nature is but one step, and this perfect self-control is tantamount to having the super-

conscious vision of that Real Self which appears to Itself, as if in a dream-projection, to be the whole universe of self and not-self.

And as in astronomy the geocentric standpoint changes the whole aspect of the heavens as viewed from the heliocentric standpoint, so the ego-centric point of view in life has converted reality into *maya*; and this stupendous illusory transformation can be most effectively brought home to us, if the whole range of this egoistic malposition be traced out by us with the light of the Spirit. It was thus that Lord Buddha crossed the ocean of *maya* and declared to man that it is egoism and desire that are weaving out between themselves the web of *maya*. In him we find the triumph of meditation in its most unalloyed glory. How sublime too is that Bengali song of Swami Vivekananda* in which he describes the experience of rising step by step in meditation to the superconscious plane! Here also the light of the Spirit, of which our mind at every instant is the vehicle, is gathered in and turned full on the all-pervading self-consciousness; as a result, the whole dream-creation conjured up as it were by the magic wand of self-consciousness fades away as shadows do, and only the radical principle of "I am" remains, announcing itself in peace and joy unspeakable, as the last vestige of ordinary consciousness. At the next step, that superimposition has also vanished and it is all that super-consciousness which passeth all language and understanding.

It is by the practice of this meditation that real control over our nature both conscious and subconscious can be gradually achieved. But though essentially uniform in its inner psychology, meditation varies considerably in its process; and these differences in the process arise partly from differences in the *ishtam*

* Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV. Page 983.

or object of concentration and partly from differences in the religious temperament of different people. Generally speaking, it is for the *Guru* or preceptor to ascertain the process which would suit each disciple, for a real *Guru* must be credited with a clear insight into the whole trend of his disciple's nature and his religious temperament. In India, a whole mass of literature has grown up round these processes of meditation, but still the problem for every religious aspirant must have to be tackled on its own peculiar issues and the personal guidance of a spiritual teacher would be in every case desirable. The old custom of placing oneself under the absolute guidance of a *Guru* has of late been the subject of much discussion and adverse criticism, and obviously this custom in its present degraded form stands in need of reform. For proper light on this important subject, we would refer our readers to Swami Vivekananda's advice in this matter of choosing one's *Guru* given in the course of one* of his lectures on *Bhakti-yoga*.

As we have thought ourselves to be, so we have become. Meditation is, therefore, essentially concerned with thought,—concentrated thought of course, for such only counts in all transformations that our nature undergoes. Now the question is: what would bring about this concentration in thought when we meditate? Sri Krishna in reply to this question said to Arjuna in the *Gita*† that the two conditions are persevering practice and renunciation. The truth of the matter, psychologically speaking, cannot be better expressed. What concentrates thought on an object in our ordinary life is desire in one form or other; and it is by the complex multiplicity of our desires that the light of the Spirit is being held down towards external objects in our ordinary life. These desires react on our

*Complete Works of S. V., Vol. III. Page 516.

† Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita Ch. VI. Verse 35.

consciousness to determine the direction in which this light of the Spirit has to radiate, even during all the time they seem to lie quiescent in the depths of our nature. It is therefore indispensable to gradual progress in meditation, that we steadily develop the spirit of renunciation within us, that is to say, we steadily acquire freedom from the subtle reaction of worldly desires on our consciousness.

In fact there is a peculiar relation between our efforts of concentration in meditation and the whole gamut of our desires and their *sanskaras* or rooted tendencies that find so obstinate a lodgment in our conscious and subconscious nature. Every effort of concentration seems to contest that right of direction over the light of the Spirit which our desires and their *sanskaras* mean to exclusively possess, and thereby it stirs up their whole gamut, so that in the stillness of meditation, we generally find one desire or other sending forth its note most obtrusively. Even in those highest heights of meditation which men like Christ or Buddha scaled before entering Nirvana, the most powerful concentration stirred up *sanskara* in the most vivid and tangible form, from the depths of that nature which they came to share with men. But when the light of the Spirit decisively bends its course back towards its source, desires and *sanskaras* are bound to give up in the long-run their game of obstruction, how presumptuous soever might be the front with which they obtrude themselves at first. In the case of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we have been told how one day in his meditative mood he had the vision of *Pâpapurusha* bidding adieu to his nature for ever, this *Pâpapurusha* being that personal form of the very principle of worldly desires and *sanskaras*, which in the conception of Hindu worshippers performing *puja* according to orthodox rites has endured as a reality for centuries.

This collateral but important function of meditation by which our evil desires and tendencies are made to start up from their quiescent but dangerous position to be gradually fought out of existence forms the principal topic of our notes today. For it is by virtue of this function of meditation, that we are enabled to gain growing control over our conscious and subconscious nature, so that *chitta-suddhi* remains for us only a question of time. So over and above a constant endeavour in the sphere of our conscious life to form good *sanskaras*, it is necessary to acquire a well-developed habit of meditation, no matter which process is recommended to the beginner by his spiritual guide. *Japam*, or repetition of the name of one's *ishtam*, is only a preliminary discipline that must have to lead one up to real meditation, for it may quite be possible for a man to have his brain and nervous centres in a manner possessed and dominated by the mere sound or letters of the *Japa-mantram* without his having the spiritual depths of his nature transfigured as in real meditation. Dancing and singing with *khol* and *kartal* as accompaniments may also very easily degenerate into purely neurotic feats, if they are indulged in by persons who do not seek to impart a true inwardness to their religious impulses by the practice of meditation and other disciplines.

Meditation has naturally got its physical basis, as human life itself has got one. This physical part of the whole activity we call meditation stands of course in definite relation to the super-physical part of it. As a result of studying this definite relation, such practices as *âsana* (posture) *pranayama* (control of breathing) etc. have been laid down as helps to meditation. But we should always remember that we are constitutionally liable to yield ourselves up to our physical nature and it very often may happen that in our eagerness to give to the physical basis of meditation its due, we unconsciously lose our

way and suffer ourselves to be immured unduly within its precincts. The practice of *sankirtan*, or such dancing and singing as referred to above, was enjoined by Sri Chaitanya as an aid to the development of our spiritual emotions. Such music may of course serve as an impetus towards concentration of our emotions. But if we do not take the trouble of spiritualising, deepening and chastening these emotions through proper discipline, and simply count upon such external physical stimulation as vigorous dancing and music to do that work for us, we are sure to acquire, instead of spirituality, only a morbid habit of physical and nervous exaltation or exhilaration, that leaves our nature,

both conscious and subconscious, still under the sway of our old *sanskaras*, only perhaps heightening in us a sense of our worthiness as deserving to be counted among saints! We speak of this evil effect of indulging in *sankirtan* as the cheapest process of acquiring spirituality, simply because religious movements are being now-a-days set afoot in our country apparently with a view to hold up *sankirtan* as the epitome of all the processes of spiritual discipline. We should always remember that *chittasuddhi* with its fruits of all-embracing love, renunciation and spiritual wisdom is the *sine qua non* of spirituality: there is no other way.



RENUNCIATION.

THERE is a passionate enthusiasm abroad in modern times to enjoy life with all that it implies for a modern man. In the midst of this universal scramble for the good things of the world, it is but natural that the ideal of renunciation would fall into discount and its real significance would be diluted away by self-complacent interpretations. It is a deeply ingrained tendency of man to philosophise to order, that is, to the dictation of the inmost inclination of his nature, and quite a good lot of philosophisings has been forthcoming in modern times from philosophers as well as poets to put renunciation out of favour.

There is a school of thought which maintains that this whirligig of life is going all right and it is bound to take us one day to absolute perfection. So all that is required of us is to surrender ourselves to its gyration, holding fast to the latest ideas and facts evolved by the same. Renunciation to these people, therefore, involves a woeful misdirection of life.

There are poets and æstheticians who declare that the whole path of our life in this

world, as we find it, is bestrown with the roses of melting sentiments, such as are calculated to lift our souls up to an all-pervading vision of the All-Beautiful. So gather these roses as along the path of life you go, for with these alone our God is to be worshipped. Renunciation, as preached in olden times, denudes life of its beauties and lessons. It means a morbid impoverishment of the soul.

There are students of eugenics again who naturally appear to be the sworn opponents of all renunciatory institutions. Their contention is that nothing antagonises the development of talent in society more than monkish renunciation.

There is yet another party of devotional enthusiasts who maintain that love of God renders renunciation unnecessary. Let pleasures and enjoyments come and surround life in their fairy ring, for love of God will act like a charm to impart immunity from all grovelling attachments. Seek never therefore the weakling's heaven of freedom from the cycle of birth and death, for, regardless of that cycle, is it not far better to be strong to

serve the Beloved in life after life? What fiction of liberation can be more glorious than the ineffable bliss of that eternal service?

People in modern times, swayed, unconsciously it may be, by a deep predilection for worldly life with all its promises of enjoyment, find in this way good occasion to rejoice that a very strong case has been made out against the antiquated ideal of renunciation; and *Sannyas* or monasticism, long considered in India to be the apex of all achievements in human life, has come to be looked upon as a sort of queer aberration towards an exploded theory of life.

There can never be, of course, a consensus of opinion as to the best theory of life, but the Aryan society, as it existed in ancient India, attained a wonderful stability of life, simply because it developed among its members a high degree of community in ideals, and the most universal feature of the theory of life that prevailed in this society consisted in the supreme merit that society attached to the ideal of renunciation. Who would make bold to say that it was suicidal folly on the part of this society to extol renunciation? Is it possible that society would so intently cherish an ideal of which the practice is fatal to its interests? Modern eugenics is still in its lisping infancy, and moves in the leading-strings of materialism. It can scarcely fancy any surer way of transmitting excellence from man to man than by the desirable father begetting the desirable son! Study history and you will find that the honour of being the greatest benefactors to society in India through all the centuries of varying fortunes and circumstances, such as would have tired any other society out of existence, belongs to men who renounced the threefold *Eshana*, namely, mammon, progeny and happiness in after life. But such is the infatuated partiality of some of our educated countrymen for Western eugenics that one writer in a vernacular contemporary heaves a pathetic

sigh over the pity of Sri Chaitanya not exercising his marital right just to propagate a noble breed of saviours for our unfortunate society!

Leaving aside the materialistic impudence of modern eugenics or of the modern political theory of life and society, if we examine the objections urged against the ideal of renunciation by the other parties referred to above, we find that they fail to appreciate this ideal simply because their philosophy is defective. The Hegelian doctrine of perfection as the sure goal of the world-movement in life and thought is a delectable figment of an over-idealistic brain. You cannot reach the infinite by summing up finite figures in mathematics. Everything that lends itself to measurement in time or space forfeits all affinity in kind to the infinite. The infinite in space and time is a contradiction in terms and should rather be called the big indefinite. The Infinite can never manifest Itself through time, space or causation in the sense in which the word, manifestation, is understood by us. The Absolute can never reproduce Itself through relations. No verbal jugglery, however sublime might be its effect upon minds aspiring to be philosophical, can explain the Absolute to be absolute only on the virtue of transcending all relations as a *necessary* condition for its self-realisation. Nobody can make the Absolute depend for its self-realisation on any system of relations which it must needs transcend, as neither can anybody make the Infinite depend for self-realisation on an indefinite extension of finitude. The Infinite and Absolute is a perfectly self-dependent reality and can never have any necessity for self-realisation through the relative and finite. Such self-realisation is quite an impossibility, a contradiction in terms. If the question arises as to how we are then to account for the existence of the world, as to how, admitting that the world exists, we are to relate it to the Absolute, the answer is that the world as we find it cannot *really* exist and therefore,

we need not *really* relate it to Absolute. The fact of our finding this world to be real to us, to be something other than the Absolute, the only existent reality, is *Maya*, and this *Maya* cannot be explained, for all explanations are activities within the sphere of this very *Maya*. The moment you try to explain the fact of the world existing besides the Absolute, you have to relate the Absolute to the world and thereby contradict your own theory of the Absolute. Those who seek to establish by reasoning their theory of absolute perfection being the goal of this world-movement contradict themselves in this way.

Now then the problem for us to solve is: how are we to regard this world so long as we have got to live in it. The truth has been made known to us by sages who have realised it. We ourselves find that however deeply rooted in our consciousness may lie the impulse to posit an Infinite or an Absolute, it is impossible to find the same in this actual world of time, space and causation. Here we have to deal absolutely with limitations. Space dictates a limit to everything we may see or imagine. Time and causation float every reality here on a stream of continual transformation. If we are then obliged to conceive of something changeless and unlimited existing elsewhere, we miserably fail to establish its existence as a fact besides the fact of this world. So every bold seeker of truth is bound to accept the ultimate conclusion of the Vedanta, namely, **एकमेवाद्वितीयं**, 'only the Absolute exists,' and the fact of our seeing the world instead of being the Absolute is *Maya*.

So long as, therefore, we have got to live in this world, we must constantly remember that we are living in *Maya* and the supreme end of our life is to transcend it by realising the truth about ourselves and this world. Next arises the question as to how to transcend this *Maya* which is revolving within and with-

out ourselves as an ubiquitous wheel of ignorance and self-hypnotism. Yielding oneself up to this whirl of *Maya* has been called *pravritti* in Vedanta and moving off from this whirl has been called *nivritti*. The word "renunciation" denotes this *nivritti*, and is therefore of the essence of all systems of spiritual discipline, whether through *Jnana* (wisdom), *Bhakti* (love), *Karma* (work) or thought-concentration.

When the right nature of things in *Maya* has been once understood, *nivritti* stands out before us as the sanest and best attitude for our minds to assume, if we are bent upon realising the real Truth and salvation. But it is not so easy or common for people to be really willing to move away from the whirl of *Maya*. Desire for enjoyable results, attachment to various objects of happiness, expectation of higher life possible only in *Maya*, and so on, are deeply ingrained in our nature and it is seldom that we find this nature actuated by a real, consistent, yearning after *nivritti*. But it is one thing for a man to be unable to feel within himself the irresistible promptings of *nivritti*, and quite another for him to be brauding such promptings in others as insane aberrations of the moral and spiritual nature. It is like calling the grapes sour.

And just as it is a simple matter of prudence for a man in the river to swim right across to the bank and then walk up to a point which he wants to reach, instead of swimming up the river against the stream to reach that point on the bank, so a man whose soul is once aflame with the spirit of *nivritti* naturally finds it expedient to fly off from all those complications and conditions of life which tend to perpetually entangle him in *Maya* and then extricate himself from its whirl from a proper position of advantage. Such a mood of renunciation comes naturally to everyone who is serious and earnest in his spirit of *nivritti*. This logic of *nivritti* being

quite self-evident, the path of *nivritti* has been identified in our ancient scriptures with the path of *Sannyas*.

But does a man really become a loser by yielding to such a mood of renunciation? By no means, we say. All that is lovely and noble in our domestic or social life owes its existence not to anything that belongs to the external economy of our social or family life, but to the intrinsic loveliness and nobility of that nature which finds expression from within us in domestic and social relations without. It is again a false philosophy which asserts that that nature has to be *realised* in these external relations, for it is already *real* before we express and experience it through those relations. It is a false philosophy, borrowed now-a-days from the West, which declares our life in this world to consist in reducing the unreal and abstract to the real and concrete. According to the Vedanta, our life in this world in all its aspects consists in striving to symbolise, naturally with ill-success at every instant, that reality which alone exists and which the very striving to symbolise obscures out of sight. Through all the wealth of relations in our life, we simply symbolise unconsciously the reality that lies deep within ourselves, so that if in our whole-hearted quest for that reality we cease to symbolise, we do not lose that reality, but we simply give up a vain though enjoyable attempt in preference for the only really fruitful attempt that is possible in life, namely, the attempt to attain to reality. So we see that all the tall talk about misdirection or impoverishment of life which some poets and theorists indulge in against the idea of renunciation are based purely on a false view of life and its relations.

Lastly, to those devotional enthusiasts who would cling on to life in this world for the sake of those opportunities of service to God which it offers, we would say that we pity the impotency of a love which labours under the *necessity* of depending on something outside

for the perfection of its self-realisation or self-gratification. The perfection of love consists in the perfect union with the Beloved, in the bliss of which experience all differentiation between the lover and the Beloved becomes submerged. The impulses to serve belong to a lower stage and are calculated only to symbolise the love already developed. They have no business to obtrude themselves when Divine union is the all-absorbing experience to the devotee. Only in the case of those God-men who are in possession of, and therefore are always within the reach of the highest consummation of love, service through life in this world becomes a *Leela* or sport with the Beloved. In the case of others, service as a necessity is an imperfection and bondage to be transcended by experiences of union. So the path of love does not render renunciation unnecessary, any the more than the path of *Jnana* or wisdom does, for concentration of life on the Reality sought after in each path is equally a necessity, and the whirl of *Maya* ceaselessly creating entanglements of desire and obligation is equally distracting in each path.

Nivritti is really the logic that underlies every course of spiritual discipline, and the plainest fact about *nivritti* is the attitude and mood of renunciation. But it is hard to snap completely asunder the deep-rooted ties of attachment to persons and things with which *Maya* has brought us together, and some seekers after spirituality strive to make their relations with such persons and things symbolic while struggling to realise the Reality. This, needless to say, divides their energies and obscures their insight, but their earnestness can afford to bear with all that and the matter ends there. But where the matter does not end exactly there, these self-complacent people break out in denunciations against what they call monkish renunciation, and we have weighed in the balance the value of their objections.



EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XIV.

Greenacre Inn,
Eliot, Maine.
26th June, 1894.

Dear—

* * This is a big inn and farm house where the Christian Scientists are holding a session. Last spring in New York I was invited by the lady projector of the meeting to come here, and here I am. It is a beautiful and cool place, no doubt, and many of my old friends of Chicago are here. Mrs. —, Miss —, and several other ladies and gentlemen live in tents which they have pitched on the open ground by the river. They have a lively time and sometimes all of them wear what you call your scientific dress the whole day. They have lectures almost every day. One Mr. — from Boston is here; he speaks everyday, it is said, under spirit control. The Editor of — has settled herself down here. She is conducting religious services and holding classes to heal all manner of diseases, and very soon I expect them to be giving eyes to the blind, and the like! After all, it is a queer gathering. They do not care much about social laws and are quite free and happy. Mrs. — is quite brilliant and so are many other ladies.A very cultured lady from Detroit is going to take me to an Island 15 miles into the sea. I hope we shall have a nice time.I may go over to Amisquan from here, I suppose. This is a beautiful and nice place and the bathing is splendid. — has made a bathing dress for me and I am having as good a time in the water as a duck—this is delicious even for the denizens of mud Ville. * *

There is here Mr. — of Boston who is one of the great lights of your sect. But he objects to belong to the sect of Mrs. Whirlpool. So he calls himself a mental healer of meta-

physical—chemico—physico—religiosio—what not! Yesterday there was a tremendous cyclone which gave a good 'treatment' to the tents. The big tent under which they had the lectures, had developed so much spirituality, under the 'treatment,' that it entirely disappeared from mortal gaze and about two hundred chairs were dancing about the grounds under spiritual ecstasy! Mrs. — gives a class every morning; and Mrs. — is jumping all about the place, they are all in high spirits. I am especially glad for —, for they have suffered a good deal last winter and a little hilarity would do her good. You will be astounded with the liberty they enjoy in the camps, but they are very good and pure people there—a little erratic and that is all.

I shall be here till Saturday next.....

* * The other night the camp people went to sleep beneath a pine tree under which I sit every morning *à la* Hindu and talk to them. Of course I went with them and we had a nice night under the stars, sleeping on the lap of mother earth and I enjoyed every bit of it. I cannot describe to you that night's glories—after a year of brutal life that I have lead to sleep on the ground, to meditate under the tree in the forest! The inn people are more or less well-to-do, and the camp people are healthy, young, *sincere* and holy men and women. I teach them *Shivoham*, *Shivoham*, and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as they are and brave beyond all bounds. And so I am happy and glorified. Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything, hanging by their tent strings to keep them from being blown down, and standing on the majesty of their souls—these brave ones—it would have done your

hearts good—I will go a hundred miles to see the likes of them. Lord bless them. I hope you are enjoying your nice village life. Never be anxious for a moment. I *will* be taken care of, and if not, I *will* know my time has come and shall pass out.

“Sweet One! Many people offer to You many things. I am poor—but I have the body, mind and soul. I give them over to You. Deign to accept, Lord of the Universe, and refuse them not.” So have I given over my life and soul once for all. One thing—they are a dry sort of people here—and as to that very few in the whole world are there that are not. They do not understand “Madhava,” the Sweet One. They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table turning, witchcraft, etc., etc. Nowhere have I heard so much about “love, life and liberty” as in this country, but nowhere is it less understood. Here God is either a terror or a healing power, vibration, and so forth. Lord bless their souls! And these parrots talk day and night of love and love and love!

Now, good dreams, good thoughts for you. You are good and noble. Instead of materialising the spirit i. e., dragging the spiritual to the material plane as these folks do, convert the matter into spirit, catch a glimpse at least, every day, of that world of infinite beauty and peace and purity—the spiritual, and try to live in it day and night. Seek not, touch not with your toes even, anything that is uncanny. Let your souls ascend day and time like an “unbroke string” into the feet of the Beloved whose throne is in your own hearts and let the rest take care of themselves, i. e., the body and everything else. Life is evanescent, a fleeting dream; youth and beauty fade;—say day and night, “Thou art my father, my mother, my husband, my love, my lord, my God—I want nothing but Thou, nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Thou in me, I in Thee, I am Thee, Thou art me.” Wealth goes, beauty vanishes, life flies, powers

fly—but the Lord abideth for ever, love abideth for ever. If there is glory in keeping the machine in good trim, it is more glorious to withhold the soul from suffering with the body—that is the only demonstration of your being “not matter” by letting the matter alone.

Stick to God! Who cares what comes to the body or to anything else. Through the terrors of evil, say,—my God, my love! Through the pangs of death, say,—my God, my love! Through all the evils under the sun, say,—my God, my love! Thou art here, I see Thee. Thou art with me, I feel Thee. I am Thine, take me. I am not of the world’s but Thine, leave not then me. Do not go for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great chance. What, seekest thou the pleasures of the world?—He is the fountain of all bliss. Seek for the highest, aim at that highest and you *shall* reach the highest.

Yours with all blessings,

Vivekananda.

IN THE HOLY LAND.

(Continued from page 73.)

JERUSALEM.

To the stranger of another race within her gates, Jerusalem, at first sight, is grey and prosaic, far different from what one has learnt to expect: one feels a certain lack of enthusiasm, a lack of the pulses quickening: it is undoubtedly disappointing. And as it is with the city, so it is with the appearance of the country beyond it—an impression of ancientness and desolation! It is not, however, inconsistent with this view to add that little by little a sense of beauty, a reverence, a something about it that the word atmosphere only feebly expresses, grows upon one, which is subtle enough to thrust its delicate pressure through the crust of one’s personal-

ity, a mystic charm that once experienced is never forgotten. Jerusalem has the individuality and the dignity of a city where great things have happened and over which many, many centuries have passed: a city which time and again has borne the shock of invasion, and revives in us memories of its fiery superstitions and dim searchings after God before many altars; a city where localities and natural features immortalised on the page of history still remain to mark and recall the incidents of the passage of one Great Figure.

Palestine is a land of ruins and Jerusalem is a city of ruins. On penetrating below the surface, the very soil on which the city stands is found to be composed of the remains of houses, pillars and aqueducts, reaching to a depth of thirty or forty feet below the foundations of the existing houses. The old Jerusalem is buried in the overthrow of her seventeen captures. The ancient city must have been magnificent in the days both of the Davidic and Herodian periods, and it is probable no city of the East or West equalled its external splendour. It owed nothing of its importance to position on a main line of traffic; the importance that it had was owing to its strength as a fortress and to its significance as the royal residence and the national sanctuary.

The present city is entirely enclosed by walls, intersected at various points by gates. A great part of its interior is occupied with mosques, churches and convents. The tall houses rising in straight upward lines, though built of stone with flat roofs, from which numerous small domes rise in most cases, are almost all windowless on the side next to the streets, which accordingly are lanes with dead walls on each side of them. Red-tiled roofs are superseding the picturesque domes of the older habitations, for they are cheaper.

To the wanderer in this land, it is one of the charms of Eastern travel that the manners and customs of the people are still

substantially the same as in Bible times. I observed and verified for myself the customs so often alluded to in the Bible and many a Biblical passage which, read at home appeared difficult of comprehension, became illuminated almost as soon as I set foot on the shores of Palestine. One has but to close one's eyes and regard any bit of it with the mind's eye and there at once rises up before one a great procession of human personages, and a host of remembrances of long-forgotten fragments of history rush into one's mind.

With the influence of European and Jewish settlements, the ancient civilisation is sorely threatened and the old order is changing, but it avails nothing to bewail a change which the march of modernism has made inevitable.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

In the heart of the city stands the most sacred church in Christendom, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the modern representative of the churches erected (320-335 A. D.) by the Emperor Constantine, in honour of places which were believed to have been the scene of the life and place of entombment of Jesus Christ. But the plan of the original Basilica has been mutilated out of all shape by the desecrations and restorations it has undergone as Jerusalem passed from the Roman to the Greek, from Persian to Frank, from Frank to Saracen, from Saracen to Egyptian, and from Egyptian to Turk! Of the present structure, no portion is probably older than the period of the Crusades. In 1808, a large part of it was damaged by fire, but it was after a time restored.

We approached the church by an open court paved with limestone, having immediately in front of us the southern facade of the church: to the right and left a series of chapels, and behind us the Greek Convent of Gethsemane. Within the circuit of this wonderful construction lives a population of many hundreds of priests, monks, nuns and pilgrims. Projecting in front of the building

is a massive bell-tower, formerly five stories high, but now reduced to three. The courtyard is occupied by Syrian merchants who squat on the ground, bargaining over the prices of crucifixes, rosaries, sacred pictures and trinkets with pilgrims, who buy these relics to be carried home to the most distant parts of the earth. Arab sweetmeat-sellers, water-sellers, and coffee-makers fill the air with their cries, and the Franciscan with his brown habit, the black-hatted Greek monks and the Turkish soldiers, whose rifles are stacked close at hand, add their element of colour to the scene. Later, one comes to recognise in these very incongruities the attraction of the place, since they arise from the fact that it is a world that comes hither to worship after its various ways.

Arriving at the outer door of the Church, we pass through a sombre archway, and just inside this principal entrance we notice on the left hand a divan upon which the Moham- medan door-keeper sits cross-legged, his head covered by a large green turban, and his eyes following the smoke of his *nârgeeleh*, supremely indifferent, while all the Christian nations of the world pass and repass his divan. The office of door-keeper is hereditary in one of the Arab families of Jerusalem, and formerly a tax was levied on every Christian who entered the building. A Turkish guard, near by, is kept to preserve order. Ever since the year 1187, the church has been in the possession of the Turks.

On entering the edifice the appearance which it presents is one of gloomy grandeur. As you look around the vast interior, the scene seems to be a miscellany of aisles, tombs, chapels, altars, staircases and windows, scattered in bewildering confusion, but overcoming this illusion, we by-and-by come to make out the general arrangement. Some of these localities are appropriated to the exclusive use of one, and some to another of the five bodies of Christians represented there—

namely, the Romish, the Greek, the Armenian, the Syrian, and the Coptic churches. Others, again, are held in common by them all, and used by each in turn. It is not one place of worship but a congeries of places of worship. To the observer it exhibits the sight of all nations and kindreds and languages worshipping, each with its peculiar rites, round which they all believe to be the tomb of their common Lord.

The actual shrine of the Holy Sepulchre is in the centre of the Basilica, covered by a marble mausoleum, and surmounted by a dome somewhat resembling a crown: around it many altars have been added by devout donors. Before this mausoleum, numbers of gold and silver lamps are burning continually and shed a brilliant light, while sweet incenses and fragrant perfumes fill the air. Stooping low, we enter the antechamber by a small door and stand within the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. The Tomb, as it appears to view, is a marble bench 2 ft. high, 6 ft. 4 inches long and 3 ft. wide. Groups of pilgrims pass through with offerings, which they place before the shrines, each murmuring a short prayer, while some, apparently oblivious of their surroundings, press lips and forehead to the cold marble, shedding many tears. There is a simplicity in the worship of men and women alike, all moved by one strong emotion. They slowly depart, still in the attitude of devotion, until the threshold is crossed once more. They then make a round of all the lesser shrines and holy spots, and in this repetition of emotion, we have a very real revelation of the Russian temperament, this ever-present consciousness of a great tradition. Perhaps there is no more impressive sight than the Russian pilgrims. The Russian character is bound up with religion and especially is this the case with the peasants. The Greek church is profoundly sacramental in its feeling, in its teachings, in its practice. The child-like faith and intense religious

fervour of these peasant-pilgrims are touching to the beholder, as he sees them in their sheep-skins with unkempt hair and beard, kneeling on the ground, their attention intensely concentrated, praying for the light of the Lord with the shining eyes of ecstatic believers who have lost themselves in a moment of rapt and self-forgetting devotion and immobility.

I punctiliously followed the course usually made by the pilgrims, and passed through the numerous chapels, presenting in successive scenes, minor sites and shrines,—a curious ceremonial which enabled me to see, realise and understand what it was, that has for ages charmed the eyes and moved the souls of thousands of human beings. It was instructive and interesting in the highest degree, difficult to be expressed in words.

The Greek Cathedral, according to tradition, is built above the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. It is lavishly ornamented and covered by a dome. Jerusalem is held to mark the centre of the earth, a belief which is still preserved in the round stone in this Greek portion of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Leaving the courtyard of the Church it is an easy walk to the beautiful German Church of the Redeemer. The site was presented by the Sultan of Turkey in 1869 to the Crown Prince of Prussia. The building is on the exact plan of the ancient church on whose site it stands. In the vicinity are situated the Russian Hospice, the Coptic Convent, the Abyssinian Monastery, and the great Greek Convent—the residence of the Greek Patriarch—which is connected with several portions of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

C. E. S.

(To be continued).

PARABLES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

II.

THE PARABLE OF THE TIGER CUB.

Upon a flock of wild goats once
A tigress hungry sprang,
But died forthwith she fell and bore
A cub in fatal pang.

The earth it touched and scampered off
With all the goats which fled ;
It learned to bleat and graze with them,
In goat-like ways upbred.

A goat in all respects but form
When up he grew to be,
A tiger of the forest chanced
This creature strange to see.

He let the goats all run away,
But had his mark caught clean,
Who bleated wild to lose them all
He had as kith and kin.

By force he dragged against his will
This frighten'd thing so queer,—
O'er water held and asked to see
His face and then compare :

“ My face and yours are quite alike,”
The tiger said to teach ;
A piece of flesh then held to him
As better than to preach.

The goatish beast this would not touch
And bleated to protest,
But shortly had the taste of blood
And ate that food with zest.

The tiger wise then said to him,
“ Now do you understand ?
What myself am so you are too,
And tiger's life so grand !

“ Now come with me to woods and wilds ”—
The forest entered he,
And followed him the other one,
From abject goat-life free.

So Guru comes to us likewise
To show us graciously,
That Real Self, in Maya lost,
Which we have still to be.

A WARNING TO THE PUBLIC.

BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE RAM-
KRISHNA MISSION.

THE disclosures that have come to light in some of the recent trials of East Bengal, have convinced the Governing Body of the Ramkrishna Mission, that the good name of the Mission and that of the Belur Math have been, and are still being, used by certain societies to secure recruits to and spread the doctrines of their mischievous, and not unoften criminal, propaganda. The Governing Body think it desirable, therefore, to inform the general public and specially the unwary young men of Bengal, that the Ramkrishna Order of monks, whose principal headquarters are at the Belur Math, and who had the Swami Vivekananda as their head, is a strictly religious Order and has nothing to do whatsoever with politics, much less with Societies based on lawlessness.

The Order, to promote its spiritual culture and realise the doctrines of the time-honoured Vedanta Philosophy, has engaged itself since its very inception to serve the Lord by serving humanity with the best of its might, remembering the imperative scriptural injunction to look upon man as nothing less than the Deity Himself—"Jiva Brahmaiva naparah." To carry on such service effectively, it has had to work in co-operation with the general public of India in many places, and in course of time, that work of philanthropy and benevolence took the shape and name which is known at present as the Ramkrishna Mission. Therefore it will be readily understood that the Ramkrishna Mission has nothing to do whatsoever with any kind of political movement.

Taught by Sri Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the Mission has always held the path of religion and service as the only way for the regeneration of Bengal and India and has always preached that that regeneration can only come through characters based on a direct realisation of religion and the Lord, and never through politics. The Mission, therefore, has all along kept its own work separate from the National Congress, the Extremist and some other regular and irregular political movements, with the firm conviction that

these would never lead to the glorious spiritual regeneration which should be the ideal of India's people. Spirituality and not political aggrandisement had been the backbone of the Indian people in the past, and on that inheritance we should stand firm with good will and love and peace to all on earth if we are to become again a glorious nation in the future—such indeed had been the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciple, the Swami Vivekananda. And the Mission has been and is always being guided by that idea.

Let the young men of Bengal and India take heed of the fact, and if in future they find a class of people coming to them in the name of the Ramkrishna Mission and that of the Belur Math, to preach politics to them in any shape whatsoever, let them conclude at once that they are impostors, who are but making cowardly attempts to hide their true colours behind the prestige of the Mission and the Math, to serve their own dark purposes. They should communicate directly with the headquarters of the Mission if they want to join the Mission or serve its various philanthropic work in any way, but they should never make inquiries regarding the purpose and method of work of the Mission from questionable sources. They should first try to find out that the man who comes to them as a preacher connected with the Mission, is really such, writing to the President or the Secretary at Belur Math, Dist. Howrah—before they listen to what he has to say. They should try first to find out whether or not a man who wants any kind of contribution from them to help the Mission, has really been authorised to do so by letters of authority from the headquarters with special seals of the Mission attached before they contribute their mite.

The second thing against which we want to warn the general public is, never to conclude that a Society or a Sevashrama belongs to and is a branch of the Belur Math and the Ramkrishna Mission, simply for the reason that the name of Ramkrishna or Vivekananda is attached to it.

It is not uncommon to find now-a-days the christening of societies, schools, hospitals, mills, stores, dispensaries, trademarks and various other things, desirable and undesirable, by the names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Good

men are taking their names to stimulate themselves to noble impulses and self-sacrificing efforts, while the bad to screen themselves behind them to secure public confidence on their own selves. It is proper, therefore, for the public to know that those alone of the Societies, Ashramas, Sevashramas and so forth, which have the words "Ramkrishna Mission" attached to their names, really belong to us as branches of the Ramkrishna Mission of the Belur Math. And to secure the privilege of using the name of the Mission, the Societies etc. have to apply to our headquarters for a formal grant of a charter of powers; and we might add here that if we do not count the Barisal Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission, we have no such affiliated branch centres in the whole of Bengal, although several Societies and Ashramas in different parts of Bengal have made their intention known to us recently, of applying to us for the same. The public should bear this fact always in mind and be guided by it. In conclusion, it is our sincere prayer that the above informations would serve as a warning to the public for their own good and security as well as that of the Math and the Mission.

(Sd.) SARADANANDA,

Secy., Ramkrishna Math and Mission.

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

THE Governing Body of the Ramkrishna Mission has been obliged, we find, to publish through the Press a warning and a protest. It is also a public avowal of the policy that determines all our activities and therefore we are glad to give it prominent insertion in the columns of the P. B. for the sake of permanent record as well as wider publicity.

An institution like the Ramkrishna Mission ought to be considered in all quarters as being above the necessity of such a public avowal of its honesty and sincerity in ideal. But unfortunately we are fallen upon evil times, and in view of the many sinister developments in the political activity of misguided enthusiasts, security in public life is evidently in jeopardy. Such developments of course may not be out of place in a country wedded

to the political ideal and scheme of collective life, and anarchism may well be regarded as a necessary evil in such a country. But in India, as we have been repeatedly pointing out in our columns, it would spell an incalculable loss and misfortune if the outlook on collective life is *westernised*, if instead of attaching spiritual values to all the ideals and activities of our collective life, we wilfully create, in imitation of Western countries, political values for them and thus misdirect our energies for giving that life a political foundation. Such a lamentable perversity in the activities and aspirations of the educated community in India mainly originated with the Congress propaganda, however much the credit of reviving on an extensive scale the enthusiasm for collective life may be due to it. This enthusiasm no doubt is a necessary factor in the regeneration of India, but the political direction which was given to it is indirectly responsible for all those developments of political lawlessness which we all deplore so much today.

The political ideal of collective life has naturally developed a tendency among our educated countrymen to harness their political impulses to all that is good and noble in their heritage from the past,—to bring the assets of our spirituality and culture under the perspective of political utility. It is for this reason that many young anarchists in India are found to be specially enamoured of religious literature, ancient and modern,—to keep with themselves as *vade mecum*, not only the modern specimens of inflammable literature, but also works on the Yoga and Vedanta philosophy or the speeches of Swami Vivekananda. Even our Prabuddha Bharata has been recently found to command peculiar interest and enthusiasm among young souls aflame with the spirit of self-sacrifice in the cause of political freedom for India. With a pre-eminently spiritual heritage to fall back upon to nerve themselves for all their efforts of self-sacrifice, the Indian advocates of anarchism are bound to differ in this respect from their Western *confreres* in political creed. It is well-known how even the Thugees in India claimed to be a religious sect. This tendency to confound the idea of self-sacrifice in any cause, noble or ignoble, with religion, has been exposing

religious bodies and cults in India to a good deal of unnecessary official distrust.

Besides this natural tendency to exploit religion in the interest of the political ideal, there have been actual cases of clandestine political activities under cover of advocacy for some well-established religious institution. Such contemptible tactics are of course pursued without the knowledge of and beyond the reach of those who are really responsible for the good name and reputation of that institution, and who are therefore powerless to drag them out to a court of law. And it is under such circumstances of helplessness that the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission has been obliged to issue its warning to the public. There may be honest people, of course, who supplement their political views with a nice sprinkling of such doctrines about religious life and discipline as are openly acknowledged by them to be derived from the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna or from the works of Swami Vivekananda. It behoves such people at the same time to exercise all possible caution against producing the impression in others that they represent in any way the views of the Ramakrishna Mission or Math. Sister Nivedita, for example, developed some political views of her own about India and her people, over and above the whole system of thoughts and principles she derived from the teachings of her master. But on account of such political views, she promptly dissociated herself and her activities from the work of the Ramakrishna Mission and publicly announced her position forthwith in the papers. After this, though remaining throughout her life the same spiritual child that she was to her master as well as to the Ramakrishna Math, which embodies the spiritual ideal she worshipped, the Sister never identified herself with the Mission as its member or worker.

But this warning to the public issued by the Ramakrishna Mission has given rise to some curious and interesting reflections among some of our contemporaries. The *Modern Review*, for example, opines: "We at once concede that the Ramakrishna Mission is a non-political body concerned in its corporate capacity only with religion and service. But we cannot admit, that either

Vivekananda or Nivedita, the two best known followers of Ramakrishna held the same opinion of politics as the Mission seems to hold." This is indeed a very bold position for our contemporary to take with regard to the issue, namely, "Vivekananda's" opinion about politics! We fully discussed that opinion in our Feb.-March number, and the most authoritative pronouncement respecting that opinion has been made accessible to the public by the publication of the Swamiji's lectures from Colombo to Almora. Nobody is therefore justified in assuming off-hand that the Ramakrishna Mission differs from Swami Vivekananda as regards its opinion about politics. He must fortify such an assumption by arguments based on the Swamiji's speeches. Instead of doing this, the *Modern Review* rounds off its bold statement with such vague colourless talk as the following: "Her (Nivedita's) master Vivekananda was no doubt a religious preacher but of a militant type. He was not a mild Hindu. His Hinduism was aggressive Hinduism. He exhorted the people of India to be strong, to find out and be conscious of their strength, and to have faith in India's undying strength,—all which form the very bed-rock of politics."

"What do you consider the distinguishing feature of your movement, Swamiji?" asked once an interviewer* to Swami Vivekananda. "Aggression," said the Swami promptly, "aggression, in a religious sense only. Other sects and parties have carried spirituality all over India, but since the days of Buddha we have been the first to break bounds and try to flood the world with missionary zeal." How can this aggression we ask, define the nature of Swamiji's politics? This aggressiveness may make the Swami a preacher of the militant type, but how can we build on it a theory about his political opinion? His conception of spirituality may be such as to make him the opposite of "a mild Hindu,"—a strong man, strong to resent impertinence and unrighteousness in others, but that does not necessarily imply any natural inclination in the Swami for a political solution of the miseries into which the Indian people have fallen. He insisted again and again in

* Complete Works of the Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Vol. V. page 1019.

his Indian speeches on the fact that the strength of the Indian people lies in their spirituality, but he repeatedly pointed out at the same time that that spirituality made it indispensable for them to adopt for their future regeneration a spiritual scheme of life instead of a political one. And it is only in a political scheme of collective life that every kind of strength, spiritual and otherwise, which a nation possesses, is exploited to supply the bed-rock on which the fabric of its politics is raised.

Such an exploitation in India would argue a total misconception of the Indian spirituality. In the Indian scheme of life, all the organic parts have to fit in with one another only by virtue of the *spiritual* values that they derive from the *actual* needs and demands of the collective spiritual life. The present day politics of our educated community is alien to the Indian scheme of life simply because it has not grown out of *the actualities* of our collective spiritual life. We pursue politics today as a part of that scheme of life which we want to borrow from the West and transplant into the soil of our country. The Ramkrishna Mission protests against Western politics as adopted by our countrymen simply because it protests against the westernisation of the Indian scheme of life. Politics fills up the most important place in collective life in the West; it constitutes in fact the formative and the regulative principle in that life. If we introduce this Western politics into the reconstruction of collective life in modern India, the whole trend and texture of the civilisation that India has been building up through centuries will have to be altered and revolutionised. Such a revolution or even our fruitless efforts to bring it about, would spell our annihilation more surely than our present degradation or misery can do. And it is in this sense that the Ramkrishna Mission has declared that our regeneration will "never come through politics."

The comments of the *Modern Review* betray a sad ignorance of the real lessons of our history that are being brought to light today and its sneer against "spirituality of the monastic type" reads most ridiculous. "Spirituality of the monastic type," it says, "has not been able to prevent Indian's impoverishment, degradation and loss of freedom."

Neither has the will-o'-the-wisp of politics which India has time and again tried to follow in the past been able to prevent the same impoverishment, degradation or loss of freedom. Politics in ancient India could prove itself useful only when it became a hand-maid to spirituality of the monastic type, and seldom did politics in ancient India with all its varied fortunes affect the life of the Indian people more deeply than surface-waves do in the ocean. Had they, like the Western people, surrendered their life to the influence of politics, they would have been clean swept off the globe like many a nation of old, and none would have survived today to be identified as the descendents of the ancient Rishis still preserving in their midst the same old ideals and polity of life. And if the fact of these ideals and the civilisation and culture which they evolved being still preserved is due to one cause more than another, it is that spirituality of the monastic type, which the *Modern Review* in a fit of puerile irresponsibility subjects to a bit of its journalistic sneering.

We would congratulate our brethren of the West if according to their scheme of life, their religion does not clash with their politics. But Western politics foisted on the Indian scheme of life would be not only incongruous, but absolutely fatal to the collective life that India seeks to build up. To bring home to people, who think like the *Modern Review*, this fatal incongruity, is no easy task, for their intellect has been led captive by the glare of modernism on which they have put unquestioning faith. But it is nevertheless one of the aims of the Prabuddha Bharata as well as the Ramkrishna Mission to accomplish that task, and we regret to find the disdainful way in which the *Modern Review* speaks about the programme of the Ramkrishna Mission. May it not be conceded that the Mission is interested in endeavouring to remove ignorance, poverty and disease from the country, besides promoting the object of spiritual "communion and nursing of the sick"? May it not be conceded that the Mission has its own principles and methods for the reconstruction of collective life in India, such as its own founder so ably announced to all and its own periodicals discuss every month? It is indeed a painful surprise to find a contemporary of such broad interests and

wide information allowing itself to be so narrow and perfunctory in its comments. The reference to Sister Nivedita's politics is also bad in taste, for our contemporary ought to have known better than the outside public that Sister Nivedita was not a worker of the Ramkrishna Mission and that her "Civic and National Ideals" which contains among other useful matters some of her political views was published by a member of the Udbodhan Office in his name purely as a matter of convenience. But why should that fact compromise the views of the conductors of the Udbodhan more than a publication from the *Modern Review* office, interspersed with religious doctrines which its own proprietor would not endorse, would compromise the latter's views, is something that we fail to understand.

We are glad to announce that the First General Report of the Ramkrishna Mission has been issued by the Governing Body of the Mission. The Report covers a period of about fifteen years, bringing up its record in most cases to the year 1912. Since that year, there have been developments in the work of the Mission, no doubt, and the next General Report will have to record them duly. For example the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary attached to the Himalayan Math has developed into a charitable institution by itself, having a nice little building of its own. The Sevashrama at Benares is going to extend its row of buildings on a big plot of land acquired by the Government for the purpose. The ceremony of laying the foundation stone on this new plot was performed on the 29th April last by Mr. C. A. C. Streatfield, the local Magistrate and Collector with a good Hindi speech in the presence of a respectable gathering of the *elite* of the town including Mrs. Streatfield, Mr. Hopkins, the Commissioner, and other official and non-official gentlemen. The Kankhal Sevashrama also is going to have a new plot of land for the extension of its buildings acquired for it by the Government.

The Sevashrama at Brindaban has issued a public appeal through the Secretary of the Ramkrishna Mission for sufficient funds to enable it to give itself a permanent habitation. The kind proprietors of the Kala Babu's Kunja at

Bansibat, Brindaban, had all along, since the inception of its work of relief, been accommodating its dispensary, its indoor patients and workers at their own premises. But the work has grown in proportions during the last six years and is being now carried on at its present quarters under exasperating circumstances of the greatest difficulty. It behoves therefore all sympathisers of the Ramkrishna Mission and the generous public to come forward and send in their contributions to equip this important Sevashrama with a building of its own. The amount that is required for this purpose is something like Rs. 20,000; and if the public begin to respond promptly to the appeal for funds, the required sum will be raised in no time, as our past experience assures us. No appeal for funds from any Sevashrama of the Ramkrishna Mission has hitherto been made in vain, for the public fully appreciate the significance of charities for alleviating distress and misery to be met with in the holy *tirthas* of India. For, as the General Report of the Mission points out, spirituality being the end of our collective life, "it is a part of national economy in India to direct the liberality of the people towards those who devote their lives more or less to the cause of spirituality," and "so when the Mission appeals to the public for help in the work of the Sevashramas springing up in the holy places, the appeal is made not only to their noble impulses of charity, but also to their national instinct of rendering the householder's help to those ascetics and other devotees through whom spirituality has to live and thrive in a special sense. Benares and Brindaban, Prayag and Hardwar, still hold undisturbed sway over the minds of thousands of all classes of Hindus, including the well-to-do classes, and is it too much to say that donations to the local Sevashrams would constitute a noble form of their hearts' tribute to these particular *tirthas*?"

GLEANINGS

Reason cannot show itself more reasonable than to leave reasonings on things above reason.

—Sir Philip Sidney.

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Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle, and planted a flower, where I thought a flower would grow.—Abraham Lincoln.

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Seeing that man is mind, that mind is composed of thought, and that thought is subject to change, it follows that deliberately to change the thought is to change the man.—James Allen.

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Whoever hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes, and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may. It is not for nothing that he has in him these sympathies with some principles and repugnance to others.

—Herbert Spencer.

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Europe has always been indebted to India for its spiritual inspirations. There is little, very little, of high thought and aspiration in Christendom which cannot be traced to one or another of the successive influences of Hindu ideas; either to the Hinduised Hellenism of Pythagoras and Plato, to the Hinduised Madeism of the Gnostics, to the Hinduised Judaism of the Kabbalists, or to the Hinduised Mahomedanism of the Moorish philosophers; to say nothing of the Hinduised Occultism of the Theosophists, the Hinduised Socinianism of the New England Transcendentalists, and the many other new streams of Orientalising influence which are fertilising the soil of contemporary Christendom.—Mr. Merwin-Marie Snell, President of the scientific section of the Parliament of Religions, Chicago.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

(CULLED AND CONDENSED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

“THE Brihajatakam” of Varahamihira has been translated by Swami Vijnanananda of Behur Math, and President of its branch Math at Allahabad. This book is considered to be the best Hindu Astrological authority. It deals exhaustively with the science of Horoscopy and its deductions seldom fail to convince even the greatest sceptic of the truth of its astrological expositions and prognostications. Its author was the famous

Varahamihira, one of the noted Navaratnas (nine gems) in the court of Raja Vikramaditya, the illustrious King of Ujjain. The book can be had at the Panini Office, Allahabad.

THE Secretary of the Sri Vivekananda Ashram Building Fund, Conjeeveram, begs to acknowledge the following donations:

Mr. Shankara Row, Proprietor Karlekar's

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HELPED with funds and equipped with the necessaries by the munificence of Babu Keshub Chandra Banerjee, the young and enthusiastic zemindar of Murapara, a small band of the young members of the Dacca Ramakrishna Sevashrama placed themselves at Dolaiganj Railway Station to render aid to the tens of thousands of pilgrims for the last Brahmputra bathing festival on their way to Langalband by the Railway. The boys distributed good and cool drinking water and sweets to the weary, thirsty and hungry passengers who were generally carried in goods wagons after detentions of days and hours. The boys helped the pilgrims in every possible way and all Indians know what troubles the illiterate village men and women are put to when out on pilgrimage. On the 3rd and 4th April the work was the hardest and the boys did their duty most admirably.

A correspondent writes from Madras:

THE 79th Birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva, the Saint of Dakshineswar was for the first time celebrated at Nandigal yesterday, Sunday, the 22nd March 1914 in a befitting manner. In the morning there was Bhajana accompanied with chanting of Vedic hymns, with the photo of the Saint taken in procession. At noon about five to six hundred poor Narayanas were fed in the local market. In the evening there was a public meeting in the premises of

the Victoria Reading Room under the presidency of M. R. Ry. A Venkatasubbiah, a local pleader and an erudite Sanskrit scholar, when a paper on "Sri Ramakrishna, His life and teachings" was read by M. R. Ry. A. Duraiswami Iyer. The paper was exhaustive enough to cover the whole sphere of Sri Ramakrishna's life and His teachings. The chairman spoke in Telugu and said that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were in accordance with our Scriptural text and as such even best suited for the present time. With a vote of thanks to the chairman the meeting was brought to a close after Mangalarati and distribution of Prasadam.

It is proposed to found a Home in memory of the Saint which it is hoped will be accomplished by God's grace.

MODERN education on Western lines in going to have a romantic dash into the far-off land of the Lamas. It is reported that the four Tibetan youths, sons of native Governors, who have been especially sent to England for education, have completed a seven months' course at Aldershot, and they are reported to have made satisfactory progress. They have now left Aldershot for Rugby.

JACKSON recommends cocoanut oil as an insecticide for bedbugs. He states that all that is necessary is to smear a little of the oil over the place where these insects are found, or where there are cracks and crevices, the oil may be dropped into them. By the use of this medium any barrack or hospital ward or article of furniture or bedding can, in a short time, be freed of the bugs, and with a minimum amount of disturbance or upheaval cocoanut oil will destroy the ova as well as the adult insect. (So. Pract.)

SOME interesting statistics relating to the production of printed books are given in the "Bulletin" Institut International de Bibliographic. It is computed that the total number of printed books in the world is no less than 11,638,810, and about 8,714,00 of these have been published subsequently to the year 1800. From 1500 to 1535 the number of books produced annually averaged only 1250. It was not until 1700 that the annual average passed 10,000, and it was not until 1817 that it reached 100,000. From 1900 to 1908, how-

ever, the annual output averaged 174,375—exactly 140 times the average output between 1500 and 1535.

SOME notable work has been done by Dr. James Cantlie, the tropical medicine specialist, in the use of tuning-forks in the diagnosis of obscure disease-conditions. Dr. Cantlie found that in certain cases it was exceedingly difficult with an ordinary stethoscope to obtain accurate knowledge of enlargements of such organs as the liver, spleen, stomach, and heart, more especially where enlargement was accompanied by affection of neighbouring structures. He discovered that if a tuning-fork was set vibrating, and the shaft of the fork placed against the body-wall and moved about, a note varying with the density of the organ situated immediately beneath was transmitted to the stethoscope. "In this way," he says, "the limits of the liver can be gauged with almost hair-breadth precision." The fork used gives out the note C sharp; it has a specially designed "striker" attachment, so that it need not be removed from position for the purpose of revibrating.

SCIENTISTS have long been searching for a light which will be heatless, devoid of harmful rays, non-explosive, and cheap, says a writer in the "New York American." The lights of the firefly and the glow-worm are perfect, inasmuch as they fulfill all these requirements. But the firefly and the glow-worm have now been rejected by the scientists of the French Institute of Oceanography for the blazing monstrously shaped fish that swim five miles below the surface of the sea in a water pressure that would crush man as flat as a pancake. Their luminous organs light up the dark regions which they inhabit like flaming torches. Some have elongated snouts on the tips of which are luminous organs emitting considerable volumes of light. Others have rows of luminous cells on top and below their bodies, with reflectors and lenses which serve the function of projecting light in definite directions. These light-emitting organs are thought to be of vital importance to the life of the animal for the purpose of illuminating the surrounding water to avoid foes, to recognise their own kind or to capture prey.