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"उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।"

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

MEMOIRS OF SISTER CHRISTINE

Training a Disciple

The training Swamiji gave was individualistic and unique. Unless the desire for discipleship was definitely expressed, and unless he was convinced that the aspirant was ready for the step, he left the personal life of those around him untouched. To some he gave absolute freedom and in that freedom they were caught. When speaking of some of those whom we did not know, he was careful to explain, "He is not a disciple; he is a *friend*." It was an altogether different relation. Friends might have obvious faults and prejudices. Friends might have a narrow outlook, might be quite conventional, but it was not for him to interfere. It seemed as if even an opinion where it touched the lives of others, was an unpardonable intrusion upon their privacy. But once having accepted him as their Guru, all that was changed. He felt responsible. He deliberately attacked foibles, prejudices, valuations—in fact everything that went to make up the personal self. Did you in your immature enthusiasm, see the world as beautiful, and believe in the reality of good and the unreality of evil? He was not long in destroying all your fine illusions. If good is real, so is evil. Both are different aspects of the same thing. Both good and evil are in *Maya*. Do not hide your head in the sand and say, "All is good, there is no evil." Worship the terrible even as now you worship the good. Then get beyond both. Say, "God is the only Reality." Shall we have the courage to say that the world is beautiful when disaster comes upon us? Are not others the prey of disaster now? Is not the world full of sorrow? Are not thousands of lives overshadowed by tragedy? Are not disease, old age, and death rampant upon the earth? In the face of all this anyone who lightly says, "The world is beautiful," is either ignorant or indifferent to the sorrows of others—self-centred.

Terrible in its sternness was this teaching. But soon there came glimp-

ses of something beyond, an unchanging Reality. Beyond birth and death is immortality; beyond pleasure and pain is that *ananda* which is man's true nature; beyond the vicissitudes of life is the changeless. The Self of man remains serene in its own glory. As these great ideas became part of our consciousness, we "saw a new heaven and a new earth." "For him, to whom the self has become all things, what sorrow, what pain, can there be, once he has beheld that Unity?" Withont once saying, "Be sincere, Be true, Be single-minded," he created in us the most intense desire to attain these qualities. How did he do it? Was it his own sincerity, his own truth, his own straightness which one sensed?

"This world is a mud puddle," was received with shocked protest, doubt, and a tinge of resentment. Years after, driving along the Dum-Dum Road in the suburb of Calcutta one glorious Sunday morning, I saw some buffaloes wallowing in a pool of mire. The first reaction was a feeling of disgust. It seemed that even buffaloes should find delight in something more beautiful than mire. But now, they felt physical pleasure in it. Then suddenly came a memory, "This world is a mud puddle." We are no better than these buffaloes. We wallow in the mire of this mud puddle of a world and we too find pleasure in it. We, who are meant for something better, the heirs of immortal glory.

He refused to solve our problem for us. Principles he laid down, but we ourselves must find the application. He encouraged no spineless dependence upon him in any form, no bid for sympathy. "Stand upon your own feet. You have the power within you!" he thundered. His whole purpose was —not to make things easy for us, but to teach us how to develop our innate strength. "Strength! Strength!" he cried, "I preach nothing but strength. That is why I preach the Upanishads." From men he demanded manliness and from women the corresponding quality for which there is no word. Whatever it is, it is the opposite of self-pity, the enemy of weakness and indulgence. This attitude had the effect of a tonic. Something long dormant was aroused and with it came strength and freedom.

His method was different with each disciple. With some, it was an incessant hammering. The severest asceticism was imposed with regard to diet, habits, even clothing and conversation. With others his method was not so easy to understand, for the habit of asceticism was not encouraged. Was it because in this case there was spiritual vanity to be overcome and because good had become a bondage? With one the method was ridicule—loving ridicule—with another it was sternness. We watched the transformation of those who put themselves into line with it. Nor were we ourselves spared. Our pet foibles were gently smiled out of existence. Our conventional ideas underwent a process of education. We were taught to think things through, to reject the false and hold to the true fearlessly, no matter what the cost. In this process much that had seemed worth while and of value was cast aside. Perhaps our purposes and aims had been small and scattered. In time we learned to lift them into a higher, purer region, and to unite all little aims into the one great aim, the goal which is the real purpose of life, for which we come to this earth again and again. We learned not to search for it in deserts nor yet on mountain tops but in our own hearts. By all these means the process of evolution was accelerated and the whole nature was transmuted.

So is it any wonder that we shrank

from the first impact of so unusual a power? Nor were we alone in this. Some time afterwards a brilliant American woman in speaking of the different Swamis who had come to the United States, said, "I like Swami— better than Swami Vivekananda." To the look of surprise which met this statement she answered, "Yes, I know Swami Vivekananda is infinitely greater, but he is so powerful he overwhelms me." Later almost the same words came from the lips of a well-known teacher of one of the new cults whose message was so obviously influenced by Vedanta that I asked him whether he had ever come under the influence of Swami Vivekananda. "Yes, I knew him and heard him," he said, "but his power overwhelmed me. I was much more attracted to Swami . . . ," mentioning a preacher of Vedanta from Northern India who had spent some time in the United States. What is the explanation? Is it that we are temperamentally attracted by certain qualities and personalities and repelled by others? Even for that there must be an explanation. Is it the fear that the little personal self will be overwhelmed and nothing will be left? "Verily, he that loseth his life shall find it." Still those who feared to be caught in the current of this great power were but few; the others by thousands were drawn with the irresistible force, even as iron filings to a magnet. He had power of attraction so great, that those who came near him, men and women alike, even children, fell under the magic spell he cast.

Far from trying to win us by expediency and by fitting into our conceptions of what the attitude of a religious teacher towards his disciples should be, he seemed bent upon offending our sensibilities and even shocking us. Others may try to hide their faults, may eat meat and smoke in secret, reasoning with themselves that there is nothing essentially wrong in doing these things but that one must not offend a weaker brother and should hide these things for expediency's sake. He on the contrary said, "If I do a wrong, I shall not hide it but shout it from the house-tops."

It is true that we were conventional and proper to the point of prudishness. Still even one more Bohemian might have been disconcerted. He, in the days when men did not smoke before ladies, would approach, and blow the cigarette smoke deliberately into one's face. Had it been anyone else, I should have turned my back and not spoken to him again. Even so for a moment I recoiled. I caught myself and remembered the reason for coming. I had come to one in whom I had seen such spirituality as I had never even dreamed of. From his lips I had heard truths unthought of before. He knew the way to attainment. He would show me the way. Did I intend to let a little whiff of smoke turn me back? It was all over in less time than it takes to tell it. I knew it was over in another sense as well. But of that more later.

Then we found that this man whom we had set up in our minds as an exalted being did not observe the conventions of our code. All fine men reverence womanhood; the higher the type, the greater the reverence. But here was one who gave no heed to the little attentions which ordinary men paid us. We were allowed to climb up and slide down the rocks without an extended arm to help us. When he sensed our feeling he answered, as he so often did, our unspoken thought, "If you were old or weak or helpless, I should help you. But you are quite able to jump across this brook or climb this path without help. You are as able as I am. Why

should I help you? Because you are a woman? That is chivalry, and don't you see that chivalry is only sex? Don't you see what is behind all these attentions from men to women?" Strange as it may seem, with these words came a new idea of what true reverence for womanhood means. And yet, he it was, who wishing to get the blessing of the one who is called the Holy Mother, the wife and disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, sprinkled Ganges water all the way so that he might be purified when he appeared in her presence. She was the only one to whom he revealed his intention. Without her blessing, he did not wish to go to the West. Never did he approach her without falling prostrate at her feet. Did he not worship God as Mother? Was not every woman to him a manifestation in one form or another of the Divine Mother? Yes, even those who had bartered their divinity for gold !. . . Did he not see this divinity in the Nautch Girl of Khetri, whereupon she, sensing his realization of her true nature, gave up her profession, lived a life of holiness, and herself came into the Great Realization. Knowing the criticism that awaited him in India, he still dared in America to initiate into *Sannyas* a woman, for he saw in her only the sexless Self.

Sannyasin and beggar though he was, never did he forget to be regal. He was generous to a fault, but never uncontrolled in his generosity. Needless to say, there was never a trace of display in any act which he did. If he was with those who had abundance of this world's goods, he accepted what was offered gladly and without protest, even with an alacrity which at times approached glee. But from those who had little, he would accept nothing. He was no longer the mendicant monk, but something so different that one asked, "Has he at one time been one of the Great Moguls?" Foolish thought! Was he not greater than the greatest of the Moguls, than all the Moguls combined? Was he not more than regal? Was he not *majestic*?

His compassion for the poor and downtrodden, the defeated, was a passion. One did not need to be told, but seeing him one knew that he would willingly have offered his flesh for food and his blood for drink to the hungry. To this day his birthday is celebrated by feeding of the poor. The downtrodden, the outcasts are on this day served by Brahmins and Kayasthas, young men of the highest castes. To those in the West it is impossible to convey the significance of such service. Cast and outcaste! Who but a Vivekananda could bring about this relationship so unobtrusively? No arguments regarding caste and the depressed classes. Nothing but heart and devotion. So even in small things while he was still in America. Thus, when asked why he was taking French lessons, he said in confusion, "This is the only way M.L. can keep from starving." Thrusting a ten dollar bill into the hand of another he said, "Give this to S . . . . , do not say it is from me." When one of the group, a weak brother, was accused of juggling with the Vedanta Society's money, he said, "I will make good any deficiency." Then the matter was dropped and he said to one of the others, "I do not know where I could have found the money to make up the loss, but I could not let poor—suffer."

Even after he left America, he still had great concern for those he left behind, who found life a great struggle. Especially did he feel for "women with men's responsibilities." Asked whether he endorsed a certain woman who was going about the country as a religious teacher and using his name and reputa-

tion to get a following, he said "Poor thing! She has a husband to support and she must get a certain amount every month." "But Swami," someone said, "she claims to be authorised by you to prepare students for your teaching. She says if we go through her two preliminary classes, then we will be ready to be taught by you. It is so absurd and unscrupulous. To the first class she gives a few gymnastic exercises and to the second she dictates some quotations or gems which she has gathered from various books on occultism. Should she be allowed to mislead people, take their money and use your name?" All that he said was, "Poor thing! Poor thing! Shiva! Shiva!" With this "Shiva, Shiva," he put the matter out of his mind. Someone asked him once what he meant when he said "Shiva! Shiva!" and he answered with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, "Shiver my timbers. Ho, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum." This was not flippancy. How could he answer a casual question otherwise? We had noticed that when something disturbed him, after allowing himself to be troubled by it for a few minutes, his "Shiva! Shiva!" seemed to end it. We knew that he had reminded himself of his true nature, in which everything of a disquieting nature was dissolved.

In New York once there was a pitiful little group that clung to him with pathetic tenacity. In the course of a walk he had gathered up first one and then another. This ragged retinue returned with him to the house of 58th Street which was the home of the Vedanta Society. Walking up the flight of steps leading to the front door the one beside him thought, "Why does he attract such queer abnormal people?" Quick as a flash he turned and answered the unspoken thought, "You see, they are Shiva's demons."

Walking along Fifth Avenue one day, with two elderly forlorn devoted creatures walking in front, he said, "Don't you see, life has conquered them!" The pity, the compassion for the defeated in his tone! Yes, and something else—for then and there, the one who heard, prayed and vowed that never should life conquer her, not even when age, illness and poverty should come. And so it has been. His silent blessing was fraught with power.

"HINDUISM INVADES AMERICA"

By The Editor

I

With the above thundering name, Mr. Wendell Thomas, B.S., M.A., Ph.D., S.T.M., has brought out a book on going through which we breathed a sigh of relief; for the learned author does not talk of any invasion like that of Nadir Shah or of Taimur Lane, which we expected, but his whole attention is focussed against a handful of Sannyasins, lecturers and others who have been preaching about Hindu religion and culture in the New World. This impudence on the part of the people belonging to a benighted nation, may scare some over-sensitive Americans out of breath, as it were, but they have no serious reason to be afraid of, for the American Missionaries are sure to continue their campaign of evangelising the heathen souls in India as unhampered as ever.

It is said that Miss Katherine Mayo could not tolerate that her country would be infected by Hindu ideas; so

she wrote "Mother India" solely as a protection of her own people. Mr. Thomas, however, has no such shrewd idea. He is above board. So at the very outset he says that his work is not an attack on Hinduism, neither is it "meant to inflame American citizens by pointing to a foreign menace." Therefore one is assured of safety at his hands. And whereas Miss Mayo stayed in this vast sub-continent only for a few weeks to write her monumental book, our present author says, "Several years of study and teaching in India have somewhat prepared me to write on Hinduism in America." Moreover, the facts of the book are "based mainly on Hindu sources and have been checked by the Hindu leaders themselves." And also the judgments, the author passes on them "are intended to be sympathetic," though "critical and constructive." As such, no doubt, he is entitled to better attention.

The book is "an account of the *serious* impact on American life of Hindu philosophy and culture especially in the *form of organised religion.*" (Italics are ours.) The invasion of Hinduism began as early as when the first Christian colonists from Europe went to America, and the influence of that old faith has been spreading through various movements since then. But "when Hindu Swamis and Yogis themselves began to appear on the horizon in robes of the color of this book-cover, (by the way, the book-cover is of the light orange colour, to which the author refers more than once—Ed.) Hinduism suddenly advanced in all its pristine glory." But the great invasion has not been organised only by them. So the learned author says that "the end of the invasion is not yet in sight, for apart from the Swamis and Yogis, a goodly throng of academic lecturers and organisation directors are slowly but surely conducting Hindu ideas into the very centre of American culture."

Mr. Thomas enumerates the nine forms in which Hinduism has appeared in America. They are as follows :—

(1) Hindu cults as the Ramakrishna Movement, and the Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society.

(2) Hindu cultural movements, such as the Threefold Movement, and the International School of Vedic and Allied Research.

(3) Learned Hindu lecturers, such as Tagore and Radhakrishnan.

(4) Popular lectures on practical Hinduism, by Indians and Americans.

(5) American impostors passing for Hindu popular lecturers.

(6) Hindu professors and students in America.

(7) Oriental cults of partly Hindu origin, such as Buddhism and Sikhism.

(8) American cults of partly Hindu origin, such as Theosophy and Christian Science.

(9) Hindn influence on Western thought in thinkers like Schopenhauer, Emerson, etc.

II

Of the eight chapters in the book, as many as three chapters are devoted to Ramakrishna Movement, and it occupies 91 out of the 244 pages of the main body-matter. The reason for this partiality as adduced by the author himself is that it "is more classic, orthodox and representative, and is perhaps the first modern missionary movement of any Eastern religion to the West."

The first chapter deals with "Hindu Movements in America, an expression of Young India." Here the author wants to show the result of the contact between the Western and Eastern civilisation in India and the outcome of the conflict between Christianity and

Hinduism in the country. The gospel of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ as preached by the missionaries through two great aids to preaching, namely, "healing and teaching," *i.e.*, medical help and education, could not affect the Muslims so much as "they were the world's fiercest propagandists, and would tolerate no defection from their creed." But Hindus being more tolerant would not refuse to listen to the Christian message. This and the advantages which the poor people get by becoming a member of the ruling community have led to the fact that at present there are five millions of Christians in India. The spread of Western education has opened the eyes of the orthodox Hindus to their own rich heritage and awakened in them a feeling to defend their religion against the invasion of Christianity. And it is chiefly from the "orthodox community that the Hindu missionaries to America have emerged."

The second chapter deals with Vedanta, "which the Hindu leaders are popularising in America to-day." Here he aims at giving a brief survey of the history and meaning of Vedanta, talks of Samkara Vedanta, Ramanuja Vedanta and falls at many pitfalls, which is natural for a foreigner who deals with this difficult subject without having any knowledge of the original. He says that to save Hindu community from the nihilistic doctrines of Buddhism, Samkara as a "wise propagandist" constructed his system on the plan of the Higher Knowledge and the Lower Knowledge, the clue to which he got in the Upanishads. Incidentally the author describes the Raja-Yoga of Patanjali also and finds that "One method that is useful in producing a state of death to the world and awaking to bliss consists in extending the tongue, bending it round, and inserting the tip into the opening of the throat, while gazing steadfastly on the spot between the eye-brows." We do not know where the author found mention of this funny process; or should we admire his ingenuity with which he could garble certain text out of all semblance to the original?

III

The third chapter describes "Saint Ramakrishna, a child of Mother Kali," and here the "story of Vedanta invasion of America will begin." No study of Hindu religion by a Westerner is complete without making some contribution to the theory of the Goddess Kali. So Mr. Thomas says, "This goddess, it seems, was originally a blood-thirsty female demon of an aboriginal tribe. But the Brahmans took her into the Hindu pantheon by making her the consort of Siva, who in his different aspects is the great ascetic, the eternal creator, the patron of outlaws and the wild carouser."

Describing the marriage of Ramakrishna the author notes that "His wife . . . . happened to be a child of five," with an accompanying remark, "The betrothal of a five years old girl is not unusual in India." We are astonished that the author dismisses the subject only with this short remark. Many will greatly miss here a sermon about the evils of child-marriage which Westerners are never weary of pointing to us.

The following is an example how cautiously a more thoughtful person broaches the subject. Mon. Romain Rolland while narrating the same incident says, "His bride was a child of five years old. I feel, as I write, what a shock this will be to my Western reader. I do not wish to spare him. Child-marriage is an Indian custom, and one which has most often roused the

indignation of Europe and America. The virtuous Miss Mayo has recently raised its flag, though rather a tattered one; . . . . for the best minds of India . . . . have for long condemned the practice, although it is usually more a formality than a reality—child marriage being generally nothing more than a simple ceremony, akin to a Western betrothal, remaining unconsummated until after puberty."

Mr. Thomas and others of his type are struck by the utter sincerity of Ramakrishna, for he practised to the best of his ability what he preached. But the critical faculty of the author soon gets the better of his feelings of admiration. So he writes, "Of course, he could not practise renunciation completely. While he scorned the body and its needs, he trusted himself to physicians, whose life work is the body's care. While he worked up such a hatred of money that he would convulse at the touch of a coin, he was yet very pleased with the food and sweets his disciples got for money—and at his own request! While he never grew tired of berating sex, his favourite religious cry was Mother! And while he was praised as master of the art of attaining tranquility, he would often worry and fret like a child, and pester his friends without mercy."

"He shuddered at the prospect of managing an estate, and even balked at his moderate priestly duties. He would rather use a soiled coverlet on his bed than take the trouble to get a clean one. He was unable to plan ahead, and loathed manual service of any kind. He failed to see any social problem. Passing a group of hungry villagers one day, he had his rich disciples feed them, and then went his way serene and satisfied that all was well with the world. . . . He failed also to make moral distinctions. He worshipped prostitutes without teaching them, praised a degraded cult without improving it, and used obscene language without any shame. One day he alone ate all the lunch of a party of four without any apology but the remark, 'I'm satisfied.' "

We quite realise the difficulty of a foreigner to understand the life of a great man, especially a saint, simply through literature, and that ill-chosen and ill-read. But what passes our understanding is the fact that one would be so eager to put in print what he has known but imperfectly well. The author says many other fanciful things about Sri Ramakrishna, which we have no space to reproduce. He concludes the chapter with the words, "Ramakrishna is now the inspiration of a world-wide cult that preaches love and service as well as renunciation and meditation."

IV

The next chapter deals with "Vivekananda, champion of Mother India." (Are the last two words purposely chosen, because of the great celebrity they have so recently obtained through another American writer?)

We know there are many interested propagandists who can tolerate Sri Ramakrishna, but not Swami Vivekananda, because of the latter's aggressive defence of Hinduism. It is doubtful whether our present writer is an exception.

About the early struggle of Swami Vivekananda and the cause of his renouncing the world Mr. Thomas writes, "Bengal is fertile, but so are Bengalis. The country is overpopulated and many people undernourished. There is also an oversupply of university graduates. They have swarmed over India seeking clerical and educational posts, and still swarm into underpaid jobs in Calcutta. Naren was not the only 'B.A.' unemployed. . . ."

"A brilliant, ambitious youth reduced to starvation by the blows of circumstance, and then—renunciation as the only alternative to crime or death or undignified labor. Renunciation, because the climate of India can support it. Renunciation, because of its now hoary sanction."

"No wonder this youth forever after called this world a hell! He was not used to being crossed in purpose. Like Gadadhar, his early home life had been one of playful and innocent license. Like his father, he was proud and fiery. And so he rebelled."

We would request the learned author to read the biography of Swami Vivekananda over again. Little knowledge is truly more dangerous than complete ignorance.

About the formation of the Ramakrishna Order and its early members it is said, "From their past Hindu heritage and present hard times, these Calcutta youths had welcomed the ideal of renunciation. From Ramakrishna's contact with the Christian Bible and Keshab Chandra Sen, from their own unusual menial service to their master, and from Vivekananda's career in a Christian College they imbibed the ideal of service."

Would it not have been more creditable to the author if he could resist indulging in such wild surmises?

About the Christian influence on the life of Swami Vivekananda the writer says, "He realized that India needed Christ to quicken her civilization, but on account of his national pride, he refused to snrrender to Christ any fundamental Hindu doctrine." This is simply an echo of the opinion, held by many bigoted Christian missionaries that Christianity will be the consummation of Indian religious life.

As to one of the reasons of the popularity of Swami Vivekananda in America, our writer says, on the authority of a missionary pamphlet, "The princely raiment his rich friends lavished on him in India did not fail in its mission." Amongst other reasons were "his wise silence on some points, and his sincere reverence for Christ."

Regarding Swami Vivekananda's right to speak in the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, Mr. Thomas makes the following extract from the same authority: "Indeed, how could he speak as a Hindu monk at all, after living in palatial hotels, sporting gaudy finery . . . . ?"

Vivekananda had enough of such villainous attacks and criticisms during his lifetime. But they could not touch the saintliness of that Seraphic Soul.

As to the success of Swami Vivekananda's work in the West, the author says in the appended notes: "Sceptical of Hindu boasts about America, Dr. Wilber W. While, Secretary of the College Y. M. C. A. of Calcutta wrote a letter to many prominent men and women in America, asking for information. The replies were unanimous in affirming that to the main body of Americans, Swami Vivekananda was at most a passing fad, leaving no permanent impressions. Some of the writers had only vaguely heard of him. Others admitted he had made converts, but not from Christianity." Then follow extracts from some of the letters.

May many inly rejoice at the above and may it bring peace to many a disturbed mind.

In the West, "The Swami had felt, 'the overwhelming difficulties he had met with in presenting Hinduism to an aggressive self-conscious Christian public,' but he consoled himself by crying aloud, India will hear me! So he was quite ready for the exuberant celebra-

tion that actually occurred on his arrival. . . .”

This is a most wonderful research work even for Dr. W. Thomas, Ph.D., unknown to any of his biographers. But this is simply one sample of many such things displayed in the book.

In writing about Swami Vivekananda, our learned author has undergone most laborious research work amongst the known as well as generally unknown, available as also rare literature dealing about the Swami, but he is quite silent regarding the persecution “the champion of Mother India” suffered at the hands of Christian missionaries. Here are the words of a more sympathetic writer: Mon. Romain Rolland writes in his biography of Swami Vivekananda:

“He was especially bitter against false Christianity and religious hypocrisy. . . . . (as a result) he had always at his heels a band of clergymen, who followed him with invectives and accusation, even going so far as to spread infamous calumnies of his life and behaviour in America and India . . . . the Christian missionaries . . . . denounced the free Sannyasin in India with almost comic zeal . . . . Vivekananda with disgust saw the scum of the rancorous wave raised by the devotees returning to him from India in the frightened letters of his disciples. And with what scorn he flung it back in the faces of those who had bespattered him with it! . . . . He was . . . . the recipient of offers of associations, promises, threats, and blackmailing letters from intrigues, busybodies, and religious charlatans. It is needless to state the effect on a character such as his. He would not tolerate the slightest domination. . . . .”

“For the honour of America it must be said here and now that his moral intransigence, his virile idealism, his dauntless loyalty attracted to him from all sides a chosen band of defenders and admirers, a group of whom were to form his first Western disciples and the most active agents in his work for human regeneration.”

When some of the criticisms levelled against him were brought to the notice of Swami Vivekananda, he said, “Perfect silence is the best refutation to them, and I wish you to maintain the same.”

At the conclusion of the chapter, Mr. Thomas calls Swami Vivekananda ‘conservative,’ ‘patently Hindu’ and opines that ‘his philosophy is Hindu dogma in Western dress.’

Then what about Christian influence in the make-up of this Hindu monk?

V

The subject of the next chapter is Vedanta Centres in America. Here the author tries to give the history, growth, present conditions, of course with his own criticism, of the Ramakrishna Movement in the continent and anticipates also its future. He had interviews with the two Swamis at the Vedanta Society of New York in 1928 and tries to reproduce their ideas and opinions, rather according as he has understood them.

Mr. Thomas doubts whether the Swamis there teach tolerance because one day while he attended a meeting of the Vedanta Society he *overheard* one of the members saying with a German accent, “Where is Jesus Christ now? Dead already—gone to nothing. These Hindus have the only true religion in the world!”

We should say that Mr. Thomas’ sense of tolerance and intolerance is very subtle and keen. After staying for ‘several years’ in India he ought to have known better what is meant by religious intolerance, from the examples as mani-

fested in the activities and attitudes of the evangelists of peace, in this country. In our schooldays, we remember, one of the subjects of our fun was how the Christian missionaries with their distorted vernacular pronunciations abuse our gods and goddesses, standing in marketplaces, surrounded by a circle of illiterate people gaping in wonder. Mahatma Gandhi says in his autobiography how he felt a revulsion of feelings towards Christianity as he found a Christian missionary thus indulging in abuses against Hinduism.

A great complaint of Mr. Thomas against the Vedanta work in America is that whereas American missionaries come to India to force Christianity upon Indians backed by American money, the Hindu Mission in America "is supported by the field in which it operates."

The moral is very simple to understand. Vedanta supplies a demand in America, while Christianity as a religion is not sought for in India from the propagandists.

As to the message of Vedanta in America he has great objection to the idea that Vedanta is rational and scientific. He accuses the first Swami (meaning Vivekananda) for saying that; "for in his naive freedom from historical detail, he was not much bothered by the fact that the classic Vedanta goal is not rational but mystically non-rational. . . ."

This reminds us of the fact, the more ignorant we are of a thing, the more authoritatively we can talk about that.

According to Mr. Thomas, the Raja Yoga as presented by Vivekananda is magical; for, as the author says, "A practice is magical (1) when it seeks to work in a realm above nature, or (2) when it is secret or limited to a select few."

But it is the consensus of opinion that Swami Vivekananda in his Raja Yoga wanted to give a rational interpretation of the subject. And he was, as every one acquainted with his works knows, up against all mystery-mongering.

Our writer finds that "in the Ramakrishna Movement the infiuence of East on West is not so great as the influence of West on East." Yet in another place he says, "In view of the conservatism of both message and method, we are not surprised to discover that . . . . its membership is generally on the decline."

The author by a statistics tries to prove that "from its inception until the present, the movement shows a marked decline in local interest and after 1906 a decline in membership levelling into stagnation."

Then why so much space and attention devoted to a dying or stagnant movement in "Hinduism Invades America?" The author however notes that from 1906 to 1929, as many as 10 Swamis had to go to America—as an outcome of "the demand for their services," . . . and in St. Louis, "an interested group has the desire and the funds for a Swami, but the Swami in question is unwilling to come out from India."

One of the reasons for decline in membership is that the Swamis "do not care enough for American life to adopt its ways." Did not Swami Bodhananda, head of the Vedanta Society in New York say ('In the spirit of ancient Upanishads', as Mr. Thomas writes) in an interview :—"Vedanta does not appeal to the masses. And as for me, I shall never compromise its truth to make it popular. Even if the masses flocked to my door, I would still continue the intensive cultivation of the individual."

"However," writes the author, "the principal cause of Vedanta stagnation in America is the master Ramakrishna

himself. Scorning the body, he put his stamp of disapproval on mental healing, and so prevented the movement from developing in a popular way along the line of such cults as Christian science."

Indeed Vedanta is not a substitute for drugs and medicines.

About further responsibilities of Sri Ramakrishna in this matter Mr. Thomas says, "Shunning wealth, he made the Order minimize the value of great funds of its own. And with his old-fashioned Hindu conviction that the disciple will always come to the master, so that the master need not go out and preach, he limited aggressive propaganda."

What a great contrast with the Christian method of proselytising!

Mr. Thomas is however of opinion that "the Ramakrishna movement will most likely abide by itself in America as long as sufficient wistful Americans exist to support the . . . . Swamis that supply them with inner peace."

VI

The next chapter deals with the Yogada-Sat-Sanga Society, Yogananda's practical cult. Chapter seven describes the remaining seven of the nine forms of Hindu influence in American life, as enumerated in the beginning. But none escapes the slash of criticism from the hands of Wendell Thomas. Rabindranath Tagore, according to the author was "rejected in his native province of Bengal, but accepted by the world." He finds fault with Prof. Radhakrishnan for the opinion that of the four ways of dealing with a conquered race, caste system is superior to the other three methods, namely, slaughter, enslavement, and absorption by inter-marriage. In the opinion of the writer, Prof. Radhakrishnan in his Heskell Lectures at the University of Chicago interpreted "the substance of classic Hinduism according to certain familiar conceptions of Christianity and Western idealism" and Dr. Surendranath Das Gupta in his Harris Lectures at the Illions University presented "Hinduism as fundamentally a non-rational mysticism." He accuses Swami Omkar of the Santi Ashrama, Madras, as not being consistent with the higher teachings of the Upanishads, because he came down to "the world of good and evil" when he raised a voice of protest against *Mother India*. Mr. Thomas however apologises by saying, "Now I am not blaming Swami Omkar for blaming Miss Mayo: I am simply pointing out the Swami's loyalty to Samkara . . . . 'the higher' conception in which 'there are neither the blamed nor the blamer' . . . . ."

We have long heard that many Indian charlatans practising magic in the name of Hindu religion have created a disgust in American minds towards India and Indian culture. Now we hear of "American Impostors" earning livelihood by preaching Hinduism in America. We learn from the book that " 'Prince Ram Maharaj is another American Hindu,' who claims to have come from Tibet after enduring twenty years of hardship attending his initiation into Hinduism. He has announced his intention of establishing a Hindu Center in Los Angeles." We know from a reliable information that 'Prince Ram Maharaj' is the name taken by an American adventurer who came to us to study Vedanta, but had to leave the Ashrama within a few weeks. The fact is, there are and will be cheats, charlatans and impostors in every race and nation. Though they can very easily create prejudice against their motherland, it is not just and safe to judge a whole people by the misdemeanour of a few individuals.

The concluding chapter attempts to

show how far American Hinduism has been the result of Hindu adjustments and also anticipates the American prospects of Hindu faith in general.

VII

The book is interspersed with things which are not altogether without any sense. As such it is more insidious : for it will thereby more easily mislead an unwary reader. Some persons see nothing but evil in the world. Others there are, whose criticism of things is coloured with appreciation simply to make their dark picture look darker. Does the author belong to this class? As we were going through the book, the thought that was uppermost in our mind was, Which has played the most important part in it—ignorance, lack of proper understanding or a deliberate desire to mutilate and misinterpret things?

On our part we believe America has nothing to fear from Hindu "invasion," nor has India anything to be afraid of Christian invasion, so long as Hindus in America try strenuously to live the Hindu ideal and Christians in India strive their best to mould their life after Christ. This will rather bring about amity and better relation among the people of the two continents. And as a matter of fact, Hindus have no reason to feel elated at getting a number of adherents in the West nor the Christians should rejoice at being able to swell in the census report the figure of Christian population in the East, unless thereby real spiritual comfort and solace are brought to any.

THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN THOUGHT ON THE THOUGHT OF THE WEST

By Swami Ashokananda

While editing *Prabuddha Bharata*, I had the privilege of publishing in it certain articles on Swami Vivekananda and his teaching by the great French savant, M. Romain Rolland. I then promised, in relation to certain statements of his, that I would express my views on them in a future issue. The present article is in fulfilment of that promise. I regret that it has been necessary. But the subject with which it proposes to deal cannot possibly be left undiscussed. I refer the reader specially to the latter portion of M. Rolland's article, *Civitas Dei—the City of Mankind*, (*P. B.*, September, 1930, pp. 437-38), in which M. Rolland has raised the question of Western indebtedness to Indian wisdom. He has therein referred to a correspondence which I had the honour of having with him, and he has sought to controvert the thesis which I put forward in my letters. I have carefully considered all that M. Rolland has said on the point at issue. But I confess I am unconvinced by his argument and find little reason to change my position.

I

Let me quote from the correspondence referred to above. In answer to a question I wrote to M. Rolland: "Vedântic ideas have surely spread over the world in greater or less degree and are still spreading. But it is really difficult, if not impossible, to say how much of this propagation is due to Swami Vivekananda and his Mission. There can be no doubt, however, that it is at least partly due to our Mission. The different sources from wbich

Vedântic ideas emanated and spread over the Western world and countries outside India are: (1) Western Sanskritists; (2) Our Mission (from Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda onwards); (3) Later teachers and literature (including Tagore and Theosophy); (4) Independent growth of Vedântic ideas owing to historical changes. What are the Vedântic ideas? They are mainly two: (*i*) The inner Divinity of man: Man is potentially Divine and possesses infinite goodness and power and, therefore, the treatment of man by society, state or religion should be based on the recognition of his inner potential Divinity and omnipotence; (*ii*) Life's ultimate value is spiritual, and all human concerns to be truly fruitful must be controlled and guided in reference to this ultimate ideal. These are the two principal characteristics of the Vedântic teaching. It cannot be said that the West openly professes them. But I am inclined to think that these ideas, especially the first one, are always in its subconscious mind. How did it get these? I do not think that Christianity or the Greco-Roman cnlture are specially favourable to them. I think in the first stage, the industrial, social and cultural changes, especially the progress of science, drove the West to those ideas, and was helped therein by Indian culture as disseminated by Western Orientalists. Many Western authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show traces of Vedântic influence on their thought. In the later stages, I am sure Swami Vivekananda and his monks and their literature had something to do." (In this letter I discussed the propagation of Vedântic ideas in the modern age. In the ancient ages, the Vedântic ideas spread through other agencies, as I shall show later on.)

In reply to the above, M. Rolland wrote among other things: "It is incontestable that a relationship reveals itself between the Vedântic ideas and many of the ideas and tendencies which are appearing now in the West. But I do not think that this is an effect (at any rate for the greatest number of them) of the modern diffusion of Vedântic ideas. In reality, this relationship rests on the identical foundation of human nature, and above all on the great Indo-European family. Whatever may be the agreements which unite the languages (and in consequence, the thoughts) called Aryan, of Asia and of Europe, these agreements are surely traced back to far distant times. . . It would be lessening the Divine, the Eternal, to imagine that there is a handful of grains in the hands of certain chosen men of a chosen race. The Eternal has sown Himself with full hands over the whole field of humanity. The earth is not everywhere so fertile that the seeds may germinate. In some places it grows and produces fruit, in other places it sleeps. But the seed is everywhere. And turn by turn, that which is sleeping, awakes; and that which was awake, goes to sleep. The spirit is always in movement from people to people, and from man to man. And no people and no man holds it. But it is the fire of the eternal life in each one,—the same Fire. And we live to feed it." M. Rolland has only elaborated this standpoint in the article, *Civitas Dei—the City of Mankind* (*P.B.*, September, 1930). I shall quote here another relevant passage: "The Areopagite uses many materials in his religious edifice that are to be found in the constructions of Indian thought. And if there is nothing to justify the view that one has borrowed from the other, it must be granted that they both come from a common quarry. I have neither the means nor the desire

to find out what it is. My knowledge of the human spirit leads me to discover it in the unity of thought and laws that govern the spirit. The primordial instinct, the desire for mystic union with the Absolute that is embedded in each individual and that urges each man towards it, has very limited means of expression; and its great paths have been traced once and for all by the exigencies and limitations of nature itself. Different races merely take with them over the same roads their different temperaments, habits and preferences." [*Early Hellenic-Christian Mysticism, P.B.*, August, 1930, page 400].

It seems to me that in the position that M. Rolland has taken, two altogether different lines of thought have been mixed up : one metaphysical, and the other historical. M. Rolland's view seems to me to be this : Every-man has the Divine potentiality in him, he will naturally realise his Divinity; this Divinity does not require to be communicated to him by an extraneous agent. And what we call Vedântic ideas are really universal, being constitutional to human nature; they, therefore, do not require to be imported from outside. He wrote to me : "I do not think that in India or in any other country there has ever been the origin of a divine revelation. I give the honour for it to God who is in every living being. He alone is the source and that source is in each of those living beings who have been, who are and who will be. In face of the Eternal there can be no question of priority; there is no commencement and there is no end." So far as individual Self-realisation goes, I partly agree with this view of M. Rolland. It is true that when one realises the truth, one realises it *oneself*, and not by proxy : the Divine realisation in each case is an original act and not derived and indirect. But it must be admitted that even in such individual realisations, outside help cannot be altogether dispensed with, in fact, it is largely necessary. We receive intellectual intimation of spiritual truths from others; we are shown the means of realisation; and sometimes the power to realise may be evoked in us by others. The fact that certain truths are potential in a man does not preclude the possibility of his being helped by others in discovering them. On the other hand, considering the anti-spiritual ideas that fill the human mind and the strength of man's lower nature, outside help seems absolutely necessary in overcoming them. In fact there is a view current among Hindus that no one can realise the Truth unless he is initiated into it by a man of realisation. Why spiritual truths only, of all truths, whether spiritual, intellectual or material, it is true that they are potential in every-one. And yet who does not know that men are learning them from one another and that we can trace the journey of ideas from man to man? M. Rolland is correct in thinking that what we call Vedântic ideas are really universal ideas in the sense that they underlie all true spiritual evolution and fulfilment. In fact the Hindus consider this universality to be a prominent characteristic of the Vedântic ideas. They are true not of a particular time and clime only, but of all times and climes. We shall see later on in what sense the Vedântic ideas are universal. Bnt supposing that these are constitutional to human mind, is it easy to realise them and do all men and nations really apprehend them?

Here is the crux of the problem. All have the Divinity within them, but all do not realise it. The Eternal may be present everywhere, but all nations do not recognise It in their life and action.

M. Rolland also says that "the earth is not everywhere so fertile." What does this signify? If the Eternal is everywhere, what is it that constitutes the "barrenness"? Evidently the omnipresence of the Eternal does not necessarily mean Its universal recognition. The fact of the presence of Vedântic ideas among certain people cannot, therefore, be explained by a reference to the omnipresence of God. Other answers have to be found. M. Rolland himself is conscious of this fact. He admits in his article, *Civitas Dei—the City of Mankind*, that man's choice is a determining factor in the existence of Vedântic ideas. He says of the Westerner that he "made the wrong choice," that he "listened to the tempter, who offered him the empire of the world spread out beneath them."

Let us correctly visualise the situation. It is true that no individual or nation can recognise and realise the Vedântic ideas if the Eternal were not everywhere. It is because the Truth is everywhere that man can experience It. But it is also equally true that the Divine Truth is extremely difficult of access. The *Upanishadic* saying that the Eternal has created men with their senses all going outward and therefore they, barring a few exceptions, do not see the Self within, is a very correct description of humanity. There is a veil, a very thick one, that shuts the light out. The view that the Eternal is always asserting Itself in the life of peoples is true only in a very limited sense. It is there, no doubt; but in what form? In its Avidyâ (Nescience) or Vidyâ (Illumination) form? Mostly in the Avidyâ form,—God has created men with outgoing senses. Under the impulsion of Avidyâ most men seek matter and its joys, a few intellectual pleasure, but very few the joy of the Spirit. The "natural" tendency of human mind is to revel in the objective life. This conflict between the inwardness of Truth and the objective tendencies of the human mind is the fundamental tragedy of human life. It has taken thousands of years for certain peoples to conceive the necessity of reversing the "natural" tendency of mind and recognise that truth lies at the end of the opposite road. Stern discipline has been necessary to accomplish this. And yet what does the achievement really amount to? Little, very little. Humanity is almost as outward bound as ever before. M. Rolland says that if one of the streams of thought that fertilise the soil of the West is Vedântic, "that is so in the same way that the natural speech of Monsieur Jourdain was 'prose' without his knowing it—because it is a natural medium of thought for mankind." I beg to differ from M. Rolland. The Vedântic is not the "natural" thought for mankind in the sense in which he means it. If that were so, all people would have recognised them in their life, which they do not. No, the Vedântic thought is not natural to mankind in the ordinary sense. It is unnatural to the large majority of mankind with their cravings for the joys of the flesh and their intellectualism. When through a reversal of the natural process, through self-discipline and deep faith in the existence of the Spirit within, men turn their mind inward, take to Nivritti, and thus transcend the lower nature, *then* the *higher* nature of man asserts itself and *then only* the Vedântic thought appears natural to them, if of course there has been also the necessary intellectual development and change of outlook in the meanwhile.

I have advisedly put this conditional clause. I have implied above that the Vedântic ideas are universal only in a

certain sense. The fact is, they cannot be apprehended without a necessary intellectual development. There may be spiritual growth, yet there may not be a realisation of the Vedântic view. Spiritual growth is due to purification of heart and apprehension of supra-mental reality. Whoever fulfils these conditions will grow spiritually. But to perceive spiritual realities is not the same as correctly grasping them intellectually; and until one has a free, rational and scientific mind, one cannot take a Vedântic view of them. In all religions and creeds, there have been many who have realised spiritual truths more or less. But their conception of those truths have been determined by their environment, education, history, traditions and beliefs. A Christian, for example, if he realises spiritual truths, will be influenced in their intellectual apprehension by the beliefs and dogmas he upholds. Similarly a Muhammadan, a Vaishnava, or a Shâkta. Now these beliefs and dogmas are not always rationally formulated. Some creeds uphold impossible myths and tenets, others are half-rational. Their irrationality, however, does not obstruct the spiritual growth of the votaries, for the beliefs and dogmas always fulfil the function for which they are essentially meant: the purification of the heart, self-discipline and development of spiritual feelings. So far as the purely religious purpose is concerned, the established creeds are more or less good enough for us.

But the conflict arises when religious beliefs begin to affect the other spheres of our life. For most men the quest of life is often other than avowedly religious. Men pursue knowledge and seek to master the secrets of nature and life. And this growth in knowledge and power changes their outlook on life and reality. The disinterested pursuit of knowledge is tremendously effective. So long as the secular life of a people, including education, intellectual pursuits, etc., is dominated and moulded by religion, conflict between religion and knowledge can be averted; but in that case knowledge is cramped and progress is fettered. But if the pursuit of knowledge is disinterested and free from religious bias, conflict between it and religion becomes inevitable unless, of course, the religious beliefs, doctrines and practices are rational, scientific and in accordance with the advanced knowledge. Unfortunately this accordance is lamentably wanting in many creeds. For the creeds are often upheld and surrounded by crude views of life and reality. Their cosmological views are irrational and fanciful; their views of human psychology crude and incorrect; their classification of spiritual phenomena unscientific and unrealistic. When knowledge is advanced, these crude and fanciful cosmologies and psychologies have to vanish, and new cosmologies and psychologies take their place; and a consequent readjustment of religious beliefs has to follow. This change is so tremendous that many creeds find it hard to survive it. For example, Christianity. The Christian beliefs and dogmas are many of them unscientific and irrational. The Biblical story of creation is fanciful; so is the story of the fall of man. And yet Christianity is based on these stories. Take these stories away, and many of the Christian beliefs will at once collapse. How much of the new knowledge of the modern West accords with Christianity? What is the Christian view of human psychology? How does Christianity classify spiritual phenomena? In both these respects Christianity is extremely deficient. Take the Christian view of man as the born sinner. This is a main belief of Christianity. The modern out-

look, however, strongly repudiates it. These views and beliefs of Christianity do not, it is true, generally stand in the way of a man becoming spiritual. But these views, if they continue to affect the entire life of man, will surely prove extremely harmful, as they have proved in the past. Modern knowledge and reason are in conflict with them. Christians will have to either modify their religious beliefs or deny modern knowledge, and they cannot do the latter. Here lies the greatness of Vedânta. The Vedântic views of life and reality, of cosmology and psychology and of spiritual phenomena accord wonderfully with the findings of science and unbiased rationalism. The religious doctrines propounded by Vedânta are, therefore, quite in agreement with the new knowledge. That is why Vedânta has such a wonderful appeal to the modern mind. Vedânta would not have been appreciated to the extent it has been, if human knowledge, freed from religious bias and dogmatism, had not properly advanced and reason triumphed. That is why I said that a required degree of intellectual development is necessary before the Vedântic view can become natural to a people.

Vedânta is universal in this sense that if we scientifically analyse the spiritual phenomena, the spiritual practices and the spiritual feelings of a creed, we shall always find certain fundamental truths underlying them. Whereas the different creeds conceive and present them often in unscientific forms, as determined by their dogmas, beliefs, mythologies and traditions—their intellectual equipment and past history, the scientific view of them coincides with the Vedântic view. Vedânta is, therefore, the science and philosophy of all religions. It explains and rationalises the myths, dogmas, rites and practices of all religions according to the advanced knowledge of mankind.

M. Rolland refers towards the end of his article, *Early Hellenic-Christian Mysticism etc.* (*P.B.*, September, 1930, page 402), to the architectural sense of the Christian metaphysicians, which he considers Hinduism may learn from Christianity. Evidently M. Rolland has omitted to consider the wonderfully rich systems of Vaishnava, Shâkta, Vedântic and Yogic thoughts with their highly developed psychology and metaphysics. If Christianity has its metaphysical architecture, Hinduism also has its own in perfectly developed forms. This need not, of course, prevent Hinduism from learning about the mystical and metaphysical systems of Christianity. Hinduism is always ready to assimilate all that is beautiful and new in any thought-system of the world. But the essential point is whether the Christian standard of the classification of spiritual facts and phenomena, according to which its spiritual architecture is built, is scientific or not. Unless the standard be scientific and rational, it will not appeal to the modern mind; the Christian mysticism will find itself in confiict with the modern outlook; and though a few may be drawn towards it, the majority of men will derive little sustenance from it. Mysticism must be presented in a rational form based on a philosophy scientifically conceived. Does Christian metaphysics and mysticism fulfil these conditions? I fear, not. Of Vedânta, however, it may rightly be said that its systems are rational and scientific. In this, in my opinion, lies the superiority of the architectural sense of Hinduism. We may systematise religious facts and phenomena according to an arbitrary standard; however beautiful that may be, it will avail little and is bound to collapse under the impact of advancing

knowledge unless the standard of systematisation is the same as inheres in the world of reality itself.

This fact must be clearly borne in mind in order to understand if the West really professes Vedântic ideas. Every spiritual view is not Vedântic. The Vedântic is that spiritual view which is rational and scientific. If the Christian or European outlook had been scientific, there would have been universality of outlook. But such universality is diametrically opposed to the Christian dogma. "Only a few free spirits have risen to this universality of outlook. The necessary implication of the recognition of the universality of spirit are freedom of worship, acceptance of the other faiths and denial of any dogmatism. The history of the West is a positive proof of the non-recognition of the Vedântic idea." (Prof. Radhakrishnan). But it is admitted that there have been some European thinkers and mystics in the past who have upheld Vedântic views, and that in the modern age there has been an increasing appreciation of those views by a larger and larger number of Westerners. If, as I have pointed out before, the Vedântic ideas do not necessarily have a spontaneous manifestation, we are forced to inquire if these were communicated from the outside. Of course these may have been self-evolved also. But also may not have been. Which it is has to be determined by historical research and not by metaphysical consideration as M. Rolland seems to have done.

II

I shall begin with the modern age. M. Rolland says that the Vedântic ideas and aspirations are none of them alien to the West, and that the unflagging feverishness of her age-long activity would have been impossible without inner fires. He says that there is a "better Europe." But he himself acknowledges that Europe does not always know it. I have always differed from M. Rolland on this point. The output of the Western civilisation, on the whole, cannot be said to be spiritual. What is the sign of spirituality? M. Rolland refers to "a persistent and immovable treasure made up of abnegation, sacrifice and faith in the Spirit." I do not think that the West has much faith in the Spirit as the word is understood by us. But she has great self-confidence; and no doubt there is much of abnegation and sacrifice, without which no civilisation can stand. But the crucial point is: Abnegation and sacrifice for what? What is all this feverish activity for? It is the end that determines the value of the means. Unfortunately the West has often shown wonderful self-sacrifice for ignominous ends—earthly power, kingdom, riches. Activity by itself means nothing. In fact we in India have always considered activity as a sign of Rajas—the second level of the mind, and not of Sattva—the third level where alone the mind becomes spiritual. Spirituality is the negation of activity. Action ceases as one realises the Spirit. If one still acts, it is under the direct inspiration of God, as His instrument, and one's action is then diametrically opposed to activity as it is commonly understood,—one is not affected by it. It is not India's peculiar way of judging spirituality. It has sometimes been said that spirituality expresses itself in India in contemplativeness and in the West in action. This is a wrong estimate. It is no question of national temperament here, but a fundamental fact of spiritual experience. Action ceases automatically with all with the dawn of spiritual knowledge, be they Eastern or Western. M. Rolland's statement that the incessant activity of the West is a sign

of her spirituality does not, therefore, convince me. No doubt there have been and are many spiritual men and women in the West. But the West, in her main tendencies, is not spiritual. The West is pre-eminently material and intellectual. Such is the opinion of all who are competent to judge. I may mention here two names: Aurobindo Ghose and Prof. Radhakrishnan. They are both thoroughly acquainted with the Indian and Western thought, and both of them have declared the West to be predominantly intellectual. In an article in the December (1930) *Prabuddha Bharata*, Prof. Radhakrishnan clearly brought out the distinction between the intellectual and spiritual view of life and showed how the West has not truly developed the latter.

As regards the Divinity of Man, M. Rolland says: "A religion whose God has been familiar for nineteen hundred years to the people of Europe by the name of the 'Son of Man,' cannot wonder that man should have taken it at its word and claimed Divinity for himself." But is it true that the Westerner is ready to believe himself Divine? I fear M. Rolland has confused the modern Westerner's self-confidence with the Vedântic idea of the Divinity of man. So far as I know, even the concept of Atman, as we understand it, is difficult of comprehension by the Western mind. It finds it hard to conceive any entity beyond and bereft of mind. There might have been solitary Christian mystics in the Middle Ages who had a glimpse of the Atman. But the Western mind is still quite unable to conceive it. Over-valuation of one's powers and arrogant self-assertion is not the Vedântic conception of the Atman. The point is not confidence in self, but *which* self. M. Rolland has referred to the Christian conception of Christ as the "Son of Man." Two very great obstacles to this concept leading to the Vedântic idea of the Divinity of self are the Christian ideas of man as the born sinner and Christ as the son of God—a *special* being, outside the category of men. The modern age in the West has been a protest against the medieval conception of life and being—it has been more or less a repudiation of Christianity and a return to the Greco-Roman humanism. If it has helped the Westerner to enhance the value of his individuality, it has also made it more and more secular, physical and intellectual. The fact is, the appreciation of the Vedântic ideas has as a *sine qua non* the practice of Nivritti. Without Nivritti, turning away from the things of the senses, there cannot be any understanding or realisation of the Vedântic ideas. To find if there has been really any growth of those ideas among the Westerners, we have simply to study their life. And I regret to say that there is not much evidence of Nivritti there.

This is not, however, to say that there are no spiritual men in the West, or that the Western mind is not potentially spiritual. Everyman, in fact every being, has a spiritual basis of life. When we speak of one being unspiritual, what we mean is that the principle of spirituality is dormant in him, other grosser elements being predominant and determining his life. The case of the West is almost the same. There was an age in Europe when she bade fair to grow into a spiritual nation—the Medieval Age, the age of Christian saints and mystics. But unfortunately, the efforts of that age could not continue. They gave way to secularism, with the result that the Western mind became predominantly material and intellectual. There were reasons why it happened so. There

must be a preparedness in a people to live the principle of Nivritti. That is not possible unless there is some worldly enjoyment previously. The Feudal Age did not allow any great opportunity to the people to enjoy. Christianity, therefore, could affect them only superficially. Secondly, Christianity was presented to people in a form which was often irrational and unscientific. The result was a rejection of Christianity with the growth of rationalism and scientific knowledge. But this was not all to the evil. With the freedom of mind that the modern age has conferred on the Westerners, there has grown in them a desire to pursue truth to its uttermost limit. Besides they are finding that life must have a basis in some eternal truth without which it is aimless and empty. They are, therefore, being led to ideas about life and reality which are not only rational and scientific, but also relate to eternal verities. Therefore, I wrote to M. Rolland : "I think, in the first stage, the industrial, social and cultural changes, especially, the progress of science, drove the West to these (Vedântic) ideas, and was helped therein by Indian culture as disseminated by Western Orientalists."

M. Rolland himself has shown in his article, *America at the Time of Vivekananda's First Visit*, (*P.B.*, May, 1930), how America was inoculated by Hindu ideas. I need not elaborate it here. Those who are interested may read profitably a work recently published by the Harvard University Press : *Emerson and Asia*. As regards Europe, the Western Orientalists certainly did a great deal in Germany, France, England and other countries. In the next issue I shall mention briefly the influence of Indian thought on German literature and philosophy.

(To be continued)

REALITY AND APPEARANCE

By Dr. Mahendranath Sircar, M.A., Ph.D.

(Continued from the last issue)

X

This leads to Bradley's position. Bradley introduces us to the conception of Reality which is an individual as well as a system. Reality is not the sum of things. It is the unity in which all things coming together are transmuted.

Bradley says that the Absolute is a higher Experience superior to the distinction which it includes and overrides. If the relations or distinctions are in the Absolute, they are in the Absolute as real; they may be assimilated in the Absolute, but the Absolute cannot deny them as elements of its being. The transcendence of relations is not the denial of relations. A being which embraces relations must necessarily be concrete, and must be an element in the totality. Relations exist in centres, and if the Absolute contains internal distinctions it must be the locus of all relations; and the locus of relations cannot remain non-relational. The non-relatedness may be true of the Absolute which can have nothing external to it. But the same cannot be true of the internal distinctions. Internal distinctions are true of the partial as well as of the complete being, the finite elements are distinguished from one an-

other as well as from the Absolute. This makes the Absolute an element in the totality. It differs from the finite. The finite beings allow external distinctions; the Absolute cannot allow such distinctions. Nothing is external to it; but this absence of externality does not make the Absolute non-relational. Bradley's mistake lies in thinking that the internal distinctions are not inconsistent with the non-relational character of the Absolute. The Absolute to be *Absolute*, Bradley truly hints, must be non-relational in the sense of denying or even superseding all relations. The supersession of relations differs from the assimilation of relations. Non-relational cannot be used by Bradley in the former sense, since he is in favour of internal distinctions in the Absolute. Assimilation expresses Bradley's ideas better. But assimilation of relations does not make the Absolute non-relational. The illustration of musical harmony is to the point. Harmony is the whole in which the distinct notes are integrated, and therefore, harmony presents the whole in which distinctions are assimilated and absorbed. But the note of harmony has a character. It is not the composite tunes, it is something unique and this uniqueness differentiates it from the distinctive tunes. But can it be said that this unique note is not relational to the composite tunes? The composite tunes are its content, and cannot be lost in the harmony. They are there. The distinctions are not lost. They are now seen in a new setting. Harmony assimilates the tunes but harmony itself cannot deny the tunes. It cannot be "non-relational."

It must be borne in mind that the analogy of musical harmony cannot correctly express the relation of the finite and the Absolute. The Absolute does not include the distinctions of facts alone, but it includes the distinctions of persons also. Persons are not things in the sense in which facts are. Persons are the centres of internal distinctions and facts are the meeting points of external distinctions. Persons are, therefore, unique and different from facts. The assimilation of such persons in the Absolute is different from the assimilation of tunes in harmony. Each finite centre is real, in the sense in which the Absolute is real, inasmuch as it is the assimilation of internal distinctions. But how can such a finite being be assimilated in the Absolute without retaining the least distinction? The finite being has character. However partial it may be as a centre of unity and uniqueness, it cannot be reduced to the position of facts or bare existences. The Absolute may be the highest reality by its character of all-absorbingness, but it cannot cease to be personal, inasmuch as it is inclusive of personalities. How the finite personalities are absorbed in the non-relational unity is not explained. The Absolute is the highest unity because it is the supra-person. To be personal is to be relational. The assimilation does not mean that the relations cease to exist, it only means that the relations are not static, they are dynamic and at every point touch the all-absorbing unity. The criticism which can be applied to external distinctions, cannot be applied to the dynamic relations. In the dynamic conception, relations are real but they are assimilated in a higher unity. The highest unity therefore, cannot cease to be personal, though it can assimilate the aggregate of relations in the concrete unity itself. But by that reason, it cannot be non-relational and impersonal. The integration of persons is not possible in a non-relational indentity, it is possible in the concrete unity. Bradley's non-relational Absolute reduces the finite being to

the category of appearance. But the appearances are not unreal, they are real, but not fully real, since they imply relations, internal and external. This seems to be a dilemma. The test of reality, according to Bradley, is unity. The unity is unique in the Absolute. But in the finite beings the unity is not complete; but this lack of completeness connotes no distinction between the Absolute, and the finite beings. The finite beings possess a unity and constancy not altogether different from the Absolute, though the partial unity differentiates it from the Absolute, still the finite is the limited picture of the Absolute. Even the idea of unity is intimate in the finite beings, although the idea of an absorbing wholeness is not included therein. The distinction, therefore, between the finite and infinite cannot be an absolute distinction. They belong to the same category. The Absolute, therefore, might absorb by its all-absorbing wholeness, the details of its existence; but in this unity the finite beings cannot lose their identity and integrity and be called appearances. The finite and the infinite as realities do not essentially differ; and therefore, the Absolute by rejecting external distinctions cannot be a non-relational unity. The Absolute must necessarily be a unity assimilating all distinctions, which thereby does not cease to exist in the Absolute. Non-relational unity might have a two-fold signification—(*i*) unity denying all relations, (*ii*) unity assimilating all relations. Bradley cannot accept the former, the latter is more consistent with his fundamental position. But the assimilating Absolute must be personal in the highest sense of the term. It cannot be a naked existence. The Absolute of Bradley cannot be impersonal and non-relational.

XI

Bhaskara and Bosanquet

Bradley's philosophy has this value that it posits the non-relational Absolute as the highest individual; it must be said to his credit that he feels the truth; finite personalities and experiences have no value and meaning. They are integreted in the higher experience and practically they come to lose their identity in the Absolute.

They can have individual experience, but in the Absolute this individual experience is assimilated in a way that it can no longer be traced. In the super-personal Absolute the finite personalities have not such realities that can stamp their experience with some meaning and value. At every step the finite experience is transcended and assimilated in the Absolute. The Absolute is the Fact.

Bosanquet follows Bradley. He has broken entirely from the tradition of Green and Wallace is not emphasising the personal distinctions of the finite selves and their continuity in the Absolute totality. He does not believe "in an unbroken identity, keeping us one with an earthly past within or into the ultimate being." And further on he adds "that the contents, the interests, the qualitative experience and focussing of externality, which are our best *i.e.*, our whole in its fullest adjustment and the centre of our being, for which so far as we understand ourselves we would readily sacrifice our nominal self—that all these things find their full development in the ultimate being, and in a form of experience not lower, but higher than what we call *personality*," *i.e.*, what is held essential is not primarily that the goal of development should be our *personality*, but it shall be a *personality*.

Our individual self-consciousness thus

becomes real and eternal in the ultimate being. Bosanquet draws a distinction between the real personality and the formal identity of the self; and the personality grows really with "a *disunition* of our formal exclusiveness."

In Indian philosophy Bosanquet is anticipated by Bhaskara who marks the transition from the concrete monism of Ramanuja to the Absolute monism of Samkara. Individuals and the sense of difference are created by what Bosanquet calls "formal exclusiveness," by what Bhaskara calls Upadhi. The formal distinction cannot produce the sense of externality and difference for the distinction is more apparent than real. The finite being and the Absolute are really and naturally one. Where the sense of difference and the formal exclusiveness are withdrawn, the finite souls begin to feel the great range of perception and the comprehensiveness of being and the ease of freedom from the sense of restriction and exclusiveness. Bhaskara seems to think that the Absolute is the concentrated being in the finite centres, this concentration impresses it with a finitude, but this finitude cannot create and constitute a permanent distinction between the finite and the infinite.

The finite is not the individual, the Absolute is the individual, and the more the finite can break away from the sense of an artificial and formal division, the more it can understand that the infinitude is its being and true self. The finite experience is, therefore, a sectional presentation, and the more the finite can be freed from its logical exclusiveness, the more will it transcend the sense of externality and relation, the more will it function universally and cosmically.

But the difficulty with Bhaskara and Bosanquet is that they have reduced the meaning and value of finite personality to nil, but still do they speak of them as realities assimilated in the infinite being. If this assimilation denies formal exclusiveness, it cannot deny their *personalities*. No doubt, Bosanquet points out that the goal of development should not be our personality, but a personality, and thereby reduces the finite personalities, their growth and development to be in a sense non-real. Bhaskara also in the conception of emancipated soul conceives the distinction and the formal exclusiveness dropped out; "We should recognise a very imperfect continuity between our present self and the receding hostile not-self of the past." This is possible, for in perfection we are more drawn closely to the infinite which is our essence and being.

Bhaskara and Bosanquet have installed a person in place of finite persons but in what position and what capacity their systems still retain the ineffete persons is very difficult to conceive. The logical exclusiveness is displaced by the spiritual inclusiveness. Bhaskara and Bosanquet struggle between intellectualism and mysticism. Intellectualism leads them to feel that to live is to be limited. It retains a distinction between the finite and the infinite. Their mysticism ignores the limit and cancels this distinction. In fact their system must logically be reduced to a concrete monism or an abstract monism. They make way for the latter. In the denial of the formal exclusiveness they conceive an expansion in the range of our experience and being and, for the matter of that, a break in the continuity of our experience. A confusion has been produced to satisfy the demands of logicism and mysticism. Vijnanabikshu has avoided this confusion, for the individuality of the finite selves is really created by a sense of formal or logical exclusiveness which they trans-

cend in emancipation by the denial of the logical exclusiveness. But Vijnana-bikshu retains in his system the spiritual exclusiveness of *Purushas* even when they transcend the relativistic sense and the distinctions of space and time. He suffers from the traditional bent of the Samkhya. He claims that this spiritual exclusiveness of Purushas does not necessarily produce the sense of difference, as the Purushas in nature and being are quite of the same kind.

XII

Samkara is explicit on this point. In the relative order he maintains a distinction between Jiva and Iswara and there is no attempt to reconcile their differences. The Jiva by controlling its Upadhi can rise above its formal limit and externality and its historical continuity, it can open unto itself wide ranges of perception, but it cannot completely break its limitation. Samkara recognises in the realm of Maya the fine marches of the soul in spirituality and comprehension and admits for it the occasional overshadowing of its individuality and the sense of exclusiveness, but it does not admit the possibility of complete self-effacement of the finite subject in super-subject. In the relative order this is not possible, for however wide the range of comprehension may be, it cannot wipe out the inherent distinction between the subject and the super-subject and the subject holds its experiences in its own personality as moments of its self-expression. The occasional overshadowing is a form of consciousness in the personal self, which welcomes and enjoys it, but this overshadowing is not the loss of, temporary even, of the personal consciousness. It is a phase of its own self in which it enjoys the possibility of expansions, but in no case it can be without reference to the self or the subject.

And again the distinction of the super-subject and the subject is possible and real, so long as the time-sense in its historic continuity holds; but the moment the time-sense and the sense of distinction cease to exist, the personality cannot function, and we are brought face to face with an order and plane of existence quite different from the relative.

And in this plane of existence neither the sense of the person or a person can hold. So long as the soul marches through time, such a possibility cannot be attained, and, therefore, the formal exclusiveness may be of some phases and aspects of life and experience in the past, but this transcendence cannot get us to a completely non-relational and alogical reality. The finite still continues, the exalted moments of its life in the infinite cannot completely obliterate the distinction. So long as the sense of a personality remains this is not possible.

Of course Bosanquet is right in holding that in the eternal march of the soul, the soul transcends the past. In fact, it does, but that does not necessarily mean that personality can completely transcend time-sense. Progress implies sometime the rejection of the past, specially in the case of finite persons, but this rejection has meaning in the sense that it marks out the turning-point of another history in the progress of the soul. So long as the sense of personality continues, the finite soul cannot look upon the past with complete detachment, and even in this transcendence of the soul in progress though the past with its history of struggle and development of the person has not its original meaning, still it cannot be said to have lost its significance.

The past is transcended as an event in time-series, it has not been transcended as a moulding influence of progress and development, it has been incorporated with the present.

The past and the future must have a meaning for the finite subjects whose knowledge takes place through a mediate process and whose progress must be through the rejection and the assimilation of the changes through time. The finite, unless it can rise above the time-sense, cannot be free from the inherent limitation of its being, but this possibility cannot come through ordinary faculties. Reason cannot anyhow rise above the limitations of relative construction, and every moment reason seeks to assimilate the differences in the identity it involves itself in antinomies.

So long as the distinction is retained between the subject and the super-subject it is not possible to get the non-relational Absolute. The highest conception may be reached in community of spirit but within the community the finite subjects retain their continuity and history and in such a continuity the super-subject is as much a personality as the finite subjects are. They are individually true and a spiritual co-ordination cannot interfere with their personalities. Lest it should pass for the desirable consummation in metaphysics it must be said that it is more a practical compromise than what is in reality. It might have some importance in moral and religious sense but cannot displace the Absolute in philosophy. Bradley perceives the limitations of these ideas and conceives reality as super-personal.

Samkara has avoided the Scylla of the Absolute as the individual and the Charybdis of the Absolute as non-relational system. The two ideas are evidently contradictory. Evidently the analogy is of a psychological unity and identity of feeling. He was making a confusion between the two. The former gives the idea of a system, the latter an identity beyond relations.

Samkara holds that identity and system cannot be united. They are, strictly speaking, different kinds of concepts. Identity is non-relational, system is relational. Identity is the law of the Absolute, system is the law of the empirical and, therefore, their logic is quite different. In Samkara the orders of relations and reality are different.

XIII

The Absolute since it is non-relational is an alogical concept. For logic, be it static or dynamic, is essentially, a science of relations and it cannot be applied to a being which is non-relational.

Ouspensky has rightly said in his "Tertium Organum" that the Absolute is supra-logical. For it represents a different kind of existence unique in the sense that it does not suffer from the polarity and relativity of existence. The attempt of static or dynamic logic must fail to determine the true nature of the Absolute.

It is indeed possible for dynamic reasoning to establish a relation and continuity between two poles of thought which tend to terminate in their qualitative identity. But in reality this can be true of the world of appearance where polarity and continuity are the laws.

But this law cannot be extended to reality. Appearance can never be set as a contrast to reality for reality *ex hypothesi* is non-relational.

Appearance is supposed to be a contrast to reality, and this has led philosophers to raise the insoluble problems of the relation between

appearance and reality. This has led Fichte to conceive the contrast of "NOT-I" to "I" and seek the syntheses *in "I."* This has led Hegel to seek the synthesis in the Absolute. Apparently they fail to see that they seek the synthesis of the meaning or judgment with the fact. A meaning or a judgment has a relative existence inasmuch as it implies a relation to a subject. It cannot have a trans-subjective existence. It cannot be Absolute.

Thought cannot conceive an appearance unsupported and unlocated. But thought also conceives the Absolute to be non-relational. Hence the necessity arises to think of the appearance in terms different from the Absolute. The Absolute is completely alogical. Samkara has evaded the duality of Kant's philosophy by conceiving the complete transcendence of the thing-in-itself. The thing-in-itself in Kant is the strictly NOT-I of relative consciousness and Kant in identifying that NOT-I with the thing-in-itself has made serious confusion.

XIV

The poles of empiric intuition, the subject and the object, cannot belong to the different orders of reality. The 'sense' can reveal objects which are empirically real. And to refer our experience to the thing-in-itself through the manifold of sense is the remnant of realistic thinking in Kant. The thing-in-itself is not real in the same sense as the manifold, and the manifold is not the sense-impression of the thing-in-itself upon mind. In fact, Kant accepts the mediate theory of perception so far as objects are concerned. Samkara accepts the immediate theory of perception and maintains the mutuality of I and NOT-I. He does away with the transcendental truth of NOT-I for the transcendent lies beyond the bifurcation of I and NOT-I of the realistic consciousness. Samkara's philosophy contains realistic touches, but this realism of perception does not in the least interfere with the transcendent aspect of his philosophy. Buddhism (specially the Vijnanvadi) at this point differs from Samkara, for it reduces the NOT-I and the 'given' of perception to the subjective states and processes, and refuses to accept the realistic element of Samkara's philosophy. The 'given' in perception is a subjective construction and self-projection, but nothing real. The NOT-I has not even the objective reality. The world is reduced to ideas. Samkara has not in the least interfered with the *truth of the 'given'* and if he calls it illusory, it is in connection with a transcendent reference. Samkara, therefore, differs from Buddhism in the acceptance of the reality of the 'given' and can construct a realistic knowledge out of the 'given' of the experience. This realism is not present in Vijnanvadi, it tends distinctly to an extreme subjectivism. Fichte also constructs the NOT-I out of I, but in his philosophy the I is the permanent factor and the creative principle. In Buddhism the 'I' has been reduced to a procession of ideas in quick succession, and the procession has been installed in the place of a definite reality. The 'I' is no less a fiction than NOT-I but the fiction appears to be a reality because of the long-standing continuity of the procession which has generated a realistic sense and consciousness. This 'I' has its root in Avidya, and beyond Avidya what exists is still a matter of difference of opinion amongst the scholars. Buddha calls it silence, because no thought category can be applied; it can be called neither positive nor negative, for these are thought-characterisations. In Buddhism reality is, therefore, described in negative terms as Nirvana, cessation from

the processions of Skandhas. In fact Buddha's problem is more practical than theoretical, and he refuses to question, he refuses to answer. 'Question not, answer not,' for logic can give no idea of the final truth. Buddhistic logic, therefore, has taken upon itself the negative task of rejecting all concepts, realistic or idealistic, including even the notion of the self.

Vivarttavada is the highest achievement of reason. It sees clearly that the Absolute cannot concentrate itself. Self-concentration is the denial of its absoluteness. The logical division of subject and object is more epistemological than real. The reality of concentration of Bhaskara's philosophy and of Saivaism is displaced by its illusoriness. But the illusoriness is not evident to reason, for though reason can understand the non-relational character of the fact and the relativity of meaning, reason cannot transcend the world of meaning and grasp the fact. It sees through limitation to understand Reality. It posits the appearance in the Absolute, it denies it there again. The first moment of thought is position, the second moment is denial, and in this reason comes to understand the phenomenality of appearance. Reason cannot think of appearance without its locus; Padmapada has well said that the illusion has for it a true datum.

Hence when reason posits the appearance, it posits it on a datum, but soon it discovers that the position cannot have any relation to the datum, for the Absolute is non-relational and hence in the second moment comes to feel the illusoriness of appearance.

But though reason thus understands the illusoriness of appearance and the Reality of a non-relational absolute still this philosophic conception is not the end of our pursuit, for the knowledge is still mediate and dialectical. The human soul cannot be satisfied with a negative dialectic and hence seeks a way to immediately feel Truth. It wants to sanction it by singular experience. The limitation of reason naturally calls for other avenues of apprehension, and this is supplied by the Vedantic doctrine of intuition.

XV

The ancient seers of India, more than anybody else, recognise the possibility of apprehending Reality and Truth in a direct way. If Reason can give systematic thinking, intuition can give direct knowledge.

But there are forms of intuition. The word is loosely used, sometimes in the sense of direct knowledge through the senses—as in empiric intuition, sometimes with a universal, sometimes with an individual connotation. Sometimes it is used in the sense of poetic or aesthetic perception of dynamical symmetry. And this accounts for the different kinds of conclusions in philosophy even when these conclusions are affirmed on the evidence of intuition. The human mind is a complex fabric and it is likely that when the deeper chords are touched, it gives expressions to tunes of varied description, and not unlikely that these open the wide vistas of perception. The human limitation begins to work here; the subconscious visions are not always supra-mental, and we are overcome by the super-sensuous visions of archetypal forms of existence and sometime spin theories out of them.

Hence difference arises in the form and character of intuition. Intuition may be concrete or transcendent. The one is logical, the other alogical. The theists believe in the former. They are inspired by the aesthetic intuition of the soul, and hence even in the highest stretch of ecstasy in love and grace, they attain the utmost limit of all con-

ceivable rapture, and sometimes lose themselves in its depth. This is possible in the highest tension of the soul, incomprehensible to the creature, but comprehensible to the soul. Even in this rapture thought expires leaving aside blessedness and joy. The soul becomes overwhelmed with the infinite shades of joyousness and the rosy hues of love-consciousness, with the eternal giving of the Soul and the consequent receiving of the polyphony and symphony of the spiritual life. It is essentially the eternal march of life in its ever-new freshness and ever-delicious festivity.

But the march of soul cannot stop there, and in its ever-widening penetration to the root of existence, it reaches the level whence the relational consciousness completely drops and a new perception begins in which the supra-mental ranges of consciousness in their unrestricted expanse and unbroken continuity take place.

The intuition may transcend the sense of eternal duration and continuity and can impress us with the sense of Immense. The intuition of eternity takes the form of timelessness, for the time-sense cannot exist in so elevated an existence. Because the mind cannot transcend the time-sense, it cannot feel the *Ever-present;* even the supra-mental time-sense (what Bergson calls intellectual intuition) cannot feel it. The supra-mental time-sense only displaces the notion of time as a series by the notion of a continuity; but it cannot transcend the sense of duration, the soul of time. This intuition of the *Ever-present* is, therefore, the intuition of Siva with the complete equilibrium of Sakti. The perception is the highest intuition in Saivaism, it is next to the highest in Samkarism.

Intuition has still a reference to the *present* and to the dynamism in complete equilibrium. It is the vision of the Chidakasha of the Vedanta, the *spiritual space* in which is entrenched in silence the seeds of creation.

When intuition is free from this reference to the Chidakasha, it becomes transcendent; the subject-object consciousness is got over in Chidakasha, but it is totally denied in Absolute intuition. The soul gets its paradise regained and becomes free from the snares of a divided existence. The perplexities of philosophy become silent and the mystic voice whispers after recovery from the plunge in the oceanic calm—I am.

Whatever may be the trend of thought, realism or idealism, the Indian teachers have not lost sight of the value of transcendence in life. They have emphasised the realisation of the complete beyond the partial, the eternal beyond the transitory. Nowhere the aspiration to the eternal is so eloquent as it is in India. The fine texture of Indian life is moulded by this longing for the eternal. The transcendent notes have not the same tune always, and the Indian philosophy in its variations only presents the various tunes which it feels and enjoys in the supra-sensuous flights of thought, imagination and intuition. Life aspires to rise from fatality of division not only in its philosophic vision, but in actual adaptation, for in Indian soil philosophy inspires life, life influences philosophy. And this inward bent of the soul has enabled the Indian teachers to emphasise an equilibrium between vision and adaptation. The intellectual intuition cannot leave us cold in our internal and external adjustments; Truth has the most formative influence in life, and the more it reaches us in the silence of our being the more powerful it becomes as a dynamic force. And this explains why the greatest teachers in India are the most active forces in construction. No doubt,

strictly as thought-construction, divergence has been actuated between intuition and reason, between thought and activity; but it should not be lost upon us that midway between the complete transcendence and the narrow activism we are inspired by the orchestral harmony of intuition and life, thought and action, and they are evenly fitted in the concrete unity of life in the plane of spiritual and physical expression.

The Jivan-muktas, the Buddhas, the Arhats, the Tirthankaras and the Siddhas have the rare possession of the cosmic vision and transcendent intuition, and this rare privilege has made them conscious or unconscious transmitters of moral and spiritual influences. They shed the genuine lustre of the spirit upon humanity. The Indian teachers have not confined their philosophy to academy, but have inspired life by its vision and message. This unity of philosophy and life has been unique in India, and in this sense philosophy has been the greatest formative force on the Indian soil. This explains why amidst the apparent divergences of thought the soul of India runs on the same ideal of formation, growth, transcendence, cosmic love and sympathy.

The life of restraint and asceticism in the period of formation is the wonderful asset and strength in the period of creativeness in family and social life, the experience of limitation in active formation in family and society seeks the higher path of higher expression in the life of transcendent intuition and cosmic service. The instincts that bind man to family and society are transformed by the deeper intuition of cosmic life which life even in its biological and psychological adaptation cannot fail to reveal. The spring of life is one and undivided. When the cosmic intuition begins to have a free vent and expression, life begins to be influenced by new perceptions and visions and begins to stir to establish Truth and blessedness on Earth. Truly India has the vision of this cosmic life and society when it trans-values the values in terms of "आत्मनो मोक्षाय जगद्धिताय च।"

(Concluded)

THE DIVINE PROMISE

By M. H. Syed, M.A., L.T.

The whole world may be reduced to two broad divisions in so far as its outlook on life is concerned: (1) those who believe in materialistic view of life; (2) those who have faith in spiritual view of life. Amongst the latter there are a few people who have never taken the trouble to have a clear conception of the meaning and purpose of human life.

Most of us are so much engrossed in living that we do not care to know what life is. We are content with paying mere lip homage to the value and importance of religious and spiritual life. Our indifference is so great that we do not study and ponder over our sacred scriptures and the true significance of their underlying meaning.

We all desire perfection, peace, harmony, security, true enlightenment, and "happiness exempt from decay." Still, how few there are, who are seriously willing to tread the path that leads to our desired goal. Every type of religious people assigns the highest position to an uncaused Cause, to a Being whom they call God both in His unmanifested and manifested form. He is looked upon as the source of our

being and the highest virtues imaginable are attributed to Him. He combines in Him perfection, peace, wisdom and happiness in the highest degree. He is the fountain of life, from whom all evolves and to whom it returns. Any good or great thing we long for can only be attained in the true sense of the word by our nearness to Him. On this vital point all religions are at one. In ordinary life we generally trust one whom we respect for his goodness; but it is the strangest irony of fate that One whom we should trust more, we trust less or not at all. We have full and abiding trust in human promises, but alas, not sufficient confidence in the words and promises of that Immutable One, whom we worship as God.

Quite a large number of the followers of the Sanatana Dharma with a clear conscience look upon Shri Krishna as the highest *Avatar* of *Vishnu* and *Shrimad Bhagvad Gita* as His *Vach*—utterence on the battle-field of *Kurukshetra* which is meant to be a scripture of Yoga for "*Sarvabhutani*," all humanity without any distinction of caste, creed or colour.

If we really and conscientionsly believe in Him as a Divine Being who "equally dwells in the hearts of all beings" and whose union would endow us with all divine qualities, free us from the bondage of birth and death, sorrow and suffering, above all the pairs of opposites, and bring us perfect happiness, is it or is it not up to us to have completest confidence in His Divine Promise and set our feet on the path of spiritual progress? In the 8th Adhyaya 14th verse of the *Bhagvad Gita* the Blessed Lord says, "He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached, O Partha, of this ever harmonised Yogi."

Again in the 9th Discourse 22nd *Shloka* He holds out His Divine Promise in these words: "To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security." "He the highest Spirit, O Partha, may be reached by unswerving devotion to Him alone, in whom all beings abide, by whom all this is pervaded."

Could there be anything more certain, unequivocal and perfectly definite than these words?

Now, the fulfilment of His promise as embodied in the *Shlokas* just quoted is dependent on an uncompromising condition which must be literally fulfilled before anything could be achieved. The condition may be summed up in one word: devotion, Bhakti, the nature of which is pithily described by Narada "as extreme devotion to some one" (*Narada Sutra*, translated by E. T. Sturdy, p. 19); the element of devotion to an individual is of its very nature. Further, on page 28, *Narada Sutra*, we read, "It is surrendering all actions to God, and feeling the greatest misery in forgetting God."

Then Narada describes the man who has obtained this love: "Obtaining which man becomes perfect, becomes immortal, becomes satisfied; and obtaining which he desires nothing, grieves not, hates not, does not delight (in sensuous objects), makes no effort (for selfish ends); knowing which he becomes intoxicated (with joy), transfixed and rejoices in the Self." (*Narada Sutra*, pp. 22 and 24).

How could such devotion be attained? First, by cultivating intense desire for union with God. No one has ever been able to gain anything in the form of wealth, honour and worldly enjoyments without sufficient yearning for them, and paying their due price.

Sage Ramanuja advises such neophytes to purify their bodies first, by taking pure food, abstaining from animal and other coarse stuff. Pure thought and noble emotion should be cultivated. So also cleanliness should be observed, so that the body may in every respect be a worthy temple of the devotee who has to use it while he treads the Path of Love. He then passes on to give the great maxim, "pure food, pure mind, and constant memory of God."

The would-be devotee is also advised *to practise freedom from desire*. Then he must practise turning his thoughts to God. When his mind wanders he should try every time to curb and control it, always bearing in mind the Lord's consoling words: "the mind may be curbed by constant practice and dispassion." The aspirant has to bring his mind back to the object of his devotion when it runs to other things. He will have fixed time when he will keep his wandering mind engaged in His worship. Later on, by habitual practice, his mind will love to dwell on the object of his devotion.

As he is pursuing the path of devotion he is ever ready to give, for giving is the very nature of love. "Love asks for nothing save the right to give." Therefore, actively doing good to others is a part of the training of the devotee.

The company of good and holy men is another thing that is enjoined on the aspirant. He should not waste his time and energy in frivolous conversation and worldly pursuits of a distracting nature. Sacred scriptures and good books containing accounts of saints and sages should be read and not worthless literature with which the modern world is flooded. Those who desire to become adepts in physical sciences do not read stories and literature.

Everything has its own price. Is love of God to be gained without any effort and necessary trouble? When shall we learn to work for God as we work for name and fame? When shall we seek His face and glory with the same zeal as we seek the toys and trivial things of this 'transient and joyless world.'

Thus, step by step, following various stages, there will come a time when God diligently sought and reverently worshipped shall reveal Himself to His devotee, and the Divine Promise will be fulfilled, at fulfilling the condition that is necessary for it.

Blessed is he who makes this the goal of his life.

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR ON THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

By Shiv Chandra Datta, M.A., B.L., F.R. Econ. S.

(*Continued from the last issue*)

Banking, Insurance and Co-operative Movement

The development of commerce and industry is pointed out as depending on Banking.[132] Banking is regarded as one of the four pillars of the economic structure, the others being—agriculture (to be modernised through advance land legislation), efficient individuals (the efficiency to be attained through accident, old age and sickness insurance) and industries (to be improved through industrial democracy, *i.e.*, control of workers over industrial establishments).[133]

[132] *Arthik Unnati* for 1333, p. 210.

[133] *Arthik Unnati* for 1333, p. 212.

A good deal of banking is done in India according to mediaeval methods.[134] But the development of modern joint-stock banks is not a discouraging one. In 1905 there were nine joint-stock banks in India under Indian control with capital of at least Rs. 5 lacs each. In 1928 the number of such banks rose to 27. In 1905 the number of foreign exchange banks was ten with deposits amounting to Rs. 17 crores, in 1928 the number rose to 18 with deposits amounting to Rs. 71½ crores. The amount of deposits in Indian joint-stock banks with capital varying from Rs. 1 lac to 5 lacs rose during the same period from Rs. 12 crores to Rs. 63½ crores. The moral drawn from the figures may best be presented in the words of Prof. Sarkar himself—"It is clear that to-day, as in 1905, the foreign banks were 'absolutely' superior to the Indian joint-stock banks in the amount of deposits." But 'relatively' speaking, it is necessary to note that while in 1905 the Indian institutions were to the foreign in the proportion of 12 to 17 crores in deposit, to-day the proportion is 63½ to 71½. The tendency on the Indian side is represented by an increase to the extent of 5.29 times, while that on the foreign side is somewhat less, namely, 4.2 times. One is convinced that the Indian concerns have at least succeeded in maintaining their pace and that the foreign institutions have not been able to out-distance them in the race of expansion."[135]

As regards the development of banking in Bengal Prof. Sarkar notes that while in 1905 the number of joint-stock banks under Bengali management could be counted at one's fingers' ends[136] and the Co-operative Societies were being only talked of,[137] the number of joint-stock banks under Bengali management have risen to the decent figure of 500[138] and that of Co-operative Credit Societies to 30,000.[139]

If the average paid-up capital of those joint-stock banks be estimated at Rs. 25,000, the combined bank capital of the 500 banks would amount to Rs. 1,25,00,000. And if each bank is regarded as doing business amounting to ten times the amount of the capital, the amount of banking business being done in Bengal under these banks would be Rs. 12½ crores. Taking the population of Bengal to be 5 crores, the per capita banking business done in Bengal by these banks would be Rs. 2-8 per year. This is a decent figure considering that 'the total amount of banking business done by us in 1905 along modern and joint-stock method was too little to yield any figure per head of the entire Bengali people."[140]

What is the significance of those 500 banks ordinarily known as Loan Offices? These banks have led to the growth of a bank personnel of about 5,000 directors and about 3,500 managers, accountants, inspectors and clerks. This shows that our intellectual middle classes 'are getting used to the technique and transactions of modern banks'[141] and as these banks are spread throughout the moffussil, 'the banking habit also is becoming diffused throughout the length and breadth of the country."[142] "It is also evident that these banks are contributing to the solution of the unemployment problem, inasmuch as they are providing so many Bengali intellectuals with appointments."[143]

[134] *Arthik Unnati* for 1333, p. 624.
[135] Lecture on "Bengali Banking in Comparative Bank Statistics," *J. B. N. C.* for Sept. 1928, p. 6.
[136] *J. B. N. C.* Sept. 1928, p. 4.
[137] *J. B. N. C.*, Sept. 1928, p. 3.
[138] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[142] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[143] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

What is the significance of the co-operative banks? These show that our illiterate peasants are operating a capital of Rs. 8 crores through the medium of these banks for their own mutual benefit. As a result, 'collective business and united efforts, as well as the spirit of mutual understanding and help have grown into a national asset and an integral part of Bengali character, especially among the peasant classes. And this spirit of agricultural and commercial solidarity is a substantial item which the businessmen, bankers and industrial heads of the country must recognize as a valuable aid to the economic development of our country during the next few years.'[144]

Thus, Bengal (we might also say, India) need not be ashamed of what she has accomplished in banking during the last two or three decades. "Of all the different lines of modern business in which Bengal has been taking part, banking is perhaps the youngest. And yet our record in banking is *quite glorious and encouraging*."[145]

We should, however, carefully remember that our achievements are too small when compared with the banking enterprise of the British and the Americans. "In England and Wales in 1924 with a population of about 39 millions (less than that of Bengal) there were over 8,000 banks or rather bank offices, owned as they were by the 13 large joint-stock institutions, commanding a deposit of some £2,000 millions. The combined capital of the firms is about £86 millions. Every Briton possesses, then, bank capital to the value of £2-4-0 (about Rs. 29) and Bank deposit valued at £51-6-0 (Rs. 684). And, from thc standpoint of banking facilities it is to be noted that for every 4,777 persons there is one bank office in the country."[146] "In 1927 there were some 27,000 banking institutions in the U.S.A. commanding, as they did, a total deposit of 56,735,858,000 dollars. . . . . Now the American population is to be counted at 117,136,000. This gives a bank office to every 4,338 persons. . . . Every American possesses a deposit to the tune of some 484 dollars (about Rs. 1,331), and bank capital per head of the American population would come up to about 25 dollars (*i.e.*, Rs. 68-12-0)."[147]

But we are asked not to be disheartened at a perusal of those imposing figures. For, even to-day there are many countries in Europe and America whose present banking position can be compared with ours. "By the American or British standard many of the independent powers, great or small, will be found to be lagging behind."[148] Besides, our banking progress till now compares very favourably with the beginnings of modern banking in the Western world. "In England, for instance, it took 50 years (1836-86) to raise the combined capital of banks from £10 millions to £40 millions. About 1840 there used to be bank failures in England at the rate of 24 or 25 per year. In 1870 there were not more than 970 bank offices owned by 133 joint-stock concerns. Besides, it was so late as 1858 that 'the limited liability principle' was admitted by England in banking business."[149] "So late as 1870 there were only 19 *departments* or districts in which France possessed banking institutions, as branches or main offices. In other words, 74 departments or districts did not possess any bank at that time. And there were not more than 5 or 6 cities which possessed

[144] *J. B. N. C.* Sept., p. 3.
[145] *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[146] *J. B. N. C.* Sept., p. 7.
[147] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[148] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

more than one bank."[150] "In Germany, between 1850 and 1870, the total capital of all joint-stock banks did not go beyond 100 million marks (1 Mark = 12 annas approximately)."[151] If we take up the case of Japan, in 1927 she had 2,100 banks and 6,000 branches with a paid-up capital of 2,000,000,000 yens and deposit of 11,403,399,000 yens. But modern banking began to develop in Japan only in 1872, and she had only 150 banks in 1876.[152]

The lesson that Prof. Sarkar would like us to derive from these facts is, first, that the modern nations of Eur-America and Japan are *only about two generations ahead* of us, and that it *does not take centuries or millenniums to become modernised* in regard to bank technique[153] and, secondly, that "the story of the earlier phases in modern banking is likely to be *more instructive* to the Indian bank-builders and experts in finance than is that of the recent developments, overpowering as those latter are bound to be by the sheer fact of their vastness and organizational complexity."[154]

As regards the immediate future, Prof. Sarkar urges that we must increase the *number* and add to the *functions* of our banks.[155] We are also required to find out the *exact size* of our banks below which we cannot go without losing in efficiency.[156] Further, *bank concentration* is urged as 'a technical necessity,' because the larger the amount of capital, the greater the chance of success. Bank concentration, like large-scale production in other lines, has proved to be a technical necessity."[157] The persons associated with joint-stock banks in Bengal in one capacity or other are advised to start a *Bengali Institute of Banking* 'with the object of discussing the ways and means of furthering and improving the business of Bengali banks on up-to-date lines."[158]

Besides, in his Economic Scheme for Young India,[159] Prof. Sarkar urges that we require *at least 5 types of credit institutions* for the economic development of the country: (1) Co-operative Credit Societies; (2) handicraft banks; (3) shop-keepers' banks; (4) modern industrial banks; and (5) foreign trade banks.

Co-operative Credit Societies are meant for both the agriculturists and the labourers. Prof. Sarkar condemns the aloofness of the people from the co-operative movement and urges that at least 10 propagandists with a monthly salary of Rs. 100 each, should be appointed in every district to push on the co-operative movement. Agricultural experts, trained in Agricultural Colleges and graduates with knowledge of economics, might be appointed as such propagandists. But he is careful to point out that the Co-operative Societies would not be sufficient to provide the peasants with the financial aid they require and that these must be supported at the top by agricultural banks, started either by the moneyed classes or the Government.

The moneyed classes are also advised to start handicrafts and shop-keepers' banks, with an authorised capital of about Rs. 50,000 each, to advance loans of from Rs. 5 to Rs. 500, to the artisans and the shop-keepers, to enable them

[150] *J. B. N. C.* Sept., pp. 9-10.
[151] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[152] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[153] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[154] *Economic Development*, p. 75.
[155] *J. B. N. C.* Sept., 1928, p. 13.
[156] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
[157] *Arthik Unnati*, 1333, p. 630 and *J. B. N. C.*, Sept. 1928, p. 14.
[158] Address on "The Artha Sastra of Young Bengal," *J. B. N. C. Sept.*, 1927, p. 82.
[159] *Economic Development*, pp. 393-417.

to work at the ideas they get from their respective schools,—and also modern industries and foreign trade banks each with an authorised capital of about Rs. 5 lakhs. The special attention of the moneyed classes is sought to be drawn to the last four types of banks just mentioned, for, 'it is through these institutions that *in the course of one generation* Indian capital will develop into *a great power.*'[160]

We might note here that Prof. Sarkar was a supporter of the once proposed Reserve Bank which he considered to have been based mainly on the fundamental principles of the Reichs Bank of Germany. His opinion on the point is briefly this—"The proposed Reserve Bank of India is likely to be a powerful instrument in the establishment of India's credit and financial system on advanced lines, such as have been experimentally found to be sound in the currency policy of the Great Powers." He thought that a larger number of Indian joint-stock banks should have been allowed the privilege of having their commercial papers recognized by the Bank, and also that the Co-operative Credit Societies should have been admitted to the same privilege. With these amendments, he would have been satisfied with the Reserve Bank Bill. The provisions as to Note-issue were approved of as being neither too rigid nor too elastic. He seems to think that lack of Indianisation of the Bank should not have been allowed to stand in the way of its establishment.[161]

The spread of Indian Insurance Companies is stressed as important for two reasons—(1) we shall thereby be able to appropriate the enormous profits which are now being received by the Europeans and the Americans[162] and (2) the Insurance Companies will make for the concentration of capital which will later be useful for the commercial and industrial expansion of the country.[163]

The progress so far achieved by Indians in the realm of Insurance business is very encouraging. The value of the business at present done by Indian Insurance Companies is Rs. 10 crores—which is three and a half times what it was before the War, and the amount of the preminm collected is Rs. 3½ crores, which is three times what it was in the pre-War period. At present, the number of Indian Insurance Companies is 60, while that of the foreign ones is 20. A few years back the Indian Companies held 20 per cent of the total premium fund in India, at present they hold 57 per cent, the remaining 43 per cent being held by the foreign concern. It thus appears that the record of the advance made by the Indian Companies is indeed a satisfactory one.[164]

Prof. Sarkar advises the moneyed classes to devote their funds with greater liberality to Insurance business in India.[165] And by Insurance business he means not only ordinary life and other Insurances but also overseas or foreign trade Insurance.[166] We might also mention here that the Insurance business is recommended as a line, which, if properly conducted, leaves very little chance of loss and carries with it the possibility of enormous profits.[167]

[160] *Economic Development*, p. 413.
[161] "Views on the Currency Report," *Greetings to Young India*, p. 91 and *J. B. N. C.* Sept., 1927, pp. 76-77.
[162] *Economic Development*, p. 413.
[163] In an interview with a correspondent of *The Englishman* subsequently published in the *Arthik Unnati.*
[164] *Ibid.*, p. 413.
[165] *Economic Development*, pp. 412-413.
[166] *Ibid.*, p. 412.
[167] *Ibid.*, p. 409.

(To be continued)

THE DESTINY OF INDIA

By Charles Johnston, I.C.S. (Retired)

'Their writings,' said a distinguished man of the Sanskrit scriptures, 'will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance.'

We might be inclined to think that this is the view of some fiery Nationalist of Benares or Poona, or perhaps a detached Orientalist like Burnouf, or Whitney of Yale. Both guesses are far afield. This was written by Warren Hastings, the first governor-general of British India, in October, 1784, as a part of his introduction to the translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Charles Wilkins. In this introduction Warren Hastings also says that, among all the known religions of mankind, this scripture is the one example of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

This earliest English version of the 'Song Celestial,' as Edwin Arnold later named it, is of high interest to students in America, and especially in New England. For this is the book that Thoreau carried with him in his exploration of the Concord and Merrimac Rivers in 1839, and he quotes it at length, laying stress on the part which Warren Hastings had played in its production, in his log book of that notable journey, whose charm and value were hidden for two generations. It is fairly certain that this volume was among the score of Oriental books which Thoreau left, at his death, to Emerson in 1862. And Emerson's debt to the *Bhagavad Gita* is recorded in more than a dozen entries in the thoughtful study by Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia*. The Sanskrit poem, and with it certain of the Upanishads, colored the literature of that fruitful period in New England as sunshine illumined the meadows and river valleys about Concord for Thoreau.

The influence of these scriptures of India grew with the years, setting in motion a tide of spiritual thought which flowed against the materialism, not so much of Darwin, who was deeply religious, as of some of his disciples. And now that materialism is once more ebbing,—giving way, as in the recent writings of Sir Arthur Eddington, to a more philosophical concept of life,—this newest current of thought flows once more toward the ideals and ideas of ancient India.

Before we try to describe these spiritual principles, it may be well to establish the intellectual importance of the land of the Indus and Ganges in more prosaic fields. Recent books seeking to give a general account of philosophical and scientific thinking have shared the shortcoming that they begin everything with the Greeks, and practically ignore India, thus throwing the whole subject out of perspective. But we find Laplace, who died more than a century ago, pointing out that it was India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by means of ten symbols, each symbol receiving a value of position as well as an absolute value, a profound and important idea which we now so completely take for granted. Laplace adds that the very simplicity of this system of ten numbers, and the great ease which it has lent to all computations, put our arithmetic in the first

rank of useful inventions; we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Apollonius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity.

The importance of these Indian numbers, popularly miscalled Arabic; of the cipher, or zero, also borrowed from India; and of the system of value by position, in virtue of which the number one has different values when it is the first figure of ten, a hundred, a thousand, and so on, is worked out in detail by Dr. Tobias Dantzig in his new book on *Number, The Language of Science*. He proves to demonstration that we are debtors to India both for the scientific and for the practical development of arithmetic. The most matter-of-fact merchant makes obeisance to the Rishis when he adds up the totals in his cashbook. He uses symbols borrowed from India every time he writes a check. As suggesting our debt to India in other fields of mathematics, we may follow Dr. Dantzig in quoting from the Brahman Bhaskara, who is assigned to the twelfth century of our era, a sentence which has a singularly modern fiavour :—

'The square of a positive number, as also that of a negative number, is positive; and the square root of a positive number is twofold, positive and negative; there is no square root of a negative number, for a negative number is not a square.'

Since Dr. Dantizig considers that mathematics began in modern Europe with the Italian Bombelli in the sixteenth century, the priority of India seems clear. The difficulty is that all early dates in India are still under the cloud cast by Archbishop Ussher's chronology; 4004 B.C. for the creation dominated all our first Orientalists, who telescoped millenniums into centuries and centuries into decades in obedience to that shrunken yardstick. So far no one has seriously undertaken to unscramble this confusion. Therefore India's achievements may be far older than the 'early centuries A.D.' to which Dr. Dantizig cautiously attributes them.

Pythagoras, whose long studies in Egypt and in the East are too generally ignored by the school which holds that all wisdom began with the Greeks, held some form of heliocentric teaching. A like view, that the sun, and not the earth, is the centre of the solar system, was pointed out by the American Sanskritist Fitzedward Hall in the Vishnu Purana :—

'Of the sun, which is always in one and the same place, there is neither setting nor rising; for what is called rising and setting is only the seeing and the not seeing the sun.'

But the later Greek astronomers, including Hipparchus and Ptolemy, were convinced that our earth is the centre of the universe, which they conceived as a not very large globe with the stars 'fixed' on its inner surface. If we supplement this small globular universe with the chronology deduced from the Hebrew scriptures and finally formulated by Archbishop Ussher, we have the world as it continued until the discoveries of Copernicus, whose great book was published as he lay dying, in the year 1543, some twenty years before the birth of Shakespeare. The steady extension of the universe both in space and in time is the most notable fact of the last four centuries. The most recent results are embodied in the splendidly imaginative writings of Sir James Jeans and Sir Arthur Eddington. And the noteworthy fact is that these newest results are singularly like the views taught millenniums back, in ancient India.

Let us take examples in space and time. First, the Ptolemaic empyrean

contained some five thousand stars. Perhaps ten thousand may be seen from a mountain top in India on a moonless night, when the stars gleam like colored jewels. But Buddha, teaching two thousand five hundred years ago, speaks of a hundred thousand times ten million worlds—that is, a million million. Sir Arthur Eddington is quoted as estimating that the great hundred-inch mirror telescope may make a photographic record of stars up to the 22d and 23d magnitudes; in all, perhaps, three hundred thousand million. It is possible that the new two-hundred-inch mirror may bring these figures up to the Buddha's total. Again, Sir James Jeans is quoted as estimating the age of the stellar universe as two hundred million million years. This still falls short of the total for a Year of Brahma, the universal Expansive Power, in the tables of the Puranas. Further, Buddha, or his disciples, taught a nebular theory closely resembling the most recent speculation of Jeans and Eddington.

To sum up: In the firmament of our intellectual life are two shining lights, Hellas and Palestine, from which we have drawn the essence of our science and our religion. But the ethical and religious teachings of India are in spirit singularly like those of the New Testament; Warren Hastings recognized that, a century and a half ago. When it comes to science, India is far closer to the most modern cosmological conceptions than Hellas ever was, while to India we owe such prosaic yet indispensable elements of our modern world as the figures which, with zero, are the very foundation of our practical and theoretical computations. India, therefore, among the nations of all time, is one of the few which have been greatly creative, in the intellectual as well as in the spiritual and ethical fields. But, while it would be unprofitable to seek in the Athens or Palestine of to-day for the living spirit that gave Greece and Judæa their world significance, with India it is not so. Her spiritual and intellectual life still burns, though buried deep under the dèbris of the centuries. Therefore, the future of India is not only the concern of India, or of the British Empire, but of the whole world. The hidden fires may, at some future day, be uncovered, once more burning brightly to illumine mankind.

ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By Swami Nityaswarupananda

दृष्टो येनात्मविक्षेपो निरोधं कुरुते त्वसौ ।
उदारस्तु न विक्षिप्तः साध्याभावात्करोति किम् ॥ १७ ॥

येन By whom आत्मविक्षेपः self-distraction दृष्टः is seen असौ he तु indeed निरोधं कुरुते practises control उदारः the noble-minded one तु but विक्षिप्तः distracted न not (भवति is सः he) साध्याभावात् their being nothing to accomplish किं what करोति does.

17. He, indeed, controls[1] himself, who sees distraction in himself. But the noble-minded[2] one is not distracted. Having nothing to accomplish,[3] what would he do?

[1 *Controls etc.*—Distraction, outward or inward, in any form, is caused only by the identification of the Self with the non-self, which is due to ignorance. It has, therefore, no place in the man of Self-knowledge. Controlling the mind etc. is meaningless to him.

[2 *Noble-minded etc.*—One who perceives the Self as One without a second.
3 *Accomplish*—by way of getting rid of distraction.]

धीरो लोकविपर्यस्तो वर्त्तमानोऽपि लोकवत् ।
न समाधिं न विक्षेपं न लेपं स्वस्य पश्यति ॥ १८ ॥

लोकवत् Like an ordinary man वर्त्तमानः existing अपि even धीरः the man of Knowledge लोकविपर्यस्तः contrary to the ordinary man सः he स्वस्य of his own समाधिं concentration न not विक्षेपं distraction न not लेपं stain न not पश्यति sees.

18. The man of Knowledge, though[1] living like a common man, is contrary to him. He sees[2] neither concentration[3] nor distraction nor defilement of his own.

[1 *Though etc.*—His external behaviour may seem like that of other people, but there is a fundamental difference between their outlooks. Ordinary people look upon the world as real and substantial and behave with it as such, but the man of Knowledge knows and feels it as illusory and unsubstantial and his behaviour with it is only apparent. His actions are no longer voluntary but are impelled only by the momentum of the effects of those actions that are responsible for his life in this world. His body drops off as soon as those effects are exhausted.

2 *Sees etc.*—For he sees nothing but the Self which is pure intelligence.

3 *Concentration*—As long as there is distraction, concentration is resorted to as an aid to Self-realisation ; but after Self-knowledge has been attained, it is no longer needed. Distraction, then, there is none and he abides in Absolute Existence.]

भावाभावविहीनो यस्तृप्तो निर्वासनो बुधः ।
नैव किञ्चित् कृतं तेन लोकदृष्ट्या विकुर्वता ॥ १९ ॥

यः Who भावाभावविहीनः devoid of existence and non-existence तृप्तः satisfied निर्वासनः free from desire बुधः wise लोकदृष्ट्या in the sight of the world विकुर्वता acting तेन by him किञ्चित् anything एव even न not कृतम् done.

19. He who is devoid[1] of existence and non-existence, who is wise, satisfied,[2] and free from desire, does[3] nothing even if he may be acting in the eyes of the people.

[1 *Devoid etc.*—*i.e.*, beyond the relative world which is a mixture of existence and non-existence. It is said to be existent as it is perceived in ordinary consciousness but to be non-existent as it is lost in superconsciousness. Knowing the nature of the world, the man of Knowledge is quite unconcerned with it.

2 *Satisfied*—in Self.

3 *Does etc.*—Actions are no longer actions when they are not accompanied with the feeling of egoism. The man of Knowledge is absolutely free from it. He does not identify himself with his actions. He is, therefore, really inactive, even though he may be seen as acting.]

प्रवृत्तौ वा निवृत्तौ वा नैव धीरस्य दुर्ग्रहः ।
यदा यत्कर्त्तुमायाति तत्कृत्वा तिष्ठतः सुखम् ॥ २० ॥

यदा When यत् what कर्त्तुं to do आयाति comes तत् that कृत्वा doing सुखं happily तिष्ठतः living धीरस्य of the wise one प्रवृत्तौ in activity वा (expletive) निवृत्तौ in inactivity वा or दुर्ग्रहः uneasiness न not एव surely (अस्ति is).

20. The wise one who lives on happily doing what[1] comes to him to be done, does[2] not feel[3] troubled either in activity or inactivity.

[[1] *What etc.*—as a matter of course on account of *Prarabdha*. With Self-knowledge the effects of all actions of past incarnations as well as of the present life except only those of *Prarabdha*, are completely destroyed. The man of Knowledge has only to reap the consequences of his *Prarabdha Karmas* as long as they last and his actions are guided accordingly.

[2] *Does etc.*—Because he no longer engages himself in any action or refrains from it out of his own will. Voluntary actions breed unhappiness when they are frustrated or impeded. Devoid of the feeling of egoism, he is the same in activity and inactivity.

[3] *Feel etc.*—*Durgraha* is literally cramp or spasm.]

निर्वासनो निरालम्बः स्वच्छन्दो मुक्तबन्धनः ।
क्षिप्तः संस्कारवातेन चेष्टते शुष्कपर्णवत् ॥ २१ ॥

निर्वासनः Desireless निरालम्बः independent स्वच्छन्दः free मुक्तबन्धनः free from bondage (जनः man) संस्कारवातेन by the wind of the effects of past actions क्षिप्तः cast (सन् being) शुष्कपर्णवत् like a dry leaf चेष्टते acts.

21. Blown by the wind of the *Samskaras*, the desireless, independent, free,[1] and liberated[2] person acts[3] like a dry leaf.

[[1] *Free*—from passions.

[2] *Liberated*—from all bondages.

[3] *Acts etc.*—Just as a dry leaf is blown by the wind hither and thither without any choice of its own, even so the man of Knowledge is guided by his *Prarabdha* without the least vestige of egoism in him.]

असंसारस्य तु क्वापि न हर्षो न विषादता ।
स शीतलमना नित्यं विदेह इव राजते ॥ २२ ॥

असंसारस्य Of one who has transcended worldly existence तु (expletive) क्व अपि anywhere हर्षः joy न not विषादता sorrow न not (अस्ति is) नित्यं ever शीतलमनाः cool-minded सः he विदेहः one without a body इव as if राजते exists.

22. There is no[1] joy or sorrow for one who has transcended worldly existence. Ever with a serene[2] mind, he lives like[3] one without a body.

[[1] *No etc.*—Both joy and sorrow are different modifications of the uncontrolled mind and originate from desire for relative things, which is at the root of worldly existence. Therefore one who has transcended worldly existence has gone beyond both joy and sorrow.

[2] *Serene*—which does not give rise to any modifications whatsoever.

[3] *Like etc.*—An important fact is recognised here, namely that the *Jivanmukta*, one liberated while still living, enjoys no less freedom than the *Videhamukta*, one whose body has dropped off after the attainment of final emancipation ; for though he may appear to have a body, the *Jivanmukta* is not the least affected by it.]

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

In the first article of this issue will be found how in training his disciples Swami Vivekananda always appealed to their inner strength. Swami Vivekananda was nothing if not an awakener of strength. The article also shows how the Swami was high above all conventionalities, and indicates as well how large was his heart and how broad his sympathy. . . . In "*Hinduism invades America*" we have tried to show with copious extracts from the book referred to how insidious is the propaganda that is being made by a section of people in America to belittle India and the value of Indian culture. Many of the quotations—and they only show the trend of thoughts in the book—embody views, which are so very absurd and ridiculous on the face of them that they require no reputation. . . . . Swami Ashokananda writes the next article to redeem the promise he made as Editor of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. The article will speak for itself . . . . Dr. Mahendranath Sircar's article, which is concluded in this issue has been received with appreciation in the scholarly circle. . . . We have no doubt that the *Divine Promise* will stir the religious feelings of many. It is astonishing that the writer though belonging to another faith could so well catch the deeper spirit of Hindu scriptures. This very fact clearly points out that all persons have got at bottom a kindred spiritual nature. Mr. M. H. Syed belongs to the staff of the Oriental Department in the Allahabad University. . . . *The Destiny of India* is quoted from an article published in a recent issue of *The Atlantic Monthly* of America.

INDIAN TEACHERS IN DEMAND FROM ABROAD

Recent political events in India have drawn the attention of the whole world to it. The other day a press reporter said that even in a far away place in Jugo-Slavia, a person was enquiring him about Mahatma Gandhi and his movement. The credit of Mahatma Gandhi lies in the fact that even in the stormy activities of politics all his actions are pitched to a high standard of religion, in the broader sense of the term. His politics is not separate from religion; in other words, even through his political activities he wants to attain his personal salvation. That is a wonderful thing in the eye of the world.

In India, religion has not been kept apart only for a certain day of the week, but it covers all phases of activities within twenty-four hours of the day. Here one has to transform all his activities into an offering to God. Mahatma Gandhi greatly typifies this aspect of the Indian life.

With regard to present Indian affairs, *The Hibbert Journal* in one of its issues writes :—"It would, however, be a disastrous mistake to regard these events exclusively from the political point of view, since in India religion and political interests are intimately and indeed inseparably united. In truth, in no other land has religion so deeply penetrated and enveloped, so firmly held and profoundly influenced, life as a whole. Its subtle atmosphere spreads everywhere and pervades all things. . . . In India religion has never been departmentalised. And here assuredly she is entirely in the right. For a secular state would, in the end, prove an

impossibility. The interests and activities of a purely secular state would necessarily lack . . . . that spiritual principle, without which it would, indeed, be nothing better than a galvanised corpse, having only the semblance, not the reality of life. . . . And it is, in our judgment, by the essential pantheism of her religion that in the end, India will be found able to save herself from the disintegration that at present appears to threaten her; and, further, *only if in this respect we are prepared to learn of her, shall we, too, as an empire, be spared the like disaster.* (Italics are ours). And by religious pantheism, let us remark, we mean only that higher pantheism which discerns the Atman or Self in all things and all things in the divine Atman or Self."

Yes, this is a great lesson which the world has to learn from India and India has to teach the world; namely, that God pervades all, and as such all our actions should be attuned to that idea. Unfortunately, due perhaps to the dark period of history through which India had to pass, all India is not fully conscious of this noble mission; some of her children are even prepared to reconstruct the entire national life on a Western model. There are many Indians who feel proud of their religion and philosophy, but their pride proceeds not from any deep knowledge of them, but is fed by the praise some Western scholars have for Indian religion and philosophy. What is necessary is that a great attempt should be made by every Indian to ransack every little gem of truth that is to be found in the religion and philosophy of the country, to realise that in life and spread that all over the world for the good of the humanity at large.

The writer of *The Hibbert Journal* further says: "Hitherto, however, we have been obliged, to rely for our knowledge of Hindu Faith and Philosophy for the most part on such interpretations as have been forthcoming from the pens of European scholars. But religion, especially philosophical religion and certainly such religious philosophy as that of India, needs to be interpreted from within by those, *i.e.*, who know its value and profess it as their own. For, after all, how can anyone adequately interpret another's religion, however sympathetic he may be? Anyhow, after Western scholars and thinkers had done their best, there still remained the need, and it was a very urgent one, that India should speak for herself. At length the soul of India found genuine expression in the English tongue through the voice of the Swami Vivekananda . . . , a wandering monk, who addressed with startling effect the Parliament of Religions in 1893. The addresses of the Swami on that and other occasions, together with the able and beautiful writings of her saintly convert, Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble), produced a profound and lasting effect on the mind of the West. Yet something further, something rather different, is needed now. What we are asking of India at the present time is, not so much the missionary to convert, as the Teacher to instruct us." We would rather say both are necessary. . . There should be a class of people who by rightly interpreting Indian culture and civilisation can influence the Western mind and draw its attention to the beauties lying hidden in them; and there should be another class of people who being the embodiment of Indian religion and ideal, will be able to transform the very life of the persons they come in contact with. One class will appeal to the intellect and the other to the heart. The author in his last remark is perhaps labouring under a misconception, when using the word

"missionary." If Hindu missionaries go out to preach, they do so not so much with a recruiting motive as to stimulate the faith of the people in their own religion. For is it not one of the fundamentals of Hinduism that all religions are in essence true, being simply different paths to realise the same God?

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND THE CONVERSION OF THE "HEATHENS"

The Christian missionaries have been pioneers in Occidental learning and medical relief in different parts of the world. In India, too, they have played a great rôle in the spread of Western education, and have been responsible for carrying on various acts of charity, bringing succour to the poor and the distressed in many parts of the country. They have rendered to the people of India services which Indians themselves have not cared to do for their countrymen. But if the good done by the Christian Missionary Societies has been considerable, the harm done by them to the Indians has been no less so. And what is true of India is true of other "heathen" lands as well.

Speaking of the Christian missionary activities in Africa, Prof. Julian Huxley of the Royal Institute, London, has made many a thought-provoking observation in an impartial article on "Missions and the Life of Africa" contributed to the *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. Professor Huxley very rightly praises the Missions for the "credit side of the balance," and quite justly he also blames them for the "debit side." And what he says in connection with Africa holds good more or less in the case of India and other non-Christian lands.

It is a well-known fact that the missionary bodies do not represent the same culture and outlook, and are often very different in their ideas from one another. And so great is the divergence that, to quote the words of the writer, "not merely will one missionary body base itself on quite different ideas from another, but two stations or sections of one and the same Missionary Society may be as different as chalk from cheese—one may be dominated by old-fashioned ideas and narrow, bigoted minds, the other by the most humane and modernist temper." Thus the Christianity that is preached to the "natives" is divided into a number of separate sects, "each assuring the black man that it alone holds the secret of his eternal salvation—and implying, if no longer openly asserting, damnation to the rest."

But in spite of all their differences naturally bewildering to the native, the white missionaries have all got a common point in view. Their ideal of service is as a rule dominated by the thought of conversion. This is true not only in the field of medical service but also in that of education. Prof. Huxley thus exposes the Christian missionary's underlying motive which has already been detected by the "heathens" whose souls he is anxious to save,—"With few but notable exceptions, missionary endeavour put conversion far above education, concentrates as much as possible on religious teaching, and often —though this attitude is decreasing— sees in secular knowledge merely a bait with which to angle for souls. (That being so, one can hardly blame those among the natives who being astute enough to see this manage to secure the bait without swallowing the hook.)"

Actuated by an inordinate desire to impress subscribers at home by scoring as many conversions as possible, the Christian missionary tries to destroy ruthlessly the convert's native culture,

and supplant it by his own. This thoughtless method baffles the purpose of true education and goes against the first principles of evolution. It denationalises the proselyte, and very often makes him a cultural hybrid who represents neither the native nor the foreign culture. As the writer points out, "Where conversion is the prime aim, it is almost inevitable that many valuable native customs will he lost in the process. Converts often come to despise all their own customs. They throw the baby out with the hath and abandon respect for tribal elders and tribal traditions. Yet they almost invariably fail to imbibe our Western traditions properly (how could they in a few short months?) and so usually fall hetween two stools."

Christianity is the religion of the dominating white race possessing an abnormally developed superiority "complex." And coming in contact with the missionaries of this "superior" race, the convert, who very often accepts the new religion not for any religious motive but for mere worldly considerations, learns to look down upon his own people. Further, he contracts a new mental disease in the form of religious intolerance from which he was free before. Prof. Huxley diagnoses the malady correctly when he ohserves, "Intolerance is only to be expected among half-educated converts who have been assured that Christianity (or rather one particular branch of it) means salvation, while all other religions mean damnation."

It is the narrow-mindedness of the intolerant missionary that breeds narrow-mindedness in the converts. And there is no doubt that in spite of a change for the hetter, missionary groups in non-Christian lands are more narrow-minded than the religious circles in the Western countries from which they are drawn. It is an irony that often the proselytising zealots are no more advanced in their thoughts and ideas than the people of the "backward" races whom they are eager to enlighten! Very pointedly does the writer remark, "We attempt to wean the negro from his addiction to magic and yet allow him to be preached at and converted by people who solemnly believe in prayers for rain, the literal translation of the bible, the historical truth of Genesis' account of creation, and all the rest of it! . . . . I wonder if people of this stamp realise that their ideas seem exactly as barbaric, crude, and wrong to a considerable and influential section of civilized people as do to them the ideas of the primitive tribes among whom they are working?" Thus the missionary wants to replace one form of superstition by another. And where he succeeds he manages to bring about in most cases a social and cultural chaos which is as deplorahle as dangerous in its havoc. According to the writer, what is needed is a better type of missionaries thoroughly trained in their work, and fully acquainted with the spirit of the culture and tradition of the race which they propose to serve.

Prof. Huxley pleads for the slow process of "anthropological missionizing" as opposed to "the more spectacular husiness of quantitative conversion." But is missionizing necessary at all? Should not a better method be adopted hy which each people may be helped to follow its own law of evolution, both in social and religious matters, and to attain to its individual and collective self-realisation? Such a scheme of evolution will certainly be better than anthropological or any other form of missionizing. But this will be possible only when the missionary frees his mind from the thoughtless desire for formal conversion, that taints his mind to no small extent.

A question, not raised by the writer, naturally arises in this connection. The Christian missionary bodies are carrying on along with their beneficent work also thoughtless acts of destruction, and this under the protection, and often with the help of the so-called Christian Governments. But can such activities be continued eternally? What will happen when the administration changes hands, as some day it must, when the natives come into power, and realise the immensity of the harm done to them in the name of religion? Young China has been disillusioned and has become positively antagonistic towards the Christian Missions. Will not the African and other "backward" peoples also open their eyes some day and see facts as they are? And what will be their attitude towards the missionary bodies? Will they also be actuated by an anti-Christian feeling like the Chinese nationalists? Time alone can answer this question. But there is no doubt that the future of the Christian Missions in non-Christian lands will be very gloomy unless the missionaries are able to transform themselves into agents, not of destruction but of fulfilment.

REVIEW

CHRISTIANITY AS BHAKTI MARGA: A STUDY OF THE JOHANNINE DOCTRINE OF LOVE. *By A. J. Appasamy, M.A. (Harvard), D. Phil. (Oxon). The Christian Literature Society for India, Madras. 236 pp., Price Re. 1/-.*

To Indianise Christianity is the problem before the Christian Missionaries of India today. To relate Christianity to Hindu thought, to make it deep-rooted in the Indian soil is the task, which some Indian Christians have now set themselves to. The present work by the editor of the Christian Literature Society for India is an interesting exposition of the Christian ideal of Love embodied in the Gospel of St. John in relation to the Hindu religion of Bhakti. Of the many types of Hindu religious thought, the author has chosen the Bhakti cult in view of the fact that it is the most prevalent form of religion in India and has the nearest affinity with the Christian faith. Then again, the Hindu mind is naturally disposed to mystical experience, and the mystical aspect of Christianity has found adequate expression in the writings of St. John. The author has selected certain typical passages from the Fourth Gospel and interpreted them successively to represent different phases of Christian love. Bhakti literature of India, such as the Bhagavatam, the Bhagavad Gita and the songs of Tamil Saints, have been quoted from time to time.

The author has dealt with the common features of the two faiths in an appreciative spirit. He has also indicated the distinctive marks of the Christian Bhakti. But in spite of his intelligent attempt at comparison, he fails to grasp the profundity and sublimity of the Hindu ideal of Bhakti and misunderstands some of its essential characteristics. The remark that the Hindu religion of Bhakti lays no emphasis on the culture of will is but one out of several instances of his misconception. It is to be noted that the Vaishnava savants of India have marked out two stages in the development of Bhakti. The one is the preparatory, the other is the primary. In the first stage, the devotee has not the spontaneous inflow of love, Bhakti is with him more or less a mental process. For such a devotee the observance of rites and duties has been strictly enjoined by the Shastras. In the second stage, the Bhakta has a natural and intense love of God, which manifests itself through his thoughts, feelings and actions. Ethical life is with him a matter of course. The great truth that in the life of a Bhakta the love of man is but a phase of the love of God and that each is incomplete without the other, has been again and again affirmed by the Bhakti literature of India. Kindness to all living beings is one of the three cardinal precepts of Sri Chaitanya.

The passionate love of God at its highest pitch sometimes produces ecstatic feelings, which often seek expression through the body. These the author confounds with

sentimentality and hysteric fits. It is true that physical symptoms are no sure measure of divine love. But that profound spiritual experiences oftentimes give physical expressions is a fact evidenced by the lives of the Bhaktas all over the world, whose saintly purity, selflessness and wisdom testify to the depth and genuineness of their Bhakti.

Bhakti is inevitably associated with a sense of relationship with God. There are different types of Bhakti according to the nature of the relationship. The relationships between the Bhakta and God correspond to our normal relationships in life. The attitude of the son to the father is a marked feature of the Christian Bhakti. This according to the Vaishnava saints is a form of Dâsya-bhakti, devotion in which servant-consciousness predominates. Dâsya-bhakti expresses itself in three different attitudes, the attitude of the servant to the master, the attitude of the subject to the king as protector, and the attitude of the son to the father. At the background of this Bhakti there is always the consciousness of God's majesty and power. So this Bhakti is woven with a sense of awe and a sense of duties and obligations. Both these elements are constant factors of Christian Bhakti. The attitude of a friend to a friend and the attitude of the mother to the son, cannot be said to be the dominant features of the Christian Bhakti. There are rare cases of the wifely attitude towards the Divine in the lives of Christian mystics. The last two attitudes largely prevail in the Bhakti religion of India. In these types of Bhakti the sense of God's might and splendour is overpowered by the consciousness of His infinite grace, love, sweetness and beauty. It is no wonder that the author fails to comprehend the close intimacy and sublime pathos of this form of supreme love.

His view of the Hindu doctrine of Karma is equally wrong. Karma is not an external bond over which man has no control, nor is it something for which man is not responsible, as the author presumes. According to the law of Karma each man reaps the fruits of his own actions. He alone is responsible for whatever he suffers or enjoys. It also allows man sufficient scope and freedom of will to counteract the influence of his own deeds. It is the best possible explanation of the differences and discrepancies of life. We cannot deny Karma without making God ultimately responsible for the evils we are beset with.

Lastly, while thanking the author for his generous appreciation of Hinduism, we cannot but point out some of his erroneous ideas. The past religious life of India, he observes, has been simply a preparation for the acceptance of Christianity. We do not know whether blind faith or bigotry leads the author to such a conclusion. It is not too much to say that the vast, varied and profound spiritual experiences it has gained through its numberless seers, sages, saints and prophets from time immemorial have made Hinduism the most liberal and comprehensive of all the religions of the world. It can appreciate not only Christianity but every other form of religion and determine the place of each in the world of religions. But does this indicate that the Hindus will accept Christianity as the fulfilment of their religion?

THE DOCTRINE OF KARMA. *By Swami Abhedananda.. The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, 40, Beadon Street, Calcutta. 33 pp. Price Two Annas only.*

This is a small but valuable book. It gives a comprehensive idea of the doctrine of Karma within a short compass. The language is so simple and lucid that even a layman can easily understand and amply profit by what it teaches.

It discusses the Laws of Causation, Action and Reaction, Compensation and Retribution in the light of the discoveries of modern science. The author has shown very nicely how the universal character of the Law of Karma can alone scientifically explain various anomalies found in the world. He has refuted the theory of "Predestination and Grace" as having any room in the Law of Karma. "If we are all predestined by God to be sinful or virtuous, to be happy or unhappy, we can neither undo our destiny nor act against the Divine decree. It makes us absolute automata bound hand and foot by the chain of slavery. Furthermore, it makes God partial and unjust. Why should He make one innocent creature destined to suffer and another to enjoy? Why is it that one obtains His grace before one's birth and another does not? If a sinner be destined to sin even before his birth, why should he be responsible for his works, and why should he suffer for the whim of the Omniscient and Almighty Creator? If God be merciful to all

of His creatures, why should He not make all eqnally good and virtuous, moral and spiritual?" It is shown how these questions remain unanswered by the theory of "Predestination and Grace," but tbey do not arise in the doctrine of Karma.

The book will be of great help to those who lead a discontented life, so far as religion is concerned.

THE RELIGION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. *By Swami Abhedananda. The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, 40, Beadon Street, Calcutta. 37 pp. Price Three Annas only.*

This small volume will be a profitable study. At the very beginning it gives in a nutshell the results of modern science in different branches, *e.g.*, Astronomy, Geology, Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, Biology, Comparative Psychology and so forth.

The author has shown how science has demonstrated that the various forces of nature are so many manifestations of one eternal Cosmic Energy. He has qnoted some of the great scientists of to-day as to their attitude towards popnlar religion and traditional faiths. He has pnt forward the reasons why "scientific minds do not care to entertain" blind faiths or beliefs. Therefore, what should be the religion of the present scientific age has been snggested by him in various ways. Some of them are: "The Twentieth Century needs a religion which will be in perfect harmony with all the truths discovered by modern science, which must be based npon the principle of unity in variety, and which should regard the material and efficient cause of the universe as one and the same.

"The Twentieth Century needs a religion which will advocate freedom of thought, freedom of speech and at the same time, which will be in perfect harmony with the conclusions of modern scientific researches; a religion which will harmonize with the monistic philosophy, and every step of which shall be fonnded upon the solid rock of truth unassailable by the critics whether of higher or of lower order."

Lastly it has been very clearly pointed ont how Vedanta can prove itself to be a religion which is at once scientific and nniversal. The book is absolutely free from any sectarian bias.

TALES FROM SANSKRIT DRAMATISTS. *Edited by a host of learned Professors of Sanskrit. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. First Edition. 365 pp. Price, Rs. 2.*

It is an excellent handy book, written in an easy and fluent style. The tales are written on the lines of *Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare,* and are intended to bring the classical treasures within a small compass. The tales range over the vast field of Sanskrit Drama from Bhasa down to Visakhadatta, inclnding the well-known plays, as Vision of Vasavadatta, Avimaraka, Sakuntala, Malavikagnimitra, Vikramorvasiya, Mricchakatika, Malati-Madhava, Nagananda, Ratnavali, and Mudrarakshasa.

The book is a pleasant reading and a good introduction to Sanskrit Drama in general and to prominent Sanskrit plays in particular.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA (Stndents' Edition). *Translated by D. S. Sarma, M.A., Professor, Presidency College, Madras. The Current Thought Press, Pycroft's Road, Triplicane, Madras. 299 pp. Price Cloth Bound Rs. 2; Paper Re. 1/8.*

The anthor has bronght out the translation with a suitable introduction, text, notes and views of notable commentators. The translation has been faithful to the original and expressed in simple English. The book has been nicely printed and in good paper. It will undoubtedly be of immense value to the students for whom it is intended.

THE VISION OF KWANNON SAMA. *Edited by B. L. Broughton, M.A. (Oxon). Luzac & Co., 46, Great Russell Street, W.C. London. 151 pp. Cloth Bound. (Price not given).*

It is an inspiring book on the story of the last Avatar of Kwanyin that has won the hearts of Buddhists in the Far East.

The author gives a very valuable introduction on the fundamentals of Buddhism. In conclusion, he hopes that "this story which is dear to the hearts of millions in the Far East, may prove of interest to Enropean readers and afford another link of common humanity between East and West, and some small aid to that mutual nnderstanding upon which the future of humanity depends."

The book is written in a charming style and in a spirit of catholic outlook. It reads like a novel for its fascinating description. It has the grandenr of a delightful philosophy at the same time.

The get-up of the book is excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT ALMORA

The 96th birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, on the 19th February last. The next day there was the feeding of the poor at the Ashram premises.

On the following Sunday, the 22nd February, a public meeting was held at the Ramsay High School Hall under the presidentship of Rai Pt. Badridatt Joshi Bahadur, who was one of those who saw and welcomed Swami Vivekananda at Almora. The Hall was packed up with ladies and gentlemen representing all communities of Almora—European, Indian, Christian, Mahomedan, etc. Several speakers addressed the meeting. Among them was Lala Daya Nath Sah, who knew Swami Vivekananda at Almora and told from memory many incidents of the life of the Swami. The audience were treated to a short dialogue on the harmony of all religions by five students of the Ramakrishna Vidyarthi Ashram, impersonating a Pâdri, a Maulavi, an orthodox Brahmin, a seeker after Truth, and Sri Ramakrishna as the harmoniser of all religions. The president in his beautiful concluding speech explained the life, teachings and mission of Sri Ramakrishna.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, MADRAS

The report for the year 1930 shows a good progress made during the period. The Silver Jubilee of the Home, celebrated on the 16th February, was the most noteworthy event of the year. On this occasion the Governor of Madras laid the foundation for the workshop in the Industrial section.

The strength of the Home at the end of the year was 134, of which 16 were College students, 51 studied in the High School, 45 in the Lower Secondary School and 22 in the Industrial and Technical School. The examination results of the institution are satisfactory. The institution records with pleasure the distinction gained by two old boys, one was successful in this year in the I. C. S. examination in London and the other became a Ph.D. in Chemistry for successful research work in the Chemistry of Drugs in English and Austrian Universities. The internal management of the Home was mostly with the boys. Household work and gardening were done by the boys. Religious Classes were held daily and the Gita, Upanishads, Vishnu Sahasranamam, Sivananda Lahari, Mukundamala and Stotra Ratnam were taught. Fifteen boys are under the charge of each teacher who guides them in the preparation of their school lessons, in the formation of right habits and in cultivating a spirit of self-help and service. Music was also taught. Due attention was paid to the physical exercise of the boys. The number of books taken out for reference and study from the Library during the year was 1,900. The Residential High School made a steady progress. The School Literary Society was active and arranged for 20 meetings. The Industrial School did satisfactory work during the year under review.

The total receipts for the year were Rs. 44,276-13-0 and the expenditure Rs. 45,802-11-1 resulting in a deficit of Rs. 1,525-14-1. The receipts by subscriptions amounted to Rs. 13,750-10-10 as against Rs. 15,475-13-1 last year and the expenditure on the boarding of the boys was Rs. 20,347-7-3 working out to an average of Rs. 12-9-0 per head per mensem. It will be noticed that the income from subscriptions has suffered very much. Nearly Rs. 3,500 are required every month for the maintenance of the boarders and the running of the Schools, and almost the whole of the money has to be got from subscriptions and donations, as the income from the endowments is much too small. We strongly request the generous public to financially help this very useful institution. All contributions should be sent to the *Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.*

THE RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA ASHRAMA, HOWRAH

The short report of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Ashrama is to hand. This institution was started by a band of young men mainly of Khurut-Kasundia, Howrah, under the guidance and inspiration of one of the disciples of Swami Vivekananda in 1916.

From the very inception it had to nndergo many difficulties and now it has been able to draw the attention and sympathy of the public.

The work of the Ashrama may be classified under three heads:—(1) *Religious*: Classes on the Gita and Upanishads are held and the Birthday Anniversaries of great saints are celebrated. (2) *Educational*: The Reading Room contains some useful collections of Sanskrit, Bengali and English books. A day school named, The Vivekananda Institution, is doing wonderful work. The school is affiliated to the Calcutta University. The number of students on the roll in the year was 550. (3) *Philanthropic*: The Ashrama organised a charity performance and door-to-door collection on the occasions of the North Bengal Flood in the year 1922 and Behar Flood in 1923. A total sum of Rs. 688-12-0 along with a good number of old and new clothes and several maunds of rice were collected and made over to the Ramakrishna Mission for disposal. The Ashrama is also maintaining a Charitable Dispensary. We have been greatly impressed by the activities of the Ashrama and hope that the group of selfless young men who have organised it will serve as an example to others. We wish them greater success.

SWAMI ADYANANDA AT THE SINGAPORE ROTARY CLUB

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE HINDUS

Interesting Explanation to Rotarians

An exceedingly interesting and illuminating address on the Social Institutions and Ceremonies of the Hindus, dealing principally with the caste system and its meanings and the many forms of marriages, was delivered by Swami Adyananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Singapore, at the Rotary Club meeting at Raffies Hotel . . . . The meeting was largely attended.

Proposing a vote of thanks to the speaker, Rotarian R. J. Farrer said he considered that of all the addresses made to the Club so far that by the Swami was the greatest step towards the fulfilment of the spirit of Rotary —service and understanding. (*applause*).

Addressing the meeting Swami Adyananda said:—

My first words this afternoon are those of thanks and gratefulness to the authorities of the Singapore Rotary Club, especially to the Chairman of the Programme Committee, for extending to me this privilege of addressing so distinguished a gathering today.

India can be said to be more a continent than a country. Customs, language, dress, social ceremonies and institutions vary from Province to Province amongst the Hindus themselves. But, in spite of these diversities, the fundamental tenets of the Hindu's view of life are common to all from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas. My purpose this afternoon will be to explain to you very briefly the true meaning of some of the ceremonies and institutions of the Hindus.

Important among these are: (1) the caste system, (2) marriage ceremonies. Besides these there are many others about which I could give you interesting discourses, but I am afraid it is not possible to do so in such a short time.

Paradox about the Caste System

The institution of caste was the principal social organisation of the Hindus. But what is this caste? Is it a mere instrument of tyranny and oppression? However degraded the institution may be today, its central motives were mutual trust and fellowship. This may appear paradoxical to you since you have only heard the one side of it always. My purpose, however, is not to defend the indefensible, but to point out the underlying principles.

The word "caste" is of Portuguese origin. Therefore there is a great deal of confusion about the word. This led to something mysterious about the institution. But if you are a deeper student of Hindu Sociology, you will find that it is an attempt to harmonise different elements in society on a co-operative basis. So caste rules have various aspects, namely, economic, social, cultural and spiritual. Human society is an organic whole, where each individual plays his indispensable part. If you want harmony and all-round progress you have to organise different groups of workers with different professions, bound by a sense of unity, yet

having sufficient decentralisation. Ancient leaders in India divided the society in four main groups, namely (1) the Brahmins ; (2) Kshatriyas ; (3) Vaishyas ; (4) Sudras.

The functions of those groups were different. Each had specific duties to perform. Each group was recognised as equally valuable to the general welfare of the society, only the caste rules insisted that the outlook in society should be more on co-operation and harmony than on competition.

The Brahmins were to develop spiritual and cultural ideals. The duty of preserving 'law and order' was left to the Kshatriyas, while economic development rested with the Vaishyas. The unskilled labourers were the Sudras.

The most interesting point in the caste system is, however, the hereditary principle of occupation. Except in rare instances, where an individual did show special genius for a particular profession, occupation was hereditary. The hereditary principle has certainly its own defects, because it puts barriers in the way of an individual choosing his livelihood. But what is the justification? Why did the ancient law-givers in India prescribe such restrictive rules? If we study the system of caste deeply, we shall find the obvious motives. It is well-known to you that if modern industrialised society has any bitter lessons to teach us today, they are those of over-production and unemployment. The ancient Hindu law-givers could foresee the inevitable results that would follow, if the economic functions of individuals in society were not restrained to legitimate proportions. The best way of doing so, was considered by the Hindu law-givers by making occupation hereditary.

I have no time at my disposal today to put the pros and cons of this aspect of the caste system, but it can be said again that through economic significance alone we cannot understand the true importance of the system. Judging all aspects of life, Hindus at that time attributed more value to the spiritual and cultural. So the defects in the economic system had to be counteracted by emphasising the spiritual ideal. If in society different groups of persons have to be assimilated, it can only be possible when different vocations are undertaken as "service." If we do not realise the dignity of labour and consider certain works as degrading from a purely economic motive, all works become servitude. So you find the emphasis on spiritualisation of the outlook of life by the chastening of feelings and impulses through performance of work in a spirit of "service." Improvement of human nature through this ideal is the goal of the caste system.

Service and Fellowship

In short, the law-givers in India did not consider society as a mere federation of traders and teachers, bankers and lawyers, each competing with the other for better economic positions, but looked upon it as an organic whole, where service and fellowship formed the main principles.

When this spiritual ideal was replaced by hierarchical tendencies in Hindu Society, degradation began to start. In the original conception of the institution, however, the teacher and the warrior, the merchant and the labourer were given equal status and privileges. Again, because occupation was hereditary generally, it does not follow that the law-givers in India were extremely rigid to any change, if time demanded. Because, in the Mahabharata, the great Hindu epic, we find it mentioned: "One becomes a Brahmin by his deeds, not by his family or birth."

There are instances which prove that conduct was counted more than mere birth. Vyasa, who is considered by the Hindus to be a great teacher, was born of a fisherwoman.

Besides this aspect, the caste system has another feature. It is the social aspect. After dividing the society in several groups with different duties, they did not very much encourage indiscriminate amalgamation of different groups through marriage. Though this was the general rule amongst different groups of social units, there are instances, however, where mixture of bloods is recommended. These are called *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages in Hinduism. Whether this principle of marriage between people of the same status is bad in a progressive society, is still doubtful. If improvement of human species is the purpose of evolution, I am sure, biological selection is one of the best methods. In evolution, it is certain, we cannot entirely depend on environment ; we have to look to heredity a great deal. By this I do not say environment does not count at all ; but we should not exaggerate the influence of environment. It is a biological

fact that the tiny chromosomes of our body cells determine our height and weight, form and colour, nervous organisation and intelligence, and we inherit these chromosomes from our parents half and half. The Hindu law-givers by their intuitive insight could see these biological facts, so they restricted matrimonial relations between the people of the same group who were on the same level of culture.

I have given you a very short summary of the underlying principles of this ancient social institution of the Hindus. You will perhaps agree with me, when I say that properly understood the system reveals the characteristic synthetic outlook of the philosophic Hindu mind. If you are a student of comparative sociology, you will find that Plato expresses similar ideas in his famous book *Republic*.

Prof. Edward J. Urwick, Head of the Department of Social Science and Administration of the University of London, writes in his well-known book *The message of Plato*: "Just as . . . . Ancient India instituted the caste system upon the basis of the three principles of the individual Soul, so Plato divides his state into three classes representing the three psychical elements . . . . The parallelism is, of course, repeated in the central books of the *Republic*."

Hindu Marriages

Thus describing one of the important social institutions of the Hindus, I now propose to tell you something about the ceremony of marriage in Hindu society. The Hindu law recognises eight different kinds of marriage. But I am not much concerned with the technical points of law here. I shall shortly describe the spirit of the ceremony, so that you can understand the Hindu view-point.

In Bengal, marriage festivities continue for four or five days. On the day of marriage both the bride and the bridegroom will fast, and at night before an assembly of guests the father of the bride will say by chanting Sanskrit Mantras to the bridegroom, "With God as my witness I give my daughter to you." The bridegroom in reply says, "I take your daughter as my companion in joys and sorrows."

Then the priest ties the hands of the couple by a garland of fiowers, when both the bride and the bridegroom say to each other, "My heart is yours and your heart is mine. Bound together they are laid at the Feet of the Lord." Thus marriage is not a material arrangement alone in Hinduism. It is an institution through which human personalities are developed by mutal comradeship. Both man and woman are to be devoted to higher ideals through family life. The Hindu marriage ideals thus emphasise that individual inclinations and tendencies must be subordinate, so that marriage ties may be sublimated to spiritual relationship.

Comparatively younger girls are married and brought to their father-in-law's home in Hindu Society. You may ask why it is so. Well, the constitution of the Hindu joint family system demands it. The Hindus consider that the responsibilities of a woman in a family are great, and that her first duty, like her comrade's, is to serve the multifarious interests of the family. And it was found that with adolescence human personality develops such idiosyncrasies as can hardly be moulded to the desired end of service. Likes and dislikes become pronounced with the advance of age, so it is difficult to mould grown-up minds to the spirit of service in a new family. From this, however, it is not to be inferred that woman's place in Hindu Society is in any way inferior to that of man. Only the law-givers found that by nature feminine psychology and abilities are different from masculine. So there is bound to be difference in duties.

Because of the Spiritual Idealism, marriage is indissoluble in Hinduism. I have very briefly given you the ideals of the two important Hindu institutions. I have tried to explain more the spirit than the actual forms. By this, I do not, however, for a moment mean to say that the present-day Hindu Society is in an ideal condition. I have only given you the spirit of some of the institutions of this ancient people, but much remains for us to do to infuse this spirit in modern conditions. The work has already started. We Hindus, after centuries of winter, are in one of the creative periods of our history today. We are on the march. When we reach the journey's end, it will be seen that the infiuence of English education and contributions of Great Britain towards this Renaissance of the Hindus in modern times, are of no small measure.—*The Singapore Free Press.*