

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Katha Upa. 1. iii. 4

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

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The parlour was full of eager listeners. A gentleman came in and prostrating himself before the Swami took his seat. He was desirous of giving up the world and embracing the monastic life. After introducing himself he expressed his intention to the Swami who, on coming to learn that he had wife and children at home, said—

“So you came away leaving everyone behind? You had your enjoyments yourself and got away? Don't you see it is cruel and cowardly to get away without making some sort of provision for the family? Do you think one is at liberty to give up the world all of a sudden?”

The gentleman: Well, this is but a relative concern—it is the outcome of ignorance.

The Swami: And your fleeing away from the world is absolute—it is the result of knowledge,—is that so? Does it stand in the way of religion merely to be in the world? Once Narada asked of the Lord who was His best devotee. The Lord replied to him, “In such and such a village there is a peasant who is My best devotee. Just go and see him.” Narada went to the place and found that the peasant had been off to the field. After a whole day the peasant returned home, took the name of the Lord once and at night retired for rest. Seeing all this Narada came back to the Lord and said, how is this, Lord? How could this man who was engaged the whole day in trifling worldly pursuits and took Thy name but once, could be the best of devotees?” “Well, Narada,” replied the Lord, “you will have your question answered soon. Now take this cup of oil, make a tour round the world, and come back.” Narada made the tour with the greatest caution and when he returned the Lord said, “Well, Narada, you must have understood now why that peasant is the greatest devotee. In your anxiety that no oil be spilt from the cup you could not remember Me even once, but that peasant, in spite of his being engrossed in work throughout the day, remembers Me regularly at the end of his day’s work.”

Sri Ramakrishna used to relate that once at Dakshineswar one Mukherji, who had left home and family, used to pass his days at the Kali temple, living on the doles of food regularly given there.

One day Sri Ramakrishna said to him, "You are a married man—have you got children?" On being answered in the affirmative he next inquired who was looking after them. And as soon as he heard from Mukherji's lips that his wife was pining at her father's home, he shouted, "You rogue, you were the man who married and who had children, and now they must be fed and clothed by your father-in-law! And here you are living on the food that is meant for the poor!" Hearing such words Mukherji lost no time in returning home and began to look after his household duties with zeal.

In the scriptures also there is mention of the four orders of life. First of all the student had to take up the Brahmacharin's vow in the house of the teacher and go through his studies. Then service unto the Guru, strict Brahmacharya and study etc. became his duties. As soon as these duties were gone through he was free. After finishing the course of study in the teacher's house the students used to test themselves to see whether they should return to the householder's life. Those who considered themselves under the sway of worldly ideas used to go through the usual ablution ceremony that marked the close of the student's life and entered the world. Here, too, they had such duties as marrying and having children, ministering unto guests, maintaining the family and so on. And when they finished these duties they were at liberty to take up the next order of life. The same things do not always appeal to anybody. When the desire for enjoyment abated and along with it the duties of the family life too were finished

then they used to embrace the forest or recluse life. They could take their wives also with them—only they had to live as brothers and sisters, without any physical attachment.

In the Upanishads too there is the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi. Yajnavalkya reached the state of Sannyasa as the natural outcome of knowledge. He said to his two wives, “Now the time for my taking up the monastic life is at hand. So whatever I have, you both divide between yourselves.” Then Maitreyi said, “What shall I do with that which won’t give me immortality?” Hearing this Yajnavalkya said, “Maitreyi, I used to love you before, but now I love you all the more.” Then he gave her instructions, and she too took up Sannyasa.

But can one give up when the householder’s life is no more appealing, but there are the wife and children? What will be the fate of them? It is gross selfishness, pure and simple. To be in the world and maintain the family, to fulfil one’s duties—this also is certainly religion. Nothing will be gained by giving up all of a sudden. One cannot climb to a roof at one bound, one has to ascend step by step. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, “A fruit plucked before maturity rots and is spoilt. A sore bleeds if you take away the scab prematurely, while it drops of itself when the sore has dried up. How fine illustrations these—don’t you see! Well, everything depends on the mind alone. If one happened to be married but latterly repented, and communicated his intention of embracing the monastic life to Sri Ramakrishna, he would say, “Wait, don’t

give up the world. If you are sincere everything will be set right. You have only to faithfully pursue the course laid down in the scriptures.' It won't do to leave the world. You have got children; now go on doing your duties towards them—do this unselfishly. To say that one is renouncing the world with the object of calling upon God, would be utterly false. Of course one should devote oneself to spiritual practices, and this is the time. * *

It is selfishness that is impure. First of all a man should fulfil his duties according to his caste and order of life and when the mind has been thus purified he should approach the qualified teacher for the attainment of Self-knowledge. There is no way out unless one has fulfilled one's duties. And the moment you have truly finished the duties of one order of life, those of the next naturally come in. But the case is different for those who have never entered the world since their boyhood.

अनेकानि सहस्राणि कुमारब्रह्मचारिणाम् ।

दिवं गतानि विप्राणामकृत्वा कुलसन्ततिम् ॥

—“Thousands of Brahmanas who were Brahma-charins from their boyhood have reached heaven without continuing their line.” (Manu V. 159.)

That you people did not enter the world was due to the good impressions of past lives. You have finished all that already, so why should you have to enter the world again? It is because you understood everything that you gave up. You have forsooth been born with this privilege. Don't you see that the world is mad after sense-enjoyment? People will run into debt and marry. And before the debt is cleared, perhaps, they die! Whenever

anybody spoke to Sri Ramakrishna about giving up the world, he would say, "If you are sincere you will find the circumstances gradually becoming favourable." Still he does not say, "Leave everything and come away." "If you are sincere,"—that is what he used to say, because he knew the contents of everyone's mind. In everything pertaining to this world there are two factors—your own wish as well as the Lord's. Hence it is highly prejudicial to take any step through personal obstinacy. Of course He is inside all, as the Controlling Principle. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell the parable of a married woman secretly in love with another. She attends to all her household duties but her thoughts are on her lover. When in this way her whole mind goes to her lover, she breaks the family ties and follows the man of her heart. Isn't it a beautiful parable? Work with one hand and serve the Lord with the other. When the time comes, you will be able to serve Him with both hands. And the time does come if one is sincere.

(To be continued).

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

EVERY great religious revival in India is followed by a revival in different spheres of life. It inspires literature and philosophy, art and architecture, social life and political activity. It serves as a nationaliser, as a potent force cementing various disjoint units differing widely in social status, tradition and culture into an organised whole actuated

by a common ideal and a common purpose. The measure of the influence of each religious revival depends on the extent to which it permeates the manifold strata of society, and inspires the rich and the poor, the high and the low alike. The secret of the success of Buddhism as one of the greatest cultural influences the world has ever seen lies in the fact that the message of Buddha was carried by his monastic followers to the doors of all people irrespective of caste, creed, race or nationality. Buddhism democratised the highest Aryan religion and culture, and unified the diverse races and peoples in India. And the mighty current of energy that generated from this great union not only vitalised Indian life in all its branches but also flowed across oceans and mountains to fertilise distant lands. Buddhism became one of the greatest mediums of Aryan culture and civilisation. The Buddhist missionaries carried along with India's religion her philosophy and literature, her science and art. The great cultural invasion that followed in the wake of Buddhism even before and during the early centuries of the Christian era influences to this day the life and thought of Thibet, China and Japan, of Burma, Siam, Ceylon and other countries. Buddhism never cared for any material conquest. It conquered the hearts of men by the power of Dharma, by love and toleration, by righteousness and virtue.

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Centuries before the advent of Buddha a reaction had set in in India against Vedic rites and sacrifices which lost their significance to the

majority of the people. Bold and sincere souls, who refused to follow blindly in the footsteps of their forefathers, called in question the way of those who wanted to conquer this world by means of progeny, to gain heavenly bliss by the performance of Yajnas, to attain to Immortality by drinking Soma offered to the gods in sacrifice. "What shall we do with progeny since the Atman is the abode we aspire after?" "The deluded souls who think that sacrifices and charitable works are of supreme value, know not the blessed Goal. Having enjoyed in the heights of heaven the fruits of their Karma, they come down again to this world or even enter into a baser one." "Neither by works, nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation alone can Immortality be attained."—Such were the ideas and ideals of those speculative souls who revolted against Vedic rites and observances, and preferred to live the life of meditation and non-attachment in order to solve the enigma of life and death, to attain Immortality here as well as hereafter. Buddha represented in his wonderful life this new spirit of revolt—the spirit of renunciation and contemplation which have ever been the highest ideals of Aryan religion and culture.

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Buddha was a prophet and reformer in one. His mission was twofold. He reformed the Aryan society, infused spirit into the fossilised religious life of the people caring only for the dead forms and lifeless practices of religion. He threw open the gates of salvation to all men and women alike. He broke down the invidious distinctions between

man and man, and presented his religion of equality and brotherhood to humanity itself, which embraces the Brahmana and the Sudra, the higher caste and the outcaste, the Aryan and the non-Aryan alike. The thief and the robber, the libertine and the prostitute he transformed into saints by the touch of his all-embracing love and sympathy. He discovered a middle path between the two extremes—sense-indulgence and asceticism—a path “which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana.”

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“Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of the gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.” Buddhist missionaries true to this great command of their Master carried his message to the four corners of the globe, even into the Hellenistic kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe as the edicts of King Asoka clearly indicate. Buddhism proved to be the greatest missionary religion of ancient India, and one of the most potent civilising influences in the world. It served as a wholesome leaven in lands where superstition and ignorance reigned supreme. It offered to animistic peoples rational explanations of cosmic and individual evolution in the laws of Karma and doctrines of re-incarnation, which were common to all systems of ancient Hindu thought.

Buddha's humanism wherever it spread infused into its votaries a great respect and tenderness for all living creatures. It was the practical application of the cardinal doctrine of the ancient faith which preached in glowing terms the glory of the Atman manifesting Itself as God, Soul and the Universe. Buddhism promoted the welfare of both men and animals and provided medical aid for them in India and abroad as one of the most remarkable of the rock edicts of King Asoka proclaim even to this day : " Everywhere the King Piyadasi, beloved of the Gods, has provided medicines of two sorts, medicines for men and medicines for animals. Wherever plants useful either for men or for animals were wanting, they have been imported and planted. Wherever roots and fruits were wanting, they have been imported and planted. And along public roads, wells have been dug for the use of animals and men."

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Little do we as yet realise the true relation between Buddhism and its Mother-religion. It is true that Hindu religious teachers accepted Buddha as an incarnation of the Divinity, but most of them in their hatred for the church founded by the Scion of the Sakya race, did not scruple to proclaim that the Enlightened One incarnated himself to preach a false and atheistic doctrine in order to delude and ruin the enemies of the Eternal Religion of India ! Buddhist missionaries on the other hand in their zeal for proselytism and blind devotion to the Master failed to take notice of the great harmony that lay at the back of Buddhism

and its Mother-religion. They laid great stress only on the points of dissension, and attempted to show that Buddha preached an entirely new religion. In consequence we have come to believe that he was a sworn enemy of the Hindu faith. But nothing can be farther from the truth. Observes Dr. Rhys Davids, the great Western authority on Buddhism: "The prevalent notion that Gautama was an enemy of Hinduism...is nothing but a misconception. This is not the case. Gautama was born and brought up and lived and died a Hindu....There was not much of the metaphysics and psychology of Gautama which cannot be found in one or other of the orthodox systems, and a great deal of his morality could be matched from earlier or later Hindu books. Such originality as Gautama possessed lay in the way in which he adapted, enlarged and systematised that which had already been well said by others ; in the way in which he carried out to their logical conclusion principles of equity and justice already acknowledged by some of the most prominent Hindu thinkers."

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Buddha was one of the greatest exponents of the Eternal Religion of India. To understand the true relation between his religion and the ancient faith we must study them in their pristine purity. We must dive deep into their spirit, boring through the encrustations of forms accumulating for centuries. True Hinduism does not consist in the mere observance of forms and ceremonies, and in the following of the rules of eating, drinking and marriage, which implies orthodoxy at the present

times. It implies the recognition of the One in all, and not the religion of Don't-touchism and exclusive privileges of the higher castes. Buddha's teachings, on the other hand, should not be confounded with the corrupt form of Buddhism with its Tantric practices, intricate philosophies, gigantic temples and elaborate rituals. Judged in their true spirit the goal of Hinduism and Buddhism is one. Advaita Mukti or Buddhist Nirvana means the negation of all limitations. It is a state "beyond the ken of speech and thought," beyond our human conception of existence and annihilation. It is reached by transcending the limitations of mind and matter. Thus the summum bonum of both Hinduism and Buddhism is one and the same, though the means may vary according to the tendency and temperament of the seekers after truth. Ancient Buddhism and ancient Hinduism were very much akin in spirit although they differed in form. But as time rolled on, the gulf of forms and ceremonials that separated them became wider and wider. Buddhism became the more popular because of its democratic spirit, and for a time it rose to be the dominant faith in India. But a religion which failed to take note of the capacity of its followers to pursue the path of the highest rectitude, and indiscriminately allowed men and women to live the life of renunciation and non-injury, could not possibly keep itself free from corruption for long.

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In the apotheosis of monasticism and non-injury lay both the strength and weakness of Buddhism.

Sham renunciation bred vice and immorality. Indiscriminate advocacy of Ahimsa encouraged weakness and cowardice, and killed the martial spirit of the people. The travesty of the greatest of virtues brought about the degeneration of the Buddhist church. With the loss of its purity, Buddhism lost its vitality. And the Mother-religion gaining in strength at last assimilated into her body the daughter-faith. It is the inherent weakness of later Buddhism that was the chief cause of its overthrow in India. Unlike Hinduism it took a partial view of life, and failed to take note of the great fact that spiritual evolution is a march from lower truth to higher truth until the culmination is attained. Buddhism declared that the path to perfection was one and only one. Hinduism held that the means might be many, though the goal was one. This is the great point of contrast between Hinduism and Buddhism, as Swami Vivekananda has clearly pointed out : " The Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism ; the Hindu might be fulfilled through any state of life. All alike were roads to the One Real....Buddhism became the religion of a monastic order, but Hinduism, in spite of its exaltation of monasticism, remains ever the religion of faithfulness to daily duty, whatever it be, as the path by which man may attain to God." It is this all-inclusive spirit of Religion Eternal that enabled it to gain ascendancy over its rebel child Buddhism.



VEDANTIC VIEW OF INDIAN HISTORY.*

BY SWAMI SHARVANANDA.

THE history of a nation is the record of the unfoldment of the potentiality of the people. Every nation is ushered into being with a particular purpose to serve in the economy of Nature in the same way as an individual, and to give a particular message and contribute its quota to the general advancement of humanity, whether the individual units realise it or not.

There is the great philosophical doctrine of Vedanta to be understood before we can understand the goal of our national life. Vedanta says that the whole universe should be looked upon from two stand-points, individual and collective. The moment a man cuts himself away from the collective life, he fails in his life, but if he feels himself to be a vital part of the nation, every action of his will be a contribution to the collective life, and he will only then serve his interests better. Again when a nation suffers, the individual life can never be healthy. What is true of this relation between the individual and the nation is equally true of the relation between a nation and humanity. The moment a nation begins to think of its own aggrandisement at the expense of other nations, it digs its own grave.

A close study of the history of the different nations shows that each one of them did contribute something to the life-history of mankind and the general advancement of humanity, and after delivering its message disappeared from the world's stage. This was the case with the ancient nations of Greece, Rome, Egypt and others. But the life of India presents a unique feature in the whole history of mankind, for though all the other ancient contemporaries are dead and gone,

* A lecture delivered at the Vanita Vishram Hall, under the auspices of the Western India Vivekananda Society, Bombay.

India soars high up into the clouds and is still alive with very little change. The reason is that she has still something to contribute, something quite different from the contributions of other nations. It is culture and religion—the life-principles of the Indian nation—which have kept it alive so long in spite of the buffets of time.

There are five principles which go to constitute a nation—race, culture, religion, political interest and geographical position. All the ancient nations laid emphasis upon either race or culture or religion, but the modern nations lay particular stress upon either political interest or geographical position. The American nation, for instance, which is made up of the various races of Europe, is to-day based principally on political and not on racial or cultural interest. Religion is relegated to the background.

It is sometimes said that India was never a nation, that India had no national consciousness. India, however, is still a nation, but her nationalism has never been based on politics, and so modern politicians cannot find the principle of nationalism in India. From ancient times India has lived in her villages. The village community, the unit of the collective national life, was self-contained. No doubt there were royal cities here and there, but they existed mainly for the expression of royal grandeur and as the seat of the king, and played very little part in the life of the nation. The reason why in spite of a thousand years of political slavery and subservience India is still alive, is because her national consciousness has not been based on politics but on culture and religion. Her culture was supported, guided and chastened by religion, by Dharma—an all-comprehensive word which excludes not a single legitimate activity or aspiration of man. Dharma was the guiding principle of the king and the peasant alike, and its laws controlled the whole society. The civic life of each village was perfect, and each village contributed its quota in forming the cultural nationalism of the country.

Man has three aspects, physical, intellectual and spiritual,

and his development is possible in each one of these. So also with a nation. One nation develops physically and becomes a great conquering power, but when the possibilities of a higher life dawn in its consciousness it emerges into the second epoch, the intellectual epoch. Then art, science, politics, religion, philosophy and ethics develop. When the intellect of a nation is still under the sway of physical life its advancement is checked, and such a nation in spite of its great intellect may be brutal. That is why in spite of the great scientific achievements of the West the last war showed the utter spiritual bankruptcy of the Western civilisation. In spite of their tall talk of peace and universal brotherhood, the Western people tried only to further their individual interests. Their intellect served only to sharpen the butcher's axe. It was given to very few nations to rise above the second epoch. Modern civilisation is still essentially an intellectual civilisation and is nothing but a natural development of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations.

But it was ordained by Providence that civilisation in India should undergo a different process of evolution. India, too, was at one time a conquering nation to a certain extent, but as the nation laid stress upon Dharma it could not rest satisfied with physical or intellectual development. The reason is that it may have been planned by Providence Itself that India should fulfil a different purpose of life in the whole scheme of Nature. Even in that hoary past when other nations were groping in the dark, the Vedic Rishis and the great sages of India proclaimed and made it clear to the popular mind that the glory of life did not lie in the conquest or enjoyment of matter, but in freeing the principle of life from the bondage of matter. This was always kept before the nation as the supreme ideal. That was how the whole nation was organised, and Dharma became the basic principle of national life, while political and economic interests were made subservient to it. So in spite of the changes of kings and principalities the national life was left unimpaired. It was a unique phenomenon in the history of the nation.

The whole society was divided into four sections according to the respective qualities and proclivities of the individuals. Thus arose the four castes representing the four stages of human evolution, marked out by the predominance of the three Gunas or qualities of Nature—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In the highest stage of evolution man becomes full of Sattva, full of peace, contentment and spirituality. In the Rajasic stage man is full of activity, dominance, and self-assertion. In the Tamasic stage man becomes inert and inactive. There is not a single human society where we do not find these different types of men. They serve the object of division of labour. The Brahmana owing to his disinterestedness, his clarified vision, his life of self-abnegation, was given the function of the teacher. The function of the Kshatriya was to protect society from internal disturbances and external attacks. He was the pillar of civic life. But the greatest honour was given to the Brahmana, and in spite of the tattered rags in which he used to clothe himself, the king would get up from his throne and prostrate at his feet, because the greatest respect was shown to the ideal of renunciation and spirituality—unlike to-day when money commands all worship. In ancient days the king considered himself as the servant of society.

The whole civilisation in ancient India was imbued with spiritual instinct. Immortality could be attained by renunciation alone, and this spirit of renunciation was driven deep into the consciousness of the nation. Society being run on the basis of Dharma, the culture of the nation was so much spiritualised that in spite of much stultification of that ideal, the old feeling is still there. As Swami Vivekananda said:—“However we may go astray from the path of our ancient national life, so long as the blood of our Rishis is coursing through our veins we must come back to our ancient paths.” Whenever there came any such stultification there came some correction, some movement that brought the national consciousness back to its ideal of life, because it had a purpose to serve in the economy of Nature, and India had to contribute something to the general well-being of humanity.

However we may try to change the tide of our national life, India will ever follow her own spiritual ideal. What would be the future of India? To me the future is very brilliant. No doubt we are all now concentrating our attention on politics, especially in this Presidency, where political consciousness has been much whetted by some recent developments, and that is the reason, as some of my friends told me, why Bombay is essentially a political city and has no ear for spirituality or religion. But so long as we have the blood of the Rishis in our veins we must come back to our spirituality. The political and economic conditions have become so keen that some of the great thinkers say that their hearts are bleeding to see the sufferings of the people and they think the remedy is Political Swaraj. That is why they are attempting to concentrate their whole attention on politics. But to me it appears that that is not the path to the salvation of the country. The present condition of the country is brought about by the fact that the countries outside India have not yet reached that stage of ethical development so as feel the unity of life and the solidarity of man. The major portion of mankind is still in the animal plane, and that is why we suffer.

India was never a conquering race—gentle India, peaceful India. This is told of us in derision. But this is our glory. If we want to free ourselves from the sway of the foreigners we must either develop greater brutish power and increase our armaments etc., or try to change the brute in man. The first does not suit the genius of the Indian nation which will never succeed in becoming brutal. So our ideal is the metamorphosis of the brute itself by taking away all its teeth and claws. If a man is well established in the spirit of Ahimsa, even the ferocious beast will forget its brutish nature. If we Indians develop our spirituality, the outside world will accept our ideal, which is the unity of life and solidarity of man. Socialism, Bolshevism etc. show that the whole of humanity is moving towards the one ideal. All artificial distinctions between man and man will disappear, and all men will be

welded into one humanity. The virile West will be conquered by India. This conquest of the world was the ideal which Swami Vivekananda put before the Indians. Our spirit has to be awakened. We should go out and preach the reality of the Soul, and the doctrine of Love.

Advanced thinkers of the West are slowly being influenced by the thought-life of India. This will hasten the salvation not only of India but of the whole world. The solution of the Indian problems lies in the harmony of the different religions, races, colours and creeds, and this harmony cannot be brought about unless it is based upon the real basic principle of Unity, that is, the Spirit. All political or economic interests are too artificial to exist long. It is for the spiritual ideal that India is still living. She will deliver her message to the world by solving first the problem of her own life, adjusting her own home. There will come about a perfect feeling of harmony and amity amongst the different religions and races which have come to live in this country. Not a spirit of "Live and let live," but a positive feeling of respect for all religions will arise. Let every Indian keep this in view, and the nation will hasten not only its own salvation but the salvation of the world at large.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—DIVINE INCARNATION OF THIS AGE.*

BY E. C. BROWN.

WE are gathered here to-day to celebrate the birthday of one of the greatest Incarnations of God. To-day in millions of homes in India and in every country in the civilised world, his name is being worshipped.

Many times God has visited this planet of ours in human

* A lecture delivered at the Hindu Temple, San Francisco, California, U. S. A. on the eighty-eighth birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.

form, His last manifestation of power and blessedness appearing in the form of this God-intoxicated soul, Sri Ramakrishna.

Never was humanity in greater need of Divine help. Religion had become a byword, churches degenerated into centres for social gatherings, the Truth itself was hidden and its regenerating power lost to the people. Scepticism, agnosticism and atheism swept like a pestilence over the human mind and everywhere humanity gave itself up to a mad rush after thirst-provoking amusements on the one hand and the crazed lust for gain on the other. The forces of materialism endangered the cause of religion and spirituality. Humanity had well-nigh forgotten God, the source of all its true happiness, health, material and spiritual welfare.

Even India, the mother of religions, had almost lost the memory of its former greatness. Forgotten were the great empires of Janaka, Asoka and other mighty rulers; forgotten were the Divine lives of Rama, Sri Krishna and Buddha, whose teachings raised their land to the highest rank in virtue, wealth and power.

‘Any way out of misery and poverty except the *one* way. Too much religion has brought all this misery. Let us give up religion, do away with Sadhus and Sannyasa, let us copy the greatness of the West and we shall be free from all our troubles.’ Thus, in effect, cried the young men of Bengal, who forthwith took the West for their model in education and modern ideas, forsook their ancient ideals and threw themselves recklessly into a growing wave of intellectual dissipation and scepticism which threatened to engulf all India.

Then when religion was falling in ruins everywhere, the sun of righteousness arose on the Eastern horizon with healing in his wings, and another wave, a wave of blessed spiritual light, arose from one of the little wayside villages of Bengal. This light was destined to permeate every nook and corner of India, lighting again the fires of religion to burn with all their ancient lustre, reviving old ideals, restoring India to the consciousness of her spiritual heritage, then flooding the whole earth with its life-giving power.

Sri Ramakrishna, the last great Incarnation of God, was born on the 18th of February, 1836 A. D., in the village of Kamarpukur, district of Hugli, to the north of Calcutta, of parents poor in things that the world esteems, but rich in the things of the Spirit.

In common with those of other Divine Incarnations, his parents had visions announcing the unique character of their coming child. At Gaya, the scene of Buddha's enlightenment, his father, Khudiram, who had gone thither on a pilgrimage, was blessed with a vision of the Great Saviour and it was told him that the Lord would take birth as his son for the enlightenment of mankind. The mother, also, standing before the image in the temple of Siva, found herself the recipient of Divine favour.

The newborn babe was named Gadadhar (Wielder of the Club) and astrologers prophesied that he would be a great spiritual light to illumine the minds of men. As a boy he was not unlike other boys; he was fond of his school, but soon grew tired of regular studies. He learned Bengali enough to read sacred literature in that language.

Everything religious made a deep impression on his youthful mind and at a very early age he would be found sitting hours at a time plunged in meditation which grew deeper and deeper with each repetition. He was greatly fascinated by the life of worldly renunciation, and like Jesus in the temple, would discuss and explain the scriptures with the wandering monks.

When he was seven, his father's death compelled his eldest brother, Ramkumar, to go to Calcutta to earn the family living, and young Gadadhar was left very much to himself. So the religious nature in him had almost free rein, and it was a natural step from the little village of his happy boyhood days to the office of assistant in the Temple of Dakshineswar, where his brother had been installed in course of time as officiating priest.

The temple atmosphere, the daily worship, the presence of devotees, all fanned the fire of his religious fervour which

soon burst into a flame and rendered him utterly incapable of attending to his duties. Possessed only of one idea to realise the blissful vision of the Divine Mother, the years passed by and many were the severe austerities he underwent.

His hunger for realisation became so intense that he was considered mad. Yes, he was mad with the wine of divine love, but in reality he was the sane one among millions. It was he who would not be satisfied with false values. What do *we* know of the hunger of a great soul after God? If we attend a lecture once a week, we feel that we have done enough.

As time went by, the anguish of separation from the Mother became so intense that one day, overwhelmed with doubt as to the possibility of realising Her in vision, in a moment of despair he exclaimed, 'Then what is the use of living without knowing Her?' And he would have plunged into his breast a sword hanging on the Temple wall, had there not suddenly dawned upon him at that very moment the blissful vision of the Mother. For days he remained in an ecstatic condition, aware only of Her divine presence, teaching and consoling him as a mother does her child.

Have we ever known or heard that there is such a vision or even believed such Divine visions are possible? Then imagine the tremendous yearning when one has such knowledge, the hunger which cannot be satisfied until the realisation of the Divine.

After Sri Ramakrishna had attained the highest state of realisation—Nirvikalpa Samadhi, in which all sense of duality is lost—hungry souls flocked to him by thousands. Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists and all sects felt that their own ideal was manifest in him, that God Himself was talking to them in the form of Christ, Krishna, Buddha, and all went away with renewed love and devotion to their own individual saviour.

Sri Ramakrishna knew no distinction of class, creed, or race. He held out hopes to the man of the world of every station, and in his own life discovered the harmony in all creeds. With his advent religion took on new life and a new movement came into being.

Like all Incarnations of God he had among his many disciples a chosen few who are known as direct disciples, those who lived constantly in his presence. It was these direct disciples who carried on his work after his passing away, and again it was some of these direct disciples under the leadership of his greatest disciple, the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, who carried the message and established centres of Vedanta thought throughout the West.

One of these immediate disciples, whose picture appears behind me on this platform and who verily laid down his life for the cause, was the Swami Trigunatita, the founder of this Temple. The gospel of Vedanta as preached and lived by these direct disciples is destined to conquer America.

What a wonderful thing that a Divine Incarnation should have attained to the highest realisation of God as Divine Mother at a time when women all over the world were struggling for emancipation! Is it difficult to believe that the incarnation on earth of this great advocate of womanhood should have given their cause a powerful impetus?

Although from childhood sex had no attraction or power over him, for an example to householders and to show that married life could be lived in all its purity, he had consented to his parent's request that he should marry. Though he lived with his wife and gladly acknowledged her as such, he knew her only as mother and his most devoted disciple. So was he also free from the greed for gold, as the familiar incident of his regarding alike a handful of earth and a handful of gold well illustrates.

One of the things he would not countenance was that any one should out of humility call himself a 'sinner.' He would say, "You, the Atman, you a sinner? Have faith; say once, 'I am a son of God,—how dare sin touch me when I am uttering the name of God?' The greatest sin is to forget God."

Even when his end was near he would allow no sincere soul to be turned away. Though the affliction in his throat was very painful, he still insisted on seeing all who came.

These great souls pass this way for our good, to free our eyes from the veil of Maya which hides from our sight the Self-Effulgent—Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Let us pause for a moment to study this Divine life. No matter what our beliefs may be, our faith and our religion will be strengthened thereby. The great outstanding purpose of Sri Ramakrishna's advent as the Divine Incarnation of this age was that he came to show that the paths of all men lead to the same goal and that the same Divine Self dwells within the heart of all.

Who can measure the glory and greatness of that life? He came to India, but he came for all, and no one country can claim him for its own. Let us give him our heart's adoration, and generations yet unborn shall call him blessed and find liberation through his name.



A PENTECOSTAL MEETING.

"All these are strung on Me as pearls on a thread."—Gita.

THE Pentecostal Church, or the Church of the Holy Ghost, in San Francisco, holds free and open meetings every evening and on Sunday afternoons, all through the year, in an auditorium seating about six hundred people, in a busy but humble quarter of the city. The Church forms one of the many denominations within the Protestant belief.

An outstanding tenet of the Church is that under certain conditions, where there is faith, the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, descends on man, answers his prayers, cures his ailments, purifies his mind, and raises him to a state of beatitude. The outward signs of such visitations are violent shaking of the body often culminating in a dancing motion, utterances of strange sounds, weeping, laughing, and exclamations. During the meetings the emotional faculty of the congregation is roused by lively speeches, songs, music and testimonies.

Accepting the invitation of a friend to attend one of the meetings, we started out for the auditorium early on Saturday evening. The place was half filled, when we arrived, with a motley crowd of men, women and children, mostly of the middle and poorer classes of society. We were fortunate in securing good seats, where we could watch the proceedings to advantage, in front of a large platform built against the wall, from which the minister and others address the audience.

At eight o'clock, the hour set for the meeting, the hall was filled. A band of musicians took their seats on chairs arranged on the platform, on which also stood a piano and an organ, at which women took their seats.

A middle aged man, with smiling face, announced from the platform the number of a song from a book with which every member of the congregation had been provided. The band, piano and organ played a lively tune, and the entire audience sang, the man on the platform beating time with his hands and leading in the singing in a loud, pleasing voice. He was full of enthusiasm, and by motions of head and hands encouraged the congregation to join heartily in the singing.

One song followed another, and it was not long before the Holy Ghost began to make its presence known among the audience. A girl, about sixteen years old, was the first to come under its influence. She began to tremble from head to foot, then her body began to twist and shake violently. This lasted for a few minutes. Then she got up from her chair and began to dance in the aisles which surrounded the audience. Her head was slightly bent to one side and backward; her half-closed eyes were raised towards heaven; a sweet smile came over her face; and with her lips constantly uttering the words, 'Oh Jesus, Oh Jesus,' her arms raised upward, she went around the hall in a graceful, measured, dancing step.

A young man followed. He took long strides, and threw out his arms in front of him as he went around the hall. Then came a woman, uttering indistinguishable sounds, and later a child with her eyes closed. The music and songs

continued while they went around the audience again and again, apparently unconscious of their surroundings. Then, one by one, they returned to their normal state, and resumed their seats. Here and there among the congregation people trembled and shook violently, but they did not dance.

The minister now took the platform, and after a few words of address, reminding the congregation that they had gathered to praise God and His holy name, suggested prayer. He asked the members of the congregation for their special requests for the needs of themselves or friends to be included in the prayers. The entire congregation kneeled down and began to pray in loud voices, each one saying his own prayer. It was a great noise. Some wept, others laughed, some almost shouted. A woman uttered strange words in an unknown language. There were lamentations and shouts of joy and loud callings on the Lord. This lasted for about ten minutes. Then the minister rose from his kneeling posture and began to address the audience, who also rose and resumed their seats.

After a short talk, exhorting those who were still living in sin to give their hearts to Jesus, the minister called for testimonies. A woman rose from her seat and testified that her mother through prayer had been cured of what the doctors had pronounced an incurable disease. Another woman declared that through prayer a wayward child had become docile and obedient. Another had her property restored to her in an unexpected manner. But there were also those who spoke of higher experiences, of the blessedness found in loving Jesus and of following in His footsteps; of the happiness experienced in spiritual life, a happiness which surpasses anything that the world can offer. With tears of joy, in trembling accents, they spoke of the great bliss that filled their hearts since they had given themselves entirely to the Lord. These testimonies were met with shouts of gladness from members of the congregation. "Praise the Lord!" they called, or "Hallelujah!" or "Jesus is our Saviour!" And sometimes the audience would sing a song announced

from the platform specially appropriate to the testimony.

There happened to be baptism this evening, and the minister called for those who wished to be baptised. To the right of the platform stood a large cement tank half filled with lukewarm water. The minister left the platform and went into a little room to change his clothing for a rubber suit. Then he came to the tank and by steps descended waist-deep into the water, followed by a young man also in a rubber suit. He told the audience that the young man had resolved to live a holy life and wished to be baptised. He spoke a few encouraging words, stroked his head in a loving, fatherly manner, and blessed him. The young man with hands folded together and raised upward called in a pleading voice to Jesus to give him strength to carry out his holy resolutions. The minister then enfolded him in his arms, and with the words, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," lowered him gently backward until his entire body for an instant was immersed in the water. Lifting him up again, he blessed him, and the young man left the tank. The same process was repeated with a woman, who, after being immersed in the water, began to tremble and speak in a strange tongue.

Throughout the meeting, the singing was most spirited, the choruses being repeated again and again with ever increasing fervour and intensity.

After about three hours the meeting closed, but many remained for prayer and healing. Some desiring salvation were led to a prayer-room, where earnest members kneeled with them in ardent supplication. Others went to the platform for physical healing. Among them was a man suffering from paralysis. The minister and his assistants passed their hands over his body praying to God to cure him. They told him to trust in Jesus, who could heal all diseases. They stamped their feet, threw out their arms, uttered strange sounds, and in the name of Jesus commanded the disease to depart. After a while the man raised his arm which had been paralysed, and with a happy smile declared that he was cured.

We left the hall with the assurance that faith can work great deeds, and that in their own way the people of this Church are helpful in guiding their unfortunate brethren to a better life.

SWAMI ATULANANDA.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 153.)

CHAPTER VII.

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

न रोधयति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म एव च ।

न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्यागो नेष्टापूर्ते न दक्षिणा ॥१॥

व्रतानि यज्ञश्छन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः ।

यथावरुन्धे सत्सङ्गः सर्वसङ्गापहो हि माम् ॥२॥

The Lord said :

1-2. Yoga, discrimination, piety, study of the Vedas, austerities, renunciation, rites such as Agnihotra and works¹ of public utility, charity, vows, sacrifices, secret Mantras, places of pilgrimage, and moral rules² particular as well as universal,—none of these, I say, binds Me so much as the association of saints that roots out all attachment.

[¹ *Works &c.*—constructing wells, tanks and parks etc.

² *Rules &c.*—For the Niyamas and Yamas see Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms II. 30-32.

The association of perfected souls is extolled here above everything else, as it imperceptibly cleanses the mind. Sri Ramakrishna's comparing it to a soap solution is characteristic enough.]

सत्सङ्गेन हि दैतेया यातुधाना मृगाः खगाः ।
 गन्धर्वाप्सरसो नागाः सिद्धाश्चारणगुह्यकाः ॥३॥
 विद्याधरा मनुष्येषु वैश्याः शूद्राः स्त्रियोऽन्त्यजाः ।
 रजस्तमः प्रकृतयस्तस्मिस्तस्मिन् युगेऽनघ ॥४॥
 बहवो मत्पदं प्राप्तास्त्वाष्ट्रकायाश्च वादयः ॥५॥

3-5. It was through the association of saints, O sinless one, that many who were of a Râjasika or Tâmasika nature—such as Vritra,¹ Prahlâda² and others³—attained Me in different ages: Daityas and Râkshasas, beasts and birds, Gandharvas, Apsarâs, Nâgas, Siddhas, Châranas, Guhyakas and Vidyâ-dharas, and among mankind—Vaishyas and Sudras, women and outcasts.

[¹ *Vritra*—son of the sage Twashtri. Vritra in his previous life had the association of the sages Nârada and Angirâ.

² *Prahlâda*—son of Kayâdhu, a daughter of the Devas whom Nârada instructed and the child listened from its mother's womb.

³ *Others*—some of these are enumerated in the next Sloka.]

वृषपर्वा बलिर्बाणो मयश्चाथ विभीषणः ।
 सुग्रीवो हनुमानृक्षो गजो गृध्रो वणिक्पथः ।
 व्याधः कुब्जा व्रजे गोप्यो यज्ञपत्न्यस्तथापरे ॥६॥

6. Vrishaparvâ,¹ Bali, Bâna, Maya, Vibhishana, Sugriva, Hanumân, the bear Jâmbabân, the elephant Gajendra, the vulture Jatâyû, the merchant Tulâdhâra, the fowler Dharmavyâdha, the hunch-backed (perfume-vendor) Kubjâ, the Gopis as well as the wives of the Brahmins engaged in sacrifices, in Vrindâvana, and others.

[¹ *Vrishaparvâ* &c.—Vrishaparvâ was a demon who was brought up by a saint. Bali associated with his grandfather Prahlâda. Bâna was the eldest son of Bali, and he was also blessed with the association of the Lord Shiva. Maya came

in contact with the Pandavas while constructing the royal court for them, while Vibhishana and Sugriva mixed with Hanumán, who himself as well as Jâmbabân had the blessed association of the Lord Himself as Rama and Krishna. Gajendra had in his previous life associated with Sadhus and in his present life was rescued from his old enemy—now a crocodile—by Sri Krishna Himself. Jatâyû met Garuda and King Dasaratha etc., the Sudra Tuládhâra met Nârada etc., Dharmavyâdha had mixed with a Vaishnava king in his past life, while Kûbjâ with the Gopis and Brahmins' wives had the association of Sri Krishna.]

ते नाधीतश्रुतिगणा नोपासितमहत्तमाः ।

अव्रतातप्ततपसः सत्सङ्गान्मासुपागताः ॥७॥

7. They had not studied the Vedas, nor served the great saints, nor observed any vows, nor performed any austerities, yet through their association with Me¹ they attained Me.

[¹ *With Me*—as represented by the saints.]

केवलेन हि भावेन गोप्यो गावो नगा मृगाः ।

येऽन्ये मूढाधियो नागाः सिद्धा मामीयुरञ्जसा ॥८॥

8. The Gopis, and even the cows, trees, beasts, serpents and others that were dull of understanding, were perfected and easily attained Me through love¹ alone:

[¹ *Love*—engendered by the association of Sadhus.]

यं न योगेन सांख्येन दानव्रततपोऽध्वरैः ।

व्याख्यास्वाध्यायसंन्यासैः प्राप्नुयाद्यत्नवानपि ॥९॥

9. Whom one attains not even after struggle, through Yoga, discrimination, charity, vows, austerities, sacrifices, teaching and study of the Vedas, or renunciation.

रामेण सार्धं मथुरां प्रणीते श्वाफल्किना मय्यनुरक्तचित्ताः ।

विगाढभावेन न मे वियोगतीव्राधयोऽन्यं ददृशुः सुखाय ॥१०॥

10. When I was taken with Balarâma to Mathura by Akrura,¹ the Gopis with their minds attached to Me through intense love, were sorely afflicted at My bereavement and considered nothing else (but Me) as of interest to them.

[Slokas 10-13 describe the case of the blessed Gopis of Vrindâvana.

¹ *Akrura*—son of Swaphalka, whom King Kamsa dispatched to Vrindâvana to bring the two brothers, with a view to kill them, first by setting on his wild elephant, and failing that, by challenging the children to a duel with his famous wrestlers. His vain idea was to baffle the prophecy that Krishna would kill him.]

तास्ताः क्षपाः प्रेष्टुतमेन नीता मयैव वृन्दावनगोचरेण ।

क्षणार्धवत्ताः पुनरङ्ग तासां हीना मया कल्पसमा बभूवुः ॥

11. Those very nights, my friend, which, with Me their Beloved in their midst at Vrindâvana, they had passed like moments, became in My absence like ages to them.

ता नाविदन्मय्यनुषंगवद्भ्रियः स्वमात्मानमदस्तथेदम् ।

यथा समाधौ मुनयोऽब्धितोये नद्यः प्रविष्टा इव नामरूपे ॥

12. With their minds fixed on Me through attachment, they knew neither their kinsmen,¹ nor their bodies, nor things far or near—as sages in the superconscious state know not name and form,—like unto rivers merging in the waters of the ocean.

[¹ *Kinsmen &c.*—Their one thought was Krishna.]

मत्कामा रमणं जारमस्वरूपविदोऽबलाः ।

ब्रह्म मां परमं प्रापुः संगच्छतसहस्रशः ॥१३॥

13. Not knowing My real nature,¹ the Gopis, who were ignorant women, desired Me as their

beloved sweetheart, yet they attained Me, the Supreme Brahman, by hundreds and thousands, through the power of holy association.

[¹ *Real nature*—as 'Supreme Brahman.']

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Soul's Secret Door.—By Swami Paramananda. Published by the Vedanta Centre, 1 Queensberry Street, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 111. Cloth-bound.

The author of these seventy-two poems places before the reader in the modern form of *vers libre*, in chaste and graceful language, the highest and at the same time the simplest ideals of what might be called a Universal Faith. Each poem is a subject for meditation. Each poem touches a string of the human heart and sings a song to the soul. Those who are fortunate enough to possess a copy of this beautiful little book will turn to it again and again, for the poems appeal to many moods and deal with a great variety of subjects. This volume is a sweet companion in one's hour of true devotion and resignation.

The printing, paper and get-up of the book are excellent.

Hymns from the Rigveda.—By Professor A. A. Macdonell, M. A., Ph. D., Hon. LL. D. Published by Association Press, 5, Russel Street, Calcutta. Pp. 98. Price—Cloth Re. 1-8; Paper Re. 1.

This little book contains metrical translation of forty hymns selected from the Rigveda, the earliest monument of Aryan thought. The author has endeavoured to translate the hymns in verse corresponding as nearly as possible in English to the original metres. There is prefixed to each hymn a short account of the Deity addressed or the subject dealt with. The

book also contains a valuable introduction which supplies a brief sketch of the form and contents of the Rigveda.

In the Rigveda itself we find the evolution of the Indo-Aryan religion from polytheism to monotheism and monism. But unfortunately Prof. Macdonell has failed to understand the true spirit of the Vedic religion which he calls a polytheistic one with a colouring of pantheism—a most misleading term so fondly used by orientalist, conveying no correct idea of Hindu monism. It is no wonder that it would be so, as the author, like many of the scholars of his class, seems to have discarded the traditional interpretation of the Vedas as followed by Sayana, and depended mainly on his own philological explanations. It would be a mistake to form an idea of the religion of the Vedas from this selection of the Rigveda as in it have not been included some of the best hymns, valuable as much for the grand thoughts as for the beautiful poetry they embody, portraying vividly the yearning of the ancient Rishis after the One Supreme Being.

Atmajñān.—By T. L. Vaswani. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. vi + 95. Price Re. 1-8.

Prof. Vaswani interprets Atmajñān or Life in the Spirit, as he calls it, in the light of his synthetic idealism. "Religion," says he, "is not a dogma but consciousness, not a creed imposed *ab extra* but a personal, vital realisation of the Self." He believes that the gospel of the One in the many, if rightly understood, is sure to bring about the harmony of the world-religions and the brotherhood of the nations.

To Awakening India.—By S. E. Stokes. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. xii + 45. Price 8 As.

In this pamphlet Mr. Stokes speaks of the economic and spiritual significance of the Swadeshi Movement. He gives his arguments in support of the burning of foreign cloth, and observes that destruction is as essential for the Khaddi campaign as the constructive methods.

REPORTS AND APPEALS.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashramd,
Brindaban for 1921.

The report is a brilliant record of service rendered to the suffering humanity by a band of selfless workers in one of the greatest places of pilgrimage, associated with the memory of Bhagavan Sri Krishna.

Besides help administered in other ways, medical relief was given to 159 indoor and 17,386 outdoor patients, irrespective of caste or creed. In the year under report, the total income in the general fund was Rs. 2024-11-0, and the total expenses came up to Rs. 2550-10-6. The total deficit of Rs. 677-6-6 including Rs. 151-7-0, the deficit balance of the previous year, was met by loan from the Temple and Building Funds.

It is a matter of great regret that the Sevashrama is labouring under a great financial stress, so much so that almost every month its income falls short of the expenditure, thus causing a debt. This debt is a serious menace to the stability of the Ashrama. We earnestly appeal to the generous public to come forward to the immediate aid of this philanthropic institution which has ever been kept alive by public help.

Want of accommodation for the patients as well as for the workers has so long been a great hindrance to the efficient working of the Ashrama. A big hall with a separate operation room attached to it, is also absolutely necessary for the outdoor dispensary. Ladies and gentlemen desiring to perpetuate the memory of their dear friends and relatives may contribute funds for the construction of wards or for the maintenance of beds for indoor patients.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received at the following addresses :—

1. The Honorary Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, Dt. Muttra. 2. The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur P. O., Dt. Howrah.

The Annual Report of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras for 1922.

The report speaks in glowing terms of the great achievement of the Home which from a very humble beginning has grown into a unique institution of its kind in South India. It aims to conserve all that is most valuable in Hindu culture, while adapting itself to the requirements of modern times. The internal management of the institution is mainly in the hands of the boys themselves, thus cultivating in them habits of self-reliance and self-sacrifice which are calculated to stand them in good stead in later life. Religious instruction, suited to the requirements of the boys, is imparted with a view to place before them the highest ideals and traditions of the country.

The Residential High School having several self-sacrificing old boys of the Home as its teachers, promises to be a great success. The management of the Home has also very wisely started vocational training classes for the High School boys. We are glad to learn that these classes are very popular with those for whom they are intended.

On the first of January, 1922 there were 68 boarders; 43 were admitted during the year, while 14 left the Home having completed their studies or owing to other reasons, thus leaving the strength at 97 on the 20th December, 1922.

The total receipts during the year, including the previous year's balance, was Rs. 84,693-1-10, and the total expenditure was 34,066-11-6. And the balance, including the permanent endowment fund, was Rs. 50,626-6-4.

We heartily congratulate the managing committee of the Home on the great success with which they are carrying on their mission of service and sacrifice for the welfare of the student population in the Madras Presidency.

Contributions in aid of the Institution may be sent to—
The Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home,
Mylapore, Madras.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Reclamation of Malkana Rajputs

The reclamation work of the Malkana Rajputs started under the guidance of Swami Shraddhananda by the Bharatiya Hindu Suddhi Sabha of Agra, has given rise to some misapprehension in the minds of the leaders of political thought in the country. Some of them, while seeing no objection to this perfectly legitimate movement, would have been glad, as they said, if the movement had not been started at the present time as it is likely to strain the feelings between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities in India. And some have gone so far as to say that reclamation can wait but Swaraj cannot.

Swaraj will be a mockery unless every community in India is allowed to enjoy perfect religious freedom. This implies the right of each one to follow and propagate by all moral and legitimate means one's own faith and religion. We are glad that the question of reclamation and religious conversion has been raised at this hour which sees the beginning of Hindu Muslim unity, so indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj. It is high time for each community to take note of the great truth that inter-communal union to be an accomplished fact must be based on perfectly equal rights and privileges. If the Mohammedans, or for the matter of that, the members of any community, are to have the right to admit proselytes from other communities, Hindus, too, should enjoy it to the fullest extent.

We have no faith in a sham union which demands the surrender of the religious right of any individual or community. And we think it to be the height of indiscretion to sacrifice any one's religious freedom at the altar of political expediency. The leaders of political life in India need not entertain any misgivings. Hindu-Muslim unity, so lovingly and laboriously woven by the great "Weaver of Sabarmati," Mahatma Gandhi.

is not going to be endangered by the Suddhi movement. It is, as Swami Shraddhananda said, only a reclamation and not a conversion work. Even if it be regarded as a proselytising movement, the Mohammedans should have no objection to it. We are sure the present strained feeling exists only among religious enthusiasts and not among the saner members of the communities. And besides this, it is only a passing phase, and is the precursor of real inter-communal unity. It is true that Swaraj cannot wait, but at the same time we submit with all the strength we can command that the long-neglected reclamation movement too cannot wait.

Swami Abhedananda at Contai. Midnapur

Srimat Swami Abhedananda went to Contai at the invitation of the residents of the place. At the gate of the town an immense gathering of people cordially received the Swami amidst deafening cheers, and shower of flowers etc.

In the evening a large meeting was held at the Contai H. E. School compound to offer to the honoured guest an address of welcome. In reply the learned Swami spoke for an hour on "Our modern needs." On the third day he delivered in Bengali a lecture on "Present Hindu Society and Sanatana Dharma" and solved many questions that were put forward. Another day, being invited by the "Contai Club," the Swami gave an address on "The Message of Vedanta," and at night he gave an edifying discourse to the ladies assembled at the local Ramakrishna Sevashrama. The Hindu Society of Contai has been much enlivened by his liberal views, deep logical acumen and strength of conviction.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama in Bombay

We have learnt with the greatest pleasure that a branch of the Ramakrishna Order has been established in Bombay at Jaya's Building, Juvem Road, Santa Cruz, with Swami Sharvananda, President of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, as its head. The formal opening of the Ashrama took place on

Thursday, the 19th April last, with special Puja and Homa, music and distribution of Prasad. We are glad to learn that Swami Sharvananda has by his learned and edifying lectures and conversations won golden opinions of the Bombay public. We heartily join with the "Indian Social Reformer" of Bombay in its earnest hope "that under his guidance the Bombay Branch will prosper greatly and soon become a centre for the diffusion of the great truths which Sri Ramakrishna taught."

Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration

The memory of Sri Ramakrishna was honoured by a service of celebration conducted by the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, U. S. A., on his birthday anniversary, at the Hindu Temple on Feb. 18, 1923.

The auditorium was decorated for the occasion with special care, foliage, flowers and potted plants being used to create a sense of inspiring beauty. The music and holy songs were heart-stirring. Members of the society and many friends filled the hall, and were rejoiced on this happy and worshipful occasion.

The speaker of the day was Mr. E. C. Brown, the president of the local centre, who voiced the heartfelt sentiments of the hour in his address, entitled "Sri Ramakrishna—Divine Incarnation of this Age," published elsewhere.

The birthday was celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion at the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur. The *tithi* was observed with special worship, chanting of hymns, Bhajana and distribution of Prasad.

The public celebration came off on Sunday, the 25th February. The Ashrama was tastefully decorated with ferns and flowers, flags and fastoons. A grand procession with a beautifully decorated picture of Sri Ramakrishna mounted on a car, followed by numerous Bhajana parties arrived at the Ashrama at about 10 a. m. About 6000 poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed on the occasion, and more than 300 of them were served with cloths. The people assembled were next treated to an edifying Harikatha Kalakshepam on the life of Prahlada.

The public meeting commenced at 7 p. m. with Dr. Ghosh in the chair. Mr. Ampalavanar spoke eloquently in Tamil and Mr. V. K. Chinniah in English on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

The birthday was celebrated under the auspices of Sri Ramakrishna Arogyasala, Kim (Guzrat). In the morning, Puja and Arati were performed by Dr. Balawantray, and

Prasad was distributed to the persons assembled. In the evening a public meeting was held under the presidentship of Mr. M. T. Adaja, Executive Engineer, Surat and Broach District. Dr. Balawantray delivered an interesting lecture on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

The birthday was also celebrated at Sri Satchidananda Sangha, Mount Road, Madras; S. B. S. Lodge, Mangalore; Shanti Ashrama, Totapalli Hills, Godavari Dt; and Ramakrishna Ashrama, Jharia.

Miscellany

The Swami Prakashananda, after four months' sojourn in India, sailed for America on the S. S. Sparta which left Calcutta for Boston on April 19th. The Swami will visit the Centres at Boston and New York before he takes up his work again at the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. The Swamis Prabhavananda and Raghavananda accompanied him, the former to take charge of the work at Los Angeles, California, the latter to assist Swami Bodhananda at the New York centre. There is a steadily increasing demand for Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission in America, and it is hoped that before long other Swamis will follow to assist in the noble work of preaching the Vedanta, inaugurated by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda.

We are glad to announce that the building of Sri Ramakrishna Math at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, was recently completed, and on the 25th March last there was a large gathering of the Swamis, Brahmacharins and devotees coming from the various centres of the Ramakrishna Mission, when Srimat Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, President of the Mission, opened the new shrine with the usual ceremonies. Opportunity was also taken to conduct the Vasanti Puja of Mother Durga for three days. Over two thousand people of Bhubaneswar and the surrounding villages were sumptuously fed and entertained in other ways.

On the 19th April last Srimat Swami Saradanandji Maharaj opened the temple newly built at Jayrambati, Dt. Bankura, Bengal,—the sacred birth-place of the Holy Mother. Numerous devotees and monastic members of the Ramakrishna Order attended the inaugural ceremony of the temple. Many thousands of people belonging to the place and its neighbouring villages were sumptuously fed. It is gratifying to learn that a large number of lady-devotees gathered to honour the loving memory of the Holy Mother, and heartily joined the consecration festival.

The birthday of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and the 13th anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah, was celebrated with great eclat on the 30th March last. A big procession carrying tastefully decorated pictures of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and followed by music and Bhajana parties went round the town. Over 500 poor Narayanas were sumptuously fed on the occasion.

A public meeting was held at 6 p. m. under the presidency of Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B. A., B. L., Subordinate Judge of Chittoor. All the elite of the town were present. The meeting began with prayers in Telugu by Mr. C. Jayaramachariu Garu, B. A., L. T., and in Hindustani by Mr. Yakub Khan. The president next opened the water tap which was the kind gift to the Samaj from Khan Bahadur H. S. A. M. Manju Mia Sahib in memory of his respected father. The Secretary of the Samaj next read the report for the year 1922. Brahmastri Kavyatirtha J. V. Subramania Sarma Garu read a short but interesting paper in Telugu on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Mr. C. P. Ramachandra Rau, B. A., B. L. next read an instructive paper on "Caste or the Hindu Social Ideal." The president brought the meeting to a close with his concluding speech.



MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks the following contributions to the Dispensary fund from January to April, 1923:—

D. K. Nattu Esq., Poona City, Rs. 8; V. L. N. Sarma, Esq., Bombay, Rs. 3; T. S. Ramaswami Iyer Esq., Bombay, Re. 1; T. V. Raja Gopal Esq., Bombay, Re. 1; Subrahmaniam Esq., Bombay, Re. 1; A. R. Kumaraguru Esq., Bangalore, Rs. 3; Sardar Narinjan Das Esq., Jammu, Rs. 10; S. R. Iyengar Esq., Baghdad, Rs. 50; Dr. S. K. Tripathi, Orai, Rs. 2; A. Friend, Rs. 2.—Total Rs. 81.

The financial condition of the Dispensary is at present most deplorable—in fact it has already run into debt. For its general upkeep as well as for the immediate repair of its roof, funds are urgently needed. We earnestly appeal to the generous public to help us out of this predicament. Contributions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged in the P. B. by the undersigned.

MADHAVANANDA.

President, Advaita Ashrama;

Mayavati, Dt. Almora.