

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

FAITH

THERE was a certain Brahman priest who served in a household chapel. Once he went away leaving the charge of the service to his little son. He told the boy to place the daily offering of food before the Deity and see that He ate it. The boy following the injunctions of his father, placed the offering before the image and silently waited. But the image neither spoke nor ate. The boy watched for a long time. He had firm faith that the Deity would come down from the altar, take the seat before the offering and eat it. Then he prayed: "O Lord, come and eat; it is getting very late, I cannot wait any longer." But the Lord did not speak. Then the boy began to cry, saying: "Lord, my father told me to see that Thou didst eat the offering. Why dost thou not come? Thou comest to my father and eatest his offering. What have I done that Thou dost not come to me and eat my offering?" He cried bitterly and for a long time. Then as he looked up at the seat, he saw the Deity in a human form eating the offering! When

the service was ended and the boy came out, the members of the household said to him, "If the service is over, bring out the offering. The boy replied: "Yes, but the Lord has eaten everything." In amazement they asked: "What did you say?" With absolute innocence the boy repeated: "Why, the Lord has eaten all that I offered." Then they entered the chapel and were dumbfounded at the sight of the empty dishes.

Such is the power of true faith and true yearning!

AVATARAS

AS in fireworks there is a kind of flower-pot which sends off one kind of flower for a while, then another kind, and still another, possessing as it were, an innumerable variety of flowers, so are the Avatáras. Then there is another kind of flower-pot which when lighted burns a little and then goes off all at once. Similarly, ordinary Jivas, after long practice and devotional exercises, go into Samadhi and do not return.

Those who come with the Avatáras are either souls who are eternally free, or who are born for the last time.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

ONE of our greatest weaknesses is to blame others or to blame fate in the hour of adversity. It is so easy to lay the blame of misfortune upon others or upon some metaphysical destiny. But if each were sufficiently strong to make a severe and crucial test of personal experience it would assuredly be found that one makes or un-makes one's own fate; at least much of that weakness manifest in blaming others would be done away with. The doctrines of the Vedanta make it clear and unequivocal that man is his own weaver of destiny. The action of to-day, the thought of to-day is certain to have its effect on the future, whether immediate or remote. And each thought and each action is within the domain of personal choice. "To be resigned to the Will of God," when misfortune comes, is not half so courageous as to stand on one's own feet, and impute one's own faults and miseries to one's self, and form resolutions to develop insight, discretion and will-power and free one's self from all self-imposed bondages of the soul.

If it is realised that we ourselves are the makers or un-makers of our destiny, what a sense of freedom is born! From this moment we can unravel the threads of bondage; from this very moment we can set in motion currents of spiritual energy that will make us gods in the revelation. From this very moment we can commence to depend on ourselves; and then we shall cease grumbling at the happenings of fate, we shall joyfully accept whatever comes, whether pleasant or unpleasant, as coming from ourselves. From this very moment let us cease to be weak. Let us cease to blame others or to rely upon others. We are the captains of our own fate; we are the masters of our own souls!

The privilege of self-development is with us all. It constitutes the bright perspective of human life. Self-knowledge, self-dependence and self-development are the very ingredients of the spiritual consciousness. There can be no spirituality without these. Constitutionally, as it were, there is "the backward pulling" of the untamed instinct. To train and spiritualise instinct is the purport of the spiritual life. In the constant spiritualising of personality the spiritual consciousness is revealed. After all, all ideals are human; even the highest of ideals—God.—is thoroughly human; and this bears testimony to the Divinity of Man.

Physical nature stands between personality and the attainment of spiritual individuality. All religious life is a demonstration of the spiritual over the animal consciousness; and asceticism and religious practices are an effort at spiritualising the will. Born with limitations, man surmounts them by utilising the power of discrimination. The true living of life is made manifest in the conquest over human limitations. And in this connection pain is a great teacher, if not the greatest. Indeed, it may be said that pain is the one great teacher whose teaching is true, whose teaching is infallible. The new revelation is always born of severity of labour, both intellectual and emotional; but the results of revelation outmeasure all sense of personal sorrow or fatigue.

The very noblest elements in self-sacrifice are needed for the attainment of the supra-sensuous ideal. The spiritual consciousness shines forth only through the crucifixion of the physical consciousness.

Sin is the rope with which we bind ourselves to the limited. Purity is the unravelling of the knot.

Here and hereafter relate to time only. The soul is eternal. Its essence is God ; and the soul and God are one. For the soul and for God there is neither here nor hereafter. Everything is Being. The effort should be to realise the highest level.

What man worships he finds finally within himself. The interpretation of the form is the artist's ideal ; the realisation of the spirit is the ideal of the man of God.

Newness is only in the relation—never in the thing itself.

Nirvana is life without any relations ; it is life without the bounds of bondages. It is the life limitless, the life immeasurable to be realised when all hopes and fears and miseries and relative pleasures have fallen off, leaving the spirit nude of all phenomenal or objective facts, freeing it from all objectivity of manifestation. In Nirvana the soul shines forth Self-revealed.

THE SENSE OF ONENESS

THE sense of oneness is the spiritual sense ; it is the most noteworthy possession of the spiritual consciousness. The universe about us and the character of experience are replete with distinctions and warring differences. On all sides there is friction. There seems no escape from the self-contradiction that reigns everywhere. If we come to analyse the source of all emotional and social disturbance, we find that it is because of the sense of difference. And true human progress and true civilisation have always been identified with the sense of the oneness of social and human destinies. All those virtues that make for civic and public progress have as their background the sense of oneness. Such virtues are co-operation, mutual sympathy and response, the recognition of the advantages and capacities of others and the spirit of brotherly love. On the contrary, the vices that have retarded human progress and caused most of the misery in the world are envy, jealousy, bitterness, lack of mutual sympathy and the belittling of the talents, the ideals and the spirit of others.

It is at once seen that the sense of oneness is not only philosophical idealism, but realistic and emotional, in the opportunity for realisation. It carries with it great emotional worth and the stimulus to social efficiency and enlightened human relationships. Wherever we find one nation rising superior to others it is always because there has been a reinvigoration of this sense of oneness.

National efficiency and national activity depend altogether on national unity and the sense of the oneness of all citizens in the national destiny.

What holds good in matters of the world, holds good, likewise, in matters concerning the spiritual order. For the spiritual life is practical, if anything. Many think that the spiritual life is that of personal lassitude and personal indifference. But in reality, no life calls for more in the way of personal effort, nor makes more important or more essential demands.

To the man of the spiritual consciousness the sense of difference constitutes one of the greatest of problems, involving years, aye, life-times of strenuous effort for its eradication. For it is the sense of difference that underlies all selfish and physical life ; it is the sense of difference that separates man from his fellow-beings, that makes for disharmony and disunion in all the affairs of life. Behind all social dissatisfaction and disturbance one is sure to find this sense of difference. It runs through all the doings of life and constitutes the great barrier for the realisation of those sublime ideals,—universal brotherhood and universal peace. The eradication of the sense of difference is concomitant with the making of character.

Thus socially, the sense of oneness should be the greatest of all ideals. If statesmen and men of public affairs were to keep this ideal constantly in mind, how much swifter would the currents of

progress flow! How much international disharmony and friction would be avoided! The sense of individual preference, so highly advocated in these days of strenuous individualism is one of the greatest fallacies of our age. For the individualism implied is only slightly removed from the individualism which a wild beast would feel it his right to enjoy. Unfortunately beneath so many of the protestations of the oneness of human destinies and the brotherhood of man there is no substratum of sincerity. The worldliness of the world moves along on the principle "We live to kill, and we kill to live." Thus, what is actually needed in our modern age is a realisation of the ideal of oneness, in a practical and pragmatical way. Books have been written wholesale concerning the unity of life, but one act of real practice, one act of genuine human kindness, one act of real sympathy with the distressed is worth tomes of clever writings. Therefore, all those who see the fitness of the ideal of oneness, owe it in honour to themselves to make their character speak louder than their thoughts. And if they are truly spiritual, their perspective of oneness will broaden even beyond all social definitions and take in the whole of the universe, the whole of life. Hatred, selfishness, conceit and personal privilege are the vices that must be burned out from personality if the ideal of oneness is to become a practical and spiritual reality. And this is no common task; it requires renunciation and utmost selflessness to follow the path of oneness.

Indeed, there is no salvation this side of oneness, for the soul in its widest vision will only perceive oneness as divine. It will realise the oneness and the equal richness of all human idealism and understand that everywhere, in every age and in every clime, and under all conditions of experience, the human heart has really been searching for this divine unity. For divinity is always one; it is always impersonal, always boundless in love and self-sacrifice. That nature is truly divine which is truly renouncing. The manifestation of power is not half so wonderful as the manifestation of love. To destroy is easier than to build. The man of spiritual attainments realises that there is but one object to destroy, and that is selfishness. And selfishness he destroys by the power of universal,

selfless and impersonal love. That is why all the saints have loved man as much as God. They have loved the children of the Great Father even as the Father Himself. And the great Vedantins of India have made efforts to see not only the relationship of mankind to God, but the very oneness of the spirit of mankind and Godhead. They have refused to see anything save the perfection of man, that sublime perfection which is divinity. They have held that man is greater than what he dreams, that bondage is only in appearance, that sense of difference is not actually deep-rooted but that it is only on the surface, and that far beneath, in the true silences as the essence of life itself, there is an all-unifying, all-harmonising oneness. The sages have built their lives and their deeds around this centre of universal oneness. Their lives were, in their character, a direct and living testimony of the ideals in which they believed and the ideals were not only those which they believed but realised as well.

So long as the soul is possessed of the sense of difference, so long it must wander on the paths of manifoldness, deceived by appearances, wandering through the mazes of relative experience, living only a relative life, coming under the sway of such superstitions as fear and death. Fear reigns until the soul cognises the spiritual unity of all lives. When one has realised the spiritual oneness of all life; when one has seen the same spiritual identity in all manifested things, whom or what, then, to fear! It is all one; it is all the same radiant divinity. The fear of death continues because man has not perceived his true nature. He is the spirit, not the form. It is the physical consciousness, the body-idea which makes for diversity. Living altogether a physical life, immersed in the desire for physical objects, the worldly man is not far removed from the beast in his mad struggle for things. His one desire is "to have." But he who knows himself as the soul, as one with the unit spirit of all life, his desire is "to be" more and more; his desire is to expand consciousness, increasing and purifying and spiritualising its contents, until not an atom of physicality is left and until the knowledge of pure spirit becomes a fact in the personal awareness.

The moral values of life are inseparably associated with the practical carrying out of the idea

of oneness. For the whole meaning of ethics is to lead the unselfish life, to break down the great barriers of selfishness that make up the purely animal consciousness. In the transfiguration of consciousness lies manifest the whole world of spiritual potentiality and realisation. When one feels himself in unison with all the forms of life, when one has learned how to sympathise with all the forms of experience, to see good even in the worst evil, and to see the beautiful even in the terrible and deformed, then only this sense of difference is conquered. The soul then attains the spiritual goal. It must be remembered that everything speaks the language of the spirit if man will hear. As the great genius Shakespeare has said, there are sermons even in brooks and stones. And if one studies the lives of such great spirits as Jesus the Christ and Gautama the Buddha, one finds invariably that the touchstone of their striving and their realisation was the spiritual solidarity and identity of things. And there is nothing that gives such great moral courage as the understanding that "all this is one." Then there is nothing to fear, nothing to fret or worry oneself about. The illuminated soul knows that underlying all the friction of life there is peace. It comprehends the essence of all life and experience and is concerned with that essence of leaving off the perception of forms. The true spiritual man goes into the heart of things. He makes himself acquainted with the secret, silent, peaceful spirit; he deliberately blinds himself, by all forms of mental and spiritual discipline, against the seeing of manifoldness. He is concerned with oneness and the reality for which it stands. He sees manifoldness as deception and illusion. Being concerned with God and the Soul in all things he overcomes the body-idea and the life it represents, knowing himself as one with the formless and the purely spiritual.

The sage sees that in the lowest life there exists the divine potentialities. Thus when the highest heights of vision have been attained he makes, in reality, no distinction between himself and the lowest form of life. Even in the amoeba and in the worm, even in the serpent and in the toad he sees the manifestation of the divine unity and the divine love. And like the great unknown monk who came to Dakshineswar he will dine

with a dog, if need be, off the leavings that are thrown by the roadside; with Saint Francis of Assisi he will preach to the birds and to the fishes, and like some great Yogins he will understand the language of the beasts and be enabled to fathom the secret of all hearts. The ideal of oneness is the magic factor in the spiritual transition. It does away with mountain-loads of selfishness and selfish iniquity. And what a stimulus it gives to him who desires to become a servant unto mankind! Seeing the same divinity in all, he sees in the poor and in the afflicted, in the sick and in the wretched, an opportunity to serve the Most High. He finds an opportunity of practically demonstrating the oneness which has spiritually enriched his own nature. He will feel it his privilege to serve. Unlike the man possessed of the sense of difference, who makes others serve him and who believes in taking in order to gain selfishly, the man of the spirit is glad to give all, even his life for the sake of others. His one motto is whole-hearted renunciation. He has transplanted the notion of the Self; that Self which he formerly conceived of and lived out personally, he now conceives of and lives out universally. From the personal he has gone to the impersonal, universal Self. He has become divine, for that Self is God.

To-day the human horizon is broadening, and the good in everything is being recognised. No longer is one spiritual ideal isolated; all spiritual ideals are being understood as aspects of the one, common spiritual background. The enlightened heart knows that there is truth in every religion, that there is the search for the same reality in all philosophy, that in all forms of art there is going on the same effort at the interpretation of ideals. The unprejudiced mind, acquainted with the identity of all human aspiration, sees in all scientific pursuits, in whatsoever clime, a seeking amidst the pluralities of experience and the diversities of form for that unity, which the sages claim is ultimately spiritual. The sage is the true cosmopolitan. In all nations and in all races he finds progressive notions and progressive ideals; he finds that all nations have contributed something to the sum-total of human experience and that, therefore, race-distinction and colour-distinction should forever pass. The human spirit should be perceived,

for the human spirit is one and it is divine, how^r ever varied be the forms and conditions through and under which it finds expression.

The sense of oneness is what the world needs to-day. It has grown old with wars and international tribulations, but it will recover its youth when it recovers its spirit, and this rejuvenating spirit is the sense of oneness. The scientists have been speaking for years now on the common origin of man, biologically; the historians and the archæologists have been showing the common origin of man historically; and the sages see the common origin of man spiritually. Physically, historically and spiritually man is one; in all idealistic pursuits, in the realisation of all ideals, in the effort at perceiving ideals and interpreting them upon the field of life, man is one. The Vedantins go further, asserting that not only is man one, but the whole universe. Spiritual solidarity and spiritual unity are everywhere. The sense of distinction thus passes off. Gradually,—slowly but surely—the truth of things is being known, and that truth centres about spiritual oneness. So long as man takes cognizance only of the form, so long as he allows the differences of form to obstruct his perspective, so long war and tribulation and international friction will remain. Universal peace and universal brotherhood are impossible without the ideal of the spiritual oneness of mankind becoming universal.

“That which exists is one; sages call it variously.” This is true in all the departments of life. The sages of the world, busied with the interpretation of various aspects of the eternal wisdom and the Eternal, call That which is One under various names. The sages know that, though they labour in various ways with various results for the interpretation of the One, they are all united in the consciousness that behind the many there is the One. Thus true sages never differ. They appreciate the spiritual worth of the life and pursuits of others. Each is ready to lend a helping hand to others. And this fact that the sages, though variously occupied are in reality concerned with the one is being proved, day by day, in the growing inter-relatedness of all the arts and sciences. That all noble-minded men and women are clamouring for union in all the departments of life is due to the fact that the more enlightened leaders of

mankind are seeing this ideal of oneness. It may be that as yet the vision is somewhat dim, but that it is to widen and to widen until it attains its fulness one may be sure of, for behind the spirit of man there breathes the spirit of God, the spirit of the divine life, the spirit of the “One without a second.”

It is only in the external that there is differentiation, and the spiritual man, following the precepts of the Upanishads, looks inwards and not outwards for his realisation. Differentiation can exist only in the process by which the one life and intelligence in all appears many and manifold. What that process is we do not know. But this is certain, that divested of its objective character all life is one. It is that oneness about which religion, philosophy and science centre. It is the perception of unity which is instinctively desired. The unit is the necessary fact; the unit is the subject, so to speak. All the rest is objective. Subjectively, spiritual oneness is absolute; objectively the universe is manifold and relative. The former is permanent and thus real; the other, the relative, is ephemeral and thus unreal. Energy is always conserved, though that through which it expresses itself be destroyed; so that oneness of life is indestructible, though its objective character, manifest as personal mind and form, be subject to the vicissitudes of birth and death, good and evil, pleasure and pain.

All of us sense identity and continuity of being within human nature. This identity and continuity cannot be absolute in its relation to the changes of the body and the mind. Its absolute existence lies [in that it is one in all. Personality is, as it were, only a covering. Verily, there is but one Individual; personality is only an approach to Him. When personality merges in true individuality, then it becomes glorified and transfigured. In that oneness of all life and in that sensing by each and all of its existence and of its peace lie the greatest human possibilities. That one, ubiquitous, all-embracing, all-unifying reality which the Vedanta has called Brahman, is in the heart of one and all. It is greater than the greatest, as the Upanishads say, and yet smaller than the smallest. It is beyond all space and time relations and yet within the experience of each moment and each form. It is reflected in the

tinest as well as in the mightiest life. It is without as well as within. When the spiritual man has attained the Great Vision, then he superimposes the vision of oneness upon everything; he sees divinity everywhere. The universe and universal experience are to him manifestations of the divine nature and glory. Amidst all the plurality and the multiplicity of life, amidst all its friction and all its contradiction, he never for one instant loses sight of That which is the all-explaining and the all-

sustaining, That which is the Supreme. And therefore he alone fulfils that consciousness of the Upanishads, which reads,—

“He who in this world of manifoldness sees that One running through all existence; in this world of death he who finds that one infinite life; in this world of insentiency and ignorance he who finds that one light and knowledge, unto him comes eternal peace, unto none else, unto none else.”

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

XIII.

When the soul rose into the Stillness of the Innermost, the Voice made itself heard thus :

“Deeper than sin, deeper than evil is goodness. The fabric of the universe, its essential element, is goodness,—infinite, incomparable goodness. There can be naught of evil where there is God. Evil is phenomenal, and never real. Deep, deep in the sea of the soul are the immovable rocks of wisdom and of truth. Against these, all error and darkness and all evil must perish. True, on the surface there may be the violent noise of hurrying winds of desire, tempests of seething passion, hours of evil and of darkness, but realisation—one moment of realisation—is *omnipotent*. It sweeps aside all manner of raging and rampant evil. It is like the effulgence of the sun, blasting all darkness. Therefore, even in the darkness, remember the Light; even in the very midst of thy sinning, call upon the Name of the Lord! And He, the Lord, shall harken to thy prayers. He shall send His Angels to help thee. There is no power greater than the soul's own. Deep down is the flow of perpetual and unit divinity. One glimpse of That, and all sense of diversity in which sin and ignorance make their abode will disappear. In essence, thou art free, thou art pure, thou art divine. All the forces of the universe are at thy beck and call.

“Shalt thou struggle for freedom when thou art free! Thy aim must be the acquirement of spiritual knowledge. A single Ray of the Flame of the Beatific Vision destroys and eradicates the subtlest shades of evil. Know that thou art of the Strength and the Effulgence of the Eternal! Thy life is neither here nor there! It is stationed in Eternity! All this sense of sin, in the deepest sense, is ignorance. It is a dream. The nature of sin is weakness; be thou strong! One glimpse of That which thou art,—and thou art That, the Effulgent and Omnipotent!”

Then heard I the Voice cry out, as though in prayer :

“O builder of these tabernacles of sense and thought, destroy that which thou hast erected! Encased in fear, sex, food and sleep, and the thoughts that spring therefrom, thou hast, as it were, willingly enshrouded thyself in the denseness of ignorance, and thou goest on dreaming. Thy curse is thine own ignorance. Break down all dreams; destroy both the ideas of pleasure and pain, and the iron bar of the body-consciousness will be flung aside. Therefore the task before thee is prodigious. The web of Maya is as thin as the spider's, and yet equally as hard as adamant. O soul come to thine own rescue! This tabernacle thou hast built; this tabernacle thou must destroy! And the process of such destruction is thine

own Self-realisation. This involves the divine awareness of the Oneness. Shall the sun and the stars and even space itself swallow up Thy Nature? The Soul is one-d with Thee! Out of the darkness, out of ignorance, O soul! It is all self-imposed. Better pain than pleasure! Better misery than enjoyment! For these mould the forms of thought and sense into the shapes of fit vehicles for the revelation of the Spirit. Be thou the lover of the Terrible, O soul! And though in the vision of the Terrible thou shalt behold Death,—lo, verily, thou shalt also behold Immortality! Life is at best a dream. There is the Great Beyond. In the end unity is everywhere, a divine, all-embracing unity. It is all the same Sun though its rays be manifold. And the Ray is the Sun, and the Sun, the Ray. And thou,—thou art the Sun, —the Sun! And even in the darkness there is Light.”

Hearing this, my soul passed into the deeper and yet deeper stages of meditation; and I KNEW, yea, verily, the Ray Itself as the Sun.

Again the Presence came in the hours of meditation, speaking,—

“In the Silence, past all sound, in Eternal Peace thy nature dwells! Far from the tumultuous noise of sense, far from the agony and pain of life, far from the sense of sin and woe,—and yet even in their midst, dwells the Divinity That IS. How wonderful the weaving of the dream! And yet, more wonderful is the Dreamer than the dream! Immortal, past the boundaries of death, stainless, even in the presence of enormous evils, art thou, O soul,—and rooted in Divinity. Good and ill,—these are of the measurements of thought; and beyond thought art thou, the Effulgent and Supreme! The splendours of thy nature transcend all things! Incomparable art thou, beyond the terms of speech. O Effulgent and Celestial and Divine One, crowned in meditation’s and realisation’s height, who shall call thee sinner, or e’en saint; who can speak or even think of thee!

“O One in all, in all the same undying Self, who shall refer to thee in the terms of mortal life! Beyond art thou—Immortal. And, within e’en the turmoil of tempestuous thoughts, know there is the Silent Watcher of all things. His Light the will-o’-the-wisps of sense can never blind; nor can His peace be repressed by all the strife of life. Im-movable, unthinkable is He, beyond the sun, beyond the moon and stars. He is the Self; the Self is He; He is the victor in the wars of sense!

“However the mountain-heights of ignorance loom up, however the deeps of sin and woe be deep, He is the Encompasser of height and depth; He is the All, the One, the Engulfer of all variance! Know this and be thou Free, the Free!”

And the words came unto my soul,—

“Lo, I am ever near. When the net-work of thy sin is drawn closest, and thou dost labour in utter darkness, know I am there suffering with thee the enormities of thy sin. I am conscious of thine inmost Self, knowing well the workings of thine inmost soul. Thou canst keep naught from me, who am ever-present, not even a grain of thy secret thought. I am in thee; I know thee well. Without me thou canst not move nor breathe. Remember I am thy Self, going whither thou dost go, remaining where thou dost remain. Come, enfold thine heart in mine. Make it thy very own. Then all shall be well. Shadow and Silence,—in them I dwell,—within, in the tabernacle of thine heart. Go now! Go thou into the world and preach my word as wide as is the Self, for it is its life. My blessings thou e’er hast, and all-embracing love! Mine is as a mother’s love for thee; as is a dove’s love for its young, such is mine for thee. When trouble comes or danger threatens, remember I am thy servant, the lover of thy soul!”

When these words had ended, I knew that the Guru had spoken, washing away all my sins, and I cried out:

“O ecstasy intense that my heart knows,
being in the Presence of my Lord! One in
Him, one in Him! How sweet the flow of
such divinest thought!” And with the saints
I exclaimed unto my self,

“Plunge into the Sea of the Lord, O fool;
—plunge into the Sea of the Lord!”

HINDUISM AND THE MODERN TRANSITION

(By the late Sister Nivedita.)

IT may fairly be claimed that no nation in the world has the same opportunity for maintaining the continuity of its own character and development through the crisis of the Modern Transition as the Indian people possess in the Advaita philosophy.

Other countries have had to face the Transition. We are not peculiar in the nature of the ordeal which has been forced upon us. The machine in manufacture and the steam-engine in travel have forced upon the societies of the West as upon those of the East, the same problem of re-adjustment. “What is wanted in our time,” said the great European philosopher Auguste Comte, “is an impulse.....new.” What is really wanted everywhere, as this saying indicates, is a moral sense so strong as to carry the nations over the bridge between the two eras, without any loss of the highest and finest results of civilisation. But the outbreak of imperialism in the higher classes of the European democracies and of hooliganism in the lower, would both go to indicate that the moral sense had not made its appearance. In other words, Christianity had proved inadequate to the strain put upon it by the opportunities of exploitation which the modern world affords to man, as an individual and in communities. For a religion is proved inadequate when it fails to restrain man from evil, by the unaided action of conscience and habit.

That Christianity should so fail was inevitable from its intellectual limitations. Its elements of history and mythology could not fail to be discredited so soon as their likeness to other religions,

histories and mythologies assumed to be false, was discovered. And even its theology and philosophy were shaken, by the discoveries of modern science. And a religion which was itself on its trial could not hold over the minds and hearts of men and nations, the required position of unassailable authority.

Christianity, accepted and elaborated under the Roman Empire, had done well in carrying the Teutonic invaders of that Empire through the long struggles that were to end in giving them national cohesion and status within the Roman circle. It had done well enough for the white man in Europe. How would it stand the test of the American, the African, the Asiatic environment?

Some chapters of that story are already completed in the Book of Doom. Many acts of the great tragedy are already played out to their lurid end. And some are yet to write.

Meanwhile, let it be said that to every people who possess the elements of a truly national existence, with the responsibility of facing the problems of a nation, this question, sooner or later, comes to be faced. Have we in the past dreamt dreams great enough, thought thoughts noble enough, willed with a will clear enough, to enable us to strike out new paths into the untried, without error and without defeat? And perhaps of all the peoples of the world only the Hindu people, to this searching enquiry, can answer ‘yes.’

Christianity to the European in his own place, Islam to the Arab and to the African and to the Tartar in their home-lands. But Vedanta to all the peoples and all the faiths and all the developments of earth, extends its hand of steadiness, and stretches out cool waters of healing.

And this is because, in building up the philosophy no doubt was shirked, and each circumstance in turn became the starting-point of the realisation. The Hindu has no difficulty in understanding how “worshippers of the Devas go to the Devas. My own come to Me.” He has no difficulty in understanding this distinction, even when “My Own worship Me” as Siva or as Krishna, or as the Mother. “My own come to Me.”

Aye, accordingly, Hinduism is fit to pass through the ordeals of the Modern Transition.

Unpublished Notes of Class Talks by Swami Vivekananda

THE greatest name man ever gave to God is Truth. Truth is the fruit of realisation, therefore seek it within the soul. Get away from all books and forms and let your soul see its Self. "We are deluged and maddened by books," Sri Krishna declares. Be beyond the dualities of nature. The moment you think creed and form and ceremony the "be-all" and "end-all," then you are in bondage. Take part in them to help others, but take care they do not become a bondage. Religion is one, but its application must be various. Let each one, therefore, give his message, but find not the defects in other religions. You must come out from all form, if you would see the Light. Drink deep of the nectar of the knowledge of God. The man who realises "I am He," though clad in rags, is happy. Go forth into the Eternal and come back with Eternal Energy. The slave goes out to search for Truth; he comes back free.—From *The Message of the East*, Aug. 1912.

RELIGION

THERE is no one definition large enough to embrace all that the word religion stands for. I prefer to regard religion as the attraction between the soul and its spiritual Source. In considering the religious problem, experience, in the widest sense of the term, should be our guide. Let us begin with the one thing we know immediately—our inner life. An ever-changing stream of consciousness or psychic states—thought, feeling, will, emotion, etc.—this is the soul as given in our everyday experience. Experimental psychology, however, goes far to prove that there is a wider self of which this so called soul is but a fragment or an aspect. This view is attractively represented by Myers in his fascinating

book, "The human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death."

In popular parlance we say, man *has* a soul. It is more correct to say, man *is* a soul with a body. The body is the soul's instrument, and as such has its use. But the soul has become hypnotised by its physical form and engrossed in the senses; and it has forgotten its real nature, has got detached, as it were, from its deeper reality. It thus finds itself a weak, needy being, in this world of its own creation where pleasures end in pain and joys are but a mockery. This is what the Hindus call *Mâyá*. To break her spell and know our true Self is the work of religion.

Is there, then, a state of pure spiritual consciousness free from all matter? This question finds its answer in the transcendent experience of Saints, Mystics among Hindus, Buddhists, Sufis or Christians,—however much their religions may differ theoretically, all speak the one language of realisation. This is made clear with a great wealth of detail by William James in his wonderful book "The Varieties of Religious Experience," and is also exhaustively treated in Evelyn Underhill's "Mysticism"—a most instructive and inspiring work which I cannot too highly recommend. Similar reference to this catholicity of mystical experience is found in Schopenhauer's principal work, "The World as Will and Idea."

Is this mystic consciousness real, i. e., is it a true spiritual perception? Aye, by every test of reality.

1. It has universality: it is the common experience of a class of free souls, limited to no special religion, race, or age.

2. It alone gives absolute satisfaction. It is the one Good compared to which all earthly treasures are but worthless dross. It is the Blessing, the Peace, which leaves no further desire.

3. It is self-sufficient. It is reality in itself; it exists by its own grace and depends

on nothing. The man who has gained this state, the consciousness of the Divine, he is affected no more by the vicissitudes of terrene existence. Or in Schopenhauer's inimitable words, to him "it is all one whether he sees the sun set through the window of a palace or the bars of a prison."

Mystics endeavor to describe their Vision, and have to use the terms of common experience—the only ones there are. But their Knowledge cannot be communicated in the categories of cognition, and their real meaning remains hidden. Symbols reveal nothing unless we know in the concrete what they represent. The words of Seers can only be understood by life-repetition. Religious systems are the forms or outlines in which the mystic consciousness tries to express itself. Schemes of worship and devotion serve their purpose in inhibiting our sinful tendencies and liberating our spiritual consciousness. Whichever does this the most effectually for an individual, that is the faith true for him. It has the greatest pragmatic value.

No other scriptures voice the language of realisation so clearly, so unequivocally as India's sacred literature from the Upanishads down. The Hindu mind has not remained contented to take religion on hearsay, it must experience it. It is the empirical method of science applied to religion, and its fruits are the Buddha, the Rishis, the Yogins.

Some months ago I visited Buddha-Gayá, the most sacred shrine in the Buddhist world. In the temple grounds is the tree said to be a shoot of the original Bo-Tree under whose branches brooded the Blessed One. Here the earth was hallowed; here life's mystery had been solved. I stood on the spot where the Shakya Muni, merged in the depths of contemplation, became the Buddha; where a man sat down and a world-Saviour arose.

But we need not go back twenty-five hundred years to find an Incarnation of spiritual illumination in the home of the Vedas.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century there lived a man—if he may be called man—who was the Saint of saints, the Bhakta of bhaktas, the Yogin of yogins. What I know of him has been learned from Swami Vivekananda and other disciples of his who are still in this land of mortals. Ramakrishna, while yet a boy, was filled with an intense, all-consuming desire to know the truth of religion; if there was a spiritual reality behind the forms of worship, he must see it. It was again the Hindu mind that could not rest in secondhand knowledge. The quest of God became his sole object and purpose: his was a seriousness that sacrificed all to its aim. Absorbed in meditation, food and other physical wants were forgotten, and days and weeks passed without his knowing when the sun rose or set. For years it was a terrible struggle, but his was the courage which admits of no defeat. He won the victory. His realisations culminated in the Nirvikalpa Samâdhi. In that highest state of super-consciousness, the body becomes rigid and lifeless, and the soul is fused with the Eternal. Like a ghost before the light of the rising sun, the external universe has dissolved into nothing, and Spirit alone is. Dreams and dream-consciousness have vanished, and the soul has awakened in the ineffable glory of the Absolute. This is the supreme realisation of Mystics, and with Ramakrishna it was attainable at will, nay, would come involuntarily. Here he found the spiritual unity underlying the various apparently conflicting creeds, all of which he recognised as true in so far as they rouse the love that draws the soul to God.

Ramakrishna's holiness was such that in him an impure thought was impossible. His entire personality was transmuted into Divinity, his very body spiritualised. His life is the explanation and fulfilment of religion, its beginning and end. His life is *Renunciation* and *Realisation*.

A European.

THE PALACE OF PRITHVI RAJ.

I stand before the palace of Prithvi Raj ;
 Naught remains save an avenue of columns,
 Curiously and magnificently inlaid
 With carvings from some strange design
 That pleased the musing fancy of the king ;
 It seemed to cover all this mighty scene.
 I resurrect the image of the whole,
 Beholding the lengths and breadths of wondrous
 parks,
 Where lions with tigers roamed,—domesticated
 By the Raj himself, who tamed the beast,
 As well as conquered valiant enemies.
 Generous was the builder of this haunt,
 Several times vanquishing, each time forgiving
 The foreign king who came in conquest's name.
 But Fate decided last against his life ;
 Against this self-same Raj.
 He lost the day and all his kingdoms vast.
 But memory enshrouds his royal house with love.
 Admiring souls have paused to gaze upon
 And wonder at his dwelling-place,
 Which pillage, conquest and the hands of time
 Have caused to fall in ruined heaps.
 O'er the broken pillars of Prithvi's House
 Stand higher now great Moslem arches old
 With num'rous carved inscriptions from the Koran.
 These, too, survived the wreckage of the years,
 Calling how, upon the palace of Prithvi Raj,
 Moslem conquerors built a great Mahal.
 But little remains to tell the glories there,
 Wild ass and flocks of shepherds roam
 Where once the mightiest reigned ;
 And shrill-voiced monkeys climb
 The ruined Musjid's heights ; and crows
 And parrots caw their noisy note
 Throughout the silent day.

A Western Pilgrim.

Delhi, February, 1911.

THE SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

IV

(*Concluded from page 216*)

HE who is truly spiritual will never see any distortion. He will see the lovableness of every thing and of every being. He will feel himself the brother of all forms of life and his heart will have become a fountain-flow of inexhaustible love. Such an attitude is not the denial of individual relationship ; it makes one the true friend of all. It enlarges the scope of friendship and enhances the perspective of love. It changes the tide of personal emotions from the individual circumference to the universal centre ; it creates a universal domesticism.

The great trouble with the world, the source of all its sorrow and its bitterness have been narrowness and provincialism. The world has glorified the life of limitations, but now patriotism is giving way before cosmopolitanism, and individualism before universalism. Now it is becoming the world instead of the nation, it is becoming humanity instead of the race. But to the seer it is already not only the world, not only humanity ; it is the universe, the universal whole. In each face, whether animal or human, in each form of life, whether human or mineral, the seer sees the divine. He is the perceiver of the spirit, and the spirit is one ; though formless it shines equally existent in all forms. Anything that makes for this vision of the seer makes for the spiritual consciousness, destroys selfishness and induces the highest morality. The spiritual consciousness makes for the only and true liberalism, in which there lingers not even an atom of reservation or conservatism. He has conquered the illusion of life who steps out from the boundaries of limited personal awareness and who is concerned with the vision of reality and truth in its aspect of the constant making of characters. True religion consists, therefore, in moulding all the actions of life harmoniously in one supreme spiritual enterprise. It consists in the growing recognition of the fitness of all things and in the recognition that all human ideals are true, that all human longing is spiritual aspiration

and that all life is indissolubly interwoven and that there is but one destiny for all created things—the revelation of the spirit.

The meaning of life is seen at once, in the light of the spiritual consciousness, to be in the expansion from inferior to superior things. And it is readily admitted that the brief span of one life could not comprise the length or the complete process of such expansion. The seers have wisely stated that each soul passes through successive lives, growing gradually from experience to experience, acquiring more and more insight and becoming more and more selfless. The character of the lives lived may vary; now it may be as a king, now as a peasant, now as a poor artisan, now as a celebrated artist, now as a woman, now as a man, that the soul takes birth. The law of personal development is not concerned with the character of birth or of position, but with what the soul reaps and sows and sows and reaps in the making of experience and the use of opportunity. The soul shall be driven through all manner of experience, according to its special tendencies, until the spiritual ends are attained, until personality becomes transformed and the divine nature is made manifest. The expanse of the divine nature is the only goal that can satisfy the aspiration of the human heart. The soul longs, in truth, for more permanent realisations than the objects of the senses. Not the gaining of the whole world can satisfy the heart. It can never rest contented with objective things; for so long as it attaches itself to objective life it will be bound by its limitations. It is only the freedom of the subjective life, *per se*, it is only the freedom of pure being that can fulfil the soul's longing; and the realisation of pure being is the realisation of true self-hood. Man wanders and wanders along the paths of relative desire until he comes to know that in reality desire is infinite and its object likewise infinite. The highest wisdom is self-consciousness and this is invariably spiritual; the highest power is the knowledge, of peace and the highest work the awareness of perfection, for then both power and work shall have been superseded by the consciousness that both power and work are relative and that when the soul has attained true self-hood there is neither need for work nor for power.

This is the acme of the spiritual consciousness.

To discover the true contents of human nature is to discover the contents of the divine nature. What a radiance, what an effulgence and what transfiguration of personality are revealed when the soul has sounded the Self! Then all limitations burst asunder; all fears, all weaknesses fall off and infinite strength comes. Then the fear of death has been vanquished; desire has burst beyond all relative pursuits into the infinite realisation. The man stands self-revealed as God. To such an one who has saturated the mind with divine ideals the morrow or the present or the past can have no meaning. He dwells within eternity; his is the eternal consciousness. He has explored all the fields of human consciousness and has developed all latent potentialities of human faculty. He is beyond distinctions and the character or the depth of him cannot be measured. He is beyond all predicates or objects; he is at peace in the enduring, changeless subjectivity of the divine blessedness. He can be bound down by no sectarian doctrines or dogmas. His is the universal religion. He sees the ideal everywhere. In all religious bodies he perceives incarnate aspects of truth. He sees the divinity not only in organised religious creed and form, but in art and in science, in philosophy and in all the true, beautiful and good relationships and experiences of human life.

And he alone may be said to be possessed of the spiritual consciousness; his nature has become merged in the divine. And of him it is said,

“Him the water cannot wet, nor the air dry, nor desire circumscribe; nor can the limitations of birth or death affect him. He has gone into the secret of things. Him the fire cannot burn; him neither lust nor gold can lead astray. He has sensed the peace; with the peace he has become one; he is the peace,—the infinite peace, the glorified silence, the eternal beatitude, beyond the world. He has seen, he has become the True. Him neither hell nor heaven can contain. Him neither space nor time can measure. The absolute, the infinite, the all-containing! He is That which the ages seek—the divine.”

The End.

TO THE MEMORY OF THE SISTER

NIVEDITA

In a pretty little North Devon Cemetery on the 12th of this month (October), the writer had the great privilege of being one of those who attended the last rites over the ashes of the Sister Nivedita which had come from India.

The day was that preceding the first anniversary of her death, and the spot in which the ashes were interred was one hallowed to her on account of its being the resting-place of the earthly remains of her father and mother and another member of her family. Very appropriately, the service was performed by the Rev. Edward Bernstein, the present Minister of the Howe Congregational Church at Great Torrington, over which her father had been, in her girl-hood, the Pastor. In addition to her sister and brother-in-law (Mr. and Mrs. Wilson of Manchester), three of the Deacons of Howe Church were present at the simple little Burial Service, and one could almost picture the Spirit which had recently animated the few ashes of the earthly part of her who had been called the Sister Nivedita, pervading the spot which she had visited in the body not a great while before, on the occasion of her mother's cremated remains being placed there.

This final ceremony seemed a fitting termination of her latest earthly career, being the resolving of her physical body finally into one of its chief elements—earth. At the cremation in India *Fire* had done its part, and *Air* had received the more ethereal portion. *Water* had then claimed its share, and now the last few ashes remaining had been consigned to Mother *Earth*. What too, could have been more in keeping with her well-known breadth of mind, than that the East and West should thus unite in paying their last tributes to one who was, as it were, a link connecting the two? One ceremony in India—the other in England. One in the land of her adoption—the other in the land of her birth and early nurture.

The writer of this knew Maggie Noble as a little girl, full of fun and frolic, when she lived in her father's manse at Great Torrington. He met her again when she was in the full swing of her Indian

work and was paying a short visit here to place her mother's ashes in the family grave, and lastly, he saw her remains deposited in the same spot but a few weeks ago.

To her may be fittingly applied the sweet little poem which the Swami Vivekananda wrote in memory of J. J. Goodwin, another of his most devoted disciples:—

"Speed forth, O Soul, upon thy star-strewn path!

"Speed, blissful one, where thought is ever free!

"Where time and sense no longer mist the view,

"Eternal peace and blessings be on thee.

"Thy service true, complete thy sacrifice,

"Thy home the heart of love transcendent find,

"Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,

"Like altar-roses, fill thy place behind.

"Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,

"And—one with That which comes as Death and
Life,—

"Thou helpful one! Unselfish e'er on earth,

"Ahead, still aid with love this world of strife."

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee,

"The Lord lift up the light of His countenance
upon thee,

"And be gracious unto thee,

"And give thee peace.

"Send thee help from the Sanctuary,

"And strengthen thee out of Zion,

"Give thee thy heart's desire,

"And fulfil all thy mind.

"O Krishna, Thou loving Shepherd of the people,

"Buddha, Lord of infinite compassion,

"Jesus, Thou lover and Saviour of the soul,

"May Ye and all the nameless Masters of the spirit,

"Receive and save this soul!

"Keep her in Thine own presence, O Lord God,

"And let light perpetual shine upon her."

(An Indian Study of Love and Death).

George M. Doe.

Great Torrington, Devon,

Oct. 1912.

RANGADAS

(*Concluded from page 219.*)

FIRE is always latent in a piece of wood. Only the kindling, the first stimulus, requires to be given. And behold what an amount of warmth and light it gives both to the kindler and to those who flock round it. Such indeed was the case with Rangadas, and the world saw in him a perfected sage ready to give himself up to the spiritual betterment of humanity.

Somebody would make grand preparations for a Bhajana and invite the saint to join the Bhajana party. In the middle of a song, Rangadas would go into Samadhi, uttering 'Dum Dum,' which was none other than the symbol of symbols, 'Om.' To what ascents of spiritual uplift does this not point to! "How blessed are those," says Sri Ramakrishna, "that lose their senses, and whose hairs stand on end at the mere utterance of the name of God. They are surely on the road to salvation."

At the end of his Samadhi he would be offered something to eat. But he would not make use of his hands for eating anything, as he had already made the vow that he would not use any of his limbs to serve the needs of his body. No sooner was any fruit placed in his hand than he would throw it up into the air. But if some one put into his mouth a bit of sugar-candy or some fruit then only he would eat it. After a time he would once more be plunged into Samadhi, preceded by the repetition of 'Dum Dum' and a fit of rapturous joy and ecstasy. He would go on laughing heartily, apparently at the sight of the beautiful decorations of Divine Images and Pictures. Everyday, some household or other would arrange for a Bhajana entertainment and Rangadas would be in their midst. It sometimes happened that people who had made preparations for a Bhajana with the intention of inviting Rangadas and hearing his sweet sayings would be anticipated by another party, who had made similar arrangements in another part of the town and whose messengers had been successful in finding Rangadas out earlier. So, the Bhajana in their house had to be postponed till the next day.

Rangadas would at this time answer any questions put to him in a most logical and convincing manner. At the end of every Bhajana there would be a short discourse by Rangadas. People would put some questions to him and he would give them most satisfactory answers. In fact, it was often with the sole object of hearing the discourses of Rangadas that the Bhajanas were arranged. The writer had the good fortune to be present at a discussion which was brought to pass by the Masulipatam Theosophical Society, between our hero and a reputed logician who happened to visit this place on a touring excursion. The opponent was utterly defeated by our hero, by his pithy, pointed and decisive answers. Rangadas's conversations and discourses became very frequent. The sought-for engagements came pouring in upon him, and from morning till night, one day after another, he would be taken by the hand and led to the house of some earnest seeker after Truth. It seemed as if his health would speedily break down; and accordingly he was advised to observe silence. But he looked upon the proposal with contempt and exerted himself all the more to teach anybody at any hour of the day. Some people whose vocation did not permit them to approach him in the day-time, visited him at night and received spiritual instructions. Such was the kind and liberal heart that Rangadas possessed! His was no religion that taught doctrines or dogmas; it was a whole-hearted effort at bringing about the practical realisation of the Self. His ambition was to inspire everyone with his spiritual illumination. But unfortunately, he was not to live long in the human body. On several occasions, Rangadas was observed running in the streets of the town at nights crying aloud, "Awake, O ye, slumbering souls, and prepare yourselves, for when death may be approaching no one knows."

His fame now spread rapidly all over the neighbouring towns and villages. In Masulipatam, there was not a single family that did not know him. Even the ladies who had no opportunity of seeing or hearing him in public, invited him to their houses one after another and listened to his charming utterances. They would make him rich offerings of fruits and sweets to be taken home, but he would leave their houses empty-handed. What cares one even for all the treasures of the world, when

one has become an *Aptakama*, that is, when one has nothing else to desire but the Supreme Self, the Object of the soul's aspiration! To a man who has drunk deep of the nectar of Divinity itself, the sweetness of earthly things is as nothing at all!

Now, from amongst the general body of admirers, some close followers had already gathered, one of whom took notes of the sayings Rangadas uttered at every Bhajana party. An interesting fact concerning the saint was, that he could at this time compose exquisite Telugu poetry extempore. His verses and songs were perfect in metre, diction and treatment. Some of his teachings, which were recorded, were published in book form by his followers at Guntur. Nothing is impossible with God. Thus, it is no wonder that Rangadas, who had only the rudiments of education, could produce such finished poetry.

It is also said that he could appreciate painting in a marked way. A painter, who had become his follower, was asked to paint an oil-picture of Rangadas's friend and Guru, Chandamma, for one of her anniversary celebrations. Every artist knows that it is almost impossible to draw a sketch from only a verbal description of the subject. To bring out the features of even a familiar face, without the aid of a photo or some other likeness, is extremely difficult. As there was no portrait of Chandamma to serve as a model, and as the artist had never seen the lady, he was at a loss to know what to do. However, Rangadas described the features of the lady, the apparel and the jewels she usually wore and the posture in which she used generally to meditate, with such an exceptional accuracy and vividness that the painter was tempted to make an attempt. What he did was to take Rangadas to his studio and have him seated before the picture as it was being done, and Rangadas all along gave him valuable instructions and suggestions and corrected him in every detail in such a way that the result was surprising. The painter wonders to this day how the mere presence and the description by Rangadas had so much inspired him, that when the figure was completed, those who had known Chandamma declared that it was an exact and remarkable likeness. It was a splendid portrait, the exquisite qualities of which even a casual observer would be sure to notice. According to the artist, the painting

was altogether the result of the grace and blessings of his Guru, who was seated before him during the entire time the drawing was in progress.

At every Bhajana party, Rangadas would sing unmasked most melodiously. His sayings would sometimes be in verse which he would sing most musically, and at others in beautiful prose. Do we not hear how the poet Kalidas got all his power of versification by worshipping the Goddess Saraswati? And what of the Saint of the last century, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna! Was it not true, that although he could scarcely write his own name, his Ananya Bhakti or whole-souled devotion to Mother Kali, made him pour forth the nectar of divine knowledge in a unique way of expression! Did not all grades of intellectual people, men of light and leading, stand in awe before him, to hear the highest truths of philosophy and religion in his simple, practical and most convincing language? So, it is no wonder that Rangadas could compose verses and songs extempore which were beyond common-sense computation.

The orthodox and bigoted Brâhmans of the place who thought that a death-blow had been given to their Brâhmanical pride by their own kith and kin paying homage to a Sudra, those so-called philosophers who with their book-learning know how to carry on discussions, but without an atom of Bhakti in their hearts, as well as the fashionable, English-educated gentle-folk, all combined to put the abilities of Rangadas to severe tests. One or other of these would take him to his house, put questions to him on various subtle topics, but would invariably be vanquished by the glowing eloquence, practical examples and rich insight with which Rangadas answered them. He possessed the happy gift of replying to his opponents' questions by means of short stories.

Those of his luminous sayings and beautiful stories that were recorded and published, form but an insignificant portion of his numerous utterances and teachings. When he became well-known, many people made every effort to preserve his sayings lest they would be forgotten. The teachings of Rangadas were noted particularly for their simplicity. Even the illiterate could very easily grasp their meaning.

When the Swami Ramakrishnananda visited

Masulipatam in the year 1904, some leading and distinguished gentlemen, by a pre-arrangement, brought Rangadas to meet him. Before the latter appeared the Swamiji had been discoursing to the assembled party on various religious topics. The conversation had just turned upon explaining the true nature of God the Absolute, when Rangadas came in. "To describe the true nature of God is impossible," said the Swamiji, and he quoted the familiar saying and parable of his Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa,—the Parable of the Salt Doll which tried to measure the depth of the ocean. He said, "No sooner had the salt doll touched the water than it became one with the ocean merging its own substance in the substance of the sea. Every particle of the doll melted away. It could not come back and tell, metaphysically speaking, of the depth of the mighty ocean. Such, likewise, is the case with him who has realised God the Absolute in Samadhi. He cannot come back to tell the world fully of the nature of the Absolute and Unconditioned Reality. If, however, it were possible for the salt doll to return, it would perforce speak in the terms of the relative and the finite. It could not in reality present a description of its experience. The Absolute and Unconditioned cannot, the comparison holding equal, be stated in terms of the relative and the conditioned. The Infinite cannot be expressed in the terms of the finite." An interpreter translated the English of the Swamiji and the Telugu of Rangadas. Rangadas having heard his words, said in deep spiritual sympathy, "The mouth shutteth itself in its very attempt at defining the Oneness of the Supreme. The tongue becomes dumb in its effort to express the Absolute." So also says Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in one place, "How can one give expression to It (the Unconditioned Being) by any word of mouth? If thou art asked to describe the ocean, thou standest with thy mouth wide open and canst only stammer out, 'Oh what a vast expanse! What multitudinous waves! What a thundering sound, incessant and eternal!' That is all." Rangadas's words were then translated to the Swami Ramakrishnananda who expressed to those present, that the speaker was a Jnani of a very high order,—a rarity among mankind, especially in this Kali Yuga (Iron age). He counselled his hearers to avail themselves of the presence of this spiritual genius in their midst. Rangadas, overcome with humility, thought that he was being flattered unduly and at once sharply retorted, saying, "That mouth from which proceedeth flattery of others is verily defiled." Ramakrishnanandaji replied, "Swamiji, I never intended to flatter you. I only exhorted the gentlemen to make the best of the life and example of a God-realised soul among them." Rangadas expressed regret that he had unwittingly misunderstood the Swami. This

short conversation which occupied only a few minutes, did not satisfy those who had brought about the meeting of these two great souls. They wished that more of an exchange of thought should take place. But what question could either of them put to the other? Each was a perennial fountain of Bhakti, Jnana and Vairagya, and talking seemed a discordant element. Each seemed filled with ecstasy at the sight of the other, and it was a joy to behold Rangadas looking with admiration at the face of the Swamiji with half-closed eyes, like a child immersed in an unnamable glory in the presence of its father. The Swamiji himself was, as it were, like the sea, so majestic, yet so calm. He expressed great delight at having seen such a noble and great soul in these parts. The gentlemen who arranged the meeting came to realise that they had hitherto treated Rangadas indifferently, not knowing his worth. True it is that the Prophet is not respected in his own country, in his own day. Since this meeting Rangadas's fame spread to all communities, and even the learned invited him more often to their residences and heard his teachings with greater veneration; and the ladies of their houses were delighted at having more favourable opportunities of serving Rangadas, at the instance of their husbands themselves. Rangadas was thus busy day and night, teaching and instructing all those who were eager to hear his words.

But all this proved too great a strain on his physical capacities, and after a time he fell seriously ill. A fortnight previous to his death, he warned his disciples of his approaching end and exhorted all of them to be near him and have all their doubts cleared. The news that Rangadas was about to give up the body caused the greatest anxiety amongst all his disciples. From far and near they came and sat at the feet of their master. Admirers from all directions also flocked round him. In highly eloquent and ecstatic tones he began to pour forth the gist of all his previous sayings in the hearing of all his disciples, friends and admirers, and also of his father, mother and brothers. He appeared much happier than ever before, and every now and then repeated his cherished symbol, 'Dum Dum.' He was never sparing in his teachings to anyone that sought them, though he felt very weak from his illness. His state grew worse and worse. After a week of malignant fever, during which he refused to take any medicine whatever, he entered that final Samadhi from which there could be no return. He did not even ask for a drop of fresh water when his fever raged worst. He retained full consciousness till the very end. In his last hours when Doctors asked him whether he felt great pain in his body, he replied, "I am enjoying Supreme Bliss. I do not feel any pain whatever." Rangadas seems to have predicted the exact time of his death, and uttering

the profoundest declaration of the Spirit, 'Sivoham, Sivoham,' he calmly, and as it were, cheerfully, dropped off all mortal bonds entering Mahasamadhi on the 4th day of December, 1907.

The news spread like wild fire. From early morning till nightfall of that day his house was filled with crowds of mourning devotees, who regarded him as their Master.

Since his death, a *mantapa* has been erected over the place where his remains were buried, and a garden laid out around it. A life-size oil-painting of the saint has been put up in the *mantapa*. His blessed memory is cherished by the annual celebration of a five days' festival in the town, when Bhajana, Bhagavata and Harikatha Kalakshepams are held. Bhaktas and followers from various quarters gather together in large numbers and make the anniversary celebrations most stirring and emotional in character. His memory is preserved in other ways also. In his name Samajes have been established in the towns of Masulipatam, Guntur, Bezwada, Bapatla, Gudivada, Muktyala and in the village of Patamatilanka. They are all in a flourishing condition, as they are bound to be, for they bear on their banners the hallowed name of Rangadas whose heart always felt, "From me, naught but peace shall flow to any living being."

Such was the hero of this sketch who though of tender years, possessed the heart and wisdom of a sage, whose life was a shining example of spirituality in this age of commercial greed and intellectual agnosticism. He was, indeed, a flower born to blish comparatively unseen, in his own day, but whose sweetness was not to be wasted on the desert air. Already the fragrance of his life is spreading sweet perfume in the hearts of men, for it was deeply rooted in that imperishable Reality, the Insight of which is the very soul of Bharatavarsha.

C. Ramakrishna Rao.

PEACE.

"Peace," the wise note of men of master-mind,
Of those high souls whose voices still resound
Through all our worlds and wars,

Come, Prince of Peace ;

Flash forth the love-light from thy God-lit lamp,
That all who live may live as one in love.

Eric Hammond.

THE NINTH YEARLY REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY, HIMALAYAS.

With the passing of October 1912, the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary of the Advaita Ashrama, completed the ninth year of its useful existence, and it gives us great pleasure to lay before our readers a general report of the work done.

Situated as the Dispensary is in the midst of the Himalayan forests stretching for miles and miles and only relieved by very sparsely-populated villages here and there, the value of the work done should not be gauged merely by the number of patients but by the urgency of their demands, and the extreme helplessness of their condition, which we cannot emphasise too strongly here.

Owing to the Doctor leaving in the middle of September, we are sorry to say that the Dispensary work suffered a great deal, thus accounting for the comparatively small number of patients treated this year. We are trying our best to secure a competent medical man, and in this we seek the help of our readers to find for us one such from among their friends, if possible, who will be willing to take charge of the work in the spirit of disinterested service, at the same time devoting his spare time and energy, unhampered by worldly influences, to spiritual exercises and study. The limited means at our disposal do not allow us to have a paid doctor, but we shall be glad to meet the Doctor's maintenance costs, and defray his travelling expenses to Mayavati.

Our thanks and best wishes go to our kind subscribers and donors who, actuated by the noblest of motives, have lent us their support and thus made it possible to fulfil the duty that we owe to the suffering humanity, who come to our door from distant villages seeking for relief from physical ailments. Our special thanks are due to "A German Friend" who has very generously sent the handsome donation of Rs. 700 to the general expenses of the Dispensary and Rs. 1300 to the Building fund; and to "A Friend" who has given Rs. 50 worth of Allopathic and Homœopathic medicines and has promised to do the same every year; and also to the Government for giving free of charge 6 Deodar trees towards the building.

We are glad to inform our readers that the construction of the permanent quarters for the Dispensary and the indoor patients has been taken in hand by clearing, levelling and banking up a suitable site adjoining the Ashrama compound, and building the foundations. But the original proposal of one-storied house with three rooms at an estimate of Rs. 2000, had to be enlarged to one of a two-storied house which will contain, (1) a dispensary-room, (2) an examining room, (3) a

room for indoor patients, (4) a room for the doctor-in-charge, (5) a bath room (6) and also a kitchen separate from the main building. This will at least cost Rs. 3000, and of this amount about Rs. 2050 are already subscribed. As we feel it an urgent need to complete the building within the next few months, we have undertaken the work relying on the generosity of numerous friends and subscribers, and we earnestly appeal to them and to the general public to help us in this matter by each sending a contribution, according to his means, as early as convenient.

Contributions, however small, towards the *Building Fund*, or the *General Dispensary Fund* will be thankfully acknowledged in the *Prabuddha Bharata* by the editor. In sending a donation, please mention for which of the above funds it is meant.

Below is given a short report of the work done as well as a statement of Receipts and Disbursements during the year:—

(a) Statement of Diseases treated:—

Fever	49	Rheumatism	30
Debility & Anæmia	36	Diarrhœa	12
Gonorrhœa	58	Piles	8
Veneræal Diseases	30	Colic	14
Dysentery	40	Worms	10
Accidents	26	Other complaints	21
Asthma	24		
Diseases of the Eye	36		
„ „ „ Ear	12		
		Total	406

(b) Statement of religion and sex of persons treated:—

Hindus	Men	180	Women	86	Children	50	Total	316
Mahommedans	„	41	„	26	„	14		81
Europeans	„	5	„	4	„	0		9
Total.	„	226	„	116	„	64		406

(c) Statement of Indoor and Outdoor patients treated:—

Indoor patients:—21; of which 17 were cured and 4 left treatment. Outdoor patients:—385.

(d) Receipts during the year Rs. As. P.

Last year's balance	100	6	9
Amount of Subscriptions received, as acknowledged in this paper	195	0	0
A German Friend	700	0	0
“A Friend” who gave medicines worth	50	0	0

(g) Statement of total Receipts and Disbursements for the Dispensary during the last nine years:—

	Public donations and subscriptions	Advaita Ashrama & P. B. Office, Mayavati	Total Receipts	Total Disbursements
From Nov. '03 to Oct. '11	Rs. 1135-11-3	Rs. 1030-11-9	Rs. 2166-7-0	Rs. 2066-0-3
„ Nov. '11 to Oct. '12	„ 963-15-0	0	„ 963-15-0	„ 161-9-0
From Nov. '03 to Oct. '12	Rs. 2099-10-3	Rs. 1030-11-9	Rs. 3130-6-0	Rs. 2227-9-3
Balance left	Rs. 902-12-9.			

N. L. Pradhan Esq., Dhulia	10	0	0
Abdul Rahman Esq., B. N. Borneo	4	15	0
Prof. S. C. Dey, Bareilly, for Oct.	2	0	0
D. K. Natu Esq., Malvan „ „	2	0	0

Total Receipts ... Rs.	1064	5	9
Total Disbursements ... „	161	9	0

Balance in hand, Rs. ...	902	12	9
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(e) Disbursements during the year Rs. As. P.

Allopathic medicines bought	100	4	0
Homœopathic medicines „	8	0	0
Surgical outfit	4	12	0
Railway freight and coolie hire for bringing up the things from Calcutta	10	13	0
Medical books	2	12	0
Personal expenses of the Doctor	35	0	0

Total Disbursements ... Rs.	161	9	0
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(f) Statement of the total number of persons treated during the last nine years:—

From Nov. '03 to Oct. '11 (vide P. B. Dec. '11)	Europeans	64	Mahommedans	349	Hindus	5251	Total	5684
„ Nov. '11 to Oct. '12	9	81	316	406				
Total—Nov. '03 to Oct. '12, 73	430	5567	6070					

(h) Receipts for the Building Fund:—

Last year's balance	646	8	0
Amount of subscriptions received, as acknowledged in this paper	77	14	0
A German Friend	1300	0	0
Abdul Rahman Esq., B. N. Borneo	5	0	0
Savings Bank interest on the deposit	21	12	0

Total Receipts ... Rs.	2051	2	0
Total Disbursements ... „	284	7	9

Balance in hand Rs.	1766	10	3
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(i) Disbursements for the Building Fund

By coolie labour for clearing, levelling and banking up the site	155	4	6
By masonry work for building the foundations	129	3	3

Total Disbursements ... Rs.	284	7	9
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NEWS AND MISCELLANIES

(CULLED AND CONDENSED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

IN the whole world there are more than 21,000 different kinds of postage stamps.

PROFESSOR Hans Tetigen of Munich declares that flowers are sensitive to music. They expand or close under certain melodies.

AT a Poultry Exhibition at St. Paul, Minn., a fine Cochin cock was exhibited harnessed to a light baby's four-wheeled carriage which it pulled with the gravity of a steed.

IT may not be generally known that King George is a successful gardener, and takes no help unless it be from the Queen. Often vegetables raised by him go to the table of Queen Alexandra.

MRS. Alice M. Diehl, the author of eighty-nine novels, who died only a few weeks ago, had dictated stories to her nurse while only three years old and when she was eight, she had published a volume of poems.

ONE atom of hydrogen, the lightest body before known, is 1760 times more massive than one electron. Electrons repel, so that they cannot be forced together. If they could, a row of one inch long would contain 12,700,000,000,000.—Prof. E. L. Larkin.

THE first Indian to fly is Mr. S. W. Setti, Assistant Engineer, P. W. D., Mysore. He has obtained his certificate from Brooklands where he flies on "Avro" monoplane. Mr. Setti was an engineering student at Roorkee College where he passed with honours, afterwards going to England to take up aviation.

IN all British India 54 out of 1,293 Civilians are Indians, while 1,239 are Europeans. Of military and other officers in civil employ holding positions ordinarily reserved for members of the Indian Civil Service, there are 126. Of these the number of Indians is only 7, the remaining 119 being

Europeans. In all the provinces there are 47 members of the Provincial Civil Service holding offices ordinarily reserved for members of the Indian Civil Service. Which all means that out of 1,466 higher civil offices, so many as 1,343 are filled by Europeans, leaving 123 to Indians. These 123 Indians do not fill the highest offices carrying the largest emoluments.—*Leader*.

'The Angel of Mercy' is the title of a strange legend which appeared in the May number of 'Wahres Leben.' We present it to our readers not on account of its intrinsic value, but for the moral attached to it.

The mother of St. Peter, we are told, was a callous and miserly woman. At her death she was therefore committed to the lower regions. When, in course of time, St. Peter found his just reward in Heaven, he immediately remembered his mother, and through his intercession an Angel of Mercy was sent out to bring her to Paradise. The unhappy soul was overjoyed at her pending salvation, but it so happened that, when she was being lifted up by the angel, some of her fellow-sufferers clung to her. The angel took his flight upwards, apparently not noticing his additional burden. The mother of St. Peter, however, became angry. She was afraid her guide might not have sufficient strength to carry so many, or that her reception in Heaven might be less cordial on account of the hangers-on; in any case, she tried to free herself of them. One by one she shook them off, but with each one who disappeared, the strength of the angel decreased. When the last one had dropped off, he was so exhausted that he could no longer carry St. Peter's mother, and she, too, fell back into her former abode.

This legend symbolises humanity and its endeavour to escape from its bondage towards the spiritual light. The unfortunate and the poor who accompany us on our earthly journey are not a hindrance, but rather an aid to our upward ascent day by day. Society that would throw off its diseased and maimed members would sink into the lowest depth of selfishness. It is only through courageous self-sacrifice and incessant endeavour to lift our poor unfortunate brethren and sisters that we can rise with the Angel of Mercy towards our final goal in Heaven.—*Light*, Aug. 3, '12.