

Prabuddha Bharata

OR AWAKENED INDIA

* * * *



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

VOL. XXXVIII

JANUARY—DECEMBER 1933

Editorial Office :

MAYAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS

Publication Office :

4, WELLINGTON LANE, CALCUTTA

Subscription: Inland Rs. 4
Foreign \$3 or 11sh.

Inland: Single Copy
Annas Seven.

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Per Annum—Rs. 10 India; £ 1 Europe; \$ 5 America.

Single Copy—Re. 1 India; 2s. Europe; 50 Cents America.

51, ESPLANADE ROAD, BOMBAY.

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VOL. XXXVIII

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No. 1



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THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In France, the “rights of man” was long a watchword of the race; in America the rights of woman till beseech the public ear; in India we have concerned ourselves always with the rights of Gods.

The Vedanta includes all sects. We have a peculiar idea in India. Suppose I had a child; I should not teach him any religion, but the practice of concentrating his mind; and just one line of prayer. Not prayer in your sense, but this—“I meditate on Him who is the Creator of the universe; may He enlighten my mind.”

Then, when old enough, he goes about hearing the different philosophies and teachings, till he finds that which seems the truth to him. He then becomes the Sishya, or disciple of the Guru (teacher), who is teaching that truth.

He may choose to worship Christ, or Buddha or Mohammed: we recognize the rights of each of these, and the right of all souls to their own Ishtam, or chosen way. It is therefore quite

possible for my son to be a Buddhist, my wife to be a Christian, and myself a Mohammedan at one and the same time with absolute freedom from friction.

We are all glad to remember that all roads lead to God; and that the reformation of the world does not depend upon all seeing God through our eyes. Our fundamental idea is that your doctrine cannot be mine, nor mine yours. I am my own sect. It is true that we have created a system of religion in India which we believe to be the only rational religious system extant; but our belief in its rationality rests upon its all-inclusion of the searchers after God; its absolute charity towards all forms of worship, and its eternal receptivity of those ideas trending towards the evolution of God in the universe.

We admit the imperfection of our system, because the reality must be beyond all systems; and in this admission lies the portent and promise of an eternal growth. Sects, ceremonies and books, so far as they are the means of a

man's realizing his own nature, are all right, when he has realized that he gives up everything.

"I reject the Vedas!" is the last word of the Vedanta philosophy. Ritual, hymns, and scriptures through which he has travelled to freedom vanish for him. "So' ham, So' ham"—I am He—bursts from his lips, and to say "Thou" to the God is blasphemy, for he is "one with the Father."

Personally, I take as much of the Vedas as agrees with reason. Parts of the Vedas are apparently contradictory. They are not considered as inspired in the Western sense of the word; but as the sum total of the knowledge of God, omniscience, which we possess. But to say that only those books which we call the Vedas contain this knowledge is mere sophistry. We know it is shared in varying degrees by the scriptures of all sects. Manu says that that part only of the Vedas which agrees with reason is the Vedas; and many of our philosophers have taken this view. Of all the scriptures of the world, it is the Vedas alone which declare that the study of the Vedas is secondary.

The real study is that "by which we realize the Unchangeable," and that is neither by reading, nor believing, nor reasoning, but by superconscious perception and Samadhi. When a man has reached that perfect state, he is of the same nature as the personal God. "I and my Father are one." He knows himself one with Brahman the Absolute, and projects himself as does the personal God. The personal God is the Absolute looked at through the haze of Maya—ignorance.

When we approach Him with the five senses, we can only see Him as the personal God. The idea is that the Self cannot be objectified. How can the knower know himself? But he can cast a shadow as it were, and the highest

form of that shadow, that attempt at objectifying one's self, is the personal God. The Self is the eternal subject, and we are eternally struggling to objectify that Self, and out of that struggle has come this phenomenon of the universe: that which we call matter. But these are weak attempts, and the highest objectification of the Self possible to us, is the personal God.

"An honest God's the noblest work of man," said one of your Western thinkers; God is as man is. No man can see God but through these human manifestations. Talk as you may, try as you may, you cannot think of God but as a man, and as you are, He is. An ignorant man was asked to make an image of the God Siva; and after many days of hard struggle he succeeded only in manufacturing the image of a monkey! So, when we try to think of God as He is in His absolute perfection, we meet with miserable failure, because we are limited and bound by our present constitution to see God as man.

If the buffaloes desire to worship God, they, in keeping with their own nature, will see Him as a huge buffalo; if a fish wishes to worship God, its concept of Him would inevitably be a big fish; and man must think of Him as man.

Suppose man, the buffalo and the fish represent so many different vessels; that these vessels all go to the sea of God to be filled, each according to its shape and capacity. In man the water takes the shape of man; in the buffalo the shape of a buffalo; and in the fish the shape of the fish; but in each of these vessels is the same water of the sea of God.

Two kinds of man do not worship God as man—the human brute who has no religion, and the Paramahansa, who has transcended the limits of his own human nature. To him all nature has become his own self, he alone can worship God as He is. The human brute does not

worship because of his ignorance, and the Jivanmuktas (free souls) do not worship because they have realized God in themselves. "So' ham, So' ham"—I am He—they say, and how shall they worship themselves?

I will tell you a little story. There was once a baby lion left by its dying mother among some sheep. The sheep fed it and gave it shelter. The lion grew apace and said "Ba-a-a," when the sheep said, "Ba-a-a." One day another lion came by.

"What do you here?" said the second lion in astonishment: for he heard the sheep-lion bleating with the rest.

"Ba-a-a," said the other; "I am a little sheep, I am a little sheep, I am frightened."

"Nonsense!" roared the first lion; "come with me; I will show you." And he took him to the side of a smooth stream and showed him that which was reflected therein. "You are a lion; look at me, look at the sheep, look at yourself."

And the sheep-lion looked, and then he said: "Ba——, I do not look like the sheep—it is true, I am a lion!" and with that he roared a roar that shook the hills to their depths.

That is it. We are lions in sheep's clothing of habit, we are hypnotized into weakness by our surroundings, and the province of Vedantism is the self-dehypnotization. The goal to be reached is freedom. I disagree with the idea that freedom is obedience to the laws of nature. I do not understand what that means. According to the history of human progress, it is disobedience to nature that has constituted that progress. It may be said that the conquest of lower laws was through the higher, but even there the conquering mind was still seeking freedom; as soon as it found the struggle was through law, it wished

to conquer that also. So the ideal is always freedom. The trees never disobey law. I never saw a cow steal. An oyster never told a lie. Yet these are not greater than man.

Obedience to law, in the last issue, would make of us simply matter—either in society, or in politics, or religion. This life is a tremendous assertion of freedom; excess of laws means death. No nation possesses so many laws as the Hindus, and the result is the national death. But the Hindus had one peculiar idea—they never made any doctrines or dogmas in religion; and the latter has had the greatest growth. Therein are we practical,—wherein you are impractical, in our religion.

A few men come together in America and say, "We will have a stock company"; in five minutes it is done. In India twenty men may discuss a stock company for as many weeks, and it may not be formed; but, if one believes that by holding up his hands in the air for forty years he will attain wisdom, it will be done! So we are practical in ours, you in your way.

But the way of all ways to realization is love. When one loves the Lord the whole universe becomes dear to him, because it is all His. "Everything is His, and He is my Lover; I love Him," says the Bhakta. In this way everything becomes sacred to the Bhakta, because all things are His. How, then, may we hurt any one? How, then, may we not love another? With the love of God will come, as its effect, the love of every one in the long run. The nearer we approach God, the more do we begin to see that all things abide in Him. Our heart will become a perennial fountain of love. Man is transformed in the presence of this Light of Love and realizes at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, Lover, and the Beloved are really one:

SWAMI SUBODHANANDA

Those who came to help the world and humanity are having their final exit one by one. And numerous are the people who will be made orphan by their physical absence. It will be a shock to many that Swami Subodhananda, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, passed away on Friday, the 2nd December last at 8.5 p.m. For some time past he was suffering from phthisis which finally carried him off.

The early name of Swami Subodhananda was Subodh Chandra Ghosh. He was born in the year 1867 and belonged to the family of Sankar Ghosh, the founder of the famous Kali temple at Thanthania, Calcutta. His father was a very pious man and fond of religious books; his mother also was of a great religious disposition. The influence of his parents contributed not a little to the growth of his religious life. His mother would tell him stories from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and other scriptures, and implanted in him, while still very young, love for truth, devotion to God, etc. From his very boyhood he showed a remarkable spirit of renunciation and got a vague feeling that he was not meant for a householder's life. When pressed for marriage, he emphatically said that he would take to the life of a wandering monk and, as such, marriage would be only an obstacle in his path. As it was settled that on his passing the class examination he would be married, Subodh fervently prayed to God that his result in the examination might be very bad. God heard the prayer of the little boy and Subodh, to his great relief, did not get promotion. Subodh was at first a student of the Hare School and then got himself admitted into the Vidyasagar School.

During this time he got a copy of

The Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna from his father. He was so much impressed with its contents that he was very eager to see Sri Ramakrishna. His father told him to wait till some holiday when he could conveniently take him to Dakshineswar. But Subodh was impatient of any delay. So one day he stole away from the house and along with a friend started on foot for Dakshineswar. There he was received very affectionately by Sri Ramakrishna. In the course of conversation Sri Ramakrishna told Subodh that he knew his parents and had visited their house occasionally and also that he knew Subodh would be coming to him. Sri Ramakrishna grasped the hand of Subodh and remaining in meditation for a few minutes said, "You will realize the goal, Mother says so." He also told Subodh that Mother sent to him those who would receive Her grace and requested him to visit him on Tuesdays and Saturdays. The request was difficult to be complied with by Subodh; for great objections would come from his parents if they knew of his intention.

On the next Saturday, however, Subodh fled away from the school with his friend and came to Dakshineswar. During this visit Sri Ramakrishna in an ecstatic mood touched his body from the navel to the throat and wrote something on his tongue, repeating, "Awake, Mother, awake!" Then he asked Subodh to meditate. As soon as he began meditation, his whole body trembled and he felt something rushing along the spinal column to his brain. He was plunged into a joy ineffable and saw a strange light in which the forms of innumerable gods and goddesses appeared and then got merged in the Infinite. The meditation gradually deepened.

ed and he lost all outward consciousness. When he came down to the normal plane, he found Sri Ramakrishna stroking his body in the reverse order.

Sri Ramakrishna was astonished to see the deep meditation of Subodh and learnt from him that it was the result of his practice at home. For Subodh used to think of gods and goddesses, hearing of them from his mother.

Since meeting with Sri Ramakrishna Subodh would see a strange light between his eyebrows. His mother coming to know of this told him not to divulge this fact to anybody else. But seized as he was with a great spiritual hankering, Subodh promptly replied, "What harm will it do to me, mother? I do not want this light but That from which it comes."

Gradually the attraction of young Subodh for Sri Ramakrishna grew stronger and stronger, till after the passing away of the Master in 1886 he left his parental homestead and joined the monastic order organized by Swami Vivekananda at Baranagore. For some years that followed, Subodh, now known as Swami Subodhananda, practised Tapasya at various places. When Swami Vivekananda, after his return from the West, appealed to his brother disciples to work for the spread of the Master's message and the good of humanity instead of living in seclusion, Subodhananda was one of those who placed themselves under his lead. Since then he worked in various capacities for the cause of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He was one of the first group of Trustees of the Belur Math appointed by Swami Vivekananda in the year 1901 and was afterwards elected Treasurer of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Lately though he could not personally work so much, wherever he would be he would inspire people to throw them-

selves into the work started by Swami Vivekananda. During the last few years he made extensive tours in Bengal and Bihar and was greatly instrumental in spreading the message of the Master.

Swami Subodhananda was childlike in his simplicity and singularly unassuming in his behaviour. It was a fitting compliment to his character that he was popularly known as Khoka Maharaj (Child Swami). He would be found equally the same when devotees showed unusual respect to him, or persons, not knowing how to properly behave themselves with Sadhus, were faulty in their conduct. These characteristics indicated his spiritual greatness. For has it not been said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"? His love for one and all was unbounded. Many on coming into contact with him, would feel his love so much that they would altogether forget the wide gulf of difference that marked their spiritual life and his. Yet he made no conscious attempt to hide the spiritual height to which he belonged; the great unostentatiousness was part and parcel of his being. It was remarkably strange that he could mix so freely with one and all and make them his own. Many are the persons, who, though not religiously minded, were drawn to him simply by his love and will feel a personal loss at his passing away. Will not they also be spiritually benefited by their contact with him? For Swami Subodhananda was an efficient channel through which the great spiritual current started by Sri Ramakrishna flowed to humanity. Then let everybody remember that the influence of the life of him whose loss we mourn to-day, will not cease to work even at his physical absence.

THE MARCH OF HUMANITY

BY THE EDITOR

I

Nobody knows when and how man came into being. The mystery of life is still as great as ever. The origin of life is still unknown. All human enquiry into the origin of life, all scientific investigation about it, has met with persistent failures. Science cannot tell how life came into existence, it only describes the process through which the world has become full of population, as we see it to-day, after the first life had its birth on earth. All religious theories as to this, which have held the thought of the respective votaries of different religions for hundreds of years, are now being exploded from day to day by science. But science also has not been able to give any theory regarding this baffling problem. So far as this question is concerned, the work of science has been only negative.

Almost all religions say that man became a full-fledged being from the very beginning; some religions say that the first man was little different from his Creator: he met with his fall, when he came into touch with the world and its degrading influences. Science, on the other hand, holds that the first living being on earth was a mollusc; through gradual process it evolved into the man, as we see him to-day, with capacity to harness the forces of nature for his own purpose, endowed with an intellect to think, know and investigate into the problems of life and death, heaven and earth, and possessing a boldness to pry into the very secrets of God.

Let us leave the problem of the origin of life to be solved by science or religion—whichever is competent to do so—or by the co-operation or fight between the two. But what was the feeling of the first man when he found himself in this vast mysterious universe! If from amoeba man was gradually evolved, what was the condition of his mind when the light of intelligence was kindled for him and a new chapter of history was opened unto him! What was the position of man, when he found himself endowed with a capacity to think and judge, to feel happy and unhappy, to distinguish between hopes and fears, and when reasoning faculty took the place of instinct as the driving power of his life!

II

The struggle for self-preservation was in the very instinct of the first created being. It persisted in the first man also—only the struggle became greater as man was more sensitive to environment than the lower animals. Lower animals tried to protect themselves from the ravages of nature; man set himself to conquer nature. This attempt towards the conquest of nature has caused the birth and progress of material civilization. As man's knowledge increased, he began to have greater and greater control over nature. What seemed impossible in one century became an everyday affair in another century; till at the present day achievements of modern science hear like the tales of fairy lands.

As sense of comfort and discomfort, happiness and unhappiness was greater

in man, he began to apply his knowledge to the ministration of his happiness. His taste developed, his standard of living increased, his wants multiplied, and he began to exercise his brains to constantly meet the demands of the new and changing situations of life.

With the evolution of mind, man could be no longer satisfied with creature comforts. He became keen for the food of his intellect as much as for that of his body—nay, some men became, as it were, more particular about appeasing the hunger of their intellect than that of their body. And this gave rise to the progress and development of art, literature, history, philosophy, etc. The feeling of curiosity which springing in the mind of Eve caused the fall of the First Man, infected the minds of all her coming children—and that has been the cause of man's insatiable thirst for knowledge, of his ever-increasing desire to know more and more, of an undying tendency in him to widen the sphere of his mental activity. What was a curse at first proved to be a blessing afterwards. For, had there been no curiosity in man's mind, there would have been no progress of human knowledge.

With the gradual development of his mind, man developed finer sensibilities; and these gave rise to the birth of many noble virtues that we find in man. What was simply a herd instinct in animals, grew into fellow-feeling and disposition of charity in man; what was the instinctive motherly love in animals developed into a human love which was not confined to one's own children only: some began to feel for the children of others as much as for their own and gave occasion for the talk of universal love and sympathy.

III

But light presupposes darkness; virtues derive their significance from

the existence of vice. So with the seeds of virtue were sown in man the seeds of sin also. Man was given an infinite opportunity to develop nobler qualities, but there remained equally the chance of his falling a prey to his baser instincts. Some stood this trial, while some could not; rather the majority of men miserably failed. With the bestowal of intellect man was given a greater responsibility; some felt it and some did not. So we find that knowledge which is power has, in one sense, become a curse to the human civilization. Man has turned, more often than not, this power of knowledge to baser ends. At first man had only one enemy—nature; his only one concern was how to protect himself from the ravages of nature or how to snatch more power from nature, so that it might conduce to his greater comfort and happiness. But as his hankering after happiness increased continuously, and at geometrical progression, he found in his fellow-man a rival who claimed a share of his happiness and enjoyment. So man became an enemy of man, and fight ensued between man and man. One race began to fight with another race, one nation came into a conflict of interest with another nation, one country set out for the conquest of another country so that its people might have greater and greater amount of enjoyment at the cost of those of another. As a result, the peace of the world has been often and often disturbed by fights and battles, wars and revolutions. There is a clash of interest everywhere—between one nation and another, between the ruler and the ruled, between one community and another, amongst the members of the same family—between father and son, brother and brother, and between man and woman as a class. In short, man finds enemies everywhere outside him-

self and some men are at war with themselves.

When one ponders over this situation, one becomes pessimistic about the future of humanity and wonders whether civilization is progressing or is going backward, whether the primitive condition of man was not better than the one seen at present. For it seems that the world has been the playground of the baser impulses of man. If man was endowed with power and intelligence to use them as instruments for the advancement of his happiness, he was given also the tools to undo his actions. And it seems he has forgotten which is which. It seems as if by a chance he sets his hand to a tool which will conduce to his progress, peace and happiness and by a similar chance he takes up another instrument which will destroy what he has once built up with so much care. Thus the process of construction and destruction has been going on simultaneously and it seems difficult to judge which outweighs which.

IV

From the very early stage of humanity all men have not been busy with externals. While some men have looked outward to conquer nature and have more and more of material comfort and enjoyment, others, of a more contemplative turn of mind, have looked within to unravel the mystery of being. They have been more busy with the problem of where man goes after death, and where does he come from at his birth. And there has been the dream : man sees in his dream even those of his relations who have been reduced to dust and ashes on their death. The sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening ; where does he go at night to take rest ? And there are so many stars—like innumerable diamonds—set

in the great vault above : who could be the master artist whose work that was ? Nature yields food and drink, but she is not all kindness. Sometimes she wears a frowning look, too terrible for even the stoutest heart. While some men began to fight with nature, others, impelled by a philosophical tendency, began to think why it is that side by side with the autumnal moon which smiles beauty there exist storms and earthquakes which destroy houses and buildings, uproot trees and forests and raze mountains and hills to the ground ; could they both be the work of the same Creator ? Thus the sense of beauty, the feeling of fear, the thought of the existence of one outside the universe who was kind—all these contributed to the birth and development of religion. The child finds in its father a dual being : sometimes he caresses and sometimes he punishes. So the child-man at the early stage of the human history, imagined the existence of a Creator who just like an earthly father sometimes smiles and sometimes frowns ; who sometimes sends from heavens storms and thunders to punish man and sometimes sprinkles from above rains and dews so that the crops may grow for the sustenance of His children. Man began to think of God as the Father in Heaven. For a long time perhaps God remained only a figment of the brain, an object of imagination associated with the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, but there came a time when man came face to face with God, when He remained no longer in a distant heaven to send reward or hurl punishment, but became the object of direct human perception ; when man ejaculated in ecstasy : वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम्—I have known this Great Person. What was the exaltation of the man, who first realized God that way ! Compared with that the

joy of 'Eureka' of the Syracusan philosopher was very very insignificant—almost nothing. For, whereas Archimedes' discovery represented the fruition of the individual effort of one human being, the success of the man who first realized God represented the result of the search of entire human race for thousands of years. If the creation of the universe or the origin of life has been the greatest mystery with mankind, the way in which the thirst for the knowledge of God sprang in human heart and God was at last revealed unto man is no less a mystery. How and why was it that some men forgot all interest in the external world and sought for the Great One who is hidden in His creation and what was the strength of his blessedness that He revealed Himself unto him? How did that divine quest awaken in him and how was that fulfilled? If the birth of the first man represents a great landmark in the history of humanity, the event of a man's realizing God represents another landmark, which is no less important.

Fortunately in the history of the world there has not been only one man, who has realized God, and only one country or one nation which has produced such men. There have been galaxy of persons who have got direct and first-hand knowledge of God in all climes. And it is not necessarily in the civilized parts of the world that there have been persons who have been blessed with the direct vision of God. The desert of Arabia, the hilly tracts of Palestine, the plains of China, the far away regions in the Himalayas can claim as their sons persons who were spiritual geniuses. And they have opened out innumerable paths to God for others. The spiritual giants who have been born in the world have, by their teachings and examples, shown

different paths and processes of God-realization, so that anyone may choose whatever path or Sadhana appeals to him. Of course there have been false prophets, counterfeit saints, hypocritical religious men. There have been heart-rending instances of irreligion in the name of religion. But false coins only indicate that there are genuine coins of which they are the imitations: false prophets prove the existence of genuine persons who have been the salt of the earth; trading in religion only indicates that there is something of genuine value in true religion which can attract people.

V

Now, what will be the ideal of future humanity? What is the goal to which mankind in their march extending over a period of millions of years in the past (and who knows how many millions of millions of years it is to be continued in the future?) are going? The ideal of the collective life is indicated by the ideal of the individual life. If by realizing God, different individuals have found the fever of their life gone and all their desires and hankerings satisfied; if they have attained that on getting which all earthly joys, conceived and conceivable, seem to be only shadowy; if they have found themselves lifted up to a region where the problem of life and death is meaningless; the same should be the goal for all others—for all humanity. That will be another blessed day for humanity when all men will be raised to the feet of God, when all men will realize God. The ideal of the society in India has been to raise all to the level of the Brahmins, the ideal of humanity will be to elevate all to the level of Seers.

Is that simply a vision, a dream, a utopia? The greatest miracle the world has witnessed has been that a

tiny human being could realize God and find his human limitations dissolved. If that has been possible, why will not this also be possible—though in the distant, very distant future into which human gaze cannot penetrate now—that all men will realize God, will attain the knowledge of the essence of their being. At least can we not expect that that is the goal to which humanity is moving through ups and downs, progress and retrogradation in its life? Are not all men, irrespective of caste, creed, nationality and different degrees of limitations, the children of God? If that be so, is it too much to expect that all children will recognize the Father as such? The present condition of the world, it is true, tells a different tale, and points to a different direction. But how little has been the age of the world in comparison with the eternal future that lies before? Humanity is now at but an adolescent stage. The follies that are now visible in the world are but the mistakes of people who have not attained the age of wisdom. Who can tell that humanity will not learn by the mistakes and experiences through which it is now passing, and that the present mistakes will not be only a basis for the right kind of action in the future?

VI

Amidst the wails and cries coming forth from the heart of humanity, due to the extreme sufferings to which it has been a victim, we hear, now and then, of the talk of universal love, brotherhood, etc. Every religion asserts that it will be the future religion of the world and that it contains in it the potentiality to unite all men into one single brotherhood. It is doubtful whether any denominational religion will be able to combine all mankind into a single con-

federation; for human temperaments are so very different and as such different individuals will, of necessity, seek different religions. But this can be said that every religion, in its essence, contains factors, which can contribute to the binding of all men by a common bond of love, sympathy and fellow-feeling.

In the meantime, we find that different factors are at work to that end. Science, though it is now only in its infancy, has greatly annihilated time and space and is continuing to do so. With the modern facilities of communication one can go from one end of the world to another in much shorter time than it would take one in the past to go from one city to another of the same province. Nowadays the sufferings of people in China touch the heart of people in England, the struggles of people in India evoke sympathy from people in America. The discovery that is made by a scientist, say, in Germany, at once finds its application in a factory, say, in Japan. Humanity is going to be more and more closely knit. There may come a time when people in distant parts of the globe will find themselves more akin in thought, outlook and views of life than inhabitants of the same village do now. Will not that create a greater and greater bond of love and sympathy between man and man and eliminate all disintegrating considerations of race, nationality, geographical area, etc.? With greater advancement of science and more progress of human knowledge there will come a time when man will recognize man only as a fellow-being and forget all regional differences.

If that be so, the great task with us, all people throughout the world, is to contribute our share to bring about that millennium—to hasten the march of humanity to reach its goal.

RELIGION AS EXPERIENCE

BY J. T. SUNDERLAND

Religion presents itself to man under four aspects : as something to be gone through with, or performed ; as something to be believed ; as something to be studied, analyzed, or speculated about ; and as something to be experienced. In other words, it presents itself as a Ceremonial ; as a Creed ; as a Philosophy ; and as a Life.

What are we to say of these differing conceptions of religion ? Doubtless we should say that all are legitimate ; all are useful ; but no one taken alone is complete—each needs the others to round it out to wholeness. Especially is this true of the first three, but they need the fourth. Experience or life is the end toward which each of the others ought to lead—the only result which gives them justification for being. Without religion as a personal experience, ceremonials, creeds and philosophies are a body without a soul.

I

Experience of religion ! I know there is a prejudice in many minds against the thought. To some persons, such experience seems only superstition, or cant, or pretence ; to others, an empty dream of the imagination. Persons with habits of unfettered thinking, or who care much for science and reason, are perhaps particularly liable to be among those who look upon religious experience with incredulity and disfavour. But why should this be so ? Can any one give a good reason ?

No one denies the validity of experience in matters outside of religion. Indeed the scientist and the man of independent thought are the very ones

who, in other things, are likely to appeal to experience most. They do not want speculation, they tell you ; they want to know. They want the testimony of somebody who has seen, heard, felt, experimented. They of all men, then, should show not least but most respect for experience in matters of religion.

I do believe that nothing in man's knowledge rests upon a more secure foundation—upon one more absolutely incapable of being disturbed, than religion. Why ? Because it rests upon the soul's deepest experience. Below these it is impossible to go. If here is not reality, then indeed

The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.
For even the validity of our knowledge of the outward world depends upon the truthfulness of the world within.

II

You say agriculture you know about, for that has to do with tangible things ; and a science like geology you can be sure of, for that deals with hard facts. But do you really think that a stone is any more a solid fact than is love or hope ? Are you any more sure that the stone is out there, than you are that you love your child or your friend ? Are you any more certain, when you plant your seed in the spring, that you will get a harvest in the fall ; or when you go to bed at night tired from your toil, to rest for the next day, are you any more sure that there will be any next day than you are that justice is better than injustice, and truth than falsehood ? I think not.

As regards any object of external nature, a flower or a tree—are you any more sure that it really exists, because to your senses it seems to, than you are that over the tree and over all else you see, and over your own life, there is a Power higher than yourself, from which, somehow, the tree and yourself came—a Power and Wisdom that can be trusted—which you have learned by all the experience of your life can be trusted? I think not. Men talk strangely, sometimes, about the physical world—the world of external nature—being certain, and the internal world of the mind and the spirit being uncertain—as if the distant could be more certain than the near—as if knowledge of the soul's foreign lands could be more reliable than knowledge of the soul's home lands. Do we not know that the things of external nature—trees, grass, houses, hills, other persons, animals, skies *are* really our soul's *foreign* lands, the lands which the mind reaches by journeying away to a distance. The own country of us all, the land in which we habitually dwell, is the internal world of our own thoughts, our own feelings, our own desires, aspirations, hopes, fears, memories, longings, loves, imaginations, emotions. Shall we say that our knowledge of this near, familiar land is uncertain, untrustworthy? and that to get knowledge which we can rely on we must travel away from home, sailing out from port of eye and ear, over oceans of air and mysterious spaces we do not understand, to the foreign land of objective things—physical, external nature—stone, tree, river, sky?

No, there is nothing so near us as ourselves. There is nothing we so immediately and certainly know as ourselves. Our deepest knowledge is experience, and not even that experience, either, that comes to us from without, indirectly and roundabout by way of

the senses, but that deepest of all possible experience which is immediate, which is internal, which is of the mind, the heart, the conscience, the moral and spiritual nature, upon which true religion ever builds. "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal." Why is the religion of experience so sure? Because God has built it into man's moral and spiritual nature. By all of man's long experience on the earth it has grown to be a part of his deepest self. The creator of his soul has engraved it on his soul: nay, has planted it in his soul, a plant of the eternities. It is the divine in him. It is God in him. Therefore he can depend upon it as certainly as he can depend upon the universe or upon God Himself.

III

One of the striking things about the preaching of Jesus was his constant talk about what he called "the kingdom of god," or "the kingdom of heaven." He represented his constant desire, his great aim, as being to establish that kingdom, to build it up among men. He taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name . . . Thy kingdom come." He pronounced blessing upon the humble and lowly in spirit, and those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake, saying, "Yours is the kingdom of heaven." When men desired to know what that kingdom was, he represented it as the reign of truth and love, of peace and goodwill, on the earth. And when asked further about it, he said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you."

Now, what did ordinary hearers of Jesus, those who saw only superficially, think about this talk? Undoubtedly they thought it nonsense. The "kingdom of heaven" to them was probably

nothing but a fancy, a hallucination of the brain of the Nazarene. As for them, they preferred solid, enduring things, not dreams and moonshine. A kingdom! Herod had a kingdom that was real; for could they not see the swords and spears that supported it? Kings in other nations round about had kingdoms that were substantial; for were they not guarded by powerful armies? Especially was the empire of world-commanding Rome solid. But this kingdom that this religious enthusiast declaimed about, which consisted simply of ideas, principles, truths, sentiments, and that was declared to be within the mind and heart—let him go and preach it to silly women! Were they not men with too much shrewdness and judgment to be caught with such chaff?

And yet, now that nigh two thousand years have gone, how stands the case? Which do we see to have been right, the prophet of religion, who proclaimed a kingdom of the soul, or they who could see nothing strong or enduring, or worthy of regard, but that which appealed to the eye, and ear, and the physical senses of man? Alas! in a few brief years every vestige of Herod's kingdom was gone. Rome stood longer, but in spite of her unparalleled strength she too fell. And all these nineteen centuries, since the prophet's voice was heard, have been full of the noise of toppling thrones and the wreck of kingdoms, empires, dynasties. But how about that kingdom of the spirit of which Jesus spoke? Has it faded or failed? Not so! Steadily has it strengthened; century by century has its dominion widened; never was it so powerful, and never were its foundations so firm as to-day. Amidst a world of change it has proved the one enduring reality.

In vain the surge's angry shock,
In vain the drifting sands;

Unharm'd upon the Eternal Rock,
The Eternal Kingdom stands.

Truly, indeed, the things that are seen are temporal; the things that are not seen are eternal. Verily, the solid things are not those which we hear and see and taste and handle. The solid things are those of the soul. Religion builds upon what cannot be shaken because she builds upon what is deepest in the nature of man.

IV

And this, too, is why religion can supply man's deep and permanent needs as nothing else can. What are the deepest and most permanent needs of man as he journeys through the land of earth? Of course, he must have food to eat and water to drink by the way, and clothing and shelter to protect him from the cold. These are essential, for without these he dies. But these alone, and everything else on the plane with these, satisfy the wants of only the brute beast in him. Is he only a brute beast? Has he no wants other than the ox or the tiger? Ah, there is a higher side of his nature which has its needs as deep and imperative as those of his body. He was made to think, and feel, and hope, and love, and pray; to cherish truth, to obey reason, to champion right; to care for his fellow-men, to help every good cause; to abhor evil, to spurn wrong; to aspire after that which is above him, to walk joyfully and holily through the world, to keep his heart full of patience and trust to the end, and when the evening of his life's day comes,

Approach his grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of
his couch about him,
And lies down to pleasant dreams.

Where is he to get help to do all this?
Yet this need is quite as great as his

need for food or drink or shelter for his body. For what could compensate if he should feed the animal in him and let the angel starve? To be sure, in this world of so sore poverty and physical suffering, it is a great problem how to supply adequately the bodily needs of the poor. The importance of this should not be overlooked. And yet the larger, deeper, graver problem is how to supply the spiritual wants of both poor and rich. For, oh, how much ignorance, fear, sorrow, disappointment, pain, heart-break, despair, sin, lust, greed, cruelty, hate, misery and evil in ten thousand forms is to be seen all up and down the world, among rich and poor alike! And where is this spiritual want and misery to find relief?

When man is hungry with that hunger which is of the soul, and which physical bread only mocks; when he thirsts with a thirst which the things of sense cannot quench or touch; when he is tired, so that no bed can rest him, weary in mind and heart, tired of life itself; when hope fails; when strength is gone; when courage departs; when the currents of human friendship and love seem to freeze; when sorrow and disappointment fall upon him and break his heart; when bereavement and death stand coldly, bitterly, in his path and must be met; and saddest and most terrible of all, when temptations to evil roll over him like billows and sweep him under; and when sin, like a body of death, fastens itself on him, dragging him down, with resolves broken, desire baffled, will enfeebled, down, down—then where is help to be found? In what direction, in such deep needs as these, may we look for light or hope?

There is no direction but one; in all the world's ten thousand years of search for help in her experiences of mightiest need, no at all adequate resource but one has ever been discovered. What

is that? I need tell no one of you who has observed, no one of you who has read history, no one of you who has a human heart that that resource is religion—the personal experience of religion in the soul—the conscious, purposeful, earnest opening of the soul's doors to the incoming spirit of God, the power of God, the peace of God, the love of God, the life of God. The tides of life from above once set flowing through a man, then, but only then, there is hope for any human soul. And that is the reason why religion, particularly the religion of God's Fatherhood and unfailing Love to all His children, has been able to reach, quicken, ennoble, sanctify, transform, save men in every condition of life, as nothing else has ever done.

V

Let no one misunderstand me. There are other influences in this world besides religion that have elevating, ennobling, saving power. I would not undervalue or make light of these. Among the more important of such influences are doubtless education, homes, association with the good—and in their way, science, philosophy, laws, physical environment. All these should be employed and made the most of, and some of them are exceedingly important. And yet it is no disparagement to any of these to say that, as an agency for bringing hope to the despairing, comfort to the sad, courage to the faltering, succour to the tempted, strength to the weak, patience in trial, light in bereavement, calmness in the presence of death, and above all moral and spiritual regeneration to men dead in indifference and sin, none of them have a tithe of the power of Religion. As a practical reformatory influence in society, as a begetter of moral power, as an inspiration to men to live for the

highest things, religion has been, at least through all Christian history, is now, and probably always will be, without a rival, without the possibility of a rival—something alone, unique, incomparable, truly divine—divine because through it man consciously lays hold of a Strength higher than his own.

I trust that this makes clear what I mean by Religion as an Experience. Nor is Religion as an Experience something confined to any one class of persons, or to any age or time. It has come in the past, and is coming still, to untold millions, of all classes—to kings, to beggars; to the wise, to the simple; to the greatest minds of the race, like Socrates, Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, Milton, Cromwell, Gladstone, Lincoln, Ram Mohun Roy, Tagore, Gandhi; but none the less it comes to the lowly woman in her garret; to the sailor on the sea; to the prodigal son squandering his substance in riotous living in a far country; to the old man tottering above his grave; to the little child in its sorrow. And it waits to reveal itself to you and me, whenever our need is great, and human help fails.

VI

We none of us know much about our future. God kindly hangs a veil before our eyes. But this much we most surely know, the future of each of us will be full of deep heart-needs, which must be supplied from some source higher than ourselves. We shall all our lives have work to do that will not be easy—that will tend ever to sink into mere drudgery and slavery. What can prevent it? What can give us songs in our toil? Nothing so certainly—this is the testimony of the ages—nothing so certainly as the acceptance of our tasks as from God, to be done for Him not

only as a part of His plan of things, but in some true deep sense as under His eye, and in the light of His smile, if done well.

We shall all, a thousand times over in the years that are coming, be pressed hard by temptation—temptation to hold lightly to our integrity; to stoop somewhat below high honour; to suppress the truth when we ought bravely to speak it out; to vary from the line of strict honesty in business; to be selfish when we ought to be generous; to ask what is easy, or popular, or expedient, when we ought to think only of what is right; to yield weak and slavish obedience to our appetites or passions instead of keeping our lower natures in subjection to our higher. What can help us in these crisis times of life? What can give us strength to stand on our feet and be men—yielding obedience ever to conscience as our king? There is no such help as Religion. The soul that has once definitely committed itself to the religious life, that has opened itself to religion as an experience, that has learned to identify the voice of conscience with the voice of God, is armed against temptation in all its forms as no other can possibly be. Consciously in alliance with a Power higher than his own, by a subtle law that Higher Power flows into his life.

So, too, as we travel on across the years we must all expect to meet disappointments, discouragements, failures of plans, dashing to pieces cherished expectations; such is the human lot. How are we going to be able to bear up under these? The danger is that as a result of them we may lose hope, courage, incentive, interest in life. What can save us? Nothing can so effectually save us as a noble Religious Faith, which looks beyond seemings to realities, beyond temporal things to eternal, and sees that in the soul itself

lies all enduring good; so that even if riches take to themselves wings and fly away, and earthly prospects fail, and disappointments in matters of worldly interest or ambition come, the real ends of our existence are not affected; still, the soul, strong in the life of God and confident of an immortal destiny, rises serene above all these temporary clouds of earth, its hope undimmed, its courage undaunted.

Nor is anything less to be said as to the practical value of Religion in the sorrows and anxieties connected with that deepest mystery, death. It does not take a long experience in this world to teach us all that we are in a land whose green soil on every side breaks with startling ease into graves. The sunniest faces of to-day, to-morrow are wet with tears of sorrow for loved ones gone to return no more. And the end for ourselves, we know, is only just a little way on down the road.

What can help us in all this? Man in his experience on the earth has found no such help as the calm, strong faith in the soul that Wisdom and Goodness are at the heart of this universe—that we and all our loved ones for life and for death are in the hands of One who cannot do wrong and will not be unkind.

Thus it is that Religion as an Experience comes to us, not like to many others of earth's helpers, to offer us its aid in hours of sunshine, and when all goes well. Rather does it come to proffer its help most urgently and generously when other resources fail. Indeed, there is no time of deepest, sorest need in life, when it is not at hand for us if we will have it.

From the cradle to the grave,

It comes to save!

From the world's temptations,

From tribulations,

From that fierce anguish

Wherein we languish,
From that torpor deep

Wherein we lie asleep,
Heavy as death, cold as the grave,
It comes to save.

From doubt where all is double,

Where wise men are not strong,
Where comfort turns to trouble,

Where just men suffer wrong;
Where sorrow treads on joy,

Where sweet things soonest cloy,
Where faiths seem built on dust,

Where love seems half mistrust,
Hungry and barren and sharp as the
sea,

It comes to set us free.

Oh! where its voice doth come,
There all doubts are dumb,

There all words are mild,
All strifes are reconciled,
All pains beguiled.

There light doth bring no blindness,
Love no unkindness;

Knowledge no ruin,
Fear no undoing.

From the cradle to the grave
It comes to save.¹

How does it save? How, in these deep needs of life, does Religion as Experience come to set us free? In the only way possible. By teaching us, like little children in the darkness, to reach up and touch God's right hand in the darkness, and so be lifted up and strengthened. By letting us feel in all our times of deepest human need—in joy and sorrow, in sunshine and storm, in life and in death—that round about us and all whom we hold dear, are the everlasting Arms of Love and Care. By digging deeper, and filling more full, the Fountains of Life within our souls. By opening up anew the connection between our lives and the Infinite Life of God.

¹ Matthew Arnold (slightly altered.)

VIVEKANANDA

BY PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

To Young India hast thou shown
Paths of action new;
For modern Ind a Bhagirath,
Thou, guide to thought's free
stream !

Startled men and women of the World
At thy soulful call;—
How is it,—why is Hindu voice
Arresting mankind's ears?

Even yet does humanity need
Gifts from India's sons,—
This they could but clearly perceive
Through thy messages bold.

Of the modern world's manifold
Shortcomings to remove
Requisitioned are they by all
Quarters of the vast globe?

Lion's courage hadst thou at heart,
Tiger's fiery eyes;
With the same energy endowed
India will shape new worlds.

Didst thou understand Vedanta,
The *end* of Vedic lore?
Couldst thou explain and teach
all that?
I do not know this sure.

But the very source of life's Ved
Without doubt didst thou grasp;
With that Om has flown spirit fresh;
And, lo, Ind is reborn !

SANSKRIT HYMNS AND HINDU RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

BY SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA

I

Prayers, Psalms and Hymns are common in all religions. We find them to be a fundamental part of the religious literature of the world. Prayers and praise are the first means of spiritual growth everywhere. Then come meditation and reflection, reason and philosophy. So long as man is man, a finite being conscious of his limitations, he cannot but worship a Personal God, on whom he depends at every step in his life. Man feels himself weak and wants some one on whom he can depend for help. He wants something concrete which he can grasp in the hours of his trials and difficulties. Granted a Personal God, prayers and hymns are but the natural outcome of one's conception of that Personal God and one's relation with Him.

Though in Hinduism the culminating religious thought is the doctrine of oneness preached by the Vedânta, yet in the Vedas themselves we have also the idea of a Personal God, the Lower Brahman, and the idea of Bhakti, which is but yet in seed form. The Mantra portion of the Rig Veda is nothing but a collection of hymns. Very few can stand the full blaze of the Advaita Vedânta; for the first step in this is to be fearless. It is the religion of fearlessness. Weakness has to go. But since a greater part of mankind is weak, these Vedântic ideals have to be preached to them in concrete form in order that these ideals may become practical, that they may be brought from the philosophic heights of the learned to

the everyday life of the common man. This is exactly what the Purânas do. The ideal of Bhakti is fully worked out by them and illustrated by the lives of kings, saints and Incarnations.

The Hindu being pre-eminently spiritual, whatever ideal he took up in the field of religion he worked it out till it became infinite and all-embracing. As a result we have in the Purânas hymns, in which the same spirit which sang forth the glories of the Atman in the Vedas, is pouring forth in ecstatic song its love for God. In these hymns is revealed the mystic soul of the Hindu, sweet and devotional. It attains to high states of ecstasy through these songs and symbols. It knows no peace till it finds God and establishes the most intimate relationship with Him. He is its master, friend, father, mother—nay, the beloved. An intense passionate hunger for God is the chief note in all these hymns. The result is the creation of a devotional literature of exquisite beauty unsurpassed by any other religious literature of the world. We find these hymns or Stotras, as they are called in Sanskrit, not only in the Purânas but in the writings of all great reformers and saints. Even that great Advaita Kesari Achârya Sankara could not avoid the temptation, and we find in his writings some of the most beautiful hymns ever written in Sanskrit. Such hymns are found not only in Sanskrit but in the vernaculars also. The religious revival of the 12th century was a popular movement and though Râmânûja who gave a philosophic back-

ground to the revival wrote in Sanskrit, the other great saints and reformers of the period wrote in the language of the people. These hymns in Sanskrit and in the vernaculars have appealed to the race greatly and have thus attained a wide popularity. They play an important part in the religious life of the people.

II

The Stotras include praise, prayer and meditations; also sometimes Mantras, which are spiritual incantations said to produce certain desired ends when accompanied by appropriate rituals and ceremonials. Leaving aside these Mantras, the Stotras include petitions, laments and entreaties for deliverance from the ills of this Samsâra or relative existence from which God alone can deliver one. These hymns fall under two categories. In the one there is complete confidence in Divine benevolence and unlimited grace, on which even the greatest of sinners builds his hope for rescue. There is in these hymns a passionate disinterested love for God often ending in a mystic communion with Him. As for example :

रघुवर यदभूत् तदृशी वायस्य
प्रणत इति दयालुर्यच्च चैवस्य कृष्ण ।
प्रतिभवमपराधमुदसायुज्यदीप्-
वद किमपदमागस्तस्य तेऽस्ति क्षमायाः ॥

“As the best of the Raghus (Râma) when even that most heinous sinner the raven (who insulted Sita) was forgiven by Thee because it took refuge at Thy feet, and since as Krishna, Thou hast granted Moksha (liberation) full of Bliss even to the King of Chedi (Shishupâla) who had wronged Thee birth after birth, what sin is there which Thou wilt not forgive !”

The other group seems to fix some conditions for the granting of requests

and prayers. It makes the Divine grace conditional on self-purification which alone makes one deserving of such a grace. The hymns in this group are marked by a spirit of self-abasement, with confession of sins, repentance and promises of reform, as for example, in the following stanza where one chastises ones mind :

आशां विहाय परिहृत्य परस्व निंदां
पापे रतिं च सुनिवार्य मनश्चमाधी ।
आदाय हृत्कमलमध्यगतं परेशं
वाराणसीपुरपतिं भज विप्रनाथं ॥

“Having renounced all desire, having given up reviling others and attachment to sinful conduct, having directed the mind to Samâdhi and meditating on the Lord seated in the Lotus of the heart, worship Viswanâth, the Lord of Benares.”

The Stotras as a rule are written in simple language. Sometimes however they are written in conventional language, and embody elaborate symbolism. This makes it difficult for the ordinary man, not initiated into their esoteric meaning, to understand them. In this class can be put ‘Hymn to Devi,’ Brahmâ’s prayer to the Divine Mother in the Chandi and also “Hymn to Tripurâ-sundari” by Sankara where especially the references to wine etc., may be repugnant to one who is not initiated into the conception of the Devi and the rituals of her worship according to the Shakti cult. Another great difficulty in understanding these hymns, a difficulty which is more or less common to all the Stotras, is our lack of familiarity with our vast mythology and the incidents narrated and the epithets used therein, to which there are frequent references in these hymns. Behind these hymns is a philosophy which, though in the background,—for the fundamental note is devotional—

determines the language, imagery and even the ecstatic fervour of these hymns.

III

The hymns group themselves round the different aspects of Godhead in Hinduism. Chiefly these are Shiva and his consort Umâ, known also as Kâli, Durgâ, Tripurâ, etc., and Vishnu and his incarnations, Râma, Krishna and others. Besides these we have the philosophic and didactic hymns based on the teachings of the Upanishads.

Shiva is the God of destruction. He is Rudra, the terrible. As he represents the darker side of nature he is regarded as dwelling away from the haunts of man, in the mountains and forest retreats or the cremation grounds, wearing a garland of skulls and besmearing himself with ashes. But then man never likes to look at the darker side of life and so this terrible aspect of Shiva is mellowed down by degrees and he becomes in time a benignant God. He is easily appeased by prayers. Yet this darker side of his nature is not completely forgotten. He is the God of gods, powerful, generous to a fault, the Auspicious One. He is the great Yogi rapt in meditation, free from all desires, the emblem of purity and the conqueror of lust, the selfless one who drinks poison for the good of the world. He is the great Teacher of teachers, the grantor of knowledge and bliss, the Lord of Girijâ, and finally he is the supreme Being beyond all duality and thought. In one word, he represents the sublime aspect of God and all the hymns about Shiva deal with this aspect of Godhead.

Shiva's consort is Umâ. At first she is Haimavati, Pârvati, the daughter of the mountains. But in time she is regarded as the Goddess of Shakti or Power. She is the creative power, the

female principle, the Great Mother. The first idea connected with this Mother-worship is that of energy. या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्तिरूपेण संस्थिता। She is the power in all beings. मया सौमनसि यो विपश्यति यः प्राणिति यः ईं शणोत्युक्तम्। "He who eats food does so by me. He who breathes, sees and hears, does so by me." Again, अहं रुद्राय धनुरातनोमि—"I stretch the bow for Rudra (when he desires to destroy)." She is the Primal Energy whether in the form of evil or good. She is the power that makes us live and die, happy and miserable. She is everywhere and in everything. With the conception of Godhead as Mother, the one-sided view of God as the cause of everything good ceases and He becomes the God of good and evil, virtue and sin in one. का त्वं शुभे शिवकरे सुखदुःखहर्त्रे।—"Who art Thou O Blessed One, the doer of good, whose holy hands hold pleasure and pain." मृत्युच्छाया तव दया चमत्तच्च नातः—"The shade of death and immortality, both these, O Mother, are thy Grace!"

This aspect of Godhead makes the devotee love even the destructive and dark forces of nature, seeing God in them. Though the mother beats the child, it clings to her all the more, crying, mother, mother. The generality of mankind fly from all that is terrible. Even a great hero like Arjuna could not stand the vision of the Universal Form and we find him praying: "Having seen Thy immeasurable Form . . . the worlds are terrified and so am I . . . show me, O Lord, that Form of Thine . . . diademed, bearing a mace and discus; Thee I desire to see as before etc." The world worships ease and pleasure. There are very few indeed who love the terrible. But then the highest idea of freedom is beyond both. So we have to face evil as well. We must learn to love and worship God

them, it makes God indifferent to morality, at any rate, not essentially righteous, and there is, therefore, no connection between Bhakti and character. Rather a hasty and foolish criticism. These critics have not the patience to see that it is men of the type of Suka and Sri Chaitanya—Paramahamsas who have gone beyond the bondage of the senses—that teach this highest ideal of love. So, we have to be careful lest we trespass on grounds forbidden to us, ordinary mortals. It is beyond our intellectual comprehension. Only those who have drunk deep of the cup of love can understand it. As to 'perversion,' what religious ideal is there that has not been perverted by man to suit his own sensuous purpose!

IV

A characteristic feature of Hindu culture is its spirit of toleration. The whole history of India is but the working out of this one ideal, "Truth is one, sages call it variously." This has been again and again emphasized at different epochs of her history by sages like the Vedic Rishis, and incarnations like Sri Krishna. We are not to think that Shiva is superior to Vishnu or Devi to Shiva, but it is the same One by whatever name we may call Him. This ideal is often the theme of many a hymn.

यं शैवाः समुपासते शिव इति ब्रह्मेति वेदान्तिनी
बौद्धा बुद्ध इति प्रमाणपटवः कर्तेति नैयायिकाः ।
अर्हन्नित्यथ जैनशासनरताः कर्मेति मीमांसकाः
सीत्यं वी विदधातु वाञ्छितफलं त्रैलोक्यनाथो हरिः ॥

"He who is worshipped as Shiva by the Shaivas, as Brahman by the Vedāntins, as Buddha by the Buddhists, as Arhat by the Jains, as Karma by the Mimāmsakas,—may that Hari the Lord of the three worlds grant us our desires."

In some of these hymns there is a consciousness of the sense of sin and the need for forgiveness. In the "Hymn of Surrender to Hari" (*Harisharanāshṭakam*) by Sankara, we find this sentiment. The devotee trembles before the very memory of his sins and yet he has an intense faith in the Lord which he is not able to put in any earthly object or relation.

पूर्वं कृतानि दुरितानि मयातु यानि ।
श्रुत्वाऽखिलानि हृदयं परिकम्पते मे ॥

"The very memory of my past misconduct makes me tremble with fear."

नो सोदरो न जनको जननी न जाया
नैवात्मजी न च कुलं विपुलं बलं वा ।
सदृश्यते न किल कोऽपि सहायको मे
तस्मात्त्वमेव शरणं सम शंखपाणे ॥

"Neither brother, father, mother, wife nor son, neither pride of birth nor sufficient power have I, nor any one, do I find, who can help me; therefore, O Wielder of the Conch, I take refuge in Thee."

In some hymns there is an indication of trust in God based on the fundamental ethical qualities as in अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमगदस्याम् । etc.,—
"O Lord Vishnu, destroy my arrogance, curb the evil propensities of my mind, and bring to a cessation this mirage of sensual objects." Of a similar strain is the "Hymn to the Mother craving forgiveness" (*Devīaparādhakṣhamāpanastotram*) by Sankara where the element of trust in God strikes the key-note of the whole hymn. She is the Mother and the mother is never bad however wicked the son ; so he who worships the Mother is sure to be saved—"Whatever faults of omission I might have committed, forgive me, for a bad son may sometimes be born but a bad mother never."

A large number of hymns relate to devotion and praise merely. To this class belong hymns to *Tripurāśundarī*,

Annapurnā and *Shivapanchākshara-stotram* by Sankara. Hymns of the kind "Hymn to Shiva in names" (*Shivanāmāvalyashtakam*) are peculiar to Hinduism. They merely give the names and epithets of the deity which bring to the mind of the devotee various acts of heroism or grace performed by that deity. Hindu mythology which is so very rich supplies any number of such names and epithets for any deity, which, arranged in poetic setting, produce a great devotional attitude in the minds of the devotees who chant them. हे चन्द्रचूडमदनांतक शूलपाणे स्थायी गिरिश गिरिजेश महेश शंभो—“O Lord of the universe who hast the moon for Thy diadem, slayer of Cupid, wielder of the trident, the Immovable One, who resideth in Mount Kailas, the Lord of Girijā, the God of gods, the Auspicious One.”

In the last group, viz., the philosophic hymns, the Vedāntic maxims and ideals are preached through song and symbol. Most of this class are by Sankara whose chief work was to spread broadcast the Vedāntic ideals throughout the country and thus bring the race back to the pristine Upanishadic culture from which it had drifted under the Buddhistic influence. In the *Charpatapanjarikā-stotram* Sankara strikes the key-note of the Hindu culture, viz., renunciation. He brings to our minds with all the fervour of a man of realization the evanescent nature of everything to which we cling due to our ignorance. The same is depicted in the *Dwādashapanjarikā-stotram* also. मूढ जहौहि धनागमदशां कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि विदुषां—“O fool, give up the desire for wealth, be discriminative and cultivate dispassion in your mind.” साकुरु जनघनयौवनगर्वं हरति निमेषात्कालः सर्वम् “Do not boast of thy followings, wealth or youth, for the all-devouring time takes all these away in a trice.”

As already pointed out, synthesis of ideals is a characteristic of the Indian mind. In *Abhilāshāstakam* which occurs in *Brahmavaivarta Purāna* there is a synthesis of Jnāna and Bhakti. The Vignānin who is blessed with such a realization sees the Impersonal in the Personal, and *vice versa*. Such a distinction usually made by the ignorant between these two ideals is to him a meaningless one. We have the mystic union of the true philosopher and the true devotee represented in this hymn.

नो ते गोत्रं नापि जन्मापि नाख्या
नो वा रूपं नैव शीलं न देशः ।
इत्यभूतोऽपीश्वरस्त्वं विलोक्याः
सर्वान्कामान्पूरयेस्व ह्यजे त्वां ॥

“Thou hast neither ancestry, nor birth, nor name, neither hast Thou form nor virtue nor country. Being even thus, Thou art the Ruler of the three worlds and fulfillest all desires. Therefore do I worship Thee.”

In *Mahānirvāna Tantra* there is a “Hymn to Brahman” (*Brahmastotram*) which sings the glory of the Absolute in manifestation, the God transcending the universe of phenomena though immanent in it. The depth and accuracy of philosophic thought combined with the earnestness and simplicity of expression of prayer to be found in this hymn is hardly surpassed by others of its kind.

त्वमेकं शरण्यं त्वमेकं वरेण्यं
त्वमेकं जगत्कारणं विश्वरूपं ।
त्वमेकं जगत्कर्तृपादप्रहृतं
त्वमेकं परं निश्चलं निर्विकल्पम् ॥

“Thou alone art fit to be the refuge, Thou alone art the adorable; Thou art the one cause of the universe and Thou hast all forms; Thou alone art the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe; Thou alone art the Supreme, Immovable and Immutable.”

There is another beautiful hymn the *Parāpujā* in which we have a new note.

It talks of the impossibility of offering worship to the Supreme.

पूर्णस्यावाहनं कुत्र सर्वाधारस्य चासनम् ।
स्वच्छस्य पादमर्ध्यं च शुद्धस्याचमनं कुतः ॥

"What place is there in which to invoke the Infinite, or what can serve as a seat for Him who contains within Himself all existence? How can we offer Pâdyam (water for washing feet), or Arghyam (oblation of Durva grass, rice, etc.), to one who is pure Spirit or Achamanam (water for rinsing) to one who is eternally pure?"

प्रदक्षिणं ह्यनंतस्य हृदयस्य कुतो नतिः ।

"How is the making of Pradakshina possible to the Limitless, and obeisance to the One who is indeed without a second?"

What an absurdity, says the hymn, to indulge in this so-called worship. Blessed indeed is he who can perform this highest worship in which the individual is lost in the Absolute.

Finally comes the bold note of the Advaitic teaching. *Nirvânasatakam* or "The six stanzas on Nirvâna," and *Vijnânanaukâ* or "The boat of Knowledge," which belong to this class, reflect the spirit of oneness as taught by the author, the great Sankara. Brahman alone is real; the world has a phenomenal existence having its basis in Mâyâ or Nescience. The individual soul is in reality nothing but Brahman Itself.

यदज्ञानतो भाति विश्वं समस्तं विनष्टं च सद्यो यदात्मप्रबोधि ।
मनोवागतीतं विशुद्धं विमुक्तं परं ब्रह्म नित्यं तदेवाहमस्मि ॥

"That Atman through the ignorance of which appears this universe and the knowledge of which immediately destroys it all, which is beyond speech and mind, pure, free,—that supreme eternal Brahman am I."

In short, these Stotras or hymns are the simple and concrete expressions of the religious experience of the race.

A WORK AMONG THE DEPRESSED CLASSES

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Towards the end of the last century, Herbert Spencer, in his classical work on "Education," pointed out that education must be a training for a "complete living." The idea is not new; at least not new to those who are acquainted with the ancient Gurukula system of our Indo-Aryan Universities, such as Nalanda or Taxilla. A couple of years ago, I read Hiuen Tsang's description of the Nalanda University; and I thought that the problem of education was at that time well on its way

to a satisfactory solution. Since that time, we have been progressing; and our progress, as we are made to believe, has been phenomenally rapid during the last one hundred years. But I notice that in the matter of education there was at first a tendency to make it stiff and petrified; then to re-dissolve our notions and methods into something more labile and fluid. A vague conception arose, among educationists, whether they were not misjudging the scope and variety of the

functions of the human organism. It was discovered that under the scheme formulated and practised, they were tapping only a very small portion of human possibilities. And to-day, a sensible school of educationists have made their appearance, who believe that man is more than the chemists' conception of him—"a few bucketfuls of water, and a bag of salts." He is now known to possess a physical body subject to physical laws; a mental organization, subject to psychological laws; and there is even a suspicion that quite a considerable number of students may possess something, which science does not explain—a Soul, far transcending the other two. The intellectual component of the mind does not cause any anxiety. Its emotional and imaginative elements are somewhat disconcerting, as they cannot entirely be brought in tune with this age of reason. But the Soul is decidedly uncanny to conceive of, in this pre-eminently civilized century.

Nevertheless a "complete life" includes all these factors, however disturbing they might be to our settled notions of education. The ancient Universities of India obviously saw the existence of these occult faculties in man, long before Spencer wrote his famous thesis and Macaulay his famous minute. The purpose of education is not to create an army of graduates, whose mental horizon is not much wider than that of the city clerk in London. It is an extensive process involving the discovery and liberation of a multitude of faculties—a process of enlightenment, which enables man to realize his great place in the scheme of the Universe.

Judged from this standard—I do not know what other standard can be set—the ancient Gurukula system is far ahead of the mobile unsettled system

of the present day. Nalanda was a self-supporting University. It produced all that it wanted and sold its surplus products to the people around. The hand worked in conjunction with the brain. Religious, literary, artistic, scientific, philosophic, mechanical, agricultural and every other activity was embodied in its programme. This is far different from the book-learning of our schools and colleges, whose finished products—the graduates—are occasionally seen to limp in their shoes, not being able to take off the small nail that pricks on their heels.

It was therefore very refreshing to visit the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukula Vidyamandiram, situated on the outskirts of Trichur, Cochin State. I do not intend to go into all the details of its curriculum—what it is actually doing and what more it hopefully anticipates to do. The most striking fact about it, is the human touch that tells through every item of its work. Here, the children of the "suppressed classes" live and learn with the children of those who "suppress" them and learn to love one another and to live amicably as if that is the natural course of human lives. Indeed it would seem that the problem of castes and creeds, of the high and the low, could be solved very easily if the peace-making confederacies of Europe did not give us a lesson to the contrary. Of the 800 students who attend this Institution, 86 are actual boarders, and these comprise the depressed as well as the higher classes.

The ten acres of land, forming the grounds of this Vidyamandiram, form an undulating plain, framed in by leafy groves, and an imposing hill to the south-east. The school is easy of access by the public road. The grounds originally bare are spouting up with vegetation. Though sufficiently re-

especially characteristic of its spiritual degradation. It would be impossible to convince a democratic world, that there are certain human beings in Kerala, who are not allowed to come within the visual range of certain higher castes of individuals of the same human species! And yet they do exist. They not only exist, but are allowed, and actually forced to passively endure the iniquitous degradation of their human rights, imposed upon them by those who consider they have a divine sanction to enforce such practices. No wonder, therefore, that the pioneer work of the Gurukulam in the direction of the emancipation of the depressed classes in the country is looked on by the orthodox with so much disfavour. So that when Swami Tyageesana, makes any pathetic remark about a certain amount of definite opposition to his enterprise from the orthodox, he is merely repeating for public notice what is already known to exist in a very virulent form.

If I were to believe half of what I have been told, during the inquiries I have made, regarding the opposition from certain of the higher castes, the account is gruesome enough for serious thought. There are in that neighbourhood certain degenerate gentry—having nothing left but a remote ancestry to muse upon, neither wealth, nor literacy—who believe that they have a sacred prerogative to keep down these poor depressed plebeians, in the same condition to the end of time. They resent these people dressing in clean garments, or holding an umbrella over their heads against sun and rain. They taunt them and frighten them, when they see them washed and cleaned, and marked with the symbolism of a Namam in the shape of Vibhuti or sandal-wood paste. There have been quite an amount of aggressive behaviour, manifested by the

orthodox crowd, when the children of the school have occasionally led processions on holy days, in honour of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I believe it is the mixed procession they object to; for if they knew anything about the individuals in whose honour the processions are instituted, such an attitude is not reasonably explicable.

It is, however, more than probable, that a good deal of their chagrin is due to a definite inconvenience they feel in not being able to obtain as before little children of the depressed classes for indentured labour. The Pariahs and the Pulayas are perpetually in debt to the debased and fallen scions of the neighbourhood. A half-rupee borrowed, swells weekly by compound interest, and in a short time amounts to a sum, beyond the power of the poor debtor to clear at short notice. In lieu of money the Pariah parent sends one of his small boys or girls to work for the creditor, till such time as the latter may take into his head to consider that his debts have been cleared by the amount of work done. Of course, such an exchange of human beings for money, amounting practically to frank slavery, is not allowed to exist in the State. Nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge the practice prevails, though the transaction is kept sufficiently secret as not to float up into public notice. The continuous suppression of the depressed classes, sometimes, is obviously a proposition of cheap labour, though clothed in the sanctimonious hypocrisy of traditional and religious sanction.

The staff works on a system of "National Education under a new scheme." Rather, I would say, they are making an effort to re-establish the fundamental principles of the ancient Gurukula system of the Indo-Aryan Universities. Both the school and the

Residential Gurukulam are free to the students. There are 300 pupils both boys and girls, 172 of whom are Untouchables and Unapproachables. In the Residential Quarters are 34 boarders under the supervision of ten teachers, who practically give their services gratis and live the simple life of the Institution.

The following is a summary of the nature and scope of the Vidya-mandiram :

I. *Departments.* (a) Free Lower Secondary School.

(b) Free Residential Gurukulam.

(c) *General Methods*—Practical Training in domestic activities, and the fostering of national life. Instruction in four languages—Malayalam, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. National music and indigenous games and dancing—Folk Song.

II. *Health Department.* (a) Free medical aid, Ayurvedic and Allopathic. Average attendance over 50 per day.

(b) *Hygiene and Sanitation.* Well and tank open to all Untouchables and Unapproachables. Free cleaning of public tanks etc., undertaken.

III. *Agricultural.* Supplying all the vegetables for daily consumption and providing practical facilities for the introduction of new ideas in methods on scientific lines.

IV. *Industrial and Agricultural.* Spinning, weaving, bee-keeping, carving, minor carpentry and masonry, leaf-works needlework, laundry, shaving, thatching, fencing, cooking, etc.

V. *Commercial.* Book-stores and provision-stores to provide good articles at cheap rates and to train boys in business methods and co-operative principles and typewriting.

VI. *Spiritual and Moral.* (a) Daily Sandhya, Surya Namaskaram and Bhajanas in the School Shrine. Daily half an hour's instruction through stories and biographies of eminent men,

occasional poor-feeding and providing opportunities for service.

(b) Training, etc., in self-government and self-discipline.

A casual observer, accustomed to the official methods of education may possibly wonder whether the training of youth involves such a complicated process : Westernized educationists may even have a fling at the idea of the students indulging in folk-song instead of dancing to the well-known tune of "Humpty, Dumpty, sat on a wall etc.;" nevertheless, the idea is growing rapidly that the East has a place in Art, and its Symbolism cannot well be replaced by any other artistic conception.

The great difficulty for such educationists, however, will be to reconcile the idea of the teachers and the taught, living and growing side by side without any of the snobbishness of aristocracy. The spiritual and moral training, not taught textually from Smiles' *Character and Self-help*, but lived actually, will be another puzzle for them to comprehend. But, as the saying is, "Knowledge comes but Wisdom lingers," and it will be some time before the uninspiring method of official education sublimates into the nicety of cultural education.

Lastly comes the tragic cry that has always been heard in all undertakings that have morally rebelled against the "ethics of convenience" of the hard-headed generation of any time—"Permanent funds—Nil!" During the last five and odd years of its existence the Institution has been left to flourish on the nutriment of its own virtuous principles. It appears that the reason why no local contributions are possible, is that "the well-to-do gentlemen are too orthodox to appreciate the work of elevation of the depressed classes." Possibly there is some truth in this observation. But the greater reason,

as it strikes me, is that the well-to-do gentlemen are rather apathetic in the matter of education. We have no doubt, however, that all obstacles that will

come in the way of the growth and development of this novel Institution will be easily overcome and that it has got a distinct mission to fulfil.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

BY SISTER DEVAMATA

PARALLELS IN METHOD AND MISSION

St. Francis was born in 1182, Sri Ramakrishna in 1836. Over six centuries divided them; seas and continents lay between them; a different racial genius produced them; divergent civilizations shaped their lives; time, circumstance, environment, training, all tended to differentiate them and hold them apart; yet despite all these disjoining influences a fundamental unity in thought and feeling, method and mission, exists between them. Only a small mind would seek to measure their relative power. Human measures do not reach so far, human values fall back abashed. A Divine fire flamed within Sri Ramakrishna; it burned also in the heart of St. Francis. Had Francis been born in India instead of in Italy, he would have been acclaimed an Incarnation. No being ever embodied more perfectly in both life and character the Christ-spirit or the Christ-Ideal than did Francis. The stigmata* set their seal on his Christhood. It was because he came in a religion that accepted one Saviour only that he was made a saint. Vedic teaching sets no limit to the number of Saviours. It proclaims that whenever spirituality

weakens and materialism grows dominant, Deity takes human form to restore the religious consciousness of that time and place. It would have admitted Francis without question.

All Great Teachers are alike in the manner in which they carry out their mission. Reformers are more often destructive in their method, but Saviours of men are always constructive. Christ said: "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil," and His words apply quite as aptly to the course taken by Sri Ramakrishna and by St. Francis. Neither Teacher destroyed anything. Both readjusted and transformed. They built the new within the old and out of it. Very different is this method from that employed in the Reformation. Luther tore down and rebuilt on a new foundation. I do not believe that he meant to be so drastic as he was; he was driven to it by the logic of his own arguments and position. But having been destructive in the beginning, even his reconstruction gives one a sense of loss. Something is gone out of the new structure.

A commentary on the results of his method was spoken at his own hearth-side. It is told that his wife said to him one day: "Martin, why is it that when we were in the cloister our prayers were so fervent, now they seem so cold?" It was not because prayers

*The Christ-wounds in hands and feet received by St. Francis at the close of his life.

reach the Lord more readily from a cloister than from a home. It was because Luther had struck out of his scheme of religion a vital element,—renunciation, the renunciation which means complete self-abandonment. Also he glorified ethics at the cost of spirituality. Virtue is vital, but it is only a preparatory step to spiritual attainment.

Not alone in their method are all Great Teachers akin. Their approach to their public mission is also strongly resemblant. Buddha, after long search, fought out his battle under the Bo tree on that night when Mara, the tempter, strove to overthrow him. Jesus went to the wilderness and was tempted of the devil. Francis anguished before the crucifix in the crumbling church of St. Damian outside the walls of Assisi. Sri Ramakrishna agonized under the banyan tree in the temple garden of Dakshineswar. They all waged war with the forces of the world before they set out to help it.

Sri Ramakrishna's struggle was long and unremitting. He strove, not for himself, but for mankind. One by one he met in his own nature as the battlefield all the obstructions which stand between men and ultimate attainment. He made himself the scavenger of a scavenger and cleaned the out-house of a Pariah until pride was gone. He sat by the Ganges-side with earth in one hand and gold in the other, reasoning as to their relative value, until both seemed alike and greed was gone. He wept and prayed and called aloud on the Mother of the Universe until lust was gone. Then the vision came—but not the end of struggle. He had been shown the living reality of Deity. It remained still for him to gain the assurance of the oneness of all faiths and of all men. He followed the spiritual practices of different religions, he sat

at the feet of many teachers, he worshipped before altars of divers faiths, until all expressions of thought and feeling met in an undifferentiated unity. Oneness of God, oneness of creeds, oneness of humanity—he had realized all three. The battle was over.

The struggle of St. Francis was less intensive, less defined. It followed a shattering illness. One day he was a rollicking youth singing through the streets of Assisi, on a morrow not far distant he was walking through the same streets leaning feebly on a cane. He could not return to his old life; it sickened him. His former companions wearied him. He would stand at the *Porta Nuova*, the city gate nearest his home, and look out over the lovely Umbrian plain below with anguished yearning in his heart,—yearning for what? He knew not. One evening as he was riding through the olive groves in the valley, he came suddenly upon a leper. He reined in his horse and turned quickly away; then, ashamed, he came back, dismounted, stooped and kissed the Leper's hand, emptying his purse into it. It was his first victory. After that he went often to the lazaretto and washed the festering sores of the lepers; he found companionship with the poor; he spent long hours in a solitary cave outside the city walls or in the deserted church of St. Damian. He prayed there alone—to the great crucifix over the altar; and one day it took life, bent down and blessed him. That was his anointing. He needed no other.

His battle, however, was not fought out. His father overwhelmed him with reproaches for bringing ridicule on the family by his foolish behaviour and demanded before a tribunal that his son return to him all the money he had expended on him. Francis replied by stripping himself of the costly garments which he still wore and giving them

back to his father, while he stood naked in the public square. The bishop threw his mantle over him and the bishop's gardener gave him a shirt. Not long after he clothed himself in a single garment of coarse gray sacking and the Order of St. Francis was founded.

Francis was never formally consecrated a monk. He was never ordained a priest. He could not say mass or perform any of the rites of the Church. He was only a preacher, but a preacher of such power that hundreds on hundreds, hearing him, were swept from the world into the cloister. His sermons were not extraordinary. They were not eloquent. They were not learned. They were simple child-like appeals to give all to God without stint or condition. It was the man who carried, not his words. Francis had no learning and very little schooling. He could read and write, but he wrote poorly, as his existing autograph testifies. He set no value on learning and tried to exclude it from the Order, regarding it as a pitfall leading to vanity, pride, ambition, and rigidity of thought.

Sri Ramakrishna held the same attitude toward it. He cared nothing for the noisy discussions of scholars, and laughed at those who were vain of their learning. He had every opportunity to study. His brother was head of a Sanskrit college in Calcutta; but when still a young boy he had closed his books and refused to know more of the thoughts of men until he had mastered the thoughts of God. From that moment first place was given always to God-thought; human thought was of small importance to him. There could be no rivalry between them. Once a gentleman brought him a costly shawl. Pleased with its beauty, Sri Ramakrishna wrapped it round him, but when later he sat down to meditate in

it, his nephew reminded him that it had cost a great deal of money and he should be very careful of it. Sri Ramakrishna took the shawl, burned off a corner of it, threw it on the ground and stamped on it. "Now it will not turn my mind away from God," he exclaimed.

An incident—not analogous, but similar in spirit, is related of St. Francis. When schisms and rebellions in the Order had wounded his heart to the core, when the sight of his eyes was nearly gone, when his frail body was well-nigh breaking under the stress of travel, he climbed the steep rocky slopes to the hermitage of Alverna to seek out his first disciple, Brother Bernardo. But Bernardo was rapt in God-communion and did not hear him call. Francis called again and again; still Bernardo did not hear. Francis was turning away when a voice said to him: "Brother Bernardo's mind is fixed on God. Would you have him turn it from God to God's creature?" St. Francis threw himself on the ground and wept with shame that he had tried to put himself in rivalry with God.

St. Francis did penance with passionate ardour and inflicted relentless punishments on himself; but the shadow of repentance could not darken his mind or heart for long. His habitual mood was that of a brave knight taking gaily the chances of the road. He had been a soldier for a brief while and knew how to meet the fortunes of war. A sad countenance was an offence against the Rule of the Order. The Brothers were expected to turn a smiling face to God and to men. One of the names that St. Francis gave to the Brothers of his Order was "Jesters of the Lord." They must make the Lord glad by their gaiety, not weary Him with whining and lament. Sri Ramakrishna also gave no place to gloom in his creed. He declared he would have

nothing to do with a religion that had not a laugh in it. He would tell his disciples, if they came to him with a clouded face, to go apart and remain alone until the shadow had lifted. "We are children of the all-blissful Mother of the Universe; we must be blissful," he would say.

The joyousness which Sri Ramakrishna taught and which St. Francis required of his followers, was not a fair

weather joyousness. It was a joyousness that persisted amid revilings, persecutions, blows even. St. Francis defined it thus to a Brother as he journeyed bare-footed and ill-covered through storm and chill winds: "When we return, if the Brothers should forbid us entrance, if they should roll us on the ground or trample on us, if they should beat us, and yet we can rejoice—that is the joy of the Lord."

HINDU SOCIETY, PAST AND PRESENT—I

BY PRAMATHA NATH BOSE, B.Sc. (London)

I

I have stepped into my seventy-eighth year. So I can carry my memory back to the early sixties of the last century, and an account of the changes which our society has undergone since then may not be without interest to the general reader. One striking feature which characterized it until about the close of the last century was the prevalence of goodwill among all classes. There were untouchables, but there was no ill-feeling between them and the higher castes. In fact, the communal problem did not exist. Even Mahomedans were treated as if they belonged to our society, and the term 'Hindu' might not inappropriately be used then in its original etymological sense of 'Indian.' I used to call a Mahomedan servant of ours uncle. The Moslems shared the joys of the festivals of the Hindus, and the latter took a prominent part in the Moharrum. The Hindus and Mahomedans vied with one another in paying homage to ascetic saints irrespective of their caste or creed. The Mahomedan Fakirs and

Hindu Sâdhns served as common bonds of the two communities. Our ceremonial observances and entertainments were so ordered as to benefit all sections of the community. The Brahmans no doubt had precedence over the other castes and got the lion's share of the gifts. But Brahman or Sudra or even Mahomedan, each had a prescriptive right to any entertainment that might take place in his neighbourhood. Whatever be the occasion, whether it be a wedding, or a Pujá, or a Srâddha, all ranks of the community from the highest to the lowest, from the richest to the poorest had their share in it almost as a matter of right. Guests came in by the hundred, and they all had to be attended to according to their social status. In regard to amusements they were open to the public. The most popular form of amusement in Bengal was the Yátrá, or popular dramatic performance. The entire expense of the Yátrá was borne by the party in whose house it was held. Sometimes also it was got up by subscription. But, in either case, it was open to the public. Selfish-

ness in its worst forms is seen in the struggles for the acquisition of wealth. The caste system, joint family, and simple living minimized these struggles and inhibited selfishness. No institution analogous to the workhouse of England, and no law like the Poor Law of that country has ever been needed in India. Except during famines private charity has always been sufficient to relieve local distress.

II

The well-to-do Hindu generally spent but little upon his own luxuries and those of his family. The greater portion of his savings was spent upon such works of public utility as temples, tanks and rest-houses. As head of the joint family he lived and earned as much for himself and his own family (in the restricted Western sense) as for others, more distantly or scarcely related to him. It is the simple life which made all this possible. The farther I carry my memory back the simpler it becomes until in the late fifties and early sixties of the last century it perilously touches the line which would be dubbed as barbarian by Westerners and Westernized Indians (Neo-Indians). In the village where I was born experienced women of one of the lowest castes (Hádi) helped mothers to launch their babies into existence. There were no trained lady doctors, or, in fact, allopathists of any description. There was a Kaviraj, but his visits to our house were few and far between. We were usually treated by elderly ladies who possessed a wonderful stock of simples for all sorts of ailments. They were not nonplussed even by accidents which nowadays would give rise to a mortal dread of imminent septicæmia. The truth is, we had the five best physicians—sunshine, air, water, exercise and wholesome diet. As infants we were

anointed with mustard oil and exposed bare-bodied to the sun. Then, when we grew up we had plenty of exercise in the fresh air unencumbered by sartorial and leathern impedimenta, such appendages as socks, vests, etc., were quite unknown. During winter we used to go about protected by no warmer garment than a *Dolái* (made of thick chintz). It was only during Durgâ Pujá, that we had a pair of shoes, a good Dhoti and Chadar with which we made a brave show on festive occasions. In regard to outdoor games, football, cricket, hockey, etc., had not yet been introduced. The commonest games which afforded us good exercise as well as amusement were Dandaguli and Hededudu. The former is a kind of inexpensive bat and ball game with a large stick as bat and a small piece of wood for a ball. It has now gone out of fashion, but Hededudu has survived, though its popularity is eclipsed by that of football. Kite-flying during the season afforded us great amusement, and kite-flying matches in which huge kites were used attracted large crowds of spectators as football matches do nowadays. Another source of amusement combined with healthy exercise was bathing and swimming in river or tank.

Our food was a deal more wholesome and nutritious than what obtains among Bhadrals at the present day. Adulteration was unheard of. Tea, bread, biscuit and tinned and bottled food were unknown, at least in villages. Our light refreshments consisted of gram soaked in water, Muri (inflated rice), Chirá (beaten rice), kernel of cocoanut, Chháná (or Sandesh), fresh fruits, etc. There was a plentiful supply of fresh fish from the river or tank, and of fruits and vegetables usually from our own orchards and kitchen gardens.

The ladies, though mostly illiterate, were by no means so ignorant as they are often supposed to have been. I have already alluded to the admirable stock of knowledge they possessed about inexpensive, easily available, efficacious indigenous remedies for diseases. Their gastronomic knowledge was no less wonderful. They were the repositories of highly useful information about the various articles of our dietary and the way in which they could be economically utilized, and were experts in the preparation of various delectable sweets, condiments and other comestibles. The cooking was done by them. The kitchen was a model of cleanliness, and the food turned out was pure and toothsome. Besides useful information pertaining to household duties, the elderly ladies were well versed in the legends of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, gathered, I believe, mainly from Kathakas, and the performances of Yâtrâ and Pâñchâli; and their high ideal of self-sacrificing duty was especially in evidence in their treatment of guests, and the way in which they helped their neighbours in case of illness and in various social functions. They had plenty of physical exercise in doing their household duties. Besides, they not only walked to houses in the neighbourhood, but also, if invited, from one part of the village to another. In the evening, they mingled with the crowd that gathered at the Thakurbari for the Arati.

III

I have a vivid recollection of the joyful life we led in the village. There was malaria, but not of the fulminant type which has committed dire havoc within the last four decades and converted it into a howling jungle. We were not at all scared by it. When we

had fever we were put out in the sun covered with a thick quilt to induce perspiration. Quinine was unknown. The only thing I remember taking by way of febrifuge was the juice of the leaves of *Shefalika* (*Nyctanthus arbor-tritis*). The truth is, there was no railway at the time with its high embankment pressed by the weight of running trains into an impervious wall and bordered by pestilential pools. And our roads had no embankments and were practicable only for bullock carts, the well-to-do using palanquins. There was free drainage from the village into the paddy fields whence superfluous water was carried by Khals into the river. Besides free drainage, we had, as I have shown above, the inestimable advantage of pure, wholesome, nutritious food and of air-bath and sun-bath. Thus we gained in vitality which stood us in good stead in case of fever and other ailments. In fact, such health as I am now enjoying in my old age bordering upon eighty is, I think, largely attributable to it.

The people enjoyed much better health than at present, and it was one of the most important predisposing causes of the goodwill which, as we have seen above, prevailed among them from the highest to the lowest. Towns like Hooghly, Bandel, Chinsura, Baraset, Krishnanagar, and Burdwan which are now hotbeds of virulent malaria, were until about the late sixties of the last century considered to be healthy, and some of them were regarded as sanitarium. Hooghly and Bandel were considered as healthy suburban retreats by the Europeans in Bengal. In the beginning of the last century there was a college at Baraset for cadets on their first arrival from England, which would not have been the case if it had been as intensely malarious as it has been for some time

past. Vensittart had a country residence there. In regard to Krishnanagar, the Census Report of 1901 observes, that "it was once famous as a health resort, and it is said that Warren Hastings had a country house at Krishnanagar." As regards Burdwan, the *District Gazetteer* observes, that "before 1862, the district was noted for its healthiness, and the town of Burdwan particularly was regarded as a sanitarium. In fact it was customary for persons suffering from chronic malarial fever to come to Burdwan where cures from the disease were common." Dr. A. J. Payne in a report on the Burdwan Division submitted in 1871 remarks that "a fatal fever has of late years become epidemic, with seasonal outbreaks of extreme severity over a large tract of country which includes districts formerly among the healthiest in the province." "In regard to the history of Bengal malaria," says Dr. Beſtley in his *Report on Malaria in Bengal*, "and the question as to whether there has or has not been an increase of the disease in comparatively recent times, an examination of existing records seems to afford overwhelming proof that many areas now suffering intensely from malaria enjoyed a relative immunity some 50 to 60 years ago. Recent investigation has shewn also, that in certain localities a rapid increase of infection has occurred within the course of the last ten years."

IV

Hinduism has never been wedded to such dogmatic views about religion as to make any departure therefrom punishable as heresy. Views were fearlessly expressed long before the Christian era regarding the genesis and destiny of man and the universe for the like of which in Christian Europe and in com-

paratively recent times thousands of heretics were mercilessly burnt and imprisoned. Bruno was made a martyr and Galileo died an ignominious death. The Catholicism of Hinduism is unparalleled. There is hardly any form of faith from monotheism and pantheism to idolatry and fetishism which it does not embrace within its hospitable fold. But Hinduism has been as intolerant of social non-conformity as it has been tolerant of religious heresy. So long as a Hindu conforms to the customs and practices of his society, he may believe or not believe what he likes. The restraint imposed by them has been greatly relaxed among the Neo-Indians by the influence of the Western contact. I remember how in the sixties of the last century my fellow-students and myself had to indulge in our taste for the biped forbidden in our society at the house of a Mahomedan friend. Now it is openly partaken of in many orthodox families at least by their male members. At the table of the late Raja Digambar Mitra, the Mahomedan, the Christian and the England-returned Hindu were equally welcome. Ramgopal Ghose also abrogated caste as regards food. Yet they both celebrated the Durgâ Pujâ. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitra used to dine with the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governor and other high officials. Yet, in regard to many ceremonial observances he was a Hindu. The late Justice Sarada Charan Mitra was a pillar of Hindu Society. On one occasion I happened to go to a place where he was staying, and he asked me to have my midday meal with him and he made me sit by his side though I had been to England and did not do any penance on my return. The marriage of a daughter of mine with a barrister-at-law was performed under his guidance without the presence of *Salagrama* which he did

not consider at all essential. The ban against voyage to Europe and America has now been removed. The Sixth National Social Conference carried a resolution to the effect, "that neither distant sea-voyages nor residence in foreign countries should by themselves involve loss of caste," and a proposal to make this conditional upon the non-violation of caste rules was rejected by a large majority.

It should be noted that the relaxation of the restraints of caste has done a good deal of harm also. The Indo-Aryans of the Rigvedic period were very fond of a fermented beverage prepared with the juice of the Soma plant, so much so that the plant was worshipped as a deity, and one entire Mandala of the Rigveda is dedicated to it. The Vedic Aryans were not satisfied with the comparatively mild Soma beverage. They would also appear to have been addicted to stronger drinks (*Sura*). The evil consequences, however, of indulgence in intoxicating drinks gradually made themselves felt in Hindu society. They were strongly condemned by Gautama the Buddha, and Manu included the drinking of spirituous liquors among the *Mahápátakas* (the most heinous sins). The great body of the higher caste Hindus have long held the drinking of spirituous liquors in abhorrence, and it is indulged in chiefly by the lower classes. But even amongst these, abstinence from drink is a test of respectability, and it is an essential part of the creed of such sects as the Kabirpanthis, the Satnamis, etc.

V

In the earlier days of English education, good many of its recipients considered it a point of enlightenment and progress not only to violate caste-rules in regard to food, but also in regard to

drink. Happily, that idea no longer exists, but it is unquestionable, that the influence of Western civilization has spread the obnoxious habit of drinking spirituous liquors among classes who were strangers to it before, to the serious detriment of their health. The relaxation of caste-rules about food has also been injurious to a great extent. On revisiting my native village about sixteen years ago, I was struck by the advance it had made in "Civilization," though it was being depopulated by malaria. One of the things that proclaimed it, was a refreshment room with a prominent signboard declaring that tea, chops, cutlets, etc., were available there. A resident friend who accompanied me said that our villages had been making remarkable "progress," that I would get any quantity of these "Civilized" viands, but I would have to search the bazar closely for such a primitive comestible as Muri (inflated rice). These chops and cutlets, like the famous sausages of the West, are prepared out of nobody knows what sort of meat and cooked with nobody knows what sort of ingredient. The supersession of such articles as gram, Muri, Chira, Cocoanut kernel, Chhana, etc., by bread, biscuits, pastry, chops, cutlets, etc., has been a change decidedly for the worse, at least for the great majority of our middle-class gentry. The former are quite as palatable as the latter, quite as nutritious, and have the additional advantages of not lending themselves to adulteration and of being better suited to our economic condition. To be wholesome chops, cutlets, pastry, etc., would be far too expensive for the great majority of our people. Even in railway refreshment rooms where the charges are very high, the meals supplied are not unoften far from wholesome. I have but little doubt, that they would be positively dangerous in

the cheap refreshment rooms where the charges are much lower. Their mischievous character is deepened by the encouragement they give to the pernicious habit of tea-drinking. It is doing incalculable harm, especially as Indian tea is generally strong and its mode of preparation is such as to extract all its strength. Dyspepsia is the root cause of many ailments, and I am fully persuaded that in many cases one of its main causes is the habit of drinking strong tea. In England the popularization of tea has done some good, as there it serves as a counter-attraction to the much more baneful alcohol. In this country it is taking the place of the innocent water and Sarbat.

The loosening of the bonds of caste has done harm in another way. The daily devotional practices which the orthodox Hindu has to go through

produce a tranquil frame of mind favourable for digestion and sleep. Whatever their esoteric significance might be, their hygienic significance is unquestionable. The Prânâyâma especially is a practice of immense value to health. Through the influence of the modern civilization of the West, on the one hand, these practices are falling into desuetude, and with them the frame of mind beneficial to health they promoted, and, on the other hand, emotions and impulses such as selfishness, greed, jealousy and worry are gaining strength to an extent which is inimical to mental harmony and therefore to health.*

*The writer has dealt with this subject in some detail in his work—*Survival of Hindu Civilization*, pp. 2, *Physical Degeneration, its Causes and Remedies*.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST

BY MELVIN J. VINCENT

Doctor Will Durant has stated in his splendidly conceived philosophical treatise, *Mansions of Philosophy*, "Human conduct and belief to-day are undergoing transformations profounder and more disturbing than any since the appearance of wealth and philosophy put an end to the traditional religion of the Greeks." Indeed, never before in the history of Western civilization have we been confronted with so many doubts as to the meaning of life. Our possession of immense wealth, unparalleled, has failed to bring us the happiness and harmony that we had so earnestly hoped for. We have seen it fail to quench our mighty thirst for that richer life,

that life which Goethe has so well indicated in the lines which describe Faust's examination of the yearnings of the human soul :

"When it would seem the sun must
sink at length,

A new urge fills me with new
strength.

I hurry on to drink its eternal light,
Before me the day, behind me the
night,

Heaven above me, the flowing waves
below;

A lovely dream while softly fades the
sun !

Yet we are born with that desire
Which drives us up and onwards to
aspire

As o'er us, lost in space of azure sky,
Warbling its song, the lark must fly."

Like the immortal Faust, we too, have embraced these dark periods of despair, and have turned our thoughts to those things which aid us in our attempted god-like flights. At these moments, we look once more to those mothers of spiritual comfort, philosophy and religion, to give us wings with which to soar. For with these grand wings, men in the past have taken those magnificent flights which have led them from the regions of despair to those which have offered refuge and solace. In the downy comfort of those wings, they have found peace and harmony. Our great need, then, is for a religion and a philosophy which will equip us with these wings to carry us to those regions wherein love and peace dwell; to transport us from a world frantic with despair at the collapse of its materialistic culture.

The East, long despised by Western culture, has perhaps smilingly, but somewhat sadly, noted our lack of harmony and contentment. And yet, that same East, like a benign Mother, who silently awaits the return of the Prodigal to her embrace, has sat peacefully, holding in her bosom, a Philosophy of contentment. I refer, of course, to the sublimely ancient Vedanta philosophy, of which Schopenhauer said: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life. It will be the solace of my death." And Max Müller confirmed this by declaring: "If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for a happy death, I know no better preparation for it than the Vedanta philosophy."

But he might well have told that no better preparation for a happy life had ever been evolved.

Vedanta philosophy had its origin thousands of years ago in Mother India; and because of it, India has had a spiritual freedom unparalleled in our Western world. Too little do we realize what this freedom with its spiritual values means. We have strayed too far from the teachings of Christ, who knew and practically demonstrated that same freedom. When we compare the significance of the thought of Christ with that of the Vedanta, we find the relationship peculiarly identical. All men are brothers. Since Divinity is resident in every man, the greater the love bestowed upon every man, be he white, brown, or black, the nearer we are to God. Such was the teaching of Christ; such was the teaching of the Upanishads. Nobody can truly love man, and nobody can aid his fellow-man, unless he loves the God in that man. True brotherly love and affection rest upon that foundation.

A daily prayer said by millions in India is: "As different streams, having different sources and with wanderings crooked or straight, all reach the sea, so Lord, the different paths which men take, guided by their different tendencies, all lead to Thee." There is no higher expression of united religion and philosophy than this. And this is the message which Christ brought. And it is the message we have lost. But it is the message which India has been preserving these many years. She cherishes it. But she is ready to extend it to you again. It is yours for the asking. No conversions are required. Resurrection of its meaning is all that is needed. How beautifully the Gita has expressed the

message of all religions in the following :

“Occupy Thy mind with Me,
Be devoted to Me,
Sacrifice to Me, Bow down to Me,
Thou shalt reach Myself
Truly do I promise unto Thee
For thou art dear to Me.”

And to-day the Ramakrishna Mission, founded in the last years of the 19th century by Swami Vivekananda in memory of his beloved teacher Sri Ramakrishna, is attempting to bring this message to you. For

with it comes more complete harmony and co-operation among the diverse religions of the world; it is a message of reconciliation through the freeing of reason. Through it, the Mission hopes to carry abroad the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna whose hopes led to a burning desire to see man's faith in man established through man's faith in unity with God. Its monasteries are to-day busily engaged in carrying out his desires. They are sending out their monks to carry the message of unity to the world.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM IN INDIA

BY S. N. SANYAL

The dawn of the nineteenth century saw the development of mechanical power, concentration of industry, and the rise of a new society. The Manor and the Guild were dissolved, power passed into the hands of the captains of industry, who became the rulers of the day; and the slavery of man thus assumed a new garb. Proudhon and Lassolle and last of all Karl Marx perceived that the real curse was economic exploitation and social injustice and suggested collectivism as the sovereign remedy. Marx expounded the theory of class-war and demanded the transference of power to the workers. What he aimed at was “State Socialism.” Another set of thinkers, perhaps more radical than Marx found that the evil lay in the Marx church and other institutions, of and among them the State was the greatest enemy of man. Led by Bakunin and Kropotkin they suggested the abolition of the State itself. They believe that in ‘force’ lies the cause of evil; so they

contend the sovereignty of the State which is based upon force.

The question for India to decide is how far we can adopt the principles and methods of European socialism. To deny the impact of European ideals is to shut our eyes to facts. But the point is what place it should have in the Indian scheme of life. A short study of the climatic influence and the socio-economic structure will reveal to us the future of Indian society. Tropical heat benumbs human energy, reduces intellectual powers and inventiveness and renders us slothful, easy-going and irresolute. The individual in India is not assertive, nor is he born under the influence of Bentham and Mill. To us collectivism is a necessity of nature for our physical existence. For, weak individuals by combination alone can live in these days of strenuous competition.

In the organization of caste and joint family we find the spirit of co-operative

action. Whatsoever invectives may be hurled against them, they show that the Indian mind needs social solidarity as the bed-rock of its institutions, more than individual self-interest. Even after the march of time when conquests have succeeded conquests, races intermingled with races and various cultures influenced us, we find India is a living country. Unlike the Greek and the Roman our nation still begets a Tagore and a Gandhi. It is possible because caste preserves the purity of ideal and has an extraordinary power of organization and self-direction. Similarly, joint family and craft-guilds have been the sources of energy, power, and social cohesion which moulded and guided the life of the individual. It created and maintained the sense of organic unity which is lacking in the Alpine race. Last of all is the Indian village community which is the fountain of political and economic strength. Besides Mayne and Baden-Powell, an administrator like Munro was struck by their power of cohesion, self-direction and organization. Dr. Radha Kamal Mukerji in his *Democracies of the East* has given a forceful, clear and vivid description of these village communities. To serious students of Sociology the future basis of socialism in India will be in these village communities. Like Russian Soviets they can alone form that small unit of political organization, where politicians will not be able to mismanage as in a Parliamentary form of Government, and which will be capable of self-government.

Village communities in India are of two types—Dravidian and Aryan. The Dravidian type shows a high watermark of cultural and political development. In the Dravidian country we find that the unit of government is the "Tara." Several Nair families form a "Tarward" and several "Tarwards" form

a "Tara." The Elders of these "Tarwards" form the committee which governs the "Tara." The committee of Elders acts as judge and police-officer. Under the direction of the committee, the villagers combine to dig irrigation channels and build embankments; they have helped the poor and orphans and maintain temples and alms-houses for pilgrims and Sadhus. Munda Dravidian organization in C.P. and Central India is so compact and efficient that the British Government has utilized it for policing the region, and collecting revenue. The Bhaichara villages in the Punjab are a model of democratic institutions and liberty and social solidarity. The organization is simple. The families are given land according to their need, and there is a village common for grazing. There is a Panchayat representing each family which looks after the distribution of land; it administers justice and adjusts the claims of the parties. Perhaps the most important feature is the periodical redistribution of land. The village protects its poor, and maintains its wells, temples and alms-houses. It directs the sowing of crops and also their harvesting. It promotes social and moral idealism. In short, it is a self-sufficient, self-directing body. The British administrators have never been able to understand the spirit of these village communities and have neglected them. At this time we find them decaying. But if we desire to build up a new India, we should have our roots struck deep into the social and political institutions of India. Superimposition, however grand and noble, will totter down with the first storm of unrest and readjustment.

Besides these institutions the study of the ideology of India is a necessary element in building up a new India. 'Religion,' said Vivekananda, "is the

backbone of India." Our whole life, he said, is devoted to manifest the inner man. To transcend the limitations of flesh is the prime necessity of our life. The conclusion therefore is that in India the hard materialism of Marx and Lenin will not strike deep root. In modern times the influence of Gandhi is the influence of a religious man. Tagore's mysticism is nearer to our soul than the economics of Marx. Even in the wake of Industrial Revolution, we have not changed like Turkey or Japan. The reason is plain and simple; the appeal for social, political or economic reform should come to us through religion. At this stage it is necessary to describe what we understand by religion. Religion in India does not indicate the belief in the sanctity of a church or the infallibility of the priest. We do not believe in dogmas or in a personality, who can dispense heaven or hell. Unlike the

Europeans we do not believe in a Theocracy or a God with sceptre in hand. To Indians, the goal of human existence is 'Atma-darshan,' and all other quest is in vain. This realization is a transcendental experience. Hence to us the bondage of desire is irksome; our whole being rebels against the physical and intellectual slavery that has been imposed upon us by ignorance. It is not the material pleasures of life that we have to fight for, but spiritual bliss. So socialism is the beginning of a new life, which shall find its full expression when man's real nature—that is, the Atman, is revealed. To put in a few words, only Socialism shorn of its grosser aspects—Materialism and Class-War, is acceptable to the Indian mind. We can say that socialism should find a new orientation in India before it can be naturalized in the soil. That new shape will be given by the religion and the social institutions of India.

APAROKSHANUBHUTI

BY SWAMI VIMUKTANANDA

Such treatises as aim at serving as introductions to a more advanced study of Vedanta, are generally known as 'Prakarana Granthas.' Besides giving an outline of the system, they each emphasize some one or other of the main features. *Aparokshanubhuti* is one such little manual which while presenting a brief description of Vedanta deals specially with that aspect which relates to the *realization* (Anubhuti) of the highest Truth. Such realization is not like knowing an object by sense-perception or inference but by the know-

ledge of one's own Self which is here indicated by the word *Aparoksha*.

The central teaching is that of the oneness of the 'individual' and the 'Absolute.' This knowledge is attained, after passing through religious, theological, scholastic or mystical stages, by the light of Vichara or enquiry alone (Verse 11). To enable the mind to enter upon such an investigation into Truth, certain disciplines are laid down, which are not peculiar to Vedanta. They are indispensable for all such kinds of enquiry as seek truths of the

highest order. The book then gives a description of one who attains such knowledge and the nature of his life.

Verses 100 to 129 deal specially with the fifteen stages through which the seeker after Truth passes, which are similar to those through which a *Raja Yogi* (mystic) passes. But the two are entirely different. Then is taught that principle of the identity of cause and effect, of the Absolute and the world, which is wound up with the last word in Vedanta, that all the visible and invisible in reality is *one* eternal Atman, Consciousness (Verse 141).

The authorship is generally attributed to Sri Sankaracharya. Even if that should be doubted, the teachings are

undoubtedly Advaitic. To those, therefore, who have neither the time nor the inclination to go through the classical works of Sankaracharya, treatises like *Aparokshanubhuti* will be invaluable guides. And if a reader in his previous life has attained to a sufficiently high stage of spiritual culture, this little book of itself may help him to reach the goal.

Translations into English and some Indian vernaculars have been already published. But the need having been expressed by some beginners for word-for-word meaning and suitable spare notes, a fresh attempt is being made here to meet these requirements. The author acknowledges his indebtedness to the existing translations and the commentary of Vidyaranya.

श्रीहरिं परमानन्दमुपदेष्टारमीश्वरम् ।

व्यापकं सर्वलोकानां कारणं तं नमाम्यहम् ॥ १ ॥

श्रीहरिं To Sri Hari परमानन्द' Supreme Bliss उपदेष्टारं the First Teacher ईश्वरं Ishwara (the Supreme Ruler) व्यापकं All-pervading सर्वलोकानां of all Lokas (regions) कारणं Cause तं Him अहं I नमामि bow down.

1. I¹ bow down to Him—to Sri Hari (destroyer of ignorance), the Supreme Bliss, the First Teacher, Ishwara, the All-pervading and the Cause² of all Lokas (the universe).

¹ I—The ego, the Jiva in bondage, who identifies himself with the gross, subtle and causal bodies, undergoes various sufferings and strives for liberation.

² The Cause—The efficient as well as the material cause. Just as a spider weaves its web from the materials of its own body, so has Ishwara created this universe out of Himself.

अपरोक्षानुभूतिर्वै प्रोच्यते मोक्षसिद्धये ।

सद्भिरेव प्रयत्नेन वीक्षणीया मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ २ ॥

मोक्षसिद्धये For the acquisition of final liberation (from the bondage of ignorance) वै that अपरोक्षानुभूतिः (the method of attaining to) *Aparokshanubhuti* (Self-realization) (अस्माभिः by us) प्रोच्यते is spoken of in details ; सद्भिः by the pure in heart एव only प्रयत्नेन by every effort (इयं this) मुहुर्मुहुः again and again वीक्षणीया should be meditated upon.

2. Herein is expounded (the method of attaining to) *Aparokshanubhuti*¹ (Self-realization) for the acquisition of final liberation (from the bondage of ignorance). Only the pure in heart should constantly and with every effort think upon the truth herein taught.

¹ *Aparokshanubhuti*—It is the direct cognition of Atman which is always present in all thought.

Everybody has some knowledge of this Atman or Self, for, to deny the Self is to deny one's existence. But at first its real nature is not known. Later on, when the mind becomes clearer through *Upasanas* and *Tapas* and the veil of ignorance is gradually withdrawn, the Self begins to reveal its real nature. A higher knowledge follows at an advanced stage of *Sadhana* when the knowledge of Self as mere witness is seen as a continuous current absorbing all other thoughts.

But the end is not yet reached. The idea of duality, such as 'I am the witness' ('I' & 'witness'), is still persisting. It is only at the last stage when the knower and the known merge in the self-effulgent Atman which alone and ever is and nothing else exists that the culmination is reached. This realization of the *non-dual* is the consummation of *Aparokshanubhuti*.

It is needless to say that *Aparokshanubhuti* here means also the work that deals with it.

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण तपसा हरितोषणात् ।

साधनं प्रभवेत् पुंसां वैराग्यादिचतुष्टयं ॥ ३ ॥

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण By the performance of duties pertaining to one's social order and stage in life तपसा by austerities हरितोषणात् by offering the fruits of action to the deity पुंसां of men वैराग्यादि *Vairagyam* (dispassion) and the like चतुष्टयं four साधनं means (to knowledge) प्रभवेत् arise.

3. Four preliminary qualifications¹ (as means to the attainment of knowledge), such as *Vairagyam* (dispassion) and the like, are acquired by men by offering the results² accruing from austerities and the performance of duties pertaining to their social order and stage in life, to the deity.

¹ *Four preliminary qualifications*—These are वैराग्य' dispassion, विवेकः discrimination, ज्ञादिषट्सम्पत्तिः six treasures such as *Sama* (the control of the mind) and the like and सुमुच्यते yearning for liberation (from the bondage of ignorance).

² *By offering the results etc.*—The performance of duty with a view to enjoy the fruits thereof will never bring about the purification of the heart, the basis of all *Sadhanas*. It is only by doing one's duty in a spirit of complete disinterestedness, by surrendering all the fruits of action to God, that one attains to this. Then alone dawns on him the true spirit of discrimination and the like.

ब्रह्मादिस्थावरान्तेषु वैराग्यं विषयेष्वनु ।

यथैव काकविष्टायां वैराग्यं तद्धि निर्मलम् ॥ ४ ॥

यथैव Just as काकविष्टायां for the excreta of a crow (वैराग्य' indifference यथैव in the same way) ब्रह्मादिस्थावरान्तेषु from the realm of Brahma to this world अनु (चिन्तयन्) considering (their perishable nature) (वत्) वैराग्य' indifference तत् that हि verily निर्मलं pure वैराग्य' indifference.

4. Indifference with which one treats the excreta of a crow—such an indifference to all objects of enjoyment from the realm of *Brahma* to this world (in view of their perishable nature), is verily called pure *Vairagyam*.¹

¹ *Pure Vairagyam*—One may be indifferent to the enjoyments of this world only in expectation of better enjoyments in the next world. This kind of indifference carries with it the seeds of desires which bar the door to Knowledge But that indifference

which results from the due deliberation on the evanescent nature of this world as well as the world to come which is nothing but a replica of this world, is alone pure, as it is free from all desires.

नित्यमात्मस्वरूपं हि दृश्यं तद्विपरीतम् ।

एवं यो निश्चयः सम्यग्विवेको वस्तुनः स वै ॥ ५ ॥

आत्मस्वरूपं Atman in itself हि verily नित्यं permanent दृश्यं the seen तद्विपरीतम् going against that (i.e., opposed to Atman) एवं thus यः which सम्यक् settled निश्चयः conviction सः that वै truly वस्तुनः of thing विवेकः discrimination (ज्ञेयः is known).

5. Atman (the seer)¹ in itself is alone permanent, the seen² is opposed to it (i.e., is transient)—such a settled conviction is truly known as discrimination.

¹ Atman—In this ever-changing world there is One Changeless Being as witness of these changes. This permanent ever-seeing being is Atman.

² The seen—This comprises everything other than Atman, such as, the objects of senses, the senses, the mind and the *Buddhi* with its various modifications.

सदैव वासनात्यागः शमोऽयमिति शब्दितः ।

निग्रहो बाह्यवृत्तीनां दम इत्यभिधीयते ॥ ६ ॥

सदैव At all times वासनात्यागः abandonment of desires अयं this शम इति as *Sama* (control of the mind) शब्दितः is termed बाह्यवृत्तीनां of the external organs निग्रहः restraint दम इति as *Dama* (control of the external organs) अभिधीयते is called.

6. Abandonment of desires¹ at all times is called *Sama* and complete restraint of the external organs is called *Dama*.

¹ Abandonment of desires—Previous impressions that are lying dormant in the mind as well as the contact of the mind with the external objects give rise to desires. To abandon all desires is to dissociate the mind from these two sets of stimuli.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

Life means struggle, and no man on earth can expect immunity from that. But the greatest struggle awaits those who take upon themselves the burden of humanity. In the present-day world the forces of evil seem to be on the way to overpower the forces of good and the better section of people find their voices too feeble against the tumult of fights and conflicts that are raging all around. Nevertheless, let them not give way to

despair; for ultimate success rests with those who are on the side of righteousness. At the beginning of the New Year let them summon up fresh strength and be ready for a stronger fight against the forces that are trying to lead humanity astray. In this their struggle, *Prabuddha Bharata* joins hands with them and prays that it also may be a humble instrument of God to bring about a better condition in the world.

The Essence of Religion is the report

of a lecture delivered by Swami Vivekananda in America. It has very recently come to our hands and not been hitherto published Many are the devotees and admirers who are today mourning the loss of *Swami Subodhananda*, to whose memory this small article is a humble tribute. . . . *The March of Humanity* surveys the past and future of man Rev. J. T. Sunderland is an old contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*. His writings on religious subjects have got a strong appeal, as the present one will indicate. . . . *Vivekananda* has been englishted from the original Bengali by the author himself Swami Vireswarananda is President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. The present article forms the introduction to *ALTAR FLOWERS*, a book of Sanskrit hymns, to be published very shortly Dr. Poduval is a Civil Surgeon in the Cochin State, wherein lies the field of work about which he talks. . . . Sister Devamata will write more about *Sri Ramakrishna and St. Francis of Assisi*. She means no comparison between the two Great Ones. Her only motive in writing about them is that through them there may be a new link of love and amity between East and West. . . . Mr. Pramatha Nath Bose is an octogenarian. Herein he gives a careful study of the changes through which the Hindu society has been passing. . . . Dr. J. Vincent is Associate Professor of Sociology in the University of Southern California. The present article is taken from an address which he gave last year, in introducing Swami Prabhavananda of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood to an audience in Los Angeles. . . . Mr. S. Sanyal is a newcomer to the *Prabuddha Bharata*. He is a journalist and associated with a paper in U. P. . . . *Aparokshanubhuti* of Sankaracharya, though very short, has been found inspiring and helpful by

many religiously minded persons. In presenting this English translation to those of our readers who do not know Sanskrit, we hope that the scope of usefulness of the book will be widened. . . . Swami Vimuktananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, now belongs to the 'Study Circle,' organized by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore.

EUROPE'S SALVATION THROUGH ASIA

There was a time when Asia was dazzled and overpowered by the achievements of the West. And taking advantage of this moral weakness Europe overran many countries of Asia and was on the look-out to divide the whole of Asia amongst European nations. There comes a tide in the affairs of man as well as of countries and nations. During the last two or three centuries almost all Asia was passing through a torpor. She forgot herself and lost faith in her powers. This is worse than an actual defeat in life. A weak body is the hotbed of countless diseases and the inferiority-complex is the nursery of innumerable ills. It is therefore not to be wondered at that till some time back Asia showed signs of death in all fields of activity. But by force of circumstances things have now changed and are changing. A stir of life has come all over Asia. Though all the present activities of the various Asian nations are not such as can be approved of or viewed without alarm, still they indicate that Asia is going to assert herself.

A tyrant thrives because of the weakness of some persons who are ready to submit to his tyranny. As such, the weakness of a man causes a double harm; it is harmful to himself as well as to others who are seeking an opportunity to take advantage of weakness

in any man. This is true also of nations. According to Rabindranath, who comes now and then out of his seclusion, to throw light on the events of the world, the stir of life that has come to Asia is good not only for herself, but also for Europe, and, therefore, for the whole world. In his opinion, "if Asia is not fully awakened then there is no deliverance for Europe as well. The fatal arrow for Europe lies in the weakness of Asia. The heavy load of suspicion, hostility and hatred, of untruthful diplomacy, and spying which Europe carries on her back is due to her grabbing for pieces and portions of the weak Asiatic continent."

Further, "Through Asia's freedom the freedom of the whole world will be made safe. Let us not forget that imperialistic Europe today is herself entangled in the bondage which she has imposed upon alien peoples who are dragging her down with their weight of wretchedness."

But let this reaction in Asia against the West be free from any venom of ill-will or canker of hatred. Otherwise instead of solving the problem of the world or contributing anything to the world-peace, Asia will only add to the present confusion and chaos. Let Asia envisage and find out wherein lies her soul; let her be true to herself. In that case only she can bring salvation to the world seized with war-fever and torn with internecine strifes and conflicts. "If the new age has indeed come to Asia," says Tagore, "then let Asia give voice to it in her own special idiom of civilization. If instead of that she imitates the roar of Europe, even if it be a lion's roar, yet it will sound pitifully unreal."

THE SUPERSTITION OF LUCK

Science says that there is infinite energy hidden in a single atom. Reli-

gion says that there is infinite possibilities lurking within man. But how many are the people who cannot do anything in life because of the lack of confidence in their own power. Swami Vivekananda truly observed that faith in oneself was more necessary than faith in God; for the man who has no faith in himself cannot have faith in God.

A bad workman quarrels with his tools and the man who fails in life—however much due to his own folly—usually puts the blame on luck or fate. He forgets that luck is often controlled by one's self-exertion. For what other explanation can be given to the fact that every one of those who have left a name in the world was a very, very hard worker. Genius has been defined as the capacity for taking pains. It may not be always inversely true, i.e., those who have worked hard have not always succeeded to their expectation, but this is true that those who have won success have always taken infinite pains. Mr. M. A. Rosanoff, a co-worker of Mr. Edison, gives in the following the opinion of the latter regarding the secret of his success in work:

"One day the Old Man (Mr. Edison) sat down for a chat, and we exchanged confidences. 'Do you believe in luck?' he asked me. I said, 'Yes and no. My reasoning mind revolts against the superstition of luck, my savage soul clings to it.'—'For my part,' said the Old Man, 'I do not believe in luck at all. And if there is such a thing as luck, then I must be the most unlucky fellow in the world. I've never once made a lucky strike in all my life. When I get after something that I need, I start finding everything in the world that I *don't* need—one damn thing after another. I find ninety-nine things that I don't need, and comes number one hundred, and that—at the very last—turns out to be just what I had been

looking for Wouldn't you call that hard luck? But I'm tellin' you, I don't believe in luck—good or bad. Most fellows try a few things and then quit. I never quit until I git what I'm after. That's the only difference between me, that's supposed to be lucky, and the fellows that think they are unlucky. Then again a lot of people think that I have done things because of some 'genius' that I've got. That too is not true. Any other bright-minded fellow can accomplish just as much if he will stick like hell and remember that nothing that's any good works by itself, just to please you; you got to *make* the damn thing work. You may have heard people repeat what I have said, 'Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety-nine per cent perspiration.' 'Yes, Sir, it's mostly *hard work*.' I said, 'You will admit, Mr. Edison, that at least your patience is out of the ordinary?'—'Oh; Yes,' he replied, 'I got lots of patience.' "

Mr. Edison's idea of sleep is no less interesting. It is due to this theory, perhaps, that he could work night after night without or with almost no sleep.

"A favourite topic with him was his theory of sleep. To this he came back again and again. 'Sleep,' he asserted, 'is an acquired habit. Cells don't sleep. Fish swim about in the water all night; *they* don't sleep. Even a horse don't sleep, he just stands still and rests. A man don't need any sleep. You try it sometime. Work all day and all night, then early in the morning, take a nap for half-an-hour, then jump up, wash your face with ice-water, and go back to work again. You'll be fresh as a lark and feel just fine.' "

Not to ignore facts, it must be however said that success depends, amongst others, on some factors over which we have no control. There are some men

who howsoever much they try to butter their bread, meet with no success. The best thing therefore is to try one's best and leave the result in the knees of God. That is why in India one is asked to work as a sort of worship to God. In the act of worship, a true devotee considers no pain too much. Similar should be the attitude of one in work. Whatever might be the spiritual value of such a method of work, it will save one from falling a prey to reaction. If failure at all comes, one will have the satisfaction that he has tried his best. As it happens, many persons, goaded by ambition, run their life at a break-neck speed and when they meet with opposition or failure, get a rude shock and pine away in disappointment; some are even driven to commit suicide.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

When various social and national problems owe their origin to religions, it is a duty with our countrymen to make a comparative study of religions. If not for the sake of religious life, religions ought to be studied at least for the solution of our country's problems. One cannot properly study religions unless one goes deep into the fountain-head of religion proper. All the great religions have their basis in universal truths and fundamental principles of moral life. A serious student of religion will find the seeds as well as the fruits of all religions in each of them. Casual readers of religion overlook this great fact and find no harmony among different creeds. Prof. D. S. Sarma in an interesting article on the subject shows how religions and languages are not produced *in vacuo*. "They are organic growths," observes he in *The Aryan Path*, "in which the evolving spirit utilises, according to the needs of the moment the physical,

psychological and historical materials that it finds in its surroundings. Therefore the task of one who wants to make a comparative study of religions is similar to that of one who makes a comparative study of languages. What do we think of an English philologist who in his admiration for the growth and structure of his own language, for its wonderful flexibility, its simplicity of grammar and its machinery of word-order pronounces Greek and Latin as clumsy, antiquated and barbarous? What do we think of his logic when he argues that the virtues which gleam only fitfully in the classical languages shine with full effulgence in modern English? But what we regard as ridiculous in the field of comparative philology we have not yet learnt to regard as ridiculous in the field of comparative

religion. How many books are there written by Christian scholars who scoff at Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam because they are not like Christianity! And how many zealous missionaries are there who argue with a singular lack of humour that Christianity is the crown of Hinduism, or Buddhism or Islam!" It is our ignorance of the sister religions that is responsible for the ninety per cent of our religious feuds and quarrels. It is now high time when the Hindus should read the Quran reverentially and the Muslims, the Upanishads and the Gita. An attitude of love and reverence for the scriptures and prophets of all religions is the one thing essential by which everybody may profitably supplement his own religion through a comparative study.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE EVOLUTION OF HINDU ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA. By Rao Bahadur S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, M.A., Hony. Ph.D. *Published by the University of Madras. xii+387 pp. Price 10s. or Rs. 6.*

The present volume consists of a series of six lectures which the author delivered during the academic year 1929-30, under the auspices of the Madras University on behalf of the Sir William Meyer Trust. When the author accepted the invitation of the University to deliver the Sir William Meyer's lectures for the year, he experienced "some difficulty to choose an appropriate subject for the occasion." For, "the choice had to subserve two ends; it must first be sufficiently attractive to a general audience; and secondly it must be acceptable, as far as may be to the tastes and the inclinations of the founder." He chose the "Evolution of the Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India" expecting it to subserve both the ends.

Dr. S. K. Aiyangar deserves to be congratulated for the discrimination which he has shown in the choice of the subject; for, this aspect of the ancient South Indian History has been totally ignored by scholars, owing to the undue emphasis which they place on the chronological and political problem. It is, no doubt, true that a satisfactory chronological framework is of primary importance in all historical research; but chronology should not be allowed to become an end in itself. It is on this account, if not for any other, that a work of the kind which Dr. S. K. Aiyangar has undertaken should be welcomed. The subject bristles with several difficult and intricate problems which do not admit of easy solutions; but Dr. S. K. Aiyangar is a ripe old scholar and has ransacked all the sources of information on the subject. A scholar of his standing and experience is specially suited to perform the task which he has set before himself.

The work has several merits. It places before the general reader the valuable mate-

rial contained in the Tamil Literature and enables him to see that the polity obtaining in early South Indian States is essentially the same as that described in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya. So far as the central institutions of the South Indian governments are concerned, the contribution of the Tamil kingdoms may be said to be practically negligible. The special feature of the South Indian State appears to be the extraordinary development of the local institutions which Dr. Aiyangar has described in a manner usually characteristic of his discussions.

The title of the work, "The Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India," should be considered inappropriate for two reasons. In the first place, the administrative institutions of several states of South India such as the Ganges of Talakad, the Kadambas, the Salankayanas, etc., are so completely ignored that the reader has to wonder whether these dynasties and the kingdoms over which they ruled belong to South India. So far as Dr. S. K. Aiyangar is concerned South India and Tamil-aham seem to be synonymous. Such a view, it must be pointed, can hardly be accepted. Secondly, Dr. Aiyangar has not succeeded in tracing the 'evolution' of the administrative institutions. The institutions connected with the central government are stereotyped imitations of Kautilian models. Dr. Aiyangar has taken considerable pains to establish this point. There is, therefore, no scope here for development and growth. In the field of local government, Dr. Aiyangar insists that the institutions described in the Uttaramerur inscriptions are the fully developed forms of the germs which appear in the Pallava grants. It is very much to be doubted whether this is the case. That we possess more information about them during the Chola than the Pallava Age ought not to be considered a sufficient reason for presupposing any evolution. The institutions seem to be the same, though we know less about them in the earlier epoch than in the later. Although Dr. S. K. Aiyangar assures his readers that in the present work, he is attempting to trace the growth of the South Indian Hindu Administrative Institutions 'from the earliest times' it seems essentially to be an enlarged and revised edition of his earlier essay on 'the Chola Administration.' It is true that he has added a prologue and an epilogue; but the nature of the work

remains unaltered; for his main interest is rooted in the Uttaramerur inscriptions of the Parantaka I and he does not seem to feel quite comfortable when he strays out of this field. In spite of his elaborate discussion of 'the rural institutions' 'by means of which the administration was carried on in localities away from the headquarters,' the author does not deal satisfactorily with certain aspects of the question. Two interesting problems demand close investigation: first, whether the local bodies described in the Uttaramerur inscriptions were peculiar to Tamil-aham; and, second, whether they were obtaining in all the villages of the kingdom, tax-free or otherwise. These points have not been discussed in a satisfactory manner by our author, and the reader is left in considerable doubt as to the truth of his assertion that they were found in villages 'inhabited by people other than the Brahmans.' The examples which he has cited in this connection fail to prove his statement, as they are taken from the inscriptions belonging to Brahman villages. A few cases of the existence of the local bodies in non-brahmadeya villages would have cleared all doubt and established the point once for all. He has said that all the villagers irrespective of their caste were allowed to vote in the assembly, given a chance to hold the membership of the committees governing the village. The regulations governing the elections at Uttaramerur leave a strong impression on the mind that communities other than the Brahman had no place in the village constitution. Dr. Aiyangar would have rendered a distinct service to the students of South Indian History, had he cited a few unambiguous instances from the lithic records with which he is so familiar.

The history of the evolution of the South Indian administrative institutions comes to a close, in the opinion of our author, with the Chola monarchy; "The administrative system," says he, "continued under Vijayanagar substantially, as it was in the four centuries from 800 A. D. to 1200 A. D." "Fortunately for them (the rulers of Vijayanagar) however, there was a highly developed administration which had attained to its full development, and all that they had to do was to see that the administrative machinery, which had been perfected by their predecessors, were maintained in ordinary efficiency, so that they may have

the benefit of the full resources of the empire for their particular purpose." This statement, coming as it does, from a scholar who is believed to have spent a lifetime specializing Vijaynagar History, is bound to fill the mind of the readers with astonishment. So far as one can judge from the evidence supplied by the inscriptions, the old Hindu polity appears to have been transformed substantially during the age of the Rayas. The Muhammadan invasions from the North created a new political situation and to meet the new conditions, the Rayas were obliged to introduce innovations in the old administrative machinery.

The work of Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, in spite of the few defects pointed out above, is bound to be useful to the scholar as well as the general student of South Indian History. The author deserves to be congratulated for opening up a new field of historical research. Although the volume abounds in typographical errors, the printing and the get-up are really good.

N. VENKATARAMANAYYA

LIFE AND EXPERIENCES OF A BENGALI CHEMIST. By Prafulla Chandra Ray. *Chuckerverty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta. x+557 pp. Price Rs. 5.*

Lives of great men are always a source of great inspiration to others. For they are a clarion call to all to aspire to be likewise. In this respect, autobiographies are more valuable than biographies. For, in them we hear from the persons themselves their struggles and methods of work, their contending hopes and fears before they were 'successful' in life.

Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray, a worthy son of India, has served the cause of the country in more capacities than one. And by bringing out the present volume of his autobiography he has done another distinct service to it. A great scientist, veteran educationist, successful industrialist, enthusiastic social worker—in all capacities a man of the first rank, Dr. Ray is a great inspiration to those who come in contact with him. By bringing out the story of his life in book form he has done untold good to those who have not been privileged to have the benefit of his personal touch.

In the pages of the volume we find the secret, how a confirmed dyspeptic, a lifelong

valetudinarian, and a victim of occasional attacks of insomnia like Dr. Ray could work in so many fields with phenomenal success. Some may perhaps think that by diverting his energy to so many channels, he has neglected the subject of his first love, namely, scientific research. But the perusal of the book will show that that fear is baseless. It is only by dint of great will, earnest zeal and proper use of time that he could do so many things. The chapter on *Use and Misuse of Time* indicates the secret of his success in life and will repay perusal any number of times.

Dr. Ray fears he lays himself open to the "reproach of egotism" at some places in the book. But he would have been untrue to himself as an autobiographer or done injustice to his readers if he had hidden anything from a false sense of humility. By his great love for the country he has become "the property of anybody and everybody," and as such it is better that all facts of his life be made known to the public so that they may profit by them.

The spiritual background of the life of this great Indian scientist is no less interesting. Though a successful industrialist or business man, "he has always realised the force of the saying—*चर्यमनर्घम् भावय नित्यम्*—that is to say; 'love of money is the root of all evil.' So the dominant note running through his life is: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; for where the treasure is, there is the heart also.'" About the main principle of his life says the great author: "Whatever field I have ploughed I have ploughed as a humble instrument in the hand of Providence; my failures are my own; to err is human. But my successes, if any, are to be attributed to the guidance of the All-knowing, who chose me to be His humble instrument. After all, a Divinity shapes our end." And "All through my varied activities I felt the force of the saying:

त्वया हवीकेश हृदि स्थितेन

यथा नियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि ।

I commit myself to Thee, O Lord! make me Thy agent."

The book is highly valuable from many standpoints and should be in the hands of every young man in the country. It has been therefore wise that the "Bengali Chemist" has written the book in English.

SANSKRIT

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA. Edited by Prof. D. V. Gokhale, B.A. *The Oriental Book Agency, Poona.* 304 pp. Price Rs. 2/-.

This is a handy volume of the Gita with the commentary of Sri Sankaracharya. The learned Editor has spared no pains to make the book very helpful and he has the imagination to see wherein lies the difficulty of beginners in going through the sanskrit

commentary of the editions found in the market. Special attention has been paid to punctuation, and the lengthy portions of the Bhashya have been divided into suitable paragraphs with the पूर्वपक्ष and the उत्तरपक्ष distinctly indicated. All quotations excepting two have been traced and plainly marked. Eight printed editions and one old Ms. were consulted in preparing the book. In fact, we know not of any other edition where the Editor has so much tried to meet the needs of the readers.

NEWS AND REPORTS

BIRTHDAYS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA

This year, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls on Wednesday, the 18th January and that of Sri Ramakrishna on Sunday, the 26th February.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

The thirty-first annual report of the above shows the activities of the Home under the following heads during the year 1931:

I. Indoor General Hospital

There are 145 beds in various wards. Still there is demand for more accommodation. In the year, the total number of new cases admitted was 1,668, of whom 1,044 were cured and discharged, 217 left treatment before being completely cured, 82 left protection or were discharged otherwise, 127 remained under treatment in the closing month of the year and 198 died. The daily average number of Indoor cases was 122.

II. Refuge for the aged men

The Home has 25 beds for invalids who come to spend their last days at Benares. At present there are two permanent inmates in this refuge.

III. Refuge for Women Invalids

There are now eleven members in this house. The entire expenses for food, clothing and other necessities are met from the funds of the Home. There is a pressing

demand for a big block for housing women invalids.

IV. Girls' Home

Seven girls belonging to respectable families have been accommodated in the Home under the able guidance of a competent Lady Superintendent. They are receiving education and helping the work of the female hospital, conducted exclusively by lady workers.

V. Home for paralytic patients

In the year the Home accommodated 15 paralytic cases in all, of which 3 were provided for under a Trust Fund.

VI. Dharamsala for the poor and the helpless

The income of a fund for the purpose is Rs. 273/- only per annum. There is no separate building for housing the poor and the helpless. They are mostly accommodated in the male refuge block of the Home. About 200 people were given shelter and food during the year under review.

VII. Outdoor Dispensary

34,217 new cases attended the Outdoor Dispensary in the year as against 29,074 of the previous year and the number of repeated cases was 50,197. A branch Outdoor Dispensary was opened by the Home at 34 and 39 Shivala in July, 1931. There 5,770 new cases were treated and the number of repeated cases was 11,320. The daily average attendance of both the Dis-

pensaries was 278 and the total number of the operation cases was 413.

VIII. *Outdoor help to Invalids and poor Ladies of respectable families*

In the year there were 165 permanent recipients of outdoor relief and this cost the Home Rs. 1,618-14-0 in money and 130 mds. and 21 srs. of rice and atta besides clothings and blankets.

IX. *Special and Occasional Relief*

784 persons coming under this heading were assisted during the year.

The income and expenses of the General Fund of the Home during the year under review were as follows: Subscriptions Rs. 6,960-0-0, donations Rs. 6,335-1-8, interest on Endowments and other invested Funds Rs. 16,573-1-4, Paralytic and Dharamsala Funds Rs. 589-4-0, sale proceeds of garden and other articles Rs. 3,138-2-0, Endowment Fund Rs. 5,236-12-6, self-diet and cremation etc., Rs. 467-0-0, house rent and land revenue Rs. 1,189-0-0 or a total receipt of Rs. 40,488-5-6 in all. The total expenses of the General Fund under various headings come to Rs. 34,435-11-6. The financial position of the Home ought to be improved in proportion to its manifold activities.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, MYLAPORE, MADARS

The annual report of the above for 1931 shows that the dispensary has completed the sixth year of its existence. It has much improved during the brief period. The total number of patients treated during the year was 58,905 of whom 23,442 were new cases. The number of patients as well as of the workers in the Dispensary have much more increased than in the previous years. The necessity is daily being felt for putting the institution on a sound financial basis for the benefit of the poor. The Dispensary has some urgent needs of which those of a Pucca Dispensary Building for the accommodation of patients and a General Fund for

the maintenance of the Dispensary and its workers require immediate help and sympathy from the kind-hearted public.

XVIIIth INTERNATIONAL MONTES-SORI TRAINING COURSE

to be held in Barcelona, Spain, from February to June, 1933

The changed and more favourable political and social conditions of Spain, a new European Republic anxious for educational progress, has decided Dr. Montessori to give in Barcelona her XVIIIth International Training Course, theoretical and practical, of her pedagogical method.

Dr. Montessori has extended this new Barcelona Course to the teachers of all countries. The general characteristics of this new course are the same as in previous courses. It will be directed personally by Dr. Montessori herself and three weekly lessons will be given. Mr. Montessori will deliver her lectures in Italian. Translations into convenient languages spoken by those registered will be facilitated. (There will also be given a course in the Italian language.)

Practical lessons, given in excellent Montessori Schools, will include the cultural cycle which begins with the child of four and proceeds on up to the elementary school boy who is to enter a secondary school.

Special lectures will be devoted to religious education. Others still will be given on the care of babies and on the education of abnormal children.

Foreigners in the Course will have a chance to learn the graceful folk dances of Catalonia which Dr. Montessori has incorporated into her school.

There is also the possibility for them to study in their spare time eurythmics in a qualified Jaques-Dalcroze Institute, and to follow regular courses in the Spanish and Catalan languages, in literature, geography, history, art, etc., in the University of Barcelona and in other educational centers of the city.

Further details to be had from the office, Ronda Universitat, 7, Barcelona Spain.



Swami Subodhananda