

# 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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## THE IDEAS, IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.\*

BY SWAMI SARADANANDA.

Whether he wishes it or not, man from his very birth finds himself concerned, confronted and conjoined always with two mysterious, vast, indefinite objects—the internal and the external world, or to speak more accurately, with two sets of phenomena, of which, learning in time to get a collective outlook, he comes to a sort of indefinite knowledge of the existence of two separate worlds, the internal and the external, and finds them acting and reacting on each other through him. His body, his mind and his ego forming part and parcel of them both, he finds himself to be the mysterious joining point or the connecting link between the two.

Proceeding in time to search and find out the truth about them, he sees naturally that two paths of inquiry

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\* Paper read at the Convention of the Order on 3rd April, 1926.

are open to him—the subjective and the objective. And the former of these seeming nearer and more likely to lead him to truth, he begins to advance rapidly through it. 'Know thy own Self,' 'Know That by knowing which you will know the mystery of everything in this universe'—became the motto at this time throughout the then civilised world. The old Vedic Rishis, Kapila, Krishna and Buddha in India, Laotze in China, Socrates in Greece, Jesus Christ in Jerusalem and many others in Egypt and other countries, joined in the quest and gave from time to time the results of their researches in what knowledge the human race possesses of philosophy and metaphysics. Considering well what little objective knowledge mankind had at the time, they came to the conclusion that it would never be possible to know the ultimate Reality through that path and took to the lines of deep meditation, of self-introspection and self-control to reach the goal. The terms in which they expressed the ultimate Reality after realisation, however, come so near to and are so much alike to one another that they lead us to think that each one of the great ancient seers must have arrived exactly at the same point on the mental plane to get such a similar view of the underlying Truth or Reality. Ancient history records the fact that all those great seers of old, Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Socrates, Jesus and others, used to drive so deep within themselves while following the introspective method of meditation, that they used to have trances, or that they forgot the existence of the outside world and of their own body during the time. It appears also from them that India used to be ahead of other countries in following this subjective path.

The sum and substance of the results obtained by the old seers at different times may be summed up as follows : That the ego in man is but a limited expression of the permanent part of him, the Soul or Self or Atman or Brahman; that the Atman or Brahman is the unlimited universal substratum of everything and therefore it is one without a second; that the highest illumination is attained



on realising one's oneness with this Atman or ultimate Reality; that the impersonal Atman or Brahman appears to us as the universe and the personal God in our attempts to know It through our limited mind and intellect. These results of course were obtained by following the method for many many centuries, of which history gives us but a very imperfect record. In the meantime the objective knowledge of the human race went on increasing and accumulating, and the advance of trade and commerce brought in facilities for interchange and spread of thoughts and ideas.

The historians of the West give us the idea that the attempt to reach the Truth by the objective method was not resorted to by the human race until a little after the Renaissance, when the human mind found itself free for the first time from its old moorings in Europe. The writings of the distinguished European authors of that period and a little after that time, e.g., *The Novum Organum* of Lord Bacon, they cite as testifying to the fact. However true it might be for the Western countries, India has a different account of its own on this point. The Western savants have not yet been able to find how old the civilisation of India is, in spite of their different assertions about it from time to time. They have been compelled to push it back several thousand years by the findings of certain excavations quite recently made in some parts of Western India, and it seems possible that they will have to alter their present conclusions also in time. It is best for us, therefore, to hold fast to the old traditions prevalent in the country and to the records which our scriptures and old books supply us on the point.

The Swami Vivekananda seemed to hold the opinion that Indian civilisation was the oldest on the globe, and that all other countries were indebted to the Vedas of India for the idea of the immortality of the Soul of man and its oneness with ultimate Reality underlying the universe. We can have our own opinions regarding the same and wait to accept it until it has been proved clearly by the evidence of history. But the great strides that



India made of old to develop her objective knowledge proves clearly the fact that far from ignoring it she used to pursue it with great zeal in almost every direction, centuries before the Renaissance in Europe. Her researches with plants and metals in the field of medicine, her surgery and astronomy, her theory of the creation of the universe from atoms and speculations regarding the nature of them, as are to be found in the Vaishesika philosophy, her methods of ship-building and navigation and the principles for organised, successful government of a country, as are to be found in her old books, all tend to prove the fact.

Liberty of thought and action was never put down by law in old India, in the field of religion and philosophy or in pursuing one's research in any kind of knowledge. What they wanted strictly from every individual of the community was to subscribe to the rules and customs of society, and to the belief in the sanctity and the truth of the records of super-conscious experiences of the great seers, that are to be found in the Vedas, and especially in the Vedanta part of it. And it seems that this belief in the authority of the Vedas arose after the nation had found repeatedly convincing proofs about it in the lives of the devotees who had followed them with sincere and earnest zeal, and after the attainment of the supreme stage of super-consciousness had been rendered into a perfect science by the religious leaders. Thus we find knowledge divided principally into two main divisions, the *parâ* and the *oparâ*—the higher, by which the unlimited, ultimate Reality or the absolute, unchangeable Truth could be realised, and the lower, by which relative truths regarding all objects within the boundaries of time, space and causation—music, painting, sculpture, architecture, in short everything—were gained.

In Europe and the Far West, where the end of the subjective path had not been attained before, the Renaissance brought in a terrible reaction. Everything relating to the subjective method was thrown overboard, and the educated lost all faith in religion and the super-conscious

Gaudapada begins by demonstrating the unreality of dreams. Of course the illusory character of a dream does not require much to be proved,—it is so obvious. This is what Gaudapada says :

“The wise declare the unsubstantiality of all that is seen in dream, it being all within the body, on account of its partaking of the subtle. Nor does the seer of the dream see distant places by going out to them, for the time taken up does in no way appear to be long (nor is there any relation with space) ; nor does the dreamer, on being awake, find himself in the place (of his dream).” (This and other quotations from Gaudapada are taken from Dvidevi’s Translation.)

That is to say, dreams have no actual time and space in them, though they *seem* to have them. Time and space as perceived in dreams are illusory, non-existent. So also causality. We well know how causal relations of the dreamland appear absurd on our waking up.

Our waking experiences are woven on the web of time, space and causality. Are they also as unreal as the time, space and causality of the dream experience? Gaudapada asserts that we have no real and valid reasons to think that our waking experiences are in any way different from dream experiences. So he says :

“As in dream, so in waking, the objects seen are unsubstantial, though the two differ by the one being internal and subtle, and the other external and gross. The wise regard the wakeful as well as the dreaming condition as one, in consequence of the similarity of the objective experience in either, on grounds already described.”

In fact, the experience of a dream by one when he is actually dreaming, and the experience of one who is perceiving the world in the wakeful state, can in no way be distinguished from each other. Both are identical. The difference that we usually feel between them is caused by our knowledge of the futility of the dreams by having awoke from them. Suppose one were to transcend the waking state. Will not one then find the waking experience also as fantastic and incongruous as one does the dreaming state?

Says Descartes in his *Meditations* : “When I consider the



contentment by controlling the desires of the flesh. In ancient India the objective method was followed with vigour, but was never allowed to delude the mind with its undue importance and to transcend its boundaries. With due respect for the path, it was always confined to its own place of discovering relative truths and laws and the applications of them to make human life rich and comfortable. But the basic principles of individual, social and national life were always taken from the great conclusions arrived at by following the subjective method. Self-control was the foundation on which life's whole structure rested, and the ranks in society were measured and divided by that unit of standard. Money and the comforts of life had their value, but a life of renunciation for a noble ideal was regarded much higher and commanded the esteem of all grades of society. Thus poverty had never been the stumbling-block to the recognition of one's greatness in society, and "plain living and high thinking" was always held up as the ideal. Then again the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation—that we are reaping the results of what we sowed in our former incarnation and will have to reap in our next birth what we are sowing in this—kept the people from being discontented with their own lot and getting jealous of their neighbours. And above all, the rules for regulating the daily life of the individual and society were always framed with the view that they might rise higher gradually and be fitted in future for a life of perfect self-control and renunciation that are necessary for realising the Atman within or the ultimate Reality.

The outlook and consideration of human life and its different activities from the two standpoints of absolute and relative Reality enabled them to set a proper value on things and events and warded off the danger that came through an overestimate of them. Thus comprising and combining the subjective with the objective view of things, the *Pâramârthika* with the *Vyâvahârîka*, the Ideal grew and became clear in men's minds. And the way, too, was found by which all kinds of Karma could

be made to lead both the individual and the community to the realisation of the goal, the super-conscious state.

Times there were when by the attractions of the flesh and the self-forgetfulness and vanity which material power and prosperity bring, the people were led astray from this ideal of life, but the Lord has always been kind to India and in His mercy has always kept His promise to the people to reincarnate Himself when needed for the re-establishment of righteousness. The Great Ones whom India has been worshipping all along as incarnations of the Deity—from the dreaded Rama with the terrible axe, to Kapila, Krishna, Buddha, Sankara and others, have every one of them appeared at such critical periods in the national life of India and have either brought the people back to the ideal of renunciation or helped them to proceed towards that Ideal by removing the hindrances that obstructed their path. Thus the ship of the national life in India had been sailing through rough and calm waters in its voyage to find the safe haven in the "eternal Rock of Ages," the absolute Reality in and beyond the universe, protected by the all-merciful hand of Providence, until the time came for its facing the roughest weather of all after the great Sankara had left its helm in other hands.

Vast and various were the evils that had entered into the body of the nation when Sankara began his reform work during the period of the downfall of Buddhism. It seems that the preachers of that religion had had to lower their ideal in many places to bring the nations with little or no ethical standard whatsoever, of Northern Asia into the fold. They had to compromise truth with half-truths, the pure light of religion and renunciation with the prevalent local customs, habits and superstitions. Thus the enormous and extensive spread of that religion was then made at the cost of its intense spirit of sacrifice for what was true and noble. The infirmities of the adherents had gradually entered the ranks of the teachers, and in time the people and the preachers of India also had been affected with the same evils by their communication with



them. Increase of intermarriage had produced among the people a great many mixed or sub-castes in different grades of development, and it became a question of time and spread of culture to weld them into one homogeneous whole. Rules were then framed for not going outside of India to prevent this medley of confusion getting worse. But they could not prevent the coming over and frequent invasions of the sturdy barbarian hordes of Chins, Huns, Sakas and the rest who had been living in Middle and Northern Asia. Many of these conquerors settled in India and made the problem of uniting the people into one nation more complex.

And before the country had time to settle those internal affairs and establish itself firmly as before on the Vedic Ideals, in came the invasion of the Yavanas or the Greeks, and a little later, of the Pathans and the Mughals. And the dark age for India was complete when during and after the downfall of the great Mughal, the supremacy of the country was partly handed over, and partly wrested from the native chiefs to and by the British Power.

Bound hand and foot, despoiled of all her wealth, power and knowledge by foreign hands, hypnotised by material power and the false glamour of the two days' material civilisation of the West, in abject misery lies she, the queen adored of nations, the mother of heroes and spiritual giants, nay, of God-men, who had rendered holy this little planet of ours by using it as their footstool—she who had helped her neighbours with religion, knowledge, both subjective and objective, and had never spread devastation and ruin in other lands in the name of conquest! And is there no hope, none whatever? And has the God of India forgotten her and His promise to her of old? The night darkened, and the bonds tightened more than ever! And sometime in 1836, in going to determine the kind of culture and education that should be given her children to enable them to free her and raise her to her former glory, it was settled that Western education, imparted through the medium of the English language,



would be the best under the circumstances! Aye, even the genius of Raja Ram Mohun Roy subscribed to introduce that foreign language, and as the Swami Vivekananda said, "helped to set the nation back for fifty years or more thereby! The country would have received the Western method of education and the objective sciences of the West in a few years, had he but translated the Western books into Sanskrit and made that language the medium of instruction."

But God in His mercy for poor India heard her prayers! And the 18th February of that same year (1836) saw the birth of that personality in a wayside village in Bengal, who by his unique realisations in the field of religion and unforeseen spiritual powers helped to convince the people of the country of the greatness of the old Indian Ideal and prevented the national bark from proceeding any further towards the rocks and sands of the materialistic civilisation of the West. Without getting any aid from the much vaunted education of modern times, he by his innate spiritual powers saw light where the best of the book-educated university-men of the day found only darkness. From the high transcendental super-conscious plane in which he passed his days, the absolute Self, God, the Soul of man, and their relation with one another, the object of creation, of human life and its activities, and the way by which that object is best fulfilled—appeared clear as things in daylight. And he used to talk about those things incessantly to all who gathered round him, in such a simple language and with such pointed similes, aphorisms and parables, that the meaning, becoming clear and palpable to everyone, would touch and carry impression into the hearts of all. We shall take the opportunity of telling you here what the Swami Vivekananda thought about this towering personality and the ideal that has been manifested in and through his godly life for the benefit of India and humanity at large.

"Many times in the past had India passed through downfalls which had left her stunned and bewildered,

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and the God of India had for as many times protected and restored life and vigour into her by manifesting Himself unto her in His mercy. But those past downfalls appear light and trivial, compared with the depths to which she has fallen at present. Never had this holy land been enveloped before with such a long night of deep and dismal misery. But it is almost over now, and soon will its darkness wane before the radiant rays of dawn.

“And the re-awakening of the country will be in proportion to this unprecedented fall, and the mighty manifestation of strength and vigour of the present rise will put into insignificance all the past revivals. They will be shorn of their glory and importance as stars before the sun.

“For, to teach people the religion practised by the Aryans and to show them the common ground of unity among the apparently divided sects that, coming into existence in different times and places and with different social rules and customs, lie scattered all over the country and are quarrelling always with one another regarding the principles of religion, and yet all of which go by the common name of Hinduism—the Lord has manifested Himself again as Sri Ramakrishna. Yea, holding within himself the realisations of the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedas, the principles of which on application were found to be true for all times and places, he has appeared in this new incarnation as the living embodiment of the eternal and universal religion itself for the benefit of humanity.

“To prove that the super-conscious knowledge that is ever existent in the Lord, reveals itself always to the perfectly pure in spirit, even though devoid of all book-learning, and that the scriptures are true inasmuch as they are the records of the same, he has in this incarnation risen to that knowledge through faith in God and purity, discarding all help that any form of book-learning can give.

“In this present dispensation suited to the age



lies the source of infinite good for India, as well as for the whole world ; and the founder of it, Sri Ramakrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the great Masters of religion of the past. O man, have faith in this. . . . From the worship of the dead past we invite you to the worship of the living present."

Nowhere in the past history of the world have we come across the fact of any of the great teachers of religion trying to find out what truth there is in the various paths through which men are travelling towards the religious goals, since the dawn of religion and religious ideas in this planet of ours. Sri Ramakrishna alone had the inclination and boldness to try the same in our time, by taking initiation from the professed teachers of almost all the prevalent great religions of the world, Hinduism, Mahomedanism and Christianity, one after another, realising the goal of one before proceeding to realise the goal of the others. And the results of his research have tolled the death-knell of all religious intolerance and bigotry that have filled men and nations with hatred towards one another.

The realisations of Sri Ramakrishna can be summed up briefly as follows—

(a) Every sincere devotee of any religion whatsoever will have to pass through the three stages of dualism, qualified monism and ultimately monism.

(b) As all jackals howl in the same pitch, so all devotees of any religion whatsoever have declared in the past and will continue to do so in future, their oneness with the Deity on realising the heights of monism.

(c) There need not be any quarrel between dualism, qualified monism and monism, for each comes in turn to every devotee in accordance with the growth and development of his spiritual life.

(d) The positive part of every religion, in which are found the way and the method of procedure through that way, as well as the goal which a sincere follower of that way would reach in the end—is true. But the negative, which speaks of punishment and damnation, eternal or

otherwise, for the straggler, is not so, being added to the former for keeping the members of the community from deserting and straying to other folds.

(e) Religion can be transmitted to others by will and touch by the great teachers.

(f) In the Sanatana Dharma of the Vedanta are to be found the eternal principles and laws that govern every single manifestation of religion in a particular time, place and environment.

(g) Stick to your own religion, and think that the followers of other religions are coming to the same goal through different paths.

Thus the Ideal suited to the age was completed after twelve long years of unheard-of struggle and renunciation, and the great Master knew that at last the time was ripe for the coming of those who would get the direct touch of his spirit and carry the Ideal everywhere in India and abroad. They came, and he knew each one of them as if he was long acquainted with them. And to the one whom he chose to make the leader of them all, when he said how he had been waiting impatiently to meet him, for he had come to know that the Divine Mother would make him the instrument to perform Her great work of uplifting India and other countries—he could not believe on account of the sceptical spirit of Western education which he had imbibed before. Strange as it is, it is not the first time that we have heard of such things about the great Masters of religion. Sankara, Chaitanya and others did the same, and Jesus not only knew his disciples, but said when he met Peter, “Upon this rock shall I build my temple!”

So the Master went on training those young men and left them in 1886, giving directions to the leader, the Swami Vivekananda, for the spread of his great message. Gentlemen, I need not enter into great details henceforth. You all know how, fired with love for their great Master and zeal for his message, this little band of young, energetic workers, without a single piece of copper in their pocket, went barefooted almost all over India,



knowing not what to eat or where to lie down, month after month and year after year ; how the great message spread itself gradually ; how in 1893 the Swami Vivekananda went to America to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; how by the inscrutable ways of the Divine Mother, the object of that august assembly was turned as it were and made to suit and serve the purpose of the advent of the Swami before the public and the glory of Hinduism ; and how winning laurel after laurel for Mother India and Hinduism in America and England, he returned to India in 1897 and started the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Swami started the Mission at first with both the lay and monastic disciples of the Master. But the former took little interest in it after a year or two, and ultimately all the work of the Mission was transferred into the hands of the monks of this Math. The Mission was started by the Swami for spreading the religious Ideal of Sri Ramakrishna by interpreting the scriptures in the light of the great Master's life and realisations and with his idea of service to humanity looking upon human beings as images of God, nay as God Himself. So preaching and philanthropic activities were the two main divisions of the Mission. But what the Swami wanted of each one of us was to do the works of those two divisions in the spirit of Karma-Yoga or perfect unselfishness by idealising not only the work itself, but the men and women also, with whom we come in contact in the course of its performance and for whom we do it, as the Deity Himself. But how to preach and teach and serve if we give up the idea that they need them? And the answer is that your scripture teaches you not only to look upon the Deity as perfect, but to do so with regard to every part of Him.

What if He has preferred to appear before you as imperfect—as sick and miserable and ignorant and starving—to give you the opportunity of getting benefited yourself by serving Him in those shapes? Thus we shall

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have to do the preaching, teaching and serving in that light. It will protect us from getting vain with the idea of our importance in going to help others, and make us more and more unselfish as we go on doing the work in that spirit, and will enable us ultimately, to realise the Vedanta idea that the Universe and *every* bit of it is God and nothing but God. No work is good or bad in itself, but the motive with which we proceed to do it makes it so. The same work which brings bondage upon bondage when we proceed to do it with selfish motives, frees and makes us rise higher and higher when we do it with perfectly unselfish motives and with no idea of gain to us, even of name and fame.

Thus the Ramakrishna Mission, gentlemen, teaches us to do all works with the highest of motives. Are you a householder? Then look upon your wife and children as images of God and serve them with your whole heart. Are you a monk? Then look upon all human beings as incarnations of God and serve with all your might, and it will help you to rise to the super-conscious state. Are you a patriot? Then give up all petty jealousies and heart-burnings which limit your vision, and work incessantly to make your country really great by helping it to stand on what is true and noble. Thus to reach the super-conscious goal by renunciation and service and to help others to do the same, are what the Mission teaches every one of us. To teach men to stand firm on the Ideal that has been given to us as our precious inheritance by Sri Ramakrishna, and then to learn and apply the relative truths that the West has discovered to improve the material condition of India—are what the Mission enjoins on every one of us.

Such, gentlemen, is the Ideal of the Ramakrishna Mission, and such the ideas which it wants to work out for the good of humanity. May He whose unique spiritual life is the inspiring Ideal behind the Mission, and he who has shown us how to apply that Ideal practically into our daily lives, bless us and give us light and strength



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to follow in their footsteps for the real welfare of India and our own selves.

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## THE FUTURE OF BUDDHISM.

What exactly is signified by the revived interest in Buddhism all the world over? How far is it an acknowledged allegiance to its author, and how far to its doctrines and philosophies? What indeed will its future relations be in regard to other religions? These are some of the questions that the approaching thrice-blessed birthday of the Lord Buddha has evoked in our mind. It cannot be denied that this interest is daily growing in depth and extent. The educated and the thoughtful everywhere are being attracted by it, and the celebration of the anniversary, widely observed in India and abroad, shows that the interest is more than merely intellectual.

From their very first contact with Oriental learning and culture, the Western scholars, with their characteristic enthusiasm and thoroughness, had taken to the study of Buddhism together with that of Vedic literature and philosophy. And we confess, though to our evident shame, that the greater part of the intellectual basis of the Buddhistic revival is owing to the noble efforts of those Western savants. The Pali Text Society, The Sacred Books of the East Series, The Sacred Books of the Buddhist Series, The Harvard Oriental Series, The German Pali Text Society and similar other societies are concrete symbols of their genuine interest and perseverance in the service of the religion of the Buddha. We must mention in this connection also the preachings of the early theosophists, for the revival is at least partly owing to them, and that beautiful and well-renowned poem, *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold.

In India, the birthplace of Buddhism, the growing influence is traceable, besides the Theosophical Society,

also to the unique attitude of Swami Vivekananda towards the Lord Buddha, and his original and correct interpretation of the true relations of Buddhism to Hinduism. Whoever have gone through the life and teachings of the Swami, cannot but be struck with his wonderful love and devotion for the Compassionate One. Even as early as his student days he had a vision of the Lord, which left a deep and indelible impression on his life. A disciple writes: "That was a great hour indeed, when he spoke of Buddha ; for, catching a word that seemed to identify him with its anti-Brahmanical spirit, an uncomprehending listener said, 'Why Swami, I did not know that you were a Buddhist!' 'Madam,' he said rounding on her, his whole face aglow with the inspiration of that name, 'I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha. Who was there ever like Him?—the Lord—who never performed one action for Himself—with a heart that embraced the whole world! So full of pity that He—prince and monk—would give His life to save a little goat! So loving that He sacrificed Himself to the hunger of a tigress!—to the hospitality of a pariah and blessed him! And He came into my room when I was a boy, and I fell at His feet! For I knew it was the Lord Himself!' " The same disciple tells us again: "May one of them never forget a certain day of consecration, in the chapel at the monastery, when, as the opening step in a life-time, so to speak, he first taught her to perform the worship of Siva, and then made the whole culminate in an offering of flowers at the feet of the Buddha! 'Go thou,' he said, as if addressing in one person each separate soul that would ever come to him for guidance, 'and follow Him, who was born and gave His life for others *five hundred times*, before He attained the vision of the Buddha!' " To many of us, Swami Vivekananda almost appears to have taken up the work initiated by Buddha among humanity, from where the declining Buddhism left it. Did not Swamiji declare many a time that the idea for which Buddha lived can be properly practised and



realised only now, and that the disciples had frustrated by their imperfect understanding the purpose of the Master? Anyhow, it is certain that if the religion of the Buddha comes again to occupy a distinctive place in the worship of India, it will be not a little due to the synthetic influence of the great Swami.

To many the religion of the Buddha signifies the denial and repudiation of Hinduism, as if they were rival churches without an underlying unity. This rivalry of religions is an idea which is absolutely foreign to the Indian mind. Divergent philosophies there were, and correspondingly different practices. But all these, in spite of their philosophical quarrels, were considered equally valid means of realising the life's ideal and as such valued components of the One Eternal Religion. In this light only the mutual relation of Hinduism and Buddhism can be correctly seen. The idea of their mutual exclusiveness is, we are afraid, of modern and foreign origin. The ancient vision is to-day clouded by confused understanding and ignorance. True to our intellectual vassalage to the West, we have swallowed this intellectual morsel unsalted, and have consequently to witness the sight of daughters aggressively asserting themselves against the Mother Church, as if in their Mother's house they have not room enough to live and grow freely to their full statures! Nothing could be more erroneous and suicidal. The vision of the Re-nascent Hinduism, synthetic and all-comprehensive, reclaiming her lost provinces and assimilating new ones, is, alas, yet enveloped in thick darkness for the mass of our educated countrymen!

What indeed shall be the form of the revived Buddhism? Will it grow up as a separate dominant creed? Do we hope that its apparently atheistic philosophy will dominate human mind again? Nothing of the kind, we are afraid, is going to happen. We are inclined to believe that however subtle and logical the Buddhistic philosophies may be, the Time-spirit is against them. Two reasons may be indicated generally.

First, this is pre-eminently the age of science, and science is decidedly positive in its outlook and ontological implications, which Buddhistic doctrines are not. Secondly, man is by nature averse to negations and as such unwilling to welcome negative philosophic prospects. Of this more later on. Not with the philosophies that pass in his name, then, can the Buddha sway again the heart of mankind. Sankara has a better chance in this respect. It is the wonderful *life* of the Compassionate One, its human appeal, its battle-cry of renunciation and spiritual emancipation, and its great compassionate motif that are going to reconquer the lost dominions. In order to derive the greatest benefit from the growing interest in Buddhism, it is necessary therefore to learn to understand the Buddha as distinguished from his doctrines and philosophies, and we are glad that some at least are slowly veering round to that point of view.

A fairly large volume containing 550 pages, nicely printed and bound in yellow cloth, with yellow top, so reminiscent of the yellow garb of the Buddhist monk, has been lying on our table for some time. *The Doctrine of the Buddha\** is replete with interesting materials, and though slightly lacking in elegance of style, grips the interest of the reader by the sincere earnestness of its appeal. It is no wonder "that the German (original) edition of the work has aroused the keenest interest, as well in scientific circles as among the general public, and already in the few years that have passed since its first publication, fourteen editions have been necessary to meet the great demand for it." The present English edition has been prepared by the author himself with the assistance of an English scholar and is said to contain some entirely new matter. The bulk of the book consists of a lucid and comprehensive delineation of the Four Most Excellent Truths. He purposely eschews Buddhist metaphysics, which in-

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\* *The Doctrine of the Buddha*.—The Religion of Reason, by George Grimm. Published by the Offizin W. Drugulin, Leipzig. Price, Sh. 15.



dicates that the author has a clear idea of its relative unimportance in the present age. He rightly observes: ". . . Much greater sinners in this direction as regards the determining of the *original* Buddha-doctrine have been, for many centuries, nay, actually for two millenniums the Buddhist monks of Asia; and sinners in this direction particularly, they still are to-day. Among them the Abhidhamma, indeed, the Milindapanha, and the yet later actual commentaries are worshipped as the acme of the highest wisdom, with such a reverence, nay, with such an inexhaustible enthusiasm, that, in the end, one might easily quite forget that in addition to the authors of this *exegetical* literature there also once lived a *Buddha*. . . Why... do you need an Abhidhamma? Why a Buddhaghosa? Why all the other commentators when you would have the Buddha-word in the *original*? Does not Buddha suffice you? . . . Has the Abhidhamma yet begotten any saints at all? . . . To-day, the Southern Buddhism has fallen so low that it expressly forbids its monks to try to lay hold of the teaching of the Buddha by the exercise of their own powers of understanding. The 'collective opinion' of the Three Councils, the so-called Theravāda-interpretation, as it is preserved in the Island of *Lanka* (Ceylon), is the sole standard of truth. . . As well the Northern as the Southern Buddhism of Asia are . . . *independent developments* of the original teachings of the Buddha which already had set in not very long after his death."

In contrast thereto, the author claims to have set forth in the present work the *original* genuine teachings of Buddha. The work is built exclusively upon the sayings of Buddha himself and his leading disciples who lived contemporaneously with him; and this confers a special value on the book inasmuch as thereby it has become a fine anthology of the most noteworthy passages from the Buddhist Canon.

We are quite one with the author in his rejecting the later metaphysical developments and reversion to

the original doctrines of the Buddha. This indeed should be the attitude of one who would be of service to the religion of the Lord as well as the modern world. But in our opinion the author does not go far enough. There is no dearth of ideas, philosophies or doctrines in the world at the present time. It is not want of logic in the existing systems, which has made the modern man irreligious. It is the vision of life that is wanting. What the world needs to-day is a few lives which shall stand before it as the living demonstrations of the truths and ideals that religion has been preaching from times immemorial. And the life of the Buddha is such an one. Therefore it is his *life* and *character* as distinguished from his doctrines, that should be upheld before mankind. They alone have a universal appeal.

Some there are who seem to entertain the belief that the revival of Buddhism will come about by supplanting other religions. We need not say that it is only a fond delusion. Old creeds do not generally revive in any extensive scale, even as past history does not exactly repeat itself. This militant attitude therefore is neither wise nor fruitful. The other day we came across a protest against this attitude in the February issue of *The Young East* (Japan) from a Boston lady who observes: "There is one tendency, I notice, in the magazine *The Young East* on the part of some of the writers and also to a certain extent in the statement of the purpose of the magazine, that troubles me a little. It is this. The putting forth of the idea in any form that Buddhism only can save the world. To say this in any way or form seems to me an error likely to wreck the spiritual contribution Japan could make to the world." Thus though as a creed Buddhism may not be much in request, it is undeniable that the character of the Lord Buddha will again receive in India and elsewhere the loving homage of innumerable souls, more and more as days pass on.

As an embodiment of the universal ideal of spiritual life, as the ideal modern man, rational, masculine and infinitely compassionate, "the greatest of Aryans", "the



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one absolutely sane," shall he reign in the hearts of men and find a place in all spiritual visions of life. There is an eternal element in the life of the Lord Buddha whose appeal is for all times. His compassion and love for all living beings, his strong and deep yearning for the realisation of Truth, the Saving Truth that heals the wounds of the suffering worlds, his practical outlook which makes directly at the essentials of life, silently passing over all theoretical accretions, and above all, his original and wonderful contribution to the spiritual ideal by making it fruitful in the loving service of all beings,—all these have an irresistible charm for the modern man. Not the nice philosophical disquisitions of his followers, but the human appeal of his own life it was that carried Buddhism over lands far and wide, as a supreme consolation to the people everywhere and "far and near, in homes of men there spread an unknown peace." It is this humanism mainly that has roused again the interest of mankind in the present age. This wonderful character of the man and not the philosophy blessed by his name, that shall ever be the object of our loving homage and worship. And the Buddha, as he himself declared, was not a person, but a realisation to which any one might attain. This realisation indeed can come through any religion and philosophy, not merely through the orthodox Buddhistic practices and philosophies. It is in this spirit that we welcome the revival of Buddhism and consider the contributions of Buddhism necessary for the revival of Hinduism. "The heart of Buddha and the intellect of Sankaracharya,"—was not that always Swami Vivekananda's definition of the future of Hinduism and the highest possibility of humanity?

Not as a separate creed then, but as a universal element in all spiritual visions of life, shall Buddhism come up again. "Many a house of life hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought these prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught ; sore was my ceaseless strife ! But now, thou builder of this Tabernacle—thou ! I know thee ! Never shalt thou build again these walls of pain,

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nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay fresh rafters on the clay ; broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split ! Delusion fashioned it ! Safe pass I thence— Deliverance to obtain.” It is the fiery spirit that lay behind these words that is again attracting humanity. Men are again feeling the spell of that infinitely loving heart that felt itself one in sympathy and compassion even with the plant-life. “May all beings be full of happiness and secure ! May they all be happy ! Whatever there are of living beings, whether they move or are bound in their place, whether they are weak or strong, whether long or short, whether big or small, whether medium of size, or slim or stout, whether visible or invisible, whether near or far, whether now in life or longing to come into life, may they all be happy ! As a mother protects her only child with her own life, cultivate such boundless love towards all beings ! ”

His spirit shall permeate all lands and peoples, and his influence shall be like unto the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers everywhere. His mission, so far as we can understand, was at no time a credal aggression. He came to fulfil, not to destroy. He discovered the knowledge which when he came was circumscribed among the few and was grown over with meaningless practices and theoretical accretions, and spread it broadcast among the people. He directed men’s attention to the fundamentals of life. He never indulged in criticisms of philosophical systems and was silent on those tenets which to many are a potent source of confusion and misapprehension. He emphasised the practical aspects of the spiritual life and showed its bearings on social and collective life. He gave it a new turn that it might yield a rich harvest in fruitful service instead of losing itself in the intricacies of ritualism.

But we must not forget that the ideal preached by the Buddha was identical with the Vedantic ideal, and that only its philosophical presentation was different. The psychological analysis on which he based his



practical teachings was not exactly that of the Vedantic teachers. The reason of this difference was that, desiring to avoid all controversy on the supersensuous and the transcendental, he conceived life and reality only in their phenomenal aspect in opposition to the noumenal view-point of the Vedanta. He represented them even as they seem on the surface, eternally changing and full of suffering. By itself this outlook was not calculated to much impress the people. But three other factors gave it a strong support. First, its practical implication,—the cessation of sorrow, a goal covetable to one and all. Secondly, the Buddha's open and bold declaration that Nirvana and the Knowledge of Truth were equally for all, irrespective of caste or colour, which ushered in the dawn of a new social and religious freedom for the people. And thirdly, the life of the Buddha himself and its message of service, compassion and love. This last element is the very core and essence of Buddhism. Whatever degree of unreality there was in the philosophical ideal was more than counterbalanced by the tremendous appeal of the sublime character of the Buddha. That life was not nothing. It was on the other hand an eloquent witness of a superior life and reality. And in the light of the appeal of that life in favour of service and universal love, the world philosophically conceived as evanescent and illusory, became the most real of all realities as the very person of the Lord of salvation. In this way life was made real, the world real, service of man real, and the widest commonalty established. Now this also is exactly the objective of the Vedanta, only its interpretations are different. While Buddhism started with "many" as the real, denying the existence of the "one," the Vedanta stood on the truth of the "one" as the real and considered the "many" as illusory. But both arrived at the same point where the service and love of men adorned the threshold of the Hall of the Ultimate. Thus Renunciation and Service,—the two eternal ideals of Hinduism found a new inspiration through the life

and teachings of the Buddha. It was no new "ism" that he promulgated. He was the fulfiller of Hinduism, and as such we offer our soul's worship at his blessed feet.

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## THE BASIC IDEA OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION.\*

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA.

You have heard a good deal about the ideas, ideals and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. As I do not presume to be able to hold your attention for a long time on the subject, I shall say only a few words in connection with the basic idea which this Mission is trying to work out according to its humble capacity.

Let me begin by drawing your attention to an interesting phenomenon of the history of human civilisation. Out of the human race have evolved two different types of *Supermen*—the Monster-man and the God-man. The Monster-man says, 'The world is for me ;' the God-man says, 'I am for the world.' The one says, 'The weak must be sacrificed for the strong ;' while the other says, 'The strong must be sacrificed for the weak.' The Monster-man says, 'Might is right ;' the God-man says, 'Righteousness is might.'

Indeed, these two types of Supermen have furnished humanity with two different paths. When the ideal of the God-man captures the imagination of the human race or a section thereof, civilisation advances, wholly or partially, in the path of love and sacrifice, and there is peace, individual as well as collective. When the other ideal holds its sway, the path of civilisation is marked by fight, and there is unrest, individual as well as collective.

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\* A speech delivered at the Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention.



The modern world has almost thrown overboard the ideal of the God-man. The Monster-man is its avowed ideal. Buddha, Christ, Sankara, Muhammad have all been thrown to the background ; they are being preserved like so many interesting specimens of fossils for antiquarian research. Their commandments have all been swept aside, as they have been found to be incompatible with the tastes and requirements of modern society.

Modern culture aims at developing the intellect, but it has no eye upon chastening the heart which is left under the sway of brute instincts. Selfishness, jealousy, anger, hatred, and lust for power and possession rule the modern man. Intellect has advanced, science, art, industries, and commerce have made a headway, but they are manipulated for aggrandising the strong and exploiting the weak—simply because man in spite of his boasted culture has remained a weakling helplessly swayed by brute impulses of greed and ferocity. A gigantic brain worked by a brute mind makes a monster ; and modern society is seized with the ambition of producing monsters. But, alas, monsters cannot bring peace either to themselves or to the world !

The watchword of modern civilisation is *survival of the fittest*. This is a law taken from brute life. Man is about to forget the fact that he differs widely from the brutes. The brutes cannot sow, nor can they weave ; the brutes cannot increase their efficiency, nor can they reduce their wants ; so they struggle for their existence, and they feel no moral scruple in suppressing the weak. They have no demand for spiritual growth, and so they require no lesson on self-sacrifice. It is the prerogative of man to evolve spiritually towards the ideal of God-man by obeying the *law of love and sacrifice*. It is the prerogative of man to taste the transcendental bliss of spiritual growth that love and sacrifice do always bring in their train. It is the prerogative of man to ask for the pardon of those who have fixed him on the cross. The brutes cannot do this—they do not produce a Buddha or a Christ. So, for man the law of real evolution is the

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law of renunciation and service. But, alas, modern society has pinned its faith on the brute. It is bent upon preserving brute instincts and brute laws on the human plane. This is why there is so much fraud and strife, unrest and agony all over the world.

Now, what is the remedy? What will solve the fundamental problem of the world's sufferings? What will wash off the bad blood that has been created between Labour and Capital, the ruler and the ruled, the coloured races and the white, between different sects, different communities and different nations? The solution is simple. Humanity has to shift its angle of vision from the ideal of the Monster-man to that of the God-man. Man has to replace the brute doctrine of the survival of the fittest by the divine law of love and sacrifice—renunciation and service. Humanity for its peace, nay for its very existence, has to accept the motto of "serving the weak, the down-trodden as Narayana, as divinity." This is no cant for a handful of Sannyasins, but a working formula for the whole world to readjust its affairs—a watchword for the right type of human civilisation. This is the solution. But our fascination for the wrong ideal is too strong! The right path of peace and progress is hidden from our vision!

At this grave crisis of human civilisation another God-man has appeared on the scene to attract our vision towards the path illuminated by a galaxy of God-men that the world has produced. The ideals of faith and purity, truth and sincerity, love and sacrifice have again blazed forth in all their splendour in Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who stands like a pillar of fire showing the right path to erring humanity.

It is in the hallowed name of this God-man that this Mission is standing meekly to whisper into the ears of men the message that they have to accept the ideal of the God-man, they have to obey the law of renunciation and service and adjust their affairs accordingly—otherwise peace individual or collective will remain an absurd dream. This Mission is standing here with the banner



of renunciation and service, to serve the world with India's offerings of spiritual ideas and ideals which have been required urgently for the redress of human sufferings all over the world and for bringing about a greater renaissance for which the world is waiting.

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### TO NANDA DEVI.\*

BY D. RUTTLEDGE.

I was a mortal  
In a lonely world,  
That went about just  
As a chrysalis might,  
Wrapt round in gloomy doubt.  
My brows were puckered,  
And mine eyes were dull,  
My shoulders loaded  
With perplexities.  
At last I spied thee,  
And with quickened step  
To lay my sins down  
Hastened to thy feet.  
With sobs that choked me  
And with tear-drowned eyes,  
I drew them forth and  
Laid them one by one,  
Self-consciousness and  
Limitation laid,  
And criticism  
Of another's way,  
Fear of his thought and  
Fear too of mine own.  
Thou didst not change, but  
Just a mighty voice

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\* One of the highest and most sublime peaks of the Himalayas visible from the Adwaita Ashrama, Mayavati.—EDITOR, P. B.

As of the blast that  
 Strikes the enduring rock  
 Pealed from on high and  
 Cried: "These are not *thou*,  
 Rise up and be *thy-*  
*Self*." Astounded, I  
 Was raised a little  
 Then, and saw beyond  
 The crys'lis wall of self—  
 The world laid out as  
 In some great design.  
 Each nation and each  
 Kingdom had its place,  
 Like notes of music  
 In a glorious scale:  
 The Life of God the  
 Melody therein.  
 I am awake and  
 Will no longer bear  
 The burden of  
 A self-made tyranny.

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION CONVENTION.

BY AN OBSERVER

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission Convention held at the Belur Math during the first week of April, the first of its kind in the annals of the Order, was a unique affair, whose importance may be attributed to more reasons than one. Graced and blessed by almost all the living disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, the occasion afforded an opportunity for the representatives of the Math and Mission from far and near to congregate together at their headquarters. About 90 centres of the Order from Mayavati to Jaffna and Bombay to Assam as also from the United States of America were represented. The Math wore a picturesque appearance with the ochre robes



and white dresses of about 200 monks and Brahmacharins. Members representing the various philanthropic, educational, preaching and publication departments of the organisation sat together and discussed only to find that their apparently diverse items of work converged to one ideal only, viz., the realisation of Truth through different channels of activities. People speaking different languages—Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujrati, Hindi, Malayalam, Assamese and English—created a polyglot tongue which gave expression to one ideal alone—the grand ideal realised by Sri Ramakrishna and interpreted by Swami Vivekananda. It was really a great sight to see how various communities that have otherwise very little in common in them could unite on the common platform of spirituality. The Convention meeting under the shadow of the Belur Math, which, as Swamiji emphatically prophesied, would supply spiritual food to the world for at least 500 years to come, gave ample inkling of the future development of the Order that would by its benign influence enable the different communities of the country to discover their national unity based on religion, and ultimately usher in a new age for the world by preaching the ideal of toleration and love, urging every one to work without malice and hatred.

The programme of the Convention, which sat for eight days, was a heavy and varied one. Learned discourses were given on the ideals of the Hindu religion and philosophy as well as on the social service and contagious diseases and their prevention by experts. Bhajan and music attracted as much attention of the people as the athletic shows and muscle displays. All these items left an indelible impression upon the minds of the visitors. An observer could not but be struck with the discovery that the cult of the future would make room for all healthy activities, eschewing none and embracing all, and it would attune even the grossest secular work to the highest verity and practicalise the sacerdotal ideals by fitting them to the actualities of the human life.

The various public meetings held under the auspices of the Convention were all well-attended. The public evinced a keen interest in the deliberations. Eminent monks of the Order read their papers and delivered their speeches. Every one carefully demonstrated how the ideal of religion as interpreted by the life of Sri Ramakrishna was, instead of being a dreamy unreality, a concern of the living reality of human life. Apart from the speeches of the President and the Secretary of the Mission, the paper read by Principal Kamakhya Nath Mitra of Faridpur dealing with the ideals, ideas and activities of the Ramakrishna Mission evoked universal applause.

An outside observer is not expected to know anything that might happen behind the screen. But that outwardly the Convention breathed a spirit of love, toleration and creative ideals may be admitted without any fear of dispute. No event happened to mar the harmony of the occasion by creating a rift in the lute.

The reports of the activities of over a hundred centres controlled and managed by the Ramakrishna Order, read at the representatives' gathering, demonstrated the expansion of its activities among all classes, sections and communities of people. They proved how silently and steadily the Order has been spreading its influence throughout the length and breadth of the country, and how fast it is being recognised as one of the few institutions that would, keeping themselves aloof from the feverish and tempestuous agitation of the time, ultimately help in the birth of the renascent India. Taking advantage of the occasion, workers of the different centres compared notes with one another regarding their respective success or failure, and all, it seemed, felt the necessity for consolidating their work, keeping a vigilant eye upon its progress that extensity might not be achieved at the cost of intensity, and that in the development of the activities the real spirit of Swamiji's Karma-Yoga might not be lost sight of.

In a series of conversazioni held generally in the



evening after the day's work was over, the senior Swamis of the Order gave opportunities to the representatives and visitors to have their doubts solved regarding various problems of work and religion. Swamis Shivananda, Saradananda, Vijnanananda, Akhandananda, Subodhananda and Nirmalananda—all of whom had sat at the feet of the Master for longer and shorter periods—created, each in his own way, an impression upon the minds of the younger members, which has surely proved of inestimable value to them. These informal meetings were a prominent feature of the Convention, and many confessed that they might not have a similar experience in their life-time again. The blessings of the elders, their encouragement and admonition, and words of caution and advice were the greatest incentive to not a few workers. More than writings and speeches, these revered elders represented the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna and threw new light on many an unilluminated aspect of our life.

By a curious irony of fate, while various speakers were preaching the unity and harmony of religions and exhorting all to foster a spirit of mutual love and toleration on the Convention grounds, the metropolis on the other side of the Ganges was witnessing great orgy of murder, assassination, incendiarism and destruction of property owing to the deeds of religious fanatics among the Hindus and Muhammedans. While speaker after speaker explained the gospel of love and service in the public meetings here, the Calcutta mob, gone beyond the bounds of control, exhibited the worst fury of hatred, jealousy and other beastly propensities. In the Convention Swami Saradananda sounded a note of warning. "If all of you," said he in one of the public meetings, "had tried to practise toleration by following in the footsteps of Sri Ramakrishna and spread its contagion among the classes and masses, Calcutta to-day would have been spared such blood-curdling events. Reconciliation between different communities of India will never be affected by mere inter-dining and exchange of social

courtesies or considerations of political expediency. Only a proper understanding and practical application of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna can bring about this happy consummation." He exhorted everyone to understand the responsibility resting upon his shoulders and consecrate his life and soul to the discharge of it.

The Convention is over. Many of the representatives have gone back to their respective centres with its happy memory. The very fact of the meeting together of so many consecrated souls was a source of great inspiration and enlightenment to all. The consciousness of the serious responsibilities that they would be called upon to bear in life has set them a-thinking. All the members who met on the occasion realised it as a great privilege in their life. Such Conventions are by no means unprecedented things in the religious history of the world. The synods of the early Christians and the Councils of the Buddhistic monks are great events of history, which consolidated their respective religions on sound and secure bases. The direct results of the early Buddhistic Councils were the systematisation of the teachings of Buddha in the form of the *Tripitaka* and the despatch of Bhikshus to the various countries of Asia for the preaching of the ethical religion propounded by the Enlightened One. The effect of such a wise step as a great leaven for shaping the civilisation of the world is keenly felt even to-day. The meetings added a fresh vigour to the life of Buddhism. Similarly, perhaps, in one such convention of the Christian clergymen, the four gospels were systematised and recognised, many of the spurious teachings ascribed to Christ having been set aside as apocryphal.

We do not know what the result of the present Convention will be for the future guidance of the Ramakrishna Order. It is yet too early to hazard any prophecy regarding its future development. But that it met under a great blessing and that its atmosphere vibrated with an unspeakable sweetness cannot be denied. Swami Shivananda, while giving his final blessings to the mem-



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bers on the concluding day, asked all to consecrate their life for tearing off the bondage of ignorance which alone could enable them to be happy instruments for the service of humanity. Swami Saradananda on the same occasion said that no one must think that the Convention was over with the dispersing of the representatives to their local centres of activity, but that all should from day to day try to find out how far they were able to carry out in life the teachings of this august meeting till they might compare notes again at the next Convention by taking a retrospective view of the work done during the intervening years.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

(ENGLISH)

**RHYTHM OF LIFE.**—By Swami Paramananda. Published and for sale by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 112. Price: Flexible binding \$2.00; cloth \$1.50.

This is a book of poems written in free verse. It is the third volume of the "Poetry Series" and will, we hope, like the previous ones, be appreciated by many. It contains some of the noblest sentiments of human idealism clothed in simple and beautiful English, at once spontaneous and heart-reaching. It is a record of the deeper and subtler experiences of a devotee in his struggles for the realisation of God—a book of prayer.

As has been mentioned in the "Foreword," we find, as we read the poems, "emotion and thought well forth in subtle rightness of rhythm like the rhythm that pulses through all harmony and order." The different poems have been written in different moods giving expression to varied sentiments.

The book will be a source of strength, peace and joy to many struggling spiritual aspirants. There is a

robust optimism throughout the whole book as the following lines will show :

“Sail thy vessel on,—

Steady, friend, steadily sail along.

Water may be rough

Or water may be smooth ;

But ever hold fast to thy compass.

The sky may smile

Or the sky may frown—

Hold fast to thy compass

Wind may roar

Or wind may be still—

Hold fast, hold fast to thy compass and  
sail thy vessel on.

Steady, friend, steadily sail along.”

The get-up and printing of the book are superb.

CIVILIZATION AND SPIRITUALIZATION.—By Swami Paramananda. Published by the Vedanta Centre, 176, Marlboro Street, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 12. Price : 10 c each, \$1.00 a dozen.

Man is immensely superior to a beast because of the nobler and sublimer instincts he has. Civilisation therefore is an outlook upon life that aims at the fuller expression of man—his divine potentialities. But, as we find nowadays, there are people who make a travesty of civilisation by identifying it with a scheme of life that is debasing and demoralising. For, it is a fact that in the name of scientific improvement and efficiency some of the foremost nations of the world have let loose the animal instincts of the human nature and made a hell of this earth. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that we should have a clear idea of civilisation, which the author tries to give in this pamphlet.

VEDIC CHRONOLOGY AND VEDANGA JYOTISHA.—By Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B.A., LL.B. Published by Messrs. Tilak Brothers, Gaikwar Wada, Poona City. Pp. 174. Price Rs. 3/-.

The book under review is a collection of several



essays, some disjointed notes and the synopsis of a contemplated treatise on the Vedic Chronology. The contents are interesting: (1) Vedic Chronology, (2) Synopsis of the whole Book, (3) A Note on a Rig-Vedic Text, (4) The Vedanga Jyotisha, (5) A Missing Verse in the Sankhya Kârikâs, (6) Chaldean and Indian Vedas, and (7) Extracts from a Rough Note Book.

"The Vedic Chronology," intended as an elaboration of the theme of "Orion," was written only up to its second chapter; and if completed, would surely have been a valuable addition to Indian archæological literature. "The Vedanga Jyotisha" appears to have been written during the author's incarceration in the Mandalay Jail. "A Missing Verse in the Sankhya Kârikâs" originally appeared in *Sanskrit Research* in Oct., 1915; and "Chaldean and Indian Vedas" was contributed to the *Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume* in July, 1917. All these, it is needless to mention, evince great erudition and scholarship, wealth of information as well as originality of thought, and bear an eloquent testimony to the versatility of Lokamanya's genius. One wonders at the capacity of a mind which being in the very vortex of an all-India political movement, could at the same time apply itself to the hard task of archæological research.

The book sadly lacks a preface by the publishers. It is excellent in printing and get-up and contains a picture of Lokamanya Tilak and several other illustrations.

RELEASE.—By C. Jinarajadasa. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 102. Price Re. 1.

This nice little brochure, dedicated to the Divine Children who have been, who are and who shall be, is a mystical representation of the spiritual life. Release by which name the book has been called is the be-all and end-all of human endeavours, and the scriptures of the world furnish accounts of the many effective ways for its attainment. In the booklet before us the author has symbolically spoken of the well-known paths of love,

light and law which correspond to Bhakti-Yoga, Jnana-Yoga and Karma-Yoga respectively of the Hindus. The struggles of the spiritual life have also been briefly hinted at. The style of the writer is simple and beautiful.

IN QUEST OF GOD.—By Ramdas. Published by P. Ganesh Rau, Gaurimutt Street, Mangalore, South India. Pp. 167 and XXIII. Price As. 8.

This is a booklet depicting the experiences of a spiritual aspirant. It appears that Swami Ramdas who is the author as well as the subject of the book has travelled wide and visited many places of pilgrimage in quest of God. The experiences recorded are no doubt interesting. There is a portrait of the Swami at the beginning of the book.

(BENGALI)

CHHELEDER TOLOSTOY (Boys' Tolstoy).—By Akshay Kumar Roy, B.A., B.T. Published by the Ripon Library, Dacca. Pp. 130. Price As. 8.

The book is an adaptation in Bengali of thirteen famous tales of Tolstoy, done in a beautiful manner. It is prefaced by a short sketch of Tolstoy's life, and is intended for the edification of boys. It is superfluous to say anything in commendation of the original tales. They hold a unique place in the realm of short stories and have that in them which is the characteristic of all scriptural stories,—the fragrance and simple charm of the eternal verities. The author who has done the translation so beautifully, deserves all thanks for bringing them within the easy reach of the Bengali boys. The printing and get-up are good.

BHARATER DAVI (India's Demands).—By Nalini Kishore Guha. Published by the Calcutta Publishers, 90/7-A, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Pp. 73. Price As. 12.

This nicely got-up book is a collection of seven essays dealing with some of the fundamentals of national requirement, written in a terse but lucid style. "India's



Demands," "The Strong Man," "Nationalism Vs. Communalism,"—such are some of his subjects. The writer's main theme is strength, self-confidence and self-reliance, without which, the writer rightly affirms, all efforts at nation-building will be futile. We congratulate the author on his thoughtful production.

**BHARATER NAVA JANMA.**—By Aurobindo Ghosh. Published by the Calcutta Publishers, 90/7-A, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Pp. 108. Price Rs. 1/4/-.

The present volume is a translation of the author's original work "Renaissance in India," and it shows how India is now passing through the days of renaissance. The word renaissance with regard to India is, however, loosely used. For, unlike in Europe, where it means the subversion of the old civilisation by Greek and Roman cultures, in India it means that the country is after a long period of darkness getting back her self-consciousness. The author indicates how many of the present-day movements fail because they do not touch the centre of India's life, which according to him, is spirituality. Those who cannot as yet believe it because of the spell of the West will find enough food for thought in the book.

(SANSKRIT)

**SRI-LAKSHMANA-PARINAYAM.**—By Kavichandra Pandit Bhubaneswar Ratha Sarma. Published by the Manager of the Radha-Priya Trustee Fund. Pp. 412. Price not mentioned.

The book under review is a Sanskrit epic in nine cantos. It was written, we are told in the preface, mainly in compliance with the requirements of a certain Trust in prospect of a monetary reward. The poem describes elaborately the marriage of Sri Krishna with Lakshmanâ, daughter of Brihatsena, King of Madra. Though the execution of the poem does not reach the height of excellence which characterises a work of art, yet the author shows considerable knowledge and skill in the manipulation of the sacred language and its rhetoric. It is these

Pandits, neglected by the intelligentsia, who are keeping the lamp of Sanskrit learning still alight with their unrequited zeal and devotion, and are entitled to all thanks from those who believe in the necessity of the revival of Sanskrit learning and literature. The poem is printed in clear and large Devnagri types and is accompanied with a commentary composed by the author himself.

(HINDI)

**BHARAT-PREMI (A Lover of India).**—By Bhagavat Prasad Sukla. Published by the author from Budhbari Pura, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 98. Price As. 12.

This is a novel, the first publication of the *Bhagavat-Works Series*, depicting the adventurous career of a patriotic young man. As has been mentioned in the preface, the writer is a novice in the field and deserves encouragement. The paper and printing of the book ought to have been better.

**ARABINDA-PATRAVALI (Letters of Arabinda).**—Translated by Prabhat Kumar Banerjee and Sanjib Kumar Chatterjee. Published by the Hindi Grantha Prakashak Samity, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 45. Price As. 6.

A collection of letters written by Sri Arabinda. As one goes through these letters, one catches a glimpse of Arabinda's lofty spiritual outlook as well as his conception of the Indian nationalism. The translation has been tolerably good.

**NAKAD-DHARMA (Religion in Practice).**—Translated by Syamlal Vaisya. Published by the Ramtirtha-Vivekananda Karyalaya, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 37.

This is a translation of a lecture delivered by Swami Ramtirtha. It is an interesting lecture wherein the Swami defines religion and brings out its real significance. Besides, he narrates therein one or two experiences of his in Japan and America and gives some valuable sugges-



tions for the regeneration of India. The translation has been free but faithful to the spirit of the original.

VEDANTA.—Translated by Surajlal Jain, Editor, Jain Prabhat. Published by the Ramtirtha-Vivekananda Karyalaya, Chhindwara, C. P. Pp. 28. Price As. 2.

As the title itself shows, this is a pamphlet containing a lecture on Vedanta. While in San Francisco Swami Ramtirtha delivered this lecture. As the Swami was a man who tried to live in life the principles he inculcated, his words have a value of their own. So his lectures and writings have been appreciated by many.

AMAR-KATHA.—Translated by Lakshmi Narayanji Gupta, Vakil, Sahjehanpur. Published by the Yogashrama, Kirthpur, Dt. Hoshiarpur (Punjab). Pp. 82. Price As. 12.

A treatise on Adwaita Vedanta dealing with the subject in a popular manner. The author is Swami Dayalji Atmadarshi, a Yogi. The translation of the book has not been very satisfactory, and the paper and printing are not also good.

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## NEWS AND NOTES.

### THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER CONVENTION.

Elsewhere are recorded the impressions of a visitor to the Convention of the Ramakrishna Order, held, as we had notified in our March issue, at the Belur Math, Calcutta, during the first week of April. The Convention, it may be said, was a complete and all round success. A varied and interesting programme was gone through during the eight days that the Convention was in session, consisting of public lectures on the ideas and ideals of the Mission as well as on philosophy and religion in the light of the life of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and also on sanitation so much needed in Bengal and elsewhere.

There was besides the reading of the reports of the various Math and Mission centres and of unaffiliated works, guided by the Order. There were music and sports and various informal discussions.

Never before in the history of the Order has there been such a unique gathering of monks and workers from all the quarters of India and abroad, and there was naturally a mighty upheaval of joy. Every one felt uplifted, and many went back with lasting impressions of the Living Ideal, with clearer ideas and much better understanding. The Convention, we believe, was not held a day too soon. The Order has grown considerably in extent and responsibilities, and a comparing of notes by the different centres was an urgent desideratum. There was further the necessity of closer co-ordination of the various aspects of the work for a better and more organised fulfilment of its duties.

The Mission, as Swami Saradananda, secretary to the Reception Committee observed in his address of welcome, has passed through the two first stages of public opposition and indifference and is now generally accepted and respected. Now is the time for greater caution and more alert attention to the maintenance of the ideal of the Order pure and unmitigated. One is confident that the measures devised by the Convention and specially the free and earnest discussion will go a great way towards guarding the Order against being toned down and losing in intensity in its quest for expansion and popularity.

### HOW ITALIANS UNDERSTAND INDIA.

The great interest that is taken in Italy about India and her culture can be clearly seen from the writings and discourses of the two Italian professors—Signor Carlo Formichi and Dr. Giuseppe Tucci, who arrived at Santiniketan, Bolpur, some time back.\* Professor Formichi is a great scholar of Sanskrit and has been teaching the subject for twenty-five years in Italy. Dr. Tucci, who

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\* He has since returned to Italy.—EDITOR, P. B.



was formerly a student of Professor Formichi, is not only a great scholar in Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, but knows Chinese and Tibetan as well. To the effort of these savants it is due that in recent years a great interest has been aroused amongst young Italians in Sanskrit and other Indian lores. At present there is quite a number of Sanskritists in Italy, which has got, of all the countries of Europe, the greatest number of chairs of Sanskrit with a professor of Indology in every faculty of letters.

In an address which Professor Formichi gave on his arrival at Bolpur, and the full text of which appeared in *The Modern Review* some time back, he said that "Italians know India better than Indians Italians," and this he attributes, to some extent, to the spread of Sanskrit culture in Italy. There is a great similarity between India and Italy as regards geographical positions, the appearance and temperament of their people and the great part these two great countries played in the civilisations of Asia and Europe respectively. The wondrous congeniality of the two nations accounts for the fact, as the Professor writes, that Italian pupils follow Sanskrit "with an interest unknown to them for other subjects. Sanskrit is as a revelation to them, as something forgotten that revives little by little in their memory." "There lies in the structure of Sanskrit," the Professor continues, "something that acts on the minds of young Italians as a mysterious enticement; it is as the well-known voice of a far-away past which accounts for all that in our present life is a riddle and a mystery. As we listen to that voice, many a puzzle loses its secret, many a wrong path is traced back to the points in which we are again able to choose the right way, and our horizon enlarges and heightens."

Dr. Tucci in an article in a recent issue of *The Modern Review* gives the names of some Italian Sanskrit scholars and their activities. There was one Gorresio who studied Sanskrit while quite young and dedicated all his life to the edition and translation of the *Ramayana*. Professor Kerbacker of the University of Naples rendered the

*Mricchakatika* into Italian verse, which has become one of the best poetical works of modern Italian literature.

Recently due to the writings of the Poet Tagore, as Dr. Tucci says, an increasing interest in modern India has begun amongst Italians. Indian art is also in great favour with the people of Italy, and "there is no good artist who does not know the name of Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore."

These are no doubt very happy indications, when people are not rare in the West, who for want of proper sympathy fail to understand India rightly. India also on the other hand should give up all self-complacent moods, and shaking off all lethargy try to appreciate and assimilate the good things of the West.

#### A NEW TYPE OF SCHOOL.

When the great war that had devastated Europe came to an end, the countries directly affected by it became up and doing to readjust themselves. It is but natural. The casualties in the war were more than one can imagine. Many parts of those countries that had been converted into war-zones were depopulated. That to make up the loss, specially the loss in man-power, will require a supreme effort is undoubted. Hence we find that along with various other endeavours institutions are being started in some countries of Europe with the express objective of making the best use of the human material.

"*La Preventorium*" is the significant name of a type of such institutions, which are doing immense services in this line. They take charge of weak-bodied children, who for want of sufficient care get easily infected with fell diseases, and thus become hopeless invalids or are prematurely cut off, and they make them healthy and robust and return them to their parents. Mr. St. Nihal Singh, in an interesting, illustrated article appearing in a recent issue of *Welfare*, describes such a school, which he had the occasion to personally see while he was touring in Belgium. The school, he speaks



of, is ideally situated at Knock-sur-Mer, a coast-town between Belgium and Holland. It is a model residential institution—a paradise for children where there is life, freedom and joy. It is equipped with every conceivable contrivance for amusing children and making them happy—a nice establishment with a playground and a gymnasium having artistically arranged flower-beds and rows of willow. It contains swings of various kinds, ladders, horizontal bars, high and low hurdles for jumping, see-saws, tennis and badminton courts and a host of such things. The sea-beach close by constantly washed by the purest air laden with ozone, where the children move about playing and merry-making, and the shallow waters of the sea where they paddle about and bathe to their hearts' content give them health and vitality. As one enters the place, says the writer, one feels its rare attractiveness and cannot help admiring its bright-hued paraphernalia—its orderliness—its scrupulous cleanliness and above all its lively method of instruction. Singing, music and recitation play a great part in developing the faculties of the children. "What elsewhere would be taught by rule and rote, by text-book or moralisation, is taught here through play."

The school has an accommodation for two hundred boys, generally between six and twelve years of age, taken from all grades of society; and the teachers are ladies of a motherly disposition, having a special training in child psychology and child hygiene as well as in pedagogy. It has been so arranged that special care can be taken of each of the children, twenty of whom are under the charge of an *institutrix*. As soon as a boy is admitted, he is dressed, after a good bath and scrubbing from head to foot, in the school-uniform with the initials of the institution—"O. N. E." embroidered on the cap. A measurement of his height and chest as well as a medical examination by the institution doctor who is constantly in attendance, follow next. Generally the school sits twice a day, and the method of teaching, as has been said, is of a singularly attractive



kind. There is nothing of compulsion and strain, and whatever is learned is learned through play and fun. The daily routine of bath, physical exercise, play, study, eating and so on has been so framed that the children do not feel how time glides on. The usual course of work is broken now and again by a fire drill, or a picnic, or some excursion out of the ordinary. Besides, there is an arrangement for cinema show and wireless entertainment. This sort of training lasts for a period of three months after which the children go back to their homes full of health and vigour. It has been found that this short stay is enough for the purpose. One special feature of the institution is that board, lodge, clothing, medical attention and instruction of the children are provided free of charge. Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Belgium, who are its patrons, take personal interest in its work.

There can be no two opinions as to the supreme usefulness of such institutions and the more their number the better for every country. In India specially, where climate, poverty, political dependence for centuries and such other causes have combined and produced a marked physical degeneracy in the people, the establishment of such healthy homes for debilitated little boys and girls is a crying necessity. It is a lamentable fact that the rate of child-mortality in our country is very high. In a recent child welfare and maternity exhibition held in Delhi, it has been shown by statistics that in India more than two millions of children die every year. Specially in our big and congested cities the death-rate of children is something that is appalling. For example, in Bombay as many as six hundred deaths occur every year per thousand. Just imagine! It is indeed a matter of serious concern. Unless preventive hygienic measures are taken without delay it is bound to spell our disaster and ruin. Side by side with efficient, man-making education, our children, the future hopes of our country, must have ample facilities for physical culture. Let them be strong and healthy, and the pessimism



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 that has cast its gloomy shadow upon the land will ere long vanish.

### THE STATUE OF BUDDHA IN AN AMERICAN PARK.\*

"In recent years many expounders of Oriental faiths have been heard in the Occident, but the appeal has been individual and unorganized. From Tokio now comes the news that Chinese, Korean and Japanese delegates assembled there have launched a movement 'for the propagation of Buddhism throughout the world.' This ambitious undertaking is to be carried on by means of speaking tours and with the aid of a wide distribution of Buddhist books, magazines and pamphlets in the various Western languages. As a favourable augury for it mention was made of the fact that Buddha has been publicly honored recently at meetings in Paris, Berlin, China, India, Korea and Formosa. Still more significant is the proposal just submitted to the Manhattan Park Commissioner for the erection of a statue of the sage in Central Park, New York. And the promoters are confident that, as the Christians have their Christmas day every year, so the time is at hand when populations all over the earth will gather to celebrate the day on which Buddha was born."—(*The Boston Herald*.)

One can ascertain the spirit in which the editor of *The Boston Herald* wrote. But the significance of the above news lies in the fact that our Oriental thought is pressing more and more upon the Occidental souls in general, and the American consciousness in particular. When thirty years ago that lion of Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda, thundered the message of the East in Chicago, hardly a dozen men could have dared prophesy the birth of a new dawn, hardly half a dozen could have exclaimed—"Again the light cometh from the East."

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\* Extracts from a letter written to us by Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee from New York. U.S.A.—EDITOR, P. B.

To-day in the perspective of the past thirty years, we can see that Swami Vivekananda was the beginning of a vast spiritual movement. Asia, the Mother of all the religions of the world, is again giving birth to a message which is making its impact upon all mankind. From now on missionaries will pour out of Asia into every part of the Western world bearing that message. None can doubt that.

But where does India stand? India who pioneered the new evangelism—where are her sons? What place do they occupy in the present spiritual torch-race? Will she not send ten Sannyasins to the one of China and Japan? When we say 'Sannyasins' we do not mean celibate men proud of their celibacy. Pride and conceit make a Sannyasin more despicable than the most desire-bound householder. In fact, when it comes to humility and celibacy our Indian Brahmacharins cannot surpass the Catholic priests who are numerous.

But there is one thing which, provided a Sannyasin is humble through and through, can be done by the Indian that no Catholic achieves. That is inclusiveness (Udāratā). The Catholic religion like all the other blends and branches of Western mentality is utterly exclusive. It proclaims the truth of one religion. It stigmatises all other religions as false.

But a preacher of our Sanatana Dharma can proclaim : "All religions are true to him who practises their essence and does not quarrel about their accretions." Vivekananda lived and acted with such humility that he became an example of Udāratā. Now we need many like him. A man who is conscious of his Sannyas is no Sannyasin.

Now as the Far Eastern nations are sending forth their messages of Reality, let us hope the lion-cubs of Vedanta will leap forth and do their part. India must not lag behind. What has taken place in the past thirty years is nothing compared with the tremendous and immeasurable influence that the wisdom of the East will exert on the Western spirit the next twenty years. And success will



attend those who are humbler than dust. For, he who is utterly humble is chosen to bear the precious burden of Truth. There is no other choice.

INTEREST GROWING IN AMERICA UNDER  
SWAMI PRABHAVANANDA.

Swami Prabhavananda, who is in charge of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, spent the 8th, 9th, and 10th of February in Tacoma, Washington, where he gave three lectures in the Theosophical Hall.

Owing to his engagements in Portland, his stay, much to the regret of all who heard him, was limited to three days only.

At his first lecture, "Evolution and Reincarnation," the hall was filled to capacity, and the interest shown was most intense. The Swami presented the truths of his subject so clearly and logically that, at the conclusion, expressions of satisfaction and delight were heard on every side.

His second lecture, "Karma and Freedom," was equally well attended and received.

On Wednesday afternoon, in his third lecture he spoke on "Avataras or Divine Incarnations." The attendance was good, though many, who would have liked to attend, were not able to do so, because of their duties in the workaday world. Very lovingly did the Swami handle his subject, which is of great interest to so many. The short hour of speaking was over all too soon, as was testified by the people who gathered about the Swami to ask eager questions and thank him for the message given.

In the evening, about twenty men and women, specially interested in the Vedanta philosophy, gathered in the home where Swami Prabhavananda was being entertained, to listen to him in a less formal and more intimate way.

Here, after an hour of music and pleasant talk—during which time the Swami answered most satisfy-

ingly many questions—it was suggested that a class for study and the practice of meditation be formed.

So the group was formed into a small society—a president and secretary-treasurer elected, and a committee appointed. It was decided that the dues were to be optional, each member paying what he or she could afford, looking toward the time when a centre can be opened with a Swami in charge.

Though the meeting was most informal, the earnestness of those present was plainly apparent, and we are praying that from this small shoot the mighty tree of Vedanta will grow, spreading its all-welcoming shade over many weary way-farers on the path, enabling them to find rest, refreshment and soul-enlightenment beneath its sheltering branches.

#### OBITUARY.

It is with feelings of deep sorrow that we announce the news of the passing away of Swami Subhananda and Swami Sachchidananda in the month of April last. Swami Subhananda, popularly known as Charu Babu was one of those ardent disciples of Swami Vivekananda who fired with the ideal of service, as preached by him, started the Ramakrishna Home of Service in Benares and after a long and weary period of great struggle and difficulties have brought the institution into its present stage. Swami Sachchidananda joined the Order during the time of Swami Vivekananda and was loved and admired by all for living a strict ascetic life. During a period of his life, seized with the spirit of visiting holy places, he travelled all over India on foot and enriched his life with experiences, which anybody who would talk with him could profit by. As such, each of them in his life represented an ideal, for which their memory will be treasured with love and reverence for a long time to come.