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“उत्तिष्ठत! जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Shiva the Lord of the Yogis—How Sri Ramakrishna would be lost in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, when he would hear songs on Shiva for some time.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Monday, 18 February 1932)

It was the hour of dawn. The entire world was absorbed in meditation, as it were, in the midst of quiet, placid nature. Under the wide canopy of the sky the temples also were wrapped in the silence of meditation. Close by the sacred Ganges was flowing gently and a soft breeze was blowing. In the faint light of dawn the monks at the monastery were quietly wending their way to the shrine for meditation. They seemed to be indrawn. Mahapurushji had been awake for some time and was seated on his cot. Who could know in what realm of blessedness his mind was soaring?

Time slipped by. With the benign touch of dawn the eastern horizon became bright with a tinge of rose. The birds started singing the praise of God as it were. In the temple of Sri Ramakrishna the blowing of the conch-shell announced the hour of 'dawn worship.' After the 'dawn worship'

devotional songs appropriate for the hour began.

It was Monday—so songs of Shiva were being sung (Monday is the day upon which Shiva is specially worshipped). A Sadhu of the monastery sang two songs composed by Devi Sahaya, a devotee of Shiva: 'O Lord Shiva, Thou who bearest the Ganges on Thy head, listen to my prayer!' And 'O Lord Shiva, take my boat across!' Mahapurushji was especially fond of these two songs. Finally the song beginning with the line 'Shiva, the Lord of Yogis, seated in the Yoga posture, is absorbed in meditation' was sung. The sweet music of the songs spread all over the monastery grounds. Mahapurushji became deeply absorbed in meditation while listening to them. He became motionless and remained with unwinking eyes. Gradually Mahapurushji came down to the normal plane, although his

mind still seemed to be steeped in the ocean of the bliss of Shiva. Sometimes he repeated softly: 'Om! Salutation to Shiva!' or 'Om! The Lord God is that Reality.' Sometimes he repeated, 'Vyom, Vyom, Mahadeva!' By this time many Sadhus and Brahmacharis had assembled in Swami Shivananda's room. He gradually came down to the normal plane and started talking a little.

The conversation was about the last song composed by Girish Babu. Mahapurushji said, 'Ah! What an excellent song Girish Babu composed!' He began singing the song. Later he remarked: 'Without the grace of the Master he couldn't have written that way. He composed the song having a vision of Shiva, so to say. How beautiful and profound the idea is! "Time remained static in the present while Shiva was absorbed in meditation." It describes the state of deep meditation. When meditation is very deep one loses all sense of past and future. There is simply consciousness of the present and that vaguely. That is why Girish Babu wrote, "Time remained static in the present." Then all sense of past and future is obliterated, there remaining only consciousness of the present. Of course, when the mind is lost in Samadhi there is no consciousness of the present either. It is a state beyond past, present, and future. That state cannot be described. That is why Swamiji said: "It is beyond speech and thought. Only he who has experienced knows it." It is not an ordinary state. Coming down from it one cannot find words to express the joy of Samadhi.

'We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would try, without success, to describe the Nirvikalpa Samadhi while coming down from that state and still under its influence. Eventually he would say: "I wish very much to tell you about it, but I cannot. Somebody presses my mouth." Really that state cannot be described. "Only he who has the experience understands it."'

When the Sadhu who was singing at dawn

came to salute Mahapurushji, Mahapurushji remarked: 'Listen. Whenever you sing songs about Shiva in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna, be sure that you conclude with one or two songs about the Mother—one or two songs describing some aspects of the Mother. Make a point of remembering this. You do not know; that is why I am telling you. When you sing songs try to feel that you are singing for the Master's entertainment and he is listening to you. The Master could not bear to hear songs of Shiva continuously. One day a great musician came to Dakshineswar with the idea of entertaining Sri Ramakrishna. He was a finished musician and used to sing splendidly. From the very start he began singing songs about Shiva. After hearing one or two songs the Master became absorbed in Samadhi. It was altogether Nirvikalpa Samadhi. We never saw the Master absorbed so deeply in Samadhi before. His face became flushed; he was pulsating with a Divine Presence; his figure appeared larger than usual and his hair stood on end. How can I describe that sight to you? In this way considerable time passed and the Master would not come down to the normal plane. The singing continued; all were speechless with wonder. We seldom saw the Master in such deep Samadhi nor did we see him having such a large figure. After some time, suddenly the Master exclaimed, "Oh! Oh!" as if he were suffering unbearable pain within. With great difficulty he said, "Sing about the Mother." We understood that he wanted to hear songs about Her. The singer was requested to sing about the Mother. The songs about the Mother continued and slowly the Master's mind came down to the normal plane. Later on he stated that that day his mind plunged into deep Samadhi and he had had a hard time to bring it down. The Master did not like to stay long in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He came for the good of the world. If he remained in the Nirvikalpa state it would not be possible for him to work for the good of the world.

That is why he wanted to maintain the attitude of a devotee and be in the company of devotees. Meditation on Shiva represents the Nirvikalpa state. In that state there is neither creation nor this world of living beings. The natural trend of Sri Ramakrishna's mind was towards the Nirvikalpa state. So he would cherish some trivial desire in order to bring his mind down. Everything about him was unique!

After remaining silent a while, Mahapurushji asked an attendant: 'Today is Monday. Are you not supposed to have a recitation of *The Hymn on the Greatness of Shiva*? When shall we have it?' 'We shall have it now, Maharaj,' answered the attendant, and taking a book of hymns from the adjoining table, he started chanting the hymn. Mahapurushji sat with folded hands and eyes closed. The chanting continued, Mahapurushji joining in:

If praise of Thee by one who is ignorant of the extent of Thy greatness be unbecoming, then even the praise of Brahma and others is inadequate for Thee. And if all remain blameless by praising Thee according to their intellectual powers, then even this attempt on my part to compose a hymn is free from blemish.

Thy greatness is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Who can fittingly praise that which even the Vedas describe with trepidation, by the method of 'Not this, Not this'? How many qualities does that possess and by whom can it be perceived? Yet towards the form taken later, whose mind and speech do not turn?

Different are the paths of realization enjoined by the three Vedas, Sankhya, Yoga, the Pashupata doctrine, and the Vaishnava Shastras. Persons following different paths—straight or crooked—according as they consider that this or that one is proper, owing to the difference in their temperaments, reach Thee alone, just as all rivers reach the ocean.

O Lover of solitude, my salutation to Thee, who art very near and also far, far away! O Destroyer of the god of love, my salutation to Thee, who art the minutest as also the largest! O Three-eyed one, my

salutation to Thee, who art the oldest and also the youngest. I offer my salutation to Thee, who art all and who transcendest all.

Salutation to Brahma, in whom Rajas preponderates for the creation of the universe. Salutation to Rudra, in whom Tamas preponderates for the destruction of the universe. Salutation to Vishnu, in whom Sattva preponderates for giving happiness to the people. Salutation to Shiva who is effulgent and beyond the three attributes.

O Lord, if the blue mountain be the ink, the ocean the inkstand, a branch of the heavenly tree be the pen, the earth the writing-leaf, and if taking these, the goddess of learning writes for eternity, even then the limit of Thy virtues will not be reached.

O Lord, I do not know the true nature of Thy being, of what kind Thou art. O Great God, my salutation again and again to that which is Thy true nature!

Mahapurushji recited the last few verses in a loud voice. For a while all were silent. Then Mahapurushji softly remarked: 'We observed that the Master could not listen to the entire *Hymn on the Greatness of Shiva*. After hearing one or two verses he would be absorbed in Samadhi. He himself would recite the two verses which begin: "O Lord, if the blue mountain be the ink" and "O Lord, I do not know the true nature of Thy being." He would burst into tears as he would repeat the last verse, and say, weeping: "Lord, who wants to know Thy nature? Who knows who Thou art? I do not want to know Thee or understand Thee; O Lord! Give me pure devotion at Thy lotus feet! Who can know Him?"'

Then the Bengali translation of the above two verses was read, as desired by Mahapurushji. Mahapurushji remarked: 'Shiva, the Lord of Yogis, is the Guru of monks. That is why Swamiji was fond of meditating on Shiva from his very childhood. Unless one renounces everything, as exemplified by Shiva, the mind will not be absorbed in Samadhi.'

THE CONQUEST OF THE WORLDS

BY THE EDITOR

We all live in worlds of our own making. The proverb, 'Man is the architect of his own fate,' only expresses the idea in another form. We believe that with our own efforts we can gain our heart's desires. As the Gita says, 'Longing for success in action, in this world men worship the gods. For success, resulting from action, is quickly attained in the human world.' In the firm conviction that we shall certainly derive the fruits of our own actions we put forth strenuous efforts towards the attainment of our purposes. Scientists assume the uniformity of nature and the inviolability of cause and effect, and have no reason to doubt the correctness of these assumptions since given a similar cause a similar effect is produced. Fire always feels hot and we should find ourselves off our feet if one cold December day we should feel that the coal fire instead of heating the room is actually making it colder. As Gaudapada says: 'By Prakriti or the inherent nature of a thing we understand *that* which even if acquired becomes completely part and parcel of the thing, *that* which is its very characteristic quality, *that* which is part of it from its very birth, *that* which does not depend upon anything extraneous for its origin, and *that* which never ceases to be itself.' Nothing can really cease to be itself or become anything other than itself. This invariable permanency of characteristics attached to any substance we take for granted. Otherwise we should be living in Alice's wonderland. So we work for results only because there is a stable connection between cause and effect; and when this relation seems to break down in any case we believe that our observations are wrong and that we must have missed the sequence of cause and effect by not taking into consideration *all* the relevant facts.

The success of man's work in any field lies in an increasingly truer understanding of

the causes and effects of phenomena in nature and using this knowledge to subserve man's ends. Human desire, foresight, aim, and effort when brought to bear upon nature result in inventions and the discovery of new processes whereby man is enabled to live under conditions contributing more to his comforts and the satisfaction of his desires. The more intense the desires and the greater the energy that man brings to the task of satisfying his desires the greater will be his success. As Sri Krishna says in the Gita to Arjuna: 'Learn from me, O mighty-armed, these five causes for the accomplishment of all works as declared in the wisdom which leads to the end of all action. The five are nature (including the human body), the doer, the various instruments of action (such as the mind and the senses as well as external instruments like a sword etc.), many different forms of effort, and finally the continuing good and bad results of previous actions. Whatever action a man performs by his body, speech, and mind—whether right or the reverse—these five are its causes.' Again: 'Knowledge, the knower and the known form the threefold urge to action, and the instrument, the doing (such as producing, acquiring, destroying, altering), and the doer are threefold fount of action.' In short, desire, knowledge, and action are the triad on which are based all our experiences in this world.

Such being the fact, we can attain the realms of our desires only by acquiring knowledge and putting forth strenuous efforts. This is equally true for the acquirement of what we call the good things of this world, the pleasures of this life, and also of Mukti or salvation. One of the frequent questions which an enquirer asks in the Upanishads is, 'What world, sir, does he conquer by *that* action?' This shows how realistic the Upanishad approach has been to the problem

of truth. By our actions we attain to the worlds we live in. By predominantly good actions we go to the world of the gods; by predominantly bad actions we sink down to the level of beasts; by a balance between good and bad actions we are born in the world of human beings. Even if we do not believe in this statement of the Shastras, yet it will become clear to us on a little reflection that our actions in this life at least determine our status and the group or circle in which we move. Leaving out of consideration for the present the natural group such as the family, the community, or the nation into which a man is born, we still see that by our actions we can go down or go up in the social, political, or economic ladder. In a static and petrified social order like that of the Hindus it is not possible for a man to change his caste formally, but this caste distinction becomes meaningless and betrays only an absurd clinging to dead forms when Brahmins and Kshatriyas serve as slaves of alien interests against all the tenets of their social order. What shall we say of the Brahminness of thousands of Brahmins who work as durwans, cooks, and even as mercenary soldiers in the army of the Mlechha? Similar is the condition of most other castes in India.

In non-Hindu societies, like that of the Mohammedans and the Christians, religious divisions prevent to some extent the free commingling of individuals, but it is wealth alone that is the key which unlocks the doors of high society. Similarly political power also raises the status of a man or a group. Under the British political dispensation democracy implies the right of groups to political representation in accordance with their numerical strength. As a result the backward classes of India have come to the forefront and the British Government, the Muslim League, as well as the Congress are vying with one another to make friendship with the leaders of these backward classes. In Bengal the Hindus who are educationally and economically forward are being crushed by the unholy alliance of reactionary elements.

In that province, the dream of Pakistan is being translated into the realm of realities by aggression which reminds us of the days of Chenghis Khan, Timur, Nadir Shah, and other free-booters of medieval ages. The German and Japanese leaders are having a dire punishment for the crime of waging war against the Allies—a punishment which almost reminds us of the tribal stage of human history when the entire male population was put to the sword and the women and children carried away as slaves; for this is the first time in modern history when prominent leaders of a great nation defeated in war are being sent to the gallows. While we abhor the cruelties of the Germans, yet they should have been spared this barbaric way of humiliation which is against all canons of international decency. The point of all this is that men reap the results of their actions and rise to higher levels or sink to lower levels. So it is up to us to work and improve our lot in this world and prepare for a better lot in the next, if we believe in one.

II

Just as water finds its level, so each man tends to gravitate towards that circle or world which satisfies his desires and inclinations. The politicians move mostly with politicians and others who serve their purposes. The military man lives in a world of aeroplanes, warships, submarines, and tanks, and is ever and anon thinking of military strategy, of how to outwit the enemy by strengthening the defences of his country and increasing its offensive power. The merchant and the financier move in the society of rich people like themselves. Americans like the society of white Americans, and not that of the Negro Americans. The whites in South Africa keep the coloured people at arm's length. Australia forbids colonization by coloured races in Australia, and is awaiting calmly the total decay of the aboriginals of that land; and the South Africans would have done likewise but for the fact that the coloured people

refuse to die out from their original home. The coloured races fight for entry into the world of political and social equality with the whites, as they feel the sting of inferiority in the present attitude of the whites towards them.

The same desire to live in a world of our own is manifested in our personal relations. We will not willingly part with the company of our parents, sons, wives, and friends. Their presence and proximity gladdens our hearts, and separation from them is painful when it is temporary, while permanent separation by death leaves a deep scar in our heart. Again as children we live in a world of our own which to adults, and to us when we are adults, appears as a world of dreams born of our unreasoning imagination. The youth thinks that the real thing in life is marriage, money, and children, and the building up of a bright economic future for himself and his family. The old man, who has enjoyed married life and prosperity and still feels a kind of restlessness and discontent, at last learns (so it would seem) that

The world is all a fleeting show,
For Man's illusion given,
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There is nothing true but Heaven.

But these ideas of heaven and other worlds are also different according to the desires and knowledge of each individual. Most of these ideas of other worlds arise from the desire for a place of enjoyment, where there will be an almost infinite round of feasting and merrymaking, unobstructed enjoyment of the senses, and the company of those whom we love. As Swami Vivekananda says, ' . . . those who want to go to such places will have to go; they will dream and when this dream is over, they will be in another dream where there is plenty of sense enjoyment, and when that dream breaks they will have to think of something else. Thus they will be driving about from dream to dream.'

About the possibility of worlds beyond the present one of our state, Dr. Joshua Loth Liebman, Rabbi of Temple Israel of Boston,

says in his book *Peace of Mind* :

' . . . We dare not ignore the hunger in the human heart for some kind of existence beyond this narrow span of life. There is an almost universal feeling that God would not shut the door completely upon our slowly developed talents—that there must be realms where we can use the powers achieved here. And one should not lightly dismiss the thoughts of philosophers who insist that there is nothing inherently impossible about life in undreamed dimensions, that just as infra-red rays are invisible to our eyes, so a creative growing universe might well have hidden unsuspected continents beyond the perception of our senses.'

The Hindu Shastras also speak of the existence of worlds besides this one of our waking state. Such worlds are places where men enjoy the results of their good deeds and afterwards they come back to this earth life again. The effect is always commensurate with the cause. The cause being finite, the effect must be finite. So all worlds which we gain as the result of our deeds are bound to be finite in the very nature of things: these worlds may last millions of years, but there must come a time when they will have to go. The Gita also says the same thing: 'The doer of good never comes to grief. Having attained to the world of the righteous, and dwelling there for everlasting years, one fallen from Yoga reincarnates himself in the home of the pure and the prosperous.' In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* we have, in the teaching of Sanatkumara to Narada, the development of the idea of the working of the principles of cause and effect in determining the rewards of our actions. Narada is at first taught to meditate on the name, speech, mind, will, consideration, reflection, understanding, power, food, water, fire, ether, memory, hope, and spirit in an ascending series of importance; and he is told that the meditator becomes lord and master of those worlds which are the special domain of the things meditated upon. The enquirer is also told, however, that whatever has been

acquired on earth, or for the next world by such exertion or by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth perishes, for such fruits are limited in their scope by their very nature. But a knowledge of the Self gives him entrance into and command of all the worlds. For the Upanishad says, 'Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds.'

Thus a man who has got the knowledge of the Self and is endowed with the powers born of Brahmacharya can at will command the world of the fathers, the mothers, the brothers, the sisters, the friends, women, food, and drink, and other enjoyments. In short 'whatever object he is attached to, whatever object he desires, by his mere will it comes to him, and having obtained it he is happy.'

The *Mundaka Upanishad* also says to the same effect: 'Whatever state a man whose nature is purified imagines and whatever desires he desires (for himself or for others) that state he conquers and those desires he obtains. Therefore let every man who desires happiness worship the man who knows the Self.'

We find a rather curious but interesting illustration of this in the *Mahabharata*. In the Ashrama-vasika Parva there is a section called Putradarshana or the Vision of the Sons. Here Vyasa tells Gandhari and Dhritarashtra that he would bring back for their pleasure all their dear ones who died in the battle of Kurukshetra. He says, 'O good Gandhari, you will see your sons, and brothers, and relatives and father tonight as if they have risen only from sleep. Kunti will see Karna and Subhadra will see Abhimanyu. Draupadi will see all her five sons and their brothers and relatives. I had this idea in my mind even before, when Dhritarashtra, yourself, and Kunti requested me to show you your dear ones. . . . So today I shall remove this great sorrow in the hearts of all about the fate of your dear ones in the other world. Let all go to the banks of the Ganges. There you will see again all those

who were killed in this war.' According to Vyasa's advice everybody went gladly to the banks of the Ganges. But the rest of the day passed slowly as if it were a hundred years to them and they were anxiously awaiting the coming of night. At night Dhritarashtra, accompanied by Pandavas, with a pure and steady mind sat in the midst of the Rishis who were with him. All the women with Gandhari were sitting in a separate place. The citizens and villagers took their seats behind these. 'Then Vyasa, the great Muni of great power, entered into the holy waters of the Ganges and invoked all the world of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and all the kings of different places who had fought in the battle. Then, O Janamejaya, there was a tumultuous sound inside the water reminding one of the army of the Kurus and Pandavas. Then all those kings, headed by Bhishma and Drona along with their armies, came out of the water in thousands. . . . Each warrior was seen with the same form, the same flag, and the same vehicle he had used while living. They were all divinely dressed and adorned, and were free from all hatred, egotism, anger, and jealousy. Accompanied by divine music and praised by minstrels and surrounded by divine damsels they came.

'Then the Muni out of kindness gave divine eyesight to Dhritarashtra, through the power of his Tapasya. . . . Thus after enjoying for the night the company of their dear ones, the warriors went away as they came taking leave of all their friends and relatives. In a moment they all disappeared before the open eyes of all by entering into the Ganges. Some went to the world of gods, some to the world of Brahma, the creator, some to the world of Kubera, and some to the world of the sun. . . .' It is also related that Vyasa by his power fulfilled whatever desires anybody there wanted to satisfy at that time.

There is a sequel also to this story. Janamejaya refuses to believe what Vaishampayana tells him. He asks, 'How is it possible for dead people to come back in

their old forms? If generous Vyasa will show me also my father, of the same age and form he had at the time of his death, then I shall believe in what you have said.' Vyasa, it is said, was kind enough to Janamejaya also and brought his father Parikshit as he had desired.

III

Now the question arises in the minds of us whether these worlds of which the Shastras speak are real or not. We all generally take for granted that our waking world is real, and the only standard of all reality. But the Vedanta says that the external is but a dull reflection of that which is internal. As Swami Vivekananda puts it: 'According to the Raja Yoga the external world is but the gross form of the internal or subtle. The finer is always the cause, the grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal the cause. . . . The man who has discovered and learned how to manipulate the internal forces will get the whole of nature under his control.'

Shankaracharya also discusses this point in his commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad*: 'The ocean of the Brahmaloaka and the enjoyment of the worlds of the Pitris and others, through Sankalpa or will—are these physical and material like the earthly ones and do they come of use to us like the similar oceans, trees, towns, and golden towers seen in this world, or are they merely mental ideas? Further, if they are physical or mental, gross, and usable, then they cannot be contained in the Akasha of the heart. Also the statement in the Puranas that the bodies in the Brahmaloaka are all mental will be contradicted; also the Shrutis say that the Brahmaloaka is "free from sorrow, free from snow and cold." Indeed, oceans, lakes, rivers, tanks, wells, sacrifices, Vedas, Mantras and others appear before Brahma in their forms; but in that case the Puranas are wrong in saying these are mental. The answer is, No. In conceiving of forms, only the well-known forms cannot go there; therefore, besides these

well-known forms we have to assume that the oceans and others took another appropriate form which can go to Brahmaloaka. Since both are equally conceptions, it is right to conceive of such well-known mental forms of men, women, etc. as they are quite in accordance with the conceptions of having a mental body. Also in dreams we see mental forms of men, women, etc. But it may be asked, are they not unreal? If we assume that mental forms are unreal, then the words of Shruti as "these true desires" will be contradicted. The reply is, No. It is quite valid to assume the reality of mental forms and ideas; for mental ideas are seen in the forms of men, women, etc. in dreams. But it may be argued, there are no men and women in dreams, and they are but reflections of the ideas of the waking state. This argument, however, proves very little. For even the experiences of the waking state are possible because of mental ideas only, for all experiences of the waking state are the result of seeing, by the self, the outside world as a consequence of light, water, and food. It has also been declared that all the worlds are the result of Sankalpa as in "the earth and the sky willed." In all the Shrutis the birth, growth and maintenance and destruction of the Pratyagatman is there itself as is declared by "As spokes to the nave of the wheel." Therefore there is natural cause and effect relation between mental and external things like the seed and its sprout. Even though external things are mental and mental things are external, *in themselves* these are never unreal or false. It is true that the experiences of the dream state appear unreal when a man wakes up. But that unreality is in comparison with the experiences of the waking state, and not *in themselves*. Similarly the experiences of the waking state are also unreal if measured by the standard of dream experiences, but not *in themselves*. The special forms of all things are due to incorrect and incomplete ideas for "name is a mere modification arising from speech and what is true are the three colours

or forms." Those also (the colours and forms) are false or unreal in their modifications as colours or forms, but real in themselves as existences. Before the dawn of the knowledge of the one existing Reality everything is real in its own sphere like the experiences of dreams. Thus there is no contradiction. Therefore mental, indeed, are the forests etc. of Brahmaloaka; as well as the enjoyments of the worlds of the Pitris etc. which are also born of Sankalpa. Being free from taints like the enjoyments of external things and being products of pure will-power of powerful persons or gods they are full of extreme pleasure.'

Swami Vivekananda puts these things clearly in modern language when he says: 'This external world is only the world of suggestion. All that we see, we project out of our own minds. A grain of sand gets washed into the shell of an oyster and unites with it. The irritation produces a secretion in the oyster which covers the grain of sand and the beautiful pearl is the result. Similarly external things furnish us with suggestions, over which we project our own ideas.' Again about the nature of this world he says that this world 'has no absolute existence. It exists only in relation to my mind, to your mind, and the mind of every one else. We see this world with the five senses, but if we had another sense, we would see in it something more. If we had yet another sense it would appear as something still different.'

IV

The Vedanta, however, is not content in merely showing that this world of our experience is but the result of the laws of time, space, and causation, and that man is but a creature of circumstances. No, it has a higher and more comforting message, and that is the message of complete freedom from nature and all the worlds which we project out of nature with our minds. The universe as we see it is a result of actions, and cause and effect, and whatever is subject to the law of causation is found to be temporary

and fleeting and, in the last resort, cannot satisfy the hunger of the human heart for abiding peace and happiness. To most of us, however, the need for a solution of this ultimate problem has not arisen. We are caught in the net of attachment to the things of this world or the next. Family life, politics, economics, and a host of other human interests grip our attention and hurry us on towards intense action in the hope of improving our lot in this world, in the hope of finding security, both individual and collective, or securing the four freedoms, to use a common parlance. We have only to look around the world to see what a terrific hunt there is for security. The Americans who have come over on top of all other nations as a result of the second world war, are afraid of Soviet Russia as a possible threat to their security, as they call it, though to impartial spectators it would seem that America is planning straight for world hegemony. The British Empire which weathered successfully the storms of German aggression now wants to put on a new lease of life under the guise of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Soviet Russia fears that her erstwhile allies are out to smash her in the near future, and is frantically seeking for political security on all her frontiers. It is unnecessary to speak of the defeated nations' effort towards recovery. It will be a long time before they can do that. The weaker nations of the world are trying to join the bandwagon of any of the Big Three. Some, like Turkey and Persia, are practising political tight-rope walking. In India also nationalists who want to establish a united State are opposed by the Pakistanists and their allies. Everywhere cruelty and bloodshed veiled under gentler names are raising their ugly and poisonous heads. The underlying cause for all this seems to be the wrong emphasis that men put on material things to the exclusion of the spiritual. So long as men do this, whether individually or collectively, there will be neither peace nor happiness. It is difficult to say whether this world of our

waking state will ever cease to be the Tantalus' hell that it appears to be. But Vedanta says that the man who wants lasting happiness must not seek it in this world of cause and effect, but must go beyond it. And the way lies only through a knowledge of the Atman, the Self of all things. This knowledge alone can destroy the ignorance that is the root cause of attachment to the things of the world as objects of enjoyment. So long as we cling to this world we shall have to take it along with its good and its evil, the twins that always go together. But even an intellectual knowledge of the nature of the Self will help a man considerably to pass fearlessly through this world for it will

give him strength and courage and help him to tide over many an emergency. There is absolute freedom from all fear only from a knowledge of one's own true Self. As long as an individual identifies himself with his body, family, community, or nation, so long will he fall short of lasting happiness. 'The Self is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst; it desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine. It is that which we must search out; it is that which we must try to understand. He who has searched out that Self and understands it obtains all worlds and all desires.' (*Chh. Up. VIII. vii. 3.*)

THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

BY A DEVOTEE OF CHRIST

I

The Imitation of Christ is universally considered second only to the Bible among Christian writings. It is a cherished treasure of instruction and inspiration for all who follow the way of the spirit, and is a vivid commentary upon life itself. Needless to say such a book must have been written by one who knew whereof he spoke. "Written," perhaps, is not the proper word,' said Swami Vivekananda in the preface to his Bengali translation. 'It would be more appropriate to say that each letter of the book is marked deep with the heart's blood of the great soul who had renounced all for this love of Christ.' The Swami said further: 'The spirit of humility, the panting of the distressed soul, the best expression of *Dasya Bhakti* (devotion as servant) will be found imprinted on every line of this great book, and the reader's heart will be profoundly stirred by the author's thoughts of burning renunciation, marvellous surrender and deep sense of dependence on the will of God.'

The Imitation of Christ was generally ascribed to Thomas a Kempis, who for seventy years lived as monk in a Dutch monastery. The claim that he was the author rested on the fact that in Brussels is an autograph copy of *The Imitation* ending thus: 'Finished and completed in the year of our Lord 1441 by the hand of brother Thomas van Kempen, at mount Saint Agnes, near Zwolle.'

Thomas a Kempis, who entered the monastery at the age of thirteen and knew not the world beyond its walls, lived a peaceful and uneventful life. The greater part of his time must have been spent in the scriptorium, where he transcribed the Roman Missal and also the entire Bible in four folio volumes. He wrote, among other things, a chronicle of the monastery and biographies of its founders and their disciples. As master of novices he was employed in teaching the younger members of the community. However, we know very few of the details of his inner life.

But from the very fifteenth century when *The Imitation of Christ* appeared in its many versions, there were doubts whether Thomas a Kempis was the actual writer of the book, and in course of time the literature on the problem of its authorship grew too extensive for any man to read in one lifetime. Gradually, however, the names of other possible authors were eliminated and Thomas a Kempis became and remained until quite recently the only contestant in the field. Catholics and Protestants united in gratitude to raise a monument to him in the Church of Saint Michael at Zwolle. Nevertheless in 1911, when the Dean of Zwolle mentioned the subject of the authorship to Pope Pius X, the Holy Father declared emphatically that he did not believe Thomas a Kempis to be the writer—perhaps as Pope he had access to information denied to others.

Whatever that may have been, a new light was thrown on the problem in 1921, when an old manuscript was discovered in the library of Lubeck in northern Germany a manuscript that for centuries had lain unnoticed among others belonging to the Sisters of the Common Life. It was entitled, *Admonitions Concerning Interior Things*, and was written in Netherlandish. A study of its sixty chapters convinced scholars that it was the original of the second and fourth Books of the *The Imitation of Christ*, also, that its author was Gerard Groote, the courageous and devoted founder of the Renaissance order known as the Brethren of the Common Life and its counterpart for women, and the father of the teaching known as the 'Modern Devotion.'

Further research made it evident that the other Books of *The Imitation of Christ* were also based on the original works of Groote, and that Thomas a Kempis, because of his great knowledge of Latin, had been employed by the Brethren of the Common Life to translate the Books into that language. In so doing he took certain liberties with the text. Although he kept the first Book intact, he converted the second Book into the second and fourth, adding several

chapters of his own, and he edited the third Book to some degree.

The Imitation of Christ, as Groote wrote it originally, is divided into three parts: Book One, 'Admonitions Very Useful for a Spiritual Life;' Book Two, 'Admonitions Concerning Interior Things,' which has three divisions: 'Of Interior Conversations,' 'Of the Interior Discourse of Christ to the Faithful Soul,' and 'Of Interior Consolation; and finally, Book Three, 'Devout Admonitions for Approaching Holy Communion.' These Books, each with its many chapters, were composed by Groote at different times and under different circumstances. They may be rightly considered faithful reflections of his spiritual moods, convictions, struggles, and experiences, revealing his progress to God through the three stages described in Christian mysticism as the 'purgative,' the 'illuminative,' and the 'unitive' ways.

The reason why the compilation was permitted to go out under the name of the translator and editor rather than that of the true author will appear when we consider the life of Gerard Groote. At the time Thomas a Kempis undertook the task of translation (1424) more and more imperfect copies under false names were circulating all over Europe, and so we are indebted to the industrious monk for providing a fairly reliable version of Groote's spiritual masterpiece.

Who was Gerard Groote, this extraordinary man, who could produce a work of such magnitude and whom Swami Vivekananda called 'that great soul, whose words, living and burning, have cast such a spell for the last four hundred years over the hearts of myriads of men and women; whose influence today remains as strong as ever and is destined to endure for all time to come; before whose genius and Sadhana (spiritual discipline) hundreds of crowned heads have bent down in reverence; and before whose matchless purity the jarring sects of Christendom have sunk their differences of centuries in common veneration to a common prin-

ciple?' Biographical material is available, but even if it were not, *The Imitation of Christ* would throw much light upon Groote's inner life—upon his spiritual experiences, struggles, and growth.

II

Gerard Groote, or Gerardus Magnus, was born in 1340 at Deventer in Gederland, in the diocese of Utrecht. As his parents were wealthy, he received a comprehensive education, beginning with the famous chapter school of Deventer and extending to the colleges of Aachen, Paris, Cologne, and Prague. He was one of the most learned men of his time, versed in philosophy, theology, canon law, medicine, astronomy, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.

Later in his life, after his spiritual awakening, he was to write, 'Trust not in thine own knowledge . . . but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble and humbleth the proud,' and 'Please not thyself in thy natural gifts or ability, lest thereby thou shouldst displease God, to whom appertaineth the good whatsoever thou hast by nature.' But in the days of his gay and admittedly unrestrained youth, he rode the crest of the wave of worldly popularity and success.

The townsmen of Deventer appreciated his sagacity even then, for when he was but twenty-six they sent him on a mission in the interests of the city to the court of Pope Urban V at Avignon. Shortly afterwards he was appointed professor of philosophy and theology at Cologne. Besides, he enjoyed two prebends, one at Utrecht and the other at Aachen, which increased his already substantial income.

By the time he was thirty, however, his brilliant mind awoke to the emptiness of earthly glory and turned to God in a way unknown to it during his long years of philosophical and theological study. He felt the necessity of following Christ in the way the Master would be followed and of despising all earthly vanities, among which he no doubt included theological dialectics and ecclesiastical honours. Appraising the

calculation of theologians, he said that he would rather feel contrition than know how to define it. And he confessed that while formerly he had studied the scriptures to gain knowledge, he now read them to find the truths that would be helpful to his soul. He summed up what was to be the theme of his life in these words: 'Whosoever then would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ must endeavour to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ.'

About this time Groote met a friend of his college days who had become a Carthusian monk and was now Prior of a monastery. This friend eagerly gave him instruction and guidance, and so rapid and steady was his progress in detachment that he soon renounced all honours, prebends, and possessions, retaining only the wherewithal for the bare necessities of life. He who had enjoyed all that the world could offer and had found it empty knew the true meaning of renunciation. He could thus say with full conviction, 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, except to love God, and Him only to serve.'

The renowned Flemish mystic, Jan van Ruysbroeck, whom he visited often in his monastery near Brussels, had considerable influence on his spiritual life. Probably it was this mystic who instructed him in meditation and recommended that he retire to a Carthusian monastery to practice self-discipline. Accordingly, he entered the monastery of Munnikhuizen as a novice.

Even before joining the monastery Groote had begun a kind of spiritual diary, and during his novitiate he continued it. He would jot down notes concerning whatever wisdom he gleaned from experience and whatever light came to him at the time of meditation. Such notes often took the form of pithy and cogent advice to encourage and guide others travelling the same path. Afterwards these writings were included in Book One of *The Imitation*: 'Admonitions Very Useful for a Spiritual Life.'

When Groote described the life of the early Christian hermits he was surely

depicting the very mode of existence he himself was striving to follow: 'In the day they laboured, and in the night they attended to continual prayer; although even while they laboured, they never ceased from mental prayer. They spent all their time with profit; every hour seemed but short for the service of God. And by reason of the great sweetness they felt in contemplation, they forgot the necessity of refreshment for the body. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, and kinsfolk; they desired to have nothing which pertained to the world. . . . Outwardly they were destitute, but inwardly they were refreshed with grace and divine consolation. They were strangers to the world, but near and familiar friends to God.'

'The Admonitions Very Useful for a Spiritual Life' reveal that Groote had found peace, but with it, new problems to face and solve misunderstanding from without and temptation from within. In the first pages of Book One he had disclosed his resolve to be humble and submissive to God, and in the latter part of this Book he showed that he found it necessary to curb the ego further in order to meet the demands of community life, where, as he said, men are tried as gold in the furnace, and where none may remain unless he be willing to humble himself with all his heart for the love of God.

Like all mystics, Groote yearned for the life of seclusion and meditation, but the Prior of Munnikhuizen refused to let him take the final monastic vows, assuring him: 'You can do much more good in the world by your preaching, for which God has given you great talent, than by staying here in the monastery.' So the obedient servant of God denied himself the life he preferred. Had he not already written, 'He doeth much that loveth much. . . . He doeth well that rather serveth the common weal than his own will?'

After five years of diligent preparation he emerged as an evangelizing preacher, eager not only to reform the Church by restoring to it the ardour and purity of the early Holy Fathers, but also to revive truly

spiritual religion among the people at large. His zeal and renunciation indicate that he was one whom God had called to work for Him. That he well knew the secret of work is revealed by his own words: 'A pure, simple, and steadfast spirit is not distracted, though it be employed in many works; for it doeth all for the honour of God, and being at rest within, seeketh not itself in anything it doeth.'

The Bishop of Utrecht ordained him deacon, but, like Saint Francis of Assisi, Groote humbly declined to become a priest. Deacons were permitted to preach, though not to celebrate Mass, and so he was satisfied. For three and a half years he went about the Netherlands giving himself wholly and with all the persuasive vigour of his nature to the apostolic work. His sermons were extremely effective drawing such large congregations that the churches were not large enough to hold them.

He soon found devoted followers who like himself wished to live the life of Christ on earth and with these, some of whom were secular clergy, he formed a community known as the Brethren of the Common Life. This was the first of many such communities, both for men and for women, that flourished throughout Europe until the Protestant Reformation.

Groote was confident that the societies of the Brethren and the Sisters, representing a modified form of monasticism without explicit vows, had a new and unique part to play in religion—they were a link between the monks and the people. But he regarded the role of the monastic regulars as highest and knew that the foundation of true monasteries was a necessity, for they would serve as supports and guides to the societies of converts from worldly life, and also as models of monastic reform. (Groote himself did not live to see the fruition of his plans, but his successor and great disciple, Florens Radewyns, carried on the work in earnest loyalty, establishing the first monastery of the Modern Devotion at Windesheim and the next at Mount Saint Agnes, where

Thomas a Kempis spent his long life).

It was during the active period of his life that Groote composed Book Two, 'Admonitions Concerning Interior Things,' which indicates that many of the spiritual realizations he now had were those of the illuminative way. The turning inward of his mind is represented by his hearing the voice of his soul. Evidently at this time he was feeling intensely drawn to direct realization of the Christ dwelling within himself.

As Groote expresses it, the interior voice began by reminding him, 'The kingdom of God is within you,' and it advised him, 'Turn thee with thy whole heart unto the Lord. . . . Learn to despise outward things and to give thyself to things interior, and thou shalt perceive the kingdom of God to become in thee. . . . Christ will come into thee and show thee His own consolation, if thou prepare for Him a worthy mansion within thee.'

As evidenced by the sole theme of Book Two—the concentration of one's whole being on love of God—Groote heeded the inner voice well and sought steadfastly to learn the way by which he might prepare himself for mystic union with Christ. The interior voice revealed that the true way to become worthy of that union was 'the royal road of the holy cross,' 'know for certain that thou oughtest to lead a dying life; and the more any man dieth to himself, so much the more doth he begin to live to God. . . . For both the disciples that followed Him and all who desire to follow Him He plainly exhorteth to the bearing of the cross, saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."'

Like every one who seeks to know God, Groote had dark periods when the Lord seemed absent from his heart. Even though he learned to be patient and trusting during such periods of dryness, he could not refrain from exclaiming, 'Happy hour, when Jesus calleth from tears to joy of spirit!'

Yet he did not crave consolation in spiritual experiences; his love was not sentimental but heroic: 'A true lover of Christ

and a diligent follower of all virtue, doth not fall back on comforts nor seek such sensible sweetnesses, but rather prefereth to endure hard trials and to sustain severe labours for Christ. When therefore spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it with thankfulness; but understand that it is the gift of God, not thy desert.' When the grace of God was temporarily withdrawn, he said, 'There is no better remedy than patience and the denying of myself according to the will of God.'

'Of the Interior Discourse of Christ to the Faithful Soul' (Book Two, part two) shows how Groote's Sadhana yielded him further revelations of the illuminative way, leading him step by step to the unitive way. Only in the Bhagavad Gita do we find another such discourse in which God himself is represented as instructing His friend and devotee.

Jesus enumerates the conditions necessary for union with Divinity: first, indifference to worldly things; second, renunciation of every desire; and third, complete surrender to the will of the Bridegroom, the Divine will. No easy Master is the Lord: 'Give all for all; seek nothing, ask nothing back, abide purely and with a firm confidence in Me, and thou shalt possess Me.'

Groote accepts the specified conditions with no reservations and with utter gladness, as is seen when the soul bows to Christ and submits to him, saying, 'Praised be thy name, not mine; magnified be thy work, not mine. Let thy holy name be blessed, but to me let no part of men's praise be given. Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. . . . O my God, my Truth and my mercy, O Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be praise, honor, power, and glory, for ever and ever.'

III

The attitude of reliance on God that Groote experienced in his solitary meditation and practised in his busy outward life soon demanded of him a stern and final testing. Until a devotee has tenaciously clung

through darkest suffering to the faith he so easily retains in times of serenity, he can never know its true worth. The Lord blessed Groote with the opportunity to test his faith after he had been teaching only a few years.

Far from admiring the activities and lives of the Brethren and the Sisters, the common people criticized them bitterly, but at length kind deeds and virtue silenced this opposition. However, the friars and priests could not bear Groote's continued denunciations of the un-Christlike activities of some of their number. Enraged at his audacity and fearful lest their power should be lost, they appealed to the Bishop of Utrecht to withdraw his preaching licence. Since no charges could be brought against the purity of either Groote's doctrines or his morals, the Bishop issued a decree of suspension of licence against all who were not in priest's orders.

Gradually the licence was restored to others, but not to Groote. Seeing this, he protested vigorously. He even appealed to Rome for redress, submitting himself in all things to the decisions of the Roman Catholic Church, but suggesting that the Bishop had been 'either misled by lies or overcome by importunity.'

Having dispatched his appeal to the Pope, Groote retired to the monastery of Woudrichem, where, undaunted by ecclesiastical enmity, he set himself to write the series of Admonitions entitled, 'Of Interior Consolation' (Book Two, part three). During this period he also translated the 'Office of the Blessed Virgin into Netherlandish for the benefit of the Sisters of the Common Life who did not understand Latin.

Of course the decree of the Bishop of Utrecht brought great agony of spirit to Groote, who yearned to complete his mission of salvation among the people, and whose lips were sealed at the very height of his success. Yet, from our perspective of time, it is plain that the Bishop's unjust decree was the cause of Groote's writing the last and one of the most beautiful sections of

The Imitation of Christ.

The resignation that sprang from anguish inspired the devotee with even greater love for God than he had known before. Everything in him deepened—thought, feeling, experience, life—and he sought the consolation of God within himself more and more. As he relates, Christ told him, 'My son, trouble not thyself if thou see others honoured and advanced whilst thou art condemned and debased.' Then He repeated the instruction insisted upon from the beginning but now given with greatest emphasis: 'I will have thee learn perfect resignation to my will. If thou wilt reign with me, bear the cross with me.'

To the Lord's words, Groote answered: 'Thou knowest what is expedient for my spiritual progress, and how greatly tribulation serves to scour off the rust of my sins. Do with me according to thy good pleasure and disdain me not for my sinful life. . . . Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the eyes nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men, but with a true judgement to discern between things visible and spiritual, and above all to be ever searching after the good pleasure of thy will.'

Again Groote said: '. . . unless I prepare myself with cheerful willingness to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed altogether nothing, I cannot obtain inward peace and stability nor be spiritually enlightened nor be fully united to thee.'

The Lord told His devotee—as was in harmony with the constantly reiterated teaching—that his degree of union with Him would depend most of all upon his degree of self-renunciation: 'My son, the more thou canst go out of thyself, so much the more wilt thou be able to enter into Me. As to desire no outward thing produceth inward peace, so the forsaking of ourselves inwardly joineth us unto God.'

Groote made the ultimate renunciation of self, even as his Master surrendered to the will of the Father in Gethsemane. He knew

that in perfect self-denial he would eventually find unity with God.

Book Three, 'Devout Admonitions for Approaching Holy Communion,' portrays so well the experiences of a great mystic and devotee of Christ that even a non-Christian must feel deeply moved upon reading it. Groote cried from the depths of his soul, 'Oh, that with thy presence thou wouldst wholly inflame, burn and transform me into thyself, that I might be made one spirit with thee by the grace of inward union and by the melting of ardent love! . . . What marvel is it if I should be wholly inflamed by thee, and die to myself since thou art a fire always burning and never smouldering, a love purifying the heart and enlightening the understanding.'

Surely such words could not form part of the theoretical lessons given to young monks by a placid master of novices like Thomas a Kempis.

Though we see in Groote's great book compensation for the frustration of his mission, and though he bowed with utter resignation to the Lord's will, yet the stern and continuing denial of his right to push forward his work with all the mighty energies at his command took its toll from him. Weary of the obstructions ecclesiastical authority threw in his way, he offered up a prayer, committing himself wholly to the Divine mercy: 'O Lord, blessed be Thy word, more sweet unto my mouth than honey and the honeycomb. What should I do in so great tribulations and anxieties, unless Thou didst comfort me with Thy holy words? What matter is it how much or what I suffer, so I may at length attain to the haven of salvation? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world. Be mindful of me, O my God, and direct me in the right way to Thy kingdom. Amen.'

His prayer was quickly answered. The plague was sweeping the Netherlands and in the capacity of doctor of medicine as well as of comforter of the afflicted, he went to his disciples in Zwolle in July 1384. On 29 August, while taking the pulse of a stricken friend, he felt the swiftly manifested symptoms of the plague overwhelming him.

In his last moments his soul was filled with peace. 'Behold,' he said, 'the Lord calls me, and the dissolution from this wretched body is at hand.' Then he addressed his disciples: 'My dearly beloved, put your trust in God and fear not the hatred of worldlings. Remain faithful to your good resolution; God Himself will stand by you here below. Man can do nothing against the decisions of God.' So died at the early age of forty-four a great teacher and a great disciple—a true follower of Christ.

Lest Thomas a Kempis, in affixing his own name to the work of another, should be blamed for denying that other his due, it must be remembered that Groote died under a cloud of condemnation, however unjustified, and was a long time hated by those who had power to destroy his writings. Groote's epitaph is a silent witness to this: 'His doctrine was a thorn in the side of the deceitful, he was a pillar of justice, a scourge to the wicked.' It is therefore understandable why Groote's authorship was a secret until the discovery of his manuscript in modern days.

'That he deserves the world's adoration,' wrote Swami Vivekananda, 'is a truth that can be gainsaid by none.' Earnestness, self-sacrifice, complete dedication to God—these are the eternal elements of which the character of Gerard Groote was composed. And these elements have been preserved through the centuries, for all who seek God, in the form of *The Imitation of Christ*.

'He (Jesus Christ), with his marvellous vision, had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner, was the embodiment of the same undying Spirit as himself.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

POLITICS AND RELIGION

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

Politics is another branch of activity which is supposed to be greatly antagonistic to religion. Very often discussions arise regarding the relation between religion and politics. At present religion and politics are suspicious of each other. Religion charges politics with misdirecting people, nations, and humanity; and politics openly, and sometimes ruthlessly, avows that religion has become an anachronism, an uncomfortable burden on human society. Politics, wielding great material power, now and then attempts to stifle religion altogether.

Such was not the case in ancient times and even some centuries back. In India we hear of Rishis guiding kings and princes with advice. The king would wield temporal power, but behind him was a sage or a seer who was the moral and spiritual force to prevent him from going astray. As such the guiding principle and ultimate motive of statecraft was how to make the subjects better spiritually and morally in addition, of course, to making them happier materially. There were wars, but they were righteous wars. And even in the course of the war, some fundamental moral principles were obeyed, honoured, and respected. There was the battle of Kurukshetra causing huge bloodshed, but the compensating factor was that it gave to the world the immortal message of the Gita. The battle of Kurukshetra meant the fight between religion and irreligion, righteousness and aberration from the rightful path, between moral principles and baser instincts hidden in the human heart—showing that ultimately right triumphs over wrong.

In historic times we hear of King Ashoka and others who, though seated on royal thrones, were actuated by the highest moral principles and spiritual thoughts. At the present age there are many who will laugh at the very idea of the possibility of such

things: according to them Ashoka was a dreamer, a visionary, an idealist, he was the cause of the downfall of India. But look at the result achieved by Ashoka and others of his type. The foreign travellers to India at those times say: 'Theft was unknown; people were extremely honest and truthful, peace and happiness reigned all over the country; there was no fight between the rulers and the ruled, between the employer and the employed; there was equitable distribution of wealth, and capitalism had not raised its head.' And compare the present state of affairs with that. Which is better?

If we study European history, we find a similar case. The more remote past we go to, the greater we see the influence of religion on politics.

'For the Greeks, ethics and politics were two aspects of a single enquiry. It was the business of ethics to prescribe the good life to the individual; it was the business of politics to determine the nature of the community in which the good life as prescribed by ethics could be lived. The *raison d'être* of politics, in other words, was to be found in an end beyond itself, an end which was ethical.'

With the advent and rise of Christianity, till the Reformation, people believed that the purpose of human activity was the realization of the spiritual goal, and, because of that, the policies of the state should be directed to that end. There was a time when the Pope commanded greater influence than a king or an emperor. But gradually there came a tendency towards a split between religion and politics. It is the inherent weakness of average human nature that philosophically it conceives of high moral principles, but in day-to-day life it has tremendously to struggle against baser instincts. As a result, an average man, more

often than not, succumbs to greed, malice, selfishness, etc. With the development of the so-called civilization life began to be more and more complex, and people found it hard to guide at least the collective life by high moral principles. So the split between religion and politics became more and more wide. With the rise of Protestantism, religion became more an individual affair, a matter of individual conscience rather than of allegiance to an organization. So people could with greater ease separate the function of religion from that of the State. Gradually it came to pass that the State dealt with the material well-being of society and the Church was busy with the spiritual needs of men. In ensuring the material welfare of people, the State did not scruple, if necessary, to lower the moral and spiritual standards. As this tendency developed, everything was considered fair in politics, till it has now earned the appellation of 'a dirty game.' It was perhaps Johnson who said that politics is the last refuge of a scoundrel. Now it is taken for granted that even if a good man enters political life, he develops a twofold conscience—political conscience and individual conscience. In private life he is a very good man—quite human, kindly, sympathetic, honest and truthful, but as soon as he sets his hands on political works, he throws all those qualities away, and there is nothing to which he will not stoop down in order to achieve his political end. As a result, when, a politician or a statesman talks in terms of some idealism, nobody pays any serious attention to his words. Everybody knows that they are mere words: they have no greater value than the breath of the wind, at any moment a solemn pledge may be most shamelessly broken, and without any notice and warning, any sacred treaty or pact may be treated as a scrap of paper.

In the matter of conflict between religion and politics, religion is not altogether free from blemishes nor can religious organizations shake off all responsibilities. Religion is the relationship between man and his Maker. If a man really believes in God, he

naturally depends on God and God alone and not on any temporal power. When religion falls from this high ideal, religion, or rather a religious organization, looks to the state for help, support, and guidance. 'All religious organizations exist by selling themselves to the rich,' writes Bernard Shaw. Naturally a religious organization that depends on the State for its support, cannot do or say anything against the interests of the State—however much even the vital principles have to be sacrificed. Sometimes the Church becomes identified with the powers that be or is at best an ally of the State. That is the reason, why a political revolution is accompanied by the destruction of monasteries, pulling down of the churches, and so on. When a new power comes to the scene, anything that helped the cause of the old regime is looked upon as anathema. The latest example of how the Church can be an instrument of tyranny to the people could be seen in pre-Soviet Russia.

'There is no denying the fact,' says a writer who had an intimate knowledge of Soviet Russia, 'that at the time of the Revolution and during some years after it there were violent manifestations of the hostility to the Orthodox Church by sections of the Soviet population, but this was not because millions of people were suddenly converted to atheism. This hostility was political or social, not philosophical. Unfortunately the State Church had to a great extent become the bulwark and instrument of a corrupt autocracy and actively obstructed the legitimate aspirations of the Russian people. In the eyes of the peasants and villagers the priest was an ally of the rapacious Czarist tax-gatherers and of tyrannical police officials.' No wonder that the Church should be destroyed with the Czarist regime.

Sometimes it becomes a part of the State policy to take advantage of the religious feelings of the people. Machiavelli speaks of religion and morals 'as an instrument to be used to his advantage by the intelligent ruler.' Napoleon I, though a sceptic, would

not countenance any anti-Christian or anti-clerical legislation. He knew that, in keeping the people oblivious of their misery and sufferings, religion exerted the greatest degree of influence. 'Yes, we must see to it,' he said, 'that the floors of the Churches are open to all, and that it does not cost the poor man much to have prayers said on his tomb.'

In times of war and on occasions which will serve its purpose, the State encourages or arranges prayers from all Churches, as if, all on a sudden, it has become very much religious-minded. It is simply a method of rousing mass feelings for or against some particular thing. How religious feelings can be exploited can best be seen in the present-day India. The masses are made simply the tools in the hands of political demagogues who invoke the aid of religion to serve their nefarious purposes. Ordinary people do not know what will be to their real interest. They simply follow the cry of 'religion in danger.' Religious feeling is one of the most combustible elements in the life of the masses. One who can sway it possesses a great power. So political leaders, themselves having no faith in religion, take advantage of the religious feelings of the people—sometimes with great success.

Another charge against religion is that it makes the people timid, docile, and other-worldly.

'In the old days our people thought that God gave them this fate or that. Now they began to see they could make their own fate,' says a Russian of the Soviet Regime. If one always looks for happiness in the world to come, naturally the duties of the present world are neglected. If people are to be kept or made, physically virile, mentally alert and vigorous, religion is a great handicap, they say. For, religion talks in terms of the spirit and not of the body.

But is this the real religion? The man who is useless for this life can never serve any useful purpose in the life to come. The man who cannot solve the problems of this life, can never solve the problems of eternity.

The man who quakes to face this life can have no hope of success in the life beyond death, for he carries this mind and the present mental attitude wherever he goes. This is a simple truth. So the real meaning and significance of religion should be first found, before any criticism can be directed against religion. But this is a fact that religion, which asks people to regulate their life according to the highest moral and spiritual principles, is a great handicap to politicians—at least to the modern politicians. For, politics nowadays is synonymous with anything but justice, honesty, truthfulness—things which count most in one's spiritual life. Naturally any honest man will be suspicious of politics or politicians—barring exceptional cases. And politicians also will find it hard to carry along with them the persons who want to live up to some ideal. Not only that. The influence of a good life lived spreads in the society. Politicians have to counteract those influences. As such they are against religion.

But there is no denying the fact that both politics and religion are important factors of human civilization, and we cannot do without either of them. One is the body, the other is the soul, as it were. Soul without the body has no visible existence, body without the soul is a lifeless corpse. Both are interdependent. Even to progress in one's spiritual life, one has to take care of the body. The body, though material, is a great help to spiritual life.

In the same way, there is a great necessity for politics. Politics—not as a 'dirty game,' but with proper direction—looks after the material needs and comforts of the citizens, and then and then only they can think of higher things. Art, literature, philosophy, religion—these are the fruits of leisure and peace-time activities, which are, in turn, ensured by proper government and able administration. When there is constant disturbance in the country, when the people have to contend against grinding poverty, when they are easy victims of death, disease, and pestilence, no higher thinking is possible.

The purpose of politics is to protect the people against these things as well as to lighten their burden of struggle for existence. As such, politics should not be looked down upon with contempt. Politics, by itself, is not bad, but when it is misdirected by unscrupulous people, it becomes bad. If there is no police to protect the people against thieves and robbers, if there is no army to guard the country against foreign aggression, one's very life is unsafe. So one should be thankful to those who hold the reins of administration. But, of course, if, sitting at the helm of affairs, they betray the trust, they deserve unequivocal condemnation. This is what is happening nowadays in the political field almost throughout the whole world. So modern politics is generally looked upon with disfavour by the better class of people. Those who are inspired by idealism and actuated by a better sense of justice and equity, are alarmed at the trend of politics in modern times. Politics has become synonymous with commercialism, imperialism, militarism, and the biological instinct of fight for elbowing out others for one's own enjoyment and domination. These things cannot go on for long. If you fight like animals, you have to die like animals too. If you worship the brute in man, you fall down to the level of brutes. All politicians should remember this.

Here religion comes to the field, and sounds a note of warning. Religion, embodying the spiritual aspirations of the human race, says, 'If you want peace and happiness, base your life on high moral and spiritual principles.' The greater the greed or avarice, the less the real happiness. By dishonest means and unscrupulous actions you may succeed for the time being, but you must remember that thereby you permanently imperil the cause of personal and national happiness.

But modern politics is not in a mood to listen to this note of warning. So some dictators want to stifle religion altogether. But is it possible to throttle the religious aspirations of the people? Churches and religious

organizations can be suppressed and destroyed, but individual religious hankerings cannot be stopped. One cannot be made religious by an Act of Parliament, nor can the fiat of a dictator silence the spiritual hankerings of a man's heart. If there is an attempt to suppress religion, as a reaction people will grow more religious. They may not go to Churches, they may not outwardly show any indication of their piety, but their religious life will shape itself intensely, till their influence will blaze out like a conflagration. Religion is the constitutional necessity of a man. Man becomes religious as a result of his inner urge. Nobody knows how that inner urge comes, so no one can devise any means to suppress that. It is elusive. The more you try to catch it, the more will it fly from you. So those who are alarmed at the thought that religion will be crushed by political power are victims of false fears. Organizations can be banned, Churches, mosques and temples may be destroyed, but religion cannot be stifled. The houses of God are the outer manifestation of the inner religious life of a people. They, having a visible form, may be done away with, but the inner life of a people remains always untouched; it is immortal.

The question remains, how to reconcile religion and politics? Both are fundamental necessities of life but they seem to have opposite interests, running counter to each other. Politics is not bad, provided it can be chastened and purified. It is the men behind politics who make it good or bad. Politics is an abstract thing. When men put it into practice, it takes a shape. It has been found from experience that no political system is absolutely good or absolutely bad. The degree of the success of a system depends on the persons at the helm. Monarchy has been successful, it has been a failure too. Democracy has done great good, it has also dashed man's hopes to pieces. The latest fad is communism. It raised high hopes some time back, now it seems it is changing colours gradually. No political system is evil-proof. With every form of Government the crux

of the problem is who the persons are who wield real power, and what type of persons they are.

Now, religion will supply the right type of persons to politics. Not those persons who subscribe to a particular creed or want to propagate a certain faith, but persons who have faith, or are eager to build up their inner life are the right type of persons. The more serious types of religious persons will not like to join politics. But, then, their influence will silently and automatically spread over the society, and the society will supply better types of persons to politics.

And is there not something common between religion and politics? Religion says: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' Every religion says that to serve humanity is the best form of worship that one can offer to God. The aim of politics also is to serve people. So this is perfectly a common formula. But religious people do with a spiritual motive what politicians do with only a humanitarian and altruistic motive. Because religious life means a constant effort for self-discipline, a religious man can naturally stick to his ideal for a longer period than a politician. A politician, though guided by the highest motive in the beginning, very soon succumbs to the exigencies of circumstances, till at last he becomes a bundle of hypocrisy. That is the usual thing and exceptional cases need not be taken into account. It is, therefore, that, when a politician talks in terms of high idealism, those who are wise pay no heed to his words.

Now, if politicians had a spiritual background, they would turn out a better quality of work, they would command greater confidence and, therefore, influence. It will be often found that those politicians who have throughout their life fought constantly for justice and equity, upheld the cause of weak and the oppressed, had been in their private life, highly moral, ethical or spiritual.

Work one has, of necessity, to do. There is no escape from work. A most highly evolved spiritual person or a man devoid of thinking power can remain without work. Between these two classes all people will have to work. The Gita says that if you do not work willingly Nature will force you to do work. And a work done in the right spirit becomes religious—a form of spiritual practice. In this respect, those who want to serve humanity through politics cannot be ignored or set aside. If they also work with a proper attitude, they can raise their actions to a spiritual level.

This is the need of the hour. Let those who want to enter politics do so with a spiritual vision, from a high sense of altruistic motive, and let them, from day to day watch with self-analysis and introspection, caution and care, that they do not fall away from the path of righteousness. Thus there will be brought about a harmony between religion and politics: politics will be saved from corruption and religion will have a wider vision. It is only in this way that the world can be saved from destruction, and the future of culture and civilization can be assured.

'Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality, and the more this is developed in a man the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticize no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spiritual realization.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

CHRISTMAS: MARY AND JESUS

BY P. CHENCHIAH

It was a sacrament to withdraw from the froth and frolic of the festival, from the tame ecstasies of prescribed song and sermon of the Church, to the secluded sanctuary of the verandah at the evening Sandhya and there, with the ripe soul of a Hindu that in its maturity has gathered the wisdom of ages, to ponder, as did Mary over Jesus, on those events that happened on the Christmas Day which along with Jesus gave birth to our era.

Were there no other mysteries in the story of Jesus than the arresting ones that he who was King of Jews was born in a manger, and he who was Redeemer of the World died on the cross, it were enough to start strange reveries on the destiny of man. What God or man is this who prefers the manger to the palace, swaddling-clothes to silk, lives with the sinners and dies with the criminals? Imagination, sacred and profane, fed on myth and legend, would have cast for incarnation a splendrous setting, as they did in our own land—princedom for hermitage, palace for cottage, purple for dress, pomp for an attendant and crown for an ornament. Else it would, in a spiritual mood, design a more elevated and ethereal environment as in the case of Gautama—the glory of renunciation, the wonder of miracles, the ecstasy of Ananda, victory over elements and passions. But that a Saviour should be born in penury, victimized by priests, condemned by judges, crowned with thorns, and counted with the outcastes,—that were a role too repugnant for imagination—too daring for thought. Yet it was so. For from the first Christmas Day onwards, God was Daridra Narayana, a comrade of sinners, a solace of the fallen, a friend of the oppressed. What a challenge for the snobbery and sanctity that would encase the divine heart in the unapproachable isolation of the transcendental.

Children of the same mother, the East,

the Semitic Jew and the Indian Aryan think differently of human destiny even when they kneel round the same cradle to adore. For the Jew tragedy of death, for the Aryan the mystery of birth, for the one, eschatology—the dream of the end, for the other, embryology, the science of the beginning, mirror the meaning of life. Where the Jew finds the glory of God declared in the scroll of the skies, the Aryan reads the will of God with the amoeba of birth. It shall be so as long as one strand of native mentality survives the ravages of alien culture. For us, the end is writ in the beginning—the cradle carries the cross. So the Indian Christian touched by the genius of his own race seeks to unravel the mystery that shrouds the human destiny in the baby that was born on Christmas Day and in its innocent bloom and bewitching smiles read the script that Brahma writes on the forehead of man anew.

It has often struck me that the Hindu and the Western in the Indian Christian have both somehow managed to miss the meaning of Christmas, in spite of double tutelage. What lies today in the cradle as the hope and despair of humanity is not merely a gift of heaven, but of earth also. It is less a descent of God than an ascent of man, less the word made flesh than the flesh taking in the word, less Emanuel than Jesus, the son of Mary. So my fancy after much prayer and contemplation understands the unsung song of Angels on Christmas morn.

The Rishi in the East sat, as did the Druid seer, under the spreading banyan and in Samadhi saw the pageant of creation pass before the mind's eye and witnessed how he who plays and then passes into creation, confounds our imagination, confutes our reason, oversays our intuition by stupendous and wondrous unexpectedness, the hall-mark of divine action. He saw how the great

unknown spun out of the tiny atom the vast fabric of cosmos peopling them with suns, stars, galaxies that in their colossal magnitude stun our imagination. Hardly had the sage recovered from the oppressive astonishment of lifeless majesty and magnitude of Nature which obeyed with unerring accuracy the unspoken word and unwritten law, he beheld a wriggle, a squirm, a pin-point of life, struggling bravely up the current of Nature helpless, uncouth and fragile, fashioned as it were, out of the primeval slime, mocked by the grandeur of heaven and surety of earth and wondered whether the Viswakarma had lost his cunning of hand. But lo! the vision rebuked his temerity and quelled his suspicions. The pin-point, the dot, the speck, spread in myriad forms from the sprat to the whale, from germ to mastodon, and from wriggling crept and from creeping crouched, from crouching walked in the diminished shape of anthropoid ape, and then of a biped separated only by one remove from the monkey. The magician touches the brain-box of the ape with some radiant light and the biped started on its marches of ages, reeling off cultures and civilizations, heroes and warriors, sages and saints, glorious sciences and wondrous arts with the ease and charm with which a maiden throws smiles, seductions, around. 'Surely the chapter of wonders has exhausted itself and "finish" has been written to creation,' thought the seer. The babe in the manger vetoed the apprehension and man started in Jesus, an ascent, outmeasuring the grandeur of nature, the splendour of the soul. The curtain rose on the Christmas on a new act of the human drama when God was born on earth and the human frame held the fulness of Godhead. It was like him, the amazing God, to play the hide and seek with us and baffle us at every turn, by making a beginning when the end looked final and thrill our imagination by giving the most unexpected and unlikely twists to creation by matching an Alpha of his for every Omega of ours. A new destiny for man—a godly career began in the overcrowded Choultry where

a carpenter and his spouse, destitute and distressed, were crowded out to seek refuge with animals. What a birthplace for the son of God! Yet all the witnesses we invoke from days of yore for a critical event were there to record and announce the birth of God, the constellation of heaven, the choir of earth, all the types of man and beast—the king, the priest, the star-gazer and the shepherd, the mother and the virgin, the cow and the camel.

'And they saw Mary with child.' Herein lies, the mystery and the meaning, the promise and joy of Christmas. Far more stupendous in significance than a birth of God is the birth of God of Mary. The mystery that fashioned man moved on to the father and then mounted to the mother. For the mother, higher than maid and man, than the lover and the beloved, holds in human shape all the conditions of a new birth and Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the symbol of humanity predestined to conceive God and bring him forth. While the scientist teased Nature to discover her endless secrets, the sage communed with the soul for a clue for salvation and the priest with the incantation of Rik and ritual sought to induce Gods to come to us men, and the Mother brooded over the creation, as Mary pondered over those things revealed to her and gave birth to God. Surely we miss the point when we see the divine paternity of Jesus and fail to note his obvious maternity. For this Jesus was the son of Mary as surely as he was the son of God. Jesus is our child—child of Humanity—son of Mary, the fruit and the consummation of the human process—which seeks not merely to induce God to descent, to commune and perchance to stay for a while with children of men but to be born of us on earth and become verily the son of Man. Thus does the babe in the cradle refute the philosophies of the Jew and the Gentile that speak of infinite qualitative differences between God and Man, for this child Jesus was born of Mary. Today we adore and

acclaim the God who is the son of Man. To me, Madonna with the infant Jesus—is the veritable picture of the summit of human destiny—to be Man-God—to equate the son of Man with the son of God. Jesus nestling in the bosom of Mary is an audible whisper to humanity, that at long last the goal of evolution was reached not only

for us but by us. I adore the son of Mary—Jesus, the divine babe. I too in imagination travel to the Bethlehem and when the wise men have departed and the door is about to shut, plead for a look, crave for an act of adoration and in the name of my country, its sages and sinners, place the tribute of wonder at the lotus feet of Jesus.

THE UPANISHADS ABROAD

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

The Upanishads, which are the philosophical portions of the Vedas, are the foundational works on Indian philosophy. They are, as Dr. R. E. Hume rightly observes, the first recorded attempts of the Hindus at systematic philosophizing. The number of the Upanishads exceeds a hundred, though the principal ones are about a dozen. Very good translations of them have already appeared in Bengali, Hindi, Gujerati, Malayalam, Tamil, and other important languages of India and have made the knowledge of the sacred lore available for the public.

Ever since the Upanishads gained cognizance abroad in the middle of the seventeenth century, they have been exerting a profound influence on the philosophical speculations of the West. In 1656-57 Dara Shukoh, the eldest son and legitimate successor of Emperor Shah Jahan, had made a Persian rendering of the fifty Upanishads with the help of the pandits of Benares at Delhi. The Moghul Prince is said to have heard of the Upanishads during his stay in Kashmir in 1640. This enlightened royal youth openly professed the liberal religious tenets of the great Emperor Akbar, but was unfortunately murdered by his younger brother, Aurangzeb. Had Dara Shukoh ascended to the imperial throne of Delhi, the history of Moghul India would have been different. The Persian translation of the

Upanishads made by Dara Shukoh was rendered into Latin in 1801-2 by Arquetil Duperron who was the very first European to come to India for the purpose of studying oriental religions. The Latin rendering called *Oupnekhat* is of great historical importance, as it was the first book which took a knowledge of the Upanishads to the West. The German philosopher, Schopenhauer, was drawn to the Upanishads by this translation. He was so enamoured of and inspired by them as to laud their study thus: 'It has been the most rewarding and the most elevating reading, which, with the exception of the original text, there can possibly be in the world. It has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death.'

A German translation of this Latin work was made in 1882 and published from Dresden. Another German rendering of more than fifty classical Upanishads from Sanskrit was done in 1897 by Paul Deussen, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kiel. This is the most scholarly translation of the Upanishads hitherto accomplished, and is accompanied with informative and interpretative introductions to each Upanishad as well as cross references and explanatory notes. Swami Vivekananda of hallowed memory had met this German Sanskritist at his home at Kiel and was highly impressed with his profound love and knowledge of the Upanishads.

The illustrious Swami was surprised to see in Deussen's library a Tamil rendering of 108 Upanishads. Prof. Deussen's monumental work on the philosophy of the Upanishads appeared originally in German in 1899 from Leipzig. This work, according to Dr. Hume, is the most systematic and scholarly work on the subject yet produced and is executed with rare linguistic and philosophic qualifications. In the introduction to this masterly volume which in 1906 was rendered into English, Deussen observes: 'The Upanishads possess a significance reaching far beyond their time and country; nay, we claim for them an inestimable value for the whole race of mankind. One thing we may assert with confidence: whatever new and unwonted paths the philosophy of the future may strike out, this principle will remain permanently unshaken and from it no deviation can take place.' The learned professor had come to India in 1893 and prior to his departure from this country he delivered a lecture before the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay. In this lecture he gave a parting message to Indians as follows: 'The Vedanta in its unfalsified form is the strongest support of pure morality, and is the greatest consolation in the sufferings of life and death. Indians, keep to it.'

Colonel G. A. Jacob of Bombay Staff Corps, prepared and published in 1891 after eight years' toil a concordance to the sixty-six principal Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, called the *Upanishad Vakya-kosha*. In the preface to this great work the English compiler observes that every syllable of its manuscript which in print runs to 1083 pages had to be written in Devanagari characters with his own hand. Dr. George C. O. Haas of New York has prepared a list of recurrent and parallel passages in the principal Upanishads and the Gita, which is different altogether in scope and arrangement from Colonel Jacob's concordance. This collection of repetitions and parallels was first printed in the *Journal of American Oriental Society* (Vol. 42) and then appended to Dr. Hume's

English translation of the thirteen principal Upanishads. Charles Edgar Little's *Grammatical Index to the Chhandogya Upanishad* is both a dictionary and a concordance. The occurrence of every word is therein recorded and the grammatical form in which every inflected word occurs is explicitly stated.

G. R. S. Mead's English rendering of nine Upanishads was brought out in 1896 by the Theosophical Society of London. Mead in his preamble calls the Upanishads a world-scripture, that is to say, a scripture appealing to the lovers of religion and truth in all races and at all times without distinction. The foregoing work was done into French by E. Marcault and published from Paris in 1905. The same was translated into Dutch by Clara Straeubel and published by the Theosophical Society of Amsterdam in 1908. A Japanese rendering of 116 Upanishads by 27 translators was brought out in nine volumes from Tokyo in 1922-24. Henry Thomas Colebrooke's essay on the sacred writings of the Hindus containing an English translation of the *Aitareya Upanishad* first appeared in 1805 in the eighth volume of the *Asiatic Researches* of Calcutta, and was rendered into German by L. Poley in 1857.

E. Roer's English translation of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* came out in 1856 in the *Bibliotheca Indica*, Calcutta. A. F. Herold's French translation of this Upanishad according to the Madhyandina recension was printed in 1894 at Paris. Otto Bohtlingk's German rendering of the same Upanishad was published in 1889 from St. Petersburg along with the Sanskrit text. Charles Johnston's *Song of Life* published from New York in 1901 is rather a free English rendering of a portion of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and was translated into German. Baron d'Eckstein's French rendering of the *Aitaraya Upanishad* was included in the *Journal Asiatique*, (Vol. II) of Paris in 1833. A French translation of the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* was made by C. de Harlez of Louvain in 1887. The *Katha Upanishad* was translated into French by Baron d'Eckstein in

1835 and into German by L. Poley in 1847. Edwin Arnold, the immortal author of the *Light of Asia* and *Song Celestial* made a free metrical version of a portion of the *Katha Upanishad* and brought it out in 1885 under the title *The Secret of Death*. In its introduction E. Arnold writes :

The subtle thought, the far-off faith,
The deathless spirit mocking death,
The close-packed sense, hard to unlock
As diamonds from the mother-rock,
The solemn brief simplicity,
The insight, fancy, mystery, of Hindu scriptures,
All are had in this divine Upanishad.

Sri Krishna Prema, an Englishman named Nixon and late Professor of Lucknow University, has an interesting volume entitled *Yoga of Kathopanishad*. This book contains a beautiful English rendering of the whole Upanishad with a novel explanation of its verses. The explanation is nothing short of a modern commentary, an original interpretation in the light of both Eastern and Western, ancient and modern thought. He has shed a new light on the deeper meanings of the verses of this most poetical of the Upanishads. According to Krishna Prema, 'there is a world of rich and vivid experience lying hidden behind the words of the text and that this sacred book speaks of an ancient road that leads from death to immortality, a road which is as open today as it was when the text was composed, a road which is known to a few all the world over.' He shows that this Upanishadic way is described in the sacred writings of the ancient races, the Sumerians, Egyptians, ancient Aryans, as well as in the teachings of the great world-teachers Pythagoras, Platinus, Hermes, Plato, Laotze, Buddha, and others.¹ A Swedish translation of the *Katha Upanishad* by Andrea Butenschon appeared in 1902 from Stockholm and an Italian rendering of the same by Belloni Filippi in 1905 from Pisa. W. D. Whitney's English translation of this Upanishad appeared in the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* (Vol.

21) of Boston in 1890. This is a very careful translation with valuable exegetical and linguistic notes and a number of proposed textual emendations. W. Gorn Old's *Yoga of Yama* is a free English version of this Upanishad. Jarl Charpentier's English rendering of the same saw the light of day in the *Indian Antiquary* in 1928.

R. T. H. Griffith who has made a beautiful metrical version in English of the great epic, *Ramayana*, has an English rendering of the *Isha Upanishad* which was published in 1898 from Benares along with the texts of the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* of which this Upanishad forms the fortieth chapter. Albrecht Weber of Berlin, who is well known for his *History of Philosophy*, published in his German work, *Indische Studien*, in 1849-50 a series of articles on the Upanishads containing translation of important passages. John Muir's edition of the original Sanskrit texts first published from London in 1858 contains numerous brief translations from the Upanishads arranged under various topics. Sir Monier Williams, the famous Sanskrit-English lexicographer gives original translations of representative extracts from several Upanishads in the second chapter (on the Brahmanas and Upanishads) of his *Indian Wisdom*. This learned English Sanskritist observes here that the Upanishads are practically the only Veda of all thoughtful Hindus of the present day. The French works of Paul Regnad and Oltramare as well as the German work of Lucian Scherman are notable publications on the Upanishads which helped to popularize the Hindu scriptures in Europe. The Christian Literature Society of Madras brought out in 1898 a book containing translations of some Upanishads together with a very disparaging survey of these sacred texts by an anonymous compiler. T. E. Slater of the same Society in his *Studies in the Upanishads*, published in 1897, observes: 'I find in all their best and noblest thoughts a true religious ring and a far-off presentiment of Christian truth; their finest passages having a striking parallelism

¹ See my review of this book in *Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1943.

to much of the teaching of the Christian gospels and epistles and so supplying the Indian soil in which many seeds of true Christianity may spring.' Charles Johnston wrote a series of thought-provoking articles in the *Open Court* (1905) and the *Monist* (1910), of Chicago. Paul Deussen's *Spirit of the Upanishads* published from Chicago in 1907 expresses the cream of Hindu philosophical thought. Dr. Lionel D. Barnett's *Brahma Knowledge* which appeared from New York in 1911 is an excellent outline of the Upanishadic philosophy as set forth by Shankara.

Books containing translation of the Upanishadic texts have been prepared by Paul Eberhardt, Alfred Hillebrandt, Johannes Hertel, K. F. Geldner and Paul T. Hoffmann in German, and by Guillaume Pauthier and Pierre Salet in French. R. Gordon Milburn's *Religious Mysticism of the Upanishads* arranges selections from the twelve Upanishads under such headings as epistemology, ontology, and esoteriology and so on. Otto Bohtlingk published in 1891 from Leipzig a book containing the text of the *Katha*, *Aitareya*, and *Prashna Upanishads* in Devanagari script together with a German rendering and critical notes. In the preliminary explanation he depreciates Shankara thus: 'In the main I have paid very little attention to Shankar's commentary, since the man knows the older language very imperfectly, has no presentiment of philosophical criticism, and explains the text from his own philosophical standpoint. If any one wishes to place a deeper meaning in the often obscure expressions, let him do so at his own risk without any prepossession. I have refrained from any sort of interpretation, and have striven only to give a philologically justifiable translation.' Otto Bohtlingk speaks in a similar strain, in his German rendering of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* published from Leipzig in 1889 along with the Sanskrit text in remarkably distinct Devanagari characters. The translator remarks in his Vorwort: 'No reference has been made, nor need be made

to the interpretation of Shankara since that impresses upon the Upanishad an entirely false stamp. On the other hand Archibald E. Gough in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, (London, 1882) explicitly states that the teaching of Shankara alone is the natural and legitimate interpretation of the fundamental doctrines of the Upanishads and that Vedanta is only a systematic exposition of the philosophy of the Upanishads. He further adds like Paul Deussen: 'The Upanishads are an index to the intellectual peculiarities of the Indian character. The thoughts that they express are the ideas that prevail through all subsequent Indian literature much of which will be fully comprehensible to those only who carry with them a knowledge of these ideas to its perusal. A study of the Upanishads is the starting point in any intelligent study of Indian philosophy. As regards religion, the philosophy of the Upanishads is the groundwork of the various forms of Hinduism, and the Upanishads have been justly characterized by Goldstucker as "the basis of the enlightened faith of India." The Upanishads are the loftiest utterances of Indian intelligence. Whatever value the reader may assign to the ideas they represent, they are the highest product of the ancient Indian mind, and almost the only elements of interest in Indian literature which is at every stage replete with them to saturation.'

Eugene Burnouf published in 1833 from Paris extracts from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in Devanagari characters together with French or Latin translations. Otto Bohtlingk brought out in 1889 from St. Petersburg a German translation of this Upanishad without the Sanskrit text. E. B. Cowell edited in 1861 the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* with the commentary of Shankaranda and an English translation. This was included in the *Bibliotheca Indica* of Calcutta and followed by the English renderings of Max Muller, Keith, and Hume. Hanns Oertel's English translation of the *Kena Upanishad* appeared in 1894 in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Richard Hauschild's edition of the *Swetaswa-*

tara Upanishad, (Leipzig, 1927) is an elaborate critical treatise with the text in transliteration and a translation into German. Text-editions of the Upanishads, collected and single, were made by L. Poley, E. Roer, Albrecht Weber, Johannes Hertel, E. B. Cowell, and a host of other Indologists. Chiefly linguistic treatises on the Upanishads were written by W. D. Whitney, Otto Bohtlingk, Earnst Windish, Willibald Kirfel, Otto Wecker, Alfred Hillebrandt, Alfons Furst, and Erich Frauwallner. Otto Wecker's work is an exhaustive investigation and tabulation of all the varying uses of the six oblique cases in the ten Upanishads. Wecker conjectures a chronological order and the grouping of the ten principal Upanishads with reference to the great grammarian, Panini. In his view, the *Swetaswatara* and *Maitri Upanishads* are post-Paninean and the other eight pre-Paninean. Willibald Kirfel's German work is an exhaustive investigation with statistically tabulated results of all the phenomena of compound nouns (Samasas) of the five classes, as they occur in the *Katha*, *Prashna*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Mundaka*, and *Swetaswatara Upanishads*.

Treatises mainly expository have been carefully written by Thaddaus Anselm Rixner, Friedrich Hugo Windischmann, J. D. Lanjuinais, Albrecht Weber, Mrs. Charlotte Speir, F. Max Muller, Max Carl Von Krempelhuber, Mrs. Charlotte Manning, Paul Regnaud, Auguste Barth, Archibald E. Gough, Hermann Oldenberg, Leopold Von Schroeder, Charles Rockwell Lanman (Professor of Sanskrit in Harvard University), Richard Garb of Leipzig, R. W. Frazer, Herbert Baynes, E. W. Hopkins of Yale University, Alfred S. Geden, Hervey D. Griswold, Arthur A. Macdonell, Josiah Royce of Harvard, Arthur H. Ewing, Annie Besant (of Theosophical Society), Paul Oltramare, Edwin A. Rumball, Maurice Bloomfield, M. R. Bodas, W. H. G. Holmes, Paul Elmer More, R. Gordon Milburn, Hermann George Jacobi, J. S. Speyer, R. W. Fraser, Nichol Macnicol, James B. Pratt, Franklin Edger-

ton, Heinrich Luders, W. S. Urquhart, H. W. Schomerus, Dorothea Jane Stephen, Edward Carpenter, G. H. Langley, George William Brown, Betty Heimann, B. Faddegon, Friedrich Heller, A. B. Keith, Otto Strauss, M. Winternitz, and Emile Senart among other Westerners. They have each written a volume or an essay on the Upanishads in English, French, or German. Professor Josiah Royce of Harvard University deemed the philosophy of the Upanishads sufficiently important to expound it in his Gifford Lectures delivered in 1900 before the University of Aberdeen. His Gifford Lectures which have been published under the title *World and the Individual* contains original translations of some Upanishadic passages especially made by his colleague, Professor Lanman.

Of the English translators of the Upanishads, F. Max Muller and R. E. Hume deserve special mention. Max Muller was a German scholar. His real love for Sanskrit literature was first kindled by the Upanishads. It was in the year 1844 when attending Schelling's lectures at Berlin that his attention was drawn to these ancient philosophic treatises. Soon after leaving Berlin he continued his Sanskrit studies at Paris under Burnouf. Finally he settled at Oxford to devote his life to his favourite studies of Vedic literature and brought out with the collaboration of various oriental scholars, after years of loving labour, the *Sacred Books of the East* from Oxford. This world-famous series which was edited by him contained in its first and fifteenth volumes English translations of the twelve principal Upanishads with annotations and introductions. He writes in the introduction to the first volume of this epoch-making series published in 1879: 'The earliest of these philosophical treatises, the Upanishads, I believe, will always maintain, a place in the literature of the world among the most astounding productions of the human mind in any age and in any country.' This was the first authoritative and important translation of the Upanishads done into a foreign

language. It broadcasted the Upanishadic wisdom throughout the world. Swami Vivekananda during his sojourn in England met this great German Sanskritist and designated him as the ancient Sayanacharya, the Vedic commentator, reborn in Europe for the resuscitation and spread of Vedic literature. It was Max Muller who brought out the very authentic edition of the *Rig Veda* with text and English rendering from Oxford. He had no occasion to visit India. When Swami Vivekananda asked him if he would come to India, the face of the aged sage brightened up and tears shone in his eyes. He sighed: 'I would not return then; you would have to cremate me there.' R. E. Hume's English rendering of the *Thirteen Principal Upanishads* from Sanskrit is, in the words of R. D. Ranade, the latest, most handy, and most serviceable of all. It contains an outline of the Upanishadic philosophy and an annotated bibliography. In the masterly introduction covering 72 pages Dr Hume who is a professor of History of Religions at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, offers to the Upanishads a place of pride in the history of philosophy and observes: 'The Upanishads undoubtedly have great historical and comparative value, but they are also of great present-day importance. It is evident that the monism of the Upanishads has exerted and will continue to exert an influence on the monism of the West; for it contains certain elements, which penetrate deeply into the truths which every philosopher must reach in a thoroughly grounded explanation of experience.'

Friemrich Hugo Windischmann added in the work of his father, Carl Joseph H. H. Windischmann, an exposition of the Upanishadic mysticism in Latin. It is one of the very earliest treatises on the subject having been published in 1827-1833 and is noteworthy as being the first attempt to use grammatical and historical considerations for determining the age of the Upanishads. Richard Garbe in his German work remarks

that the pre-Buddhistic Upanishads represent a time (from the eighth to the sixth centuries B. C.) in which there developed those ideas which became determinative of Indian thought later on. In the opinion of Charles Johnston the great Upanishads are the deep, still mountain tarns, fed from the pure water of the everlasting snows, lit by clear sunshine, or by night mirroring the high serenity of stars. R. Gordon Milburn, a Christian missionary, who became the Vice-Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, made some noteworthy proposals on the modern importance of Upanishadic mysticism. In an article on Christian Vedantism to the *Indian Interpreter* (Madras, 1913), Milburn writes: 'Christianity in India needs the Vedant (which is another name for the Upanishadic thought). We missionaries have not realized this with half the clearness that we should. We cannot move freely and joyfully in our own religion; because we have not sufficient terms and modes of expressions wherewith to express the more immanent aspects of Christianity. A very useful step would be the recognition of certain books or passages in the literature of the Vedant as constituting what might be called an Ethnic Old Testament. The permission of ecclesiastical authorities could then be asked for reading passages found in such a canon of Ethnic Old Testament at divine service along with passages from the New Testament as alternatives to the Old Testament lessons.' Thereupon the writer suggests certain passages from the six Upanishads among other Hindu and Buddhist scriptures.

Hermann Oldenberg is of opinion that many, ideas, images, and expressions of Brahmanical speculation passed on to Buddhism. He reiterates: 'If I am correct in my surmise as to the time of the production of the *Katha Upanishad*, it contains an important contribution to the history of thought preparatory to Buddhism.' Auguste Barth in his French work says: 'India will remain, at heart, attached to the manner of philosophizing found in the Upanishads.'

To that its sects will come back again one after another; its poets, its thinkers even, will always take pleasure in this mysticism, with its modes of procedure.' Richard Garbe in his *Philosophy of Ancient India* (Chicago, 1899) writes: 'In the older Upanishads the struggle for absolute knowledge has found an expression unique in its kind. There are indeed in these Upanishads many speculations over which we shake our heads in wonder, but the meditations keep recurring to the Brahman. The World-Soul, the Absolute or "Ding An sich" or however the word so full of content may be translated, culminates in the thought that the Atman, the inner Self of man is nothing less than the eternal and infinite Brahman. The language of the Upanishads is enlivened in such passages by a wonderful energy, which testifies to the elevated mode in which the thinker of that time laboured to proclaim the great mystery. New phrases, figures, and similies are constantly sought in order to put into words what words are incapable of describing.' Arthur A. MacDonell in his *History of Sanskrit Literature* (London and New York, 1900) says: 'It must not, of course, be supposed that the Upanishads either as a whole or individually, offer a complete and consistent conception of the world logically developed. They are rather a mixture of half-poetical, half-philosophical fancies of dialogues and disputations dealing tentatively with metaphysical questions. Their speculations were only reduced to system in the Vedanta philosophy.'

Arthur H. Ewing's article on the Hindu conception of the function of breath is a study in early Hindu psycho-physics and appeared in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1901. It is a complete collection and attempted interpretation of all the data in the Samhitas, Brahmanas, and the Upanishads concerning the various breaths, the Pranas. Baynes Herbert in his *Ideals of the East* (London, 1898) writes: 'Perhaps no class of metaphysical literature

is likely to exercise so great an influence on future schools of thought in Europe as those mystical products of the Indian mind known as the Upanishads.' Paul Deussen's German work on the Vedanta philosophy was translated into English by J. H. Woods, C. V. Runkle, and Charles Johnston. In the preparatory note this German author observes: 'On the tree of Indian wisdom there is no fairer flower than the Upanishads and no finer fruit than the Vedanta Philosophy. This system grew out of the teachings of the Upanishads and was brought to its consummate form by the great Shankara. Even to this day, Shankara's system represents the common belief of nearly all thoughtful Hindus and deserves to be widely studied in the Occident.'

Schopenhauer had spoken of the Upanishads as the products of highest wisdom. He wrote in 1818 that the benefit of the Vedas, the access to which by means of the Upanishads is the best, is in his eyes a blessed privilege to which this young century may lay claim before all previous centuries. In the introduction to his *magnum opus*, entitled *The World as Will and Idea*, the German philosopher in an inspired mood prophesies thus: 'How entirely do the Upanishads breathe throughout the holy spirit of the Vedas! How is every one who makes a diligent study stirred by that spirit to the very depth of his soul! How does every line display its firm, definite, and throughout harmonious, meaning! From every sentence deep, original, and sublime thoughts arise and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. Indian air surrounds us, and original thoughts of kindred spirits. And oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions and of all philosophy that cringes before those superstitions! Our religion will never strike root in India. The primitive wisdom of the human race will never be pushed aside there by the events of Galilee. On the contrary, Indian

wisdom will flow back upon Europe, and produce a thorough change in our knowing and thinking.' One Durga Prosad of Lahore made in 1898 an expository translation of the *Kena Upanishad* into English. In that unassuming work the translator gave vent to a noble feeling which is in my opinion

shared by the Hindu mind in general. He said: 'The perusal of the Upanishads makes one religious. Nowhere is God truly described as in these metaphysical books of India.' To this I beg to add that no scripture speaks of so sublime spiritual experiences as the Upanishads.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

In this instalment of the *Conversations* the reader will get a glimpse of the ecstatic state of Sri Ramakrishna where 'time remained static in the present.' . . . In *The Conquest of the Worlds* the Editor deals with the possibility of other worlds than our own and discusses their nature and objective reality from the Vedantic standpoint. . . . In *The Imitation of Christ* the writer shows that Thomas a Kempis is not the real author of the book, though that fact in no way minimizes the spiritual value of the book. . . . Swami Pavitrananda argues that *Politics and Religion* are not antagonistic as is believed, but only two phases of the same problem supplementing each other. . . . The significance of Christmas as viewed from the Indian standpoint is portrayed by P. Chenchiah in *Christmas: Mary and Jesus*. . . . In a very learned article *The Upanishads Abroad* Swami Jagadiswarananda reveals in detail the sublime influence of the Upanishads upon the Western writers and thinkers.

STUDIES ABROAD

'Today,' writes Gandhiji in *Harijan*, 'the craze for going abroad has gripped students. . . . An Indian doctor who went to America writes me to influence students not to go abroad for the following reasons :

The amount our poor country spends on sending and training ten students abroad could be better

utilized by securing the service of a first-rate professor who could train forty students as well as equip a laboratory. . . . If we have experts brought out, our laboratories will also get perfected.

It will be interesting to note in this connection the economic and national effects of Indian students going abroad for studies. According to the *Indian Information* (December 1944), issued by the Government of India, the average number of students at any time in normal pre-war years in Great Britain was about 2,000. Dr. Taraknath Das and Gobindaram J. Watumull write as follows :

If the average expense of an Indian student in England be estimated at least at £250 a year, then these students must have spent annually at least £500,000 or Rs. 75 lakhs. If this sum—one year's expenditure by Indian students in England—be used judiciously and economically, it can be adequate for establishing an institution of higher education in India. For instance, out of 75 lakhs of rupees 25 lakhs may be used for building and equipment and the balance 50 lakhs can be invested to yield an annual income of 2½ lakhs of rupees. This income supplemented by tuition fees would provide for a staff of fifty professors and instructors. Such an institution within ten years can be developed into a magnificent one providing facilities for higher education for thousands of Indians without draining Indian resources out to foreign lands.

During the last forty years at least 10,000 Indian students went to England. . . . On the average these students spent three years to finish their studies in England; and on the average they spent £250 a year. Thus the total amount spent by

Indian students in England during the twentieth century has been no less than £7,500,000 or Rs. 112,500,000. . . . This sum spent in England for the so-called higher education of Indian students would have provided funds for 15 Universities and facilities for higher education of hundreds of thousands of Indians, enriching Indian national efficiency.

It seems that the Government have not fully grasped the significance of it: for they are still pursuing the same policy. During the year 1945-46 more than 600 students will be sent to foreign universities. Government of India will spend more than a million dollars a year to train Indian students in U.S.A. and more in U.K. i.e. more than 25 million dollars will be spent by Indian taxpayer in foreign lands in the coming few years; and these students on their return largely depend on government jobs, for personal benefit only. What will the country as a whole, the common man who defrays the expenses, benefit by this?

To develop the industries, to develop the efficiency of the technological and educational institutions, to raise the economic and national efficiency, which is at the bottom of sending our youth to foreign universities, will not be effected by mere 'sending' without a supplementary program in India itself. Russia and Japan which were till recently backward countries do not send their youth in thousands to foreign lands. Soviet Russia, to carry out her vast economic program, brought foreign experts and developed her industries and technical institutions. Governments and industrialists take a major part in this matter in foreign lands. To quote the *New York Times* :

Many educational institutions are now participating in the field of commercial research. The Battelle Memorial Institute employing a research staff of 600 last year worked on contracts totalling approximately \$2,500,000. Cornell University has more than 300 commercial investigations under way. . . . Nearly 200 industrial concerns are backing a research project at Mellon Institute. The X-ray laboratories at the University of Rochester serve industries within a 100-mile radius. . . . The University of Minnesota has approximately 160 research projects operating at present. The University of Texas has received nearly \$500,000 from commercial concerns since 1939

for research purposes. The largest of the current grants now totalling \$186,000 is to continue investigations on the Schoch process of making acetylene from natural gas by the electric discharge method. . . .

What are the Indian industrialists doing to develop Indian education and technical research? What are they doing to raise the national standard? To quote Dr. Das and Watumull again:

The program for raising the standard of Indian universities and the development of research facilities in these institutions is of greater importance than sending hundreds of Indian students to study in foreign universities. There is every reason to believe that if every year the government send only a few—fifty or so—of the most promising young members of the faculties of various Indian universities . . . with a specific purpose of equipping them with greater efficiency in their own fields of study and then spend larger sums in developing existing Indian universities and establish new institutions to meet national needs, such a program will be more economic and effective.

Though limited are the powers, great are the responsibilities of the national government of India; and greater are the expectations of the nation from them.

HEAD AND HEART

The modern world is suffering from too much of intellect and too less of intuition. The discovery of atom bomb has abundantly proved the intellectual penetration; whereas the wiping out of two cities, the tragic destruction of about two lakhs of people for mere experiment's sake at the Bikini Atolls show the poverty of feeling, lack of moral scruples, which slowly stultifies the growth of finer feelings. As there is a one-sided growth to the detriment of the heart, man grows greedy and selfish and 'fundamentally insufficient,' and the sense of love which unifies humanity as a whole is being cut off. 'What we suffer from is not intellectual error or moral ignorance, but it is spiritual blindness. No amount of science and art . . . can maintain whole an edifice whose foundations are unsound,' says Radhakrishnan in a radio talk from New York city. The professions of scientists were considered to be noble and they were not dragged to the chair of inquisition to demoralize and destroy a

certain section of humanity for political rivalry. But the last war has shown that the war-lords no more consider the shrine of science as *sanctum sanctorum* and the immense force released by it has been degraded by using for diabolical purposes. Continues Radhakrishnan:

Science has put at our disposal potencies of universal force but human individuals who use them are little communal egos with nothing universal in the light of their knowledge or the life of their affections. The nationals of a country are prepared for the immolation of the innocent. . . . In pursuit of the mind and spirit there was hitherto an element of international collaboration. But today even the scientific workers are conscripted into the service of the State. Science and scholarship, whose essential purpose is to foster universal values, are being betrayed by their votaries, who are compelled to conform to the policy of the State and give to a group what is meant for mankind. We are bruised and bewildered, our deepest emotions are stirred by the incredible forms of savagery in which even intelligent and sensitive men are required to acquiesce.—*Vedanta Quarterly*

It is time that scientists should revolt against this sacrilegious act, this encroachment into their sacred domain. It is time they should refuse to co-operate in the misuse of their power and should cast away national and political allegiance to develop a new social order where the dry intellect is equally balanced by the emotions of heart. It is here they should show their scientific mind, and like Socrates or Jesus prefer death to the lowering of the ideals. Or what difference is there between the old witch-doctors and inquisitors, who used their spiritual power for domination and the atom-bomb scientists?

It is one of the evils of Western civilization that intellectual education is more cared for to the utter neglect of the finer emotions of the heart. When the heart leaps up in sympathy and fellow-feeling, the head prevents it from it by bringing selfish motives. Through the intellect is not the way to get out of this misery, this anarchy, fear, and jealousy; it is not going to bring peace either. If half the amount of effort and energy spent in cultivating the intellect is used for developing the natural flow of heart,

in making men purer and gentler, this world would have been a thousandfold happier and safer than today. Says Swami Vivekananda:

When there is conflict between the heart and the brain let the heart be followed, because intellect has only one state, reason, and within that intellect works and cannot get beyond. It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane which intellect can never reach; it goes beyond intellect and reaches what is called inspiration. Intellect can never become inspired. Only the heart when it is enlightened becomes inspired. An intellectual, heartless, man never becomes an inspired man. It is always the heart that speaks in the man of love.

It is only when this universal love, this oneness with our fellow-men becomes the leading star of our life, not as political diplomacy or economic policy, but as a spontaneous inner realization, that real relations with others are possible. A feeling that in the life of our fellow-men is our own life complete is the only secure base for human unity.

THE CANCER OF UNTOUCHABILITY

'Look on all living beings as Brahman' is the fundamental principle of Hindu religion. But the social isolation and tyranny of a section of the people as 'untouchables' has cast a slur on the good name of not only Hindu society, but religion as well. It has become a good handle in the hands of others to dub it as a tyrannical community. It should be said at the outset that there is no religious sanction behind this custom which is purely social in origin. The original ideal of this caste system was meant for raising all humanity slowly and gently towards the realization of the great ideal of the spiritual man. But later when the uncivilized hordes of foreigners had poured into India, Hindu society had made hard and fast rules for self-preservation. This had its use in those critical times, but it is foolishness to preserve it when the times have changed, and it positively is doing harm to society. 'The subdivisions which originated for stabilizing and preserving the community have now become a source of weakness,' observes Shankaracharya of Shringeri. 'Our ancestors

freed religious thought and we have wonderful religion; but they put a heavy chain on the feet of society and our society is, in one word,—horrid, diabolical says Swami Vivekananda. He continues:

The present religion of the Hindus is not in the Vedas nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti—religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of the Hindus is neither the path of knowledge, nor that of reason—it is 'don't-touchism': 'don't touch me,' 'don't touch me'—that exhausts its description. . . . Must the teaching 'look upon all beings as your own self' be confined to books alone? How will those who become impure at the mere breath of others purify others? 'Don't-touchism' is a form of mental disease.

This cry of Swami Vivekananda to remove the blot on Hindu society has now reached the hearts of people, thanks to the untiring works of Gandhiji and the Congress. We are glad to note that the Congress government of Bombay have passed a legislation to remove the social disabilities of a section of society which was long groaning under a heavy yoke.

But piecemeal reformation is not the need of the day. Fifty years before such an act would have been a great step forward. But the times have changed and we have to move with the times or die in the struggle for national survival. Gradual reform will make the opposition of the orthodox Hindus more prolonged and make the so-called untouchables more exasperated. A bold and imaginative action is what is needed today. At one stroke *all* the social disabilities under which any caste suffers should be removed by law.

The experience of Travancore in legislating in this direction shows that the problem is easy of solution, provided there is courage in the rulers. The statesmanlike action of the Travancore Ruler proves the flexible and adaptable nature of Hindu society. By one bold act of proclamation this relic of a tyrannical age was destroyed. At first there were demurrings, angry words, non-cooperation, and boycott from some ignorant caste Hindus.

True Brahmins and lovers of Hindu society have always stood by the proclamation. But the majority of Brahmins were Brahmins only in name, and their religion was in the cooking-pot. Soon the pinch was felt, as the income fell considerably. And eventually all of them returned to the same fold. Thus the bold action and still more bold stand on it, saved the situation, and today it is a complete success.

It is such statesmanship and moral courage that is required today. What fear is there if we are convinced of the moral righteousness of the cause? It is a tragedy and mockery to humanity to tyrannize over a section of the society simply because they were born in a certain family. 'It is a far cry for India to establish relations of equality with foreign nations until she succeeds in restoring equality within her own bounds,' says Swami Vivekananda.

Now one word to the so-called caste Hindus. Their society is no more observing the old injunctions of caste rules. A Brahmin is no more devoted to studies and meditation; a Kshatriya is not a fighter today. All are slaves of foreigners, and all are vying with one another to get the post of a clerk under the government. Now what is the use of hugging the corpse which is really stinking? 'A religion which does not uplift man forfeits the name of religion', says Swami Vivekananda:

Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. . . . He who sees Shiva in the poor, the weak, and the diseased really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image his worship is preliminary.

And this is his call to every Hindu:

Go, all of you, wherever there is untouchability, or wherever the people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you may die—what of that? Die you must, but have a great ideal to die for, and it is better to die with a great ideal in life. . . . May I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls; above all my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor, of all races and of all species is the special object of my worship.

SCIENCE NOTES

Plato conceived of this universe as a series of shadows, cast by passing events outside a cave on the wall facing its small entrance. Naturally, these shadows are two-dimensional representation of events taking place in space of three dimensions. Going a step forward we suppose that events taking place in a space-time medium of four dimensions, which surround us in this universe of ours, are only shadows of events taking place in a medium of five or more dimensions. We are dwellers in a cave where we see shadows in a space-time continuum of four dimensions, and we all the time troubled about the nature of events which so wickedly cast their shadows to our great bewilderment. Unfortunately our face is turned away from the entrance, and we are suffering from a stiff neck, which makes it impossible for us to look in the direction of the happening of events. We do not have, therefore, any inkling of these events or their real nature, because they are for ever inaccessible to our direct observation. Passing shadows in front of us are all we can see, and their frequency, repetition, and intensity of light and shade all the data at our disposal with which we start on our exploratory adventure. This is the reason why Sir James Jeans—alas, he is no more in our midst having recently died on 26 September last—once said that ‘the outstanding achievement of twentieth century science is . . . the general recognition that we are not yet in contact with ultimate reality.’ Not only this, this great scientist, with his penetrating insight, further said, ‘for this reason, to borrow Locke’s phrase, “the real essence of substances” is for ever unknowable.’

What adds to our confusion is the primary mistake, into which we are unconsciously led, that what we see are not shadows but real events happening before us, from which we derive all our weals and woes, and with which we are so inextricably linked. It is no wonder, therefore, that studying these events by

their shadows we do not reach the reality of which they are made. And who knows whether the events which cast their shadows on the wall before us are not themselves simpler shadows of other more complicated events? The reality may thus be several generations behind, and perhaps so far away that it may never be traced. That is perhaps the reason why Vedanta regards this universe as essentially unreal, as all shadows are, and tries to reach the reality by a method different from what the scientists have chosen.

But the fact of the events of this universe being mere shadows does not take away a jot from their realness; they may not be material in the sense of grossness, and may not be otherwise of the nature of matter. What is beyond all controversy now is that the universe does not admit of any biological or mechanical explanation, and its interpretation has passed to the laws of pure mathematics, which gave us the concept of a finite space, a space which is empty, which ever expands and is four-dimensional; laws of probability instead of the law of causation; a space-time medium called continuum replacing our old time Father Christmas, ether. Pure mathematics is the product of pure thought, which finds its echo in nature, or which is the same thing as saying that the same laws govern minds and nature. Thus it is that the universe has now been reduced to a mere concept, not so far as its realness is concerned, but in the manner of its behaviour at least.

Descartes could see no connection between matter and thought, but if pure mathematics has reduced matter to the nature of thought, it must exist in some mind, as does thought. This led Berkley to assume the existence of a universal mind without whom the whole universe could not exist. I can be conscious of that part of the universe which sends stimuli to my mind through the senses, and so only that part can have any objective existence for me. A universal mind, call it God if you will, can take cognizance of the whole universe at the same time,

which exists, therefore, because there is the universal mind to cognize it. This does not, however, supplant realism by any idealism, because science adopts this concept only to the extent that laws of nature are not governed by the laws of thought of individual minds, but by the laws of thought of the universal

mind, which are the same for all of us. It may be this will necessitate addition of another dimension to our medium filling this universe, that of consciousness, to the four of space and time. If we do this we shall be nearer to religion, as it is universally understood, than we ever were.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

HINDU COLONIES IN THE FAR EAST. BY DR. R. C. MAJUMDAR. *Published by General Printers and Publishers, Ltd., Calcutta.*

Although this book was written for the use of university students, the contents are such as to interest the general reader who feels a sense of pride in the wonderful achievements and colonizing spirit displayed by Indians in the early historical period. It is well known that when the West was steeped in barbarism, ancient India had already developed a high level of civilization and culture, which had also spread to neighbouring lands in the East. Dr. R. C. Majumdar had done intense research in this field for nearly twenty years. In this short book the author has included all the essential facts bearing upon the history and culture of ancient Hindu colonies in the Far East avoiding all critical discussions and references to authorities.

The term 'Hindu Colonies' in the Far East refers to Champa, Suvarna Dvipa, Kambuja, Siam, Burma and Indo-China. As in the modern world, emigration in ancient time had a definite purpose which was to acquire wealth, by trade and commerce. But when contacts began for commercial purposes, Indians took care to take with them the light and learning of their mother country. There were of course no military or political designs on the lands thus colonized. The Empire, if it can be called such, was purely an Empire of Hindu Culture, Arts, and literature and there was no trace of dictation or coercion. The author pointedly observes: 'The fusion between the Indian settlers and the Hinduized local people was so complete that it is not always possible to distinguish between the two. The latter assumed Hindu names and adopted Sanskrit or Pali language and Hindu religion, manners, and customs, while the Indians imbibed local habits and social usages and merged themselves into the local communities. Thus grew up the Indian Colonial Kingdoms which were constantly strengthened by fresh streams of immigration from the motherland.'

From the remnants that still exist in these Eastern countries it has been established that the Hindu

colonists hailed from Brahmins and Kshatriyas and were imbued with a high sense of adventure and a spirit of exploration, which was at once the object of admiration and emulation. They took to the sea in a most natural way and despite the absence of scientific advance, which only came much later, these colonists set up a highly developed administrative system and fostered the arts, literature and architecture.

Dr. Majumdar has treated the subject in a most analytical manner, taking each country one after another through all the ups and downs of political and cultural history, describing minutely the various aspects of life led by the people—the judicial, administrative, religious and cultural.

C. V. SARMA

VERDICT ON SOUTH AFRICA. BY P. S. JOSHI. *Published by Thacker & Co., Ltd., Rampart Row, Bombay. Pp. 365. Price Rs. 9-12.*

Mr. P. S. Joshi is a familiar journalist and an author. He has, after his education in Bombay, settled in Johannesburg. In Johannesburg he has interested himself in public and social activities. As such his 'verdict' is a just analysis of the entire problem of 'The Tyranny of Colour.' I must state that this book cannot be classed with the 'verdict' of Beverley Nichols who spent just a year in illness and running about in official circles and ultimately produced his 'detestable and irritating verdict.' In this book is presented, in the clear light of reason, the problem of the sinister colour bar that is agitating Indians today. It is the fruit of many years of labour. Again I shall say it is not so running and hurried as Gauba's *Verdict on England*. The case for the abolition of colour bar is made out after a careful analysis. And rightly he draws upon the words of Sir Surendranath Banerjee. 'It is melancholy to have to reflect that the South African legislators should have so little knowledge of India and the circumstances of Indian life as to confound the coolie with the cultured Indian, the aboriginal inhabitant with the representative of a civilization, older than any the memory of man can recall, and in

comparison to which the civilization and culture of Europe are but of yesterday.' (Page 93).

It is good that Mr. Joshi has dedicated the book to Mahatma Gandhi 'who inaugurated the first onslaught on the South African stronghold of racial discrimination by passive resistance, a movement based on soul-force, the first of its kind in the modern age. This is Mr. Joshi's hope, now: 'South Africa will surely never have to rue its grant of equality to Indians. On the contrary, it will be a guiding light to the world in the matter of colour bar. It will not only enhance the strength and status of the British Empire, but will win the hearts of Indians and the co-operation of India. India will enrich its trade by consuming its gold, coal, fruit, and sugar. It will stand beside it in its hour of need.' Here is the ring of co-prosperity. It is true there can be no prosperity for a country in isolation. The forces are moving towards interlocking of interests. It will be a great day both for India and for South Africa if there is co-operation as a result of the abolition of the discriminatory laws against Asiatics. I may state such a thing will not annihilate the whites. Instead, the whites will prosper.

The price of the book is somewhat discouraging to the common Indian readers.

B. S. MATHUR

AKHAND BHARAT. BY RADHA KUMUD MUKERJEE. Published by *Hind Kitabs*, Bombay. Price 8 As.

There is a general dearth of books dealing in a scientific and detached manner on some of our vital problems. The tendency appears to be more and more emotional and even sentimental in discussing current topics. It is, therefore, refreshing to come across such an eminently dispassionate study of Akhand Hindustan as is to be found in this brochure by the well known publicist, Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerjee, who also happens to be the President of the Akhand Bharat Conference.

It was the late Mr. James Ramsay Macdonald who said that 'India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul,' and nothing has happened since then to disprove this fundamental concept regarding this country, in spite of the jarring note struck consistently by a coterie of disruptionists. Dr. Radha Kumud pertinently refers to the historical evolution of India emphasizing her political and economic unity throughout the centuries under various rulers and dynasties. The modern trend in the world, he says, is toward larger and larger unions and federations and is entirely against the disintegration of existing unions. The division of the country, every sane man will agree, will be a suicidal act, which should be resisted with the utmost vigour.

Turning to the economic aspect of the problem it has to be acknowledged that the mineral wealth, the river systems, industrial expansion—these point to the

necessity for treating the whole country as one unit. Otherwise, the ideal of improvement of the condition of masses will indeed be an idle dream. Thus, 'The economics of India should be a pointer to her politics,' concludes the author. The schedule of federal subjects in the U.S.S.R., and extracts from Gandhi-Jinnah correspondence, given as appendices, enhance the value of the booklet for the general reader.

C. V. SARMA

IDEAS HAVE LEGS. BY PETER HOWARD. Published by *Thacker & Co. Ltd.*, Bombay. Price Rs 5-8.

Ideas Have Legs is a brilliant and penetrating story of an active mind, so ceaselessly involved in current politics in the modern world. Seemingly it is an autobiography; but really it is a critical analysis of modern thought which is essentially responsible for endless wars. Wars begin in minds: so minds have to be cleared of the war-complex. In the opinion of Howard one thing that is the cause of present chaos is materialism. 'The disease is commonly called: "Gimme" or "Get". It is the subtle philosophy, now world-wide, that makes man look for happiness in the wrong place. It is a search, restless, endless, for more and more of what does not satisfy.' And this endless search for more and more results in the full-fledged materialism which soon begets dictatorship, and the world heads immediately towards a catastrophe.

What is the way out? Howard writes: 'Buchman, the man of the future, has taken the ideas of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, of the guidance of God and the possibility of a change in human nature.... He gave these ideas legs, and they are on the march today.' Here is a definite and clear call for moral armament. Just after our sages, like Swami Vivekananda and Gautama Buddha, Peter Howard is keen on moral strengthening. If we are lost in the pleasures of the flesh, if we are ruled by passion, there is no room for reason and we revert to our earliest stage of brutes and animals.

As I close I visualize Peter Howard to be an infinitely vigorous man, increasingly aware of the need of the hour. In a frank and effective fashion, in the course of these 143 pages, one jostles against events that have shaped the life of Churchill, Beaverbrook, Lenin and a host of others not excluding Peter Howard and his wife.

B. S. MATHUR

ROLLAND AND TAGORE. EDITED BY ALEX ARONSON AND KRISHNA KRIPALANI. Published by *Visva-Bharati*, 6/3, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 126. Price Rs 3-8.

This book is intended to perpetuate the concrete expression of spiritual kinship between two world figures, Romain Rolland and Rabindranath Tagore. It contains letters from Rolland to Tagore between 1911 and

1926, letters sometimes of a personal nature, but containing throughout lofty admiration of the spiritual and literary heights reached by the Indian poet. Rolland's was a free soul which was utterly disgusted with petty politics of nations and parties. He found an understanding and sympathetic friend in Rabindranath.

In the words of the late Mr. C. F. Andrews, 'the personal relationship between these two literary geniuses of the West and the East has been enhanced and sublimated through their spiritual unity as pure and ardent lovers of humanity, who have risen above the lower barriers and boundaries of nationalism into the border realm of the ultimate brotherhood of mankind.' In the section containing Conversations, the reader is brought into closer touch with the harmony of two great minds on recent topics of world-wide interest, like the League of Nations, Italian Fascism, etc., and also perennial subjects like painting and music. The 'Notes' at the end help the reader with proper references to the text.

C. V. SARMA

PARROT'S TRAINING AND OTHER STORIES.

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE. *Published by Visva-Bharati, 2, College Square, Calcutta. Pp. 44. Price Rs. 3.*

Rabindranath Tagore is known all over the world as a poet and an artist, but not so widely understood as a writer of short stories with mystical meanings. Most of his works were originally written in Bengali and hence the non-Bengali readers have to depend upon translations to delve into the depths of his thought. The four stories presented in this book give expression to one facet of Tagore's genius, that is, a blend of satire and wit, with profundity of thought, which only an artist of his calibre could successfully achieve. In a concluding note, Krishna Kripalani says that the translations cannot possibly give the original flavour; they are remotely suggestive. Even as such the stories included here elevate the reader's thoughts to lofty regions, where profound human feeling is expressed in simple beauty and grandeur. There are apt sketches

drawn by the famous artists Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose.

C. V. SARMA

HINDI

KATHA UPANISHAD. *Published by Madan Mohan Agrawal, India Printing Works, Almora. Pp. xx+264. Price Rs. 2-8.*

This translation into Hindi of one of the famous Upanishads opens a new gate to those people of North India who are not well versed in Sanskrit. The wisdom of the ancients, hidden in Sanskrit, is thus brought to the door of every man and woman.

The commentary is written in simple and easy Hindi. By exhaustive notes the whole significance of the allusions is brought out and difficult words and abstract ideas explained in simple language. The reader gets a short view of Shankara's philosophy also in this, since the translation is more or less based on his commentaries. Thus it is easy and at the same time brings the full significance of the Mantras. With word-for-word meaning, with lucid summary of the verses, and with long and exhaustive notes, it will help all those eager souls who could not hitherto probe into the inner meaning of the Sanskrit philosophies. This is certainly a step forward in the Vedantic literature of Hindi, and we are sure every thinking man will study it and make the ideas, so regrettably lacking in our present-day life, his own.

Of course, it would have been nice, had the commentary been clearer and more comprehensive, and the notes served only as explanations to difficult words and allusions. And more important, we would have been highly gratified had the vocabulary used been more inclined towards the layman's tongue than towards Sanskrit, as is the case in the present one. But we hope he will bear this in mind while attempting translations of the Upanishad series, for which people are eagerly waiting. We heartily congratulate the translator, Swami Chinmayananda, for his bold and novel attempt.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA ANNIVERSARY BANQUET IN CHICAGO

A largely attended banquet was held at Hotel Maryland on Wednesday, 24 April. The guest speakers on this occasion were Swami Akhilananda of Boston, Prof. Charles Braden, and Prof. Edward Schaub of the North Western University.

The proceeding began with Hindu music. Swami Viswananda welcomed them saying that they had gathered there to celebrate the birthday of a great sage and seer, the prophet of New India. Swami Akhilananda gave a vivid picture of the conditions of the post-war world, how humanity today after going through the most terrific war has not attained peace and security.

Professor Braden gave an outline of the materialistic frenzy of the United States at this time, the frantic amassing of money and the things which money can buy. Meanwhile the people grow more frustrated, more discontented, more nervous and more bewildered as they increase the tempo of their search for fulfilment through haste and avarice.

In contrast to this sterile quest of American, he described the approach to life of Ramakrishna. Dr. Braden paused to speculate upon what hospitality such a child as the Master was would have had in America. In all probability, the professor said, the young Ramakrishna would have been confined in an institution, his intense spiritual response to beauty and religion regarded as a mental disease. How different from this was the tender understanding which the Master received as a child in India from his family, and from all the people of his village.

Dr. Braden then drew a striking contrast between the noisy rush of the West toward more powerful machines, more powerful armies, more destructive weapons, more mass production of goods of all kinds, and the quiet introspective India, where in a temple garden Ramakrishna sat quietly invoking divine realization. As the nineteenth century drew to its explosive close, he said, America pursued her goal, the Master pursued his. Now his missions begin their quiet work among the speed-maddened people of America. If Americans wish to save themselves from the doom of their own machines, then they should listen to the Gospel of Ramakrishna, and try to learn some part of that truth which he already knew when he was transfixed as child with wonder at the sight of the lovely cranes against the darkling sky. He concluded saying that it is time that we stop all our useless activities and listen to this quiet, inspired voice.

Professor Schaub devoted his talk to a consideration of the difference between 'doing' and 'being.' He said that as he was now about to retire from active teaching he had glanced back over his life in universities. He was grateful for many acts of kindness and assistance on his behalf by professors, teachers and students down through the years. But his greatest gratitude, he said, went out to one man who had, actually, done nothing tangible, yet by reason of what that man was in himself, he had conferred more benefit than came from all the external gifts and benefits of lesser men.

This quality of 'being,' the professor said, was the outstanding legacy left to the world by Ramakrishna. He dwelt upon various occasions when the Master himself had explained to his followers that the first necessity is to purify one's own soul and become acquainted with God. The reason, Dr. Schaub suggested, that so much philanthropy, so much zeal for the betterment

of mankind seems to accomplish nothing, or almost nothing, towards the salvation of the people is exactly this lack of the quality of 'being' in those who rush out ambitiously to do 'good works.'

The strength and power and 'sweetness' of the message of Ramakrishna, the professor said, arise from the quality of divine realization of the Master's own life and personality. Ramakrishna did not 'do' anything, nor did he need to 'do' anything. His gift to the world lay in what he was.

For all the crowding ills which afflict America and the other Western nations, Dr. Schaub said he could see no cure except the inward, direct understanding of that quality of 'being' which Ramakrishna possessed in such abundant measure. As Ramakrishna always said, the professor concluded, you may call that inner illumination by whatever name you will, it does not matter. All that does matter is that you should seek and if possible find it. Ramakrishna knew this truth and it made him what he was. 'It is for us to learn it, if we can.'

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANNIVERSARY IN MAURITIUS

The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the Ramakrishna Mission, Mauritius. One of the principal speakers who spoke on the occasion was Mon. Aunauth Beejadhur. Among other things, he said, in French:

'If we have, in the past, neglected to pay our collective gratitude to these two apostles of Hinduism, we have, however, read their works; we have tried to follow their teachings; we have cherished the desire to renew, with India, the ties that have been suddenly severed. The ordeal has been a severe one for our people, unexpectedly transplanted as they have been in a country placed under the sign of the cross, but they have, in spite of every obstacle, kept their own identity. After more than a century spent far from the banks of the Ganges, these disrooted people have remained faithful to their customs, traditions and religions.'

They were not aware exactly of India's contribution to civilization, yet, belonging to a nation having such a past, all laden with glory, they were conscious of their rights; and later, from books or from the mouths of missionaries, they learnt that India was the cradle of civilization, that geometry (Kalpa-Veda) was known in India in the 8th century B.C., that the famous multiplication table of Pythagoras was used in the country of their ancestors long before the 6th century B.C., that is, 200 years before the birth of the Greek mathematician; that trigonometry, the work of Bhaskaracharya, was used by Indian engineers in the year 1000 B.C.

In fact they also learnt that there existed an Indian treatise on music, the Sama Veda, and a book on medicine, the Ayur Veda, the existence of which goes as far back as prehistoric times.

In the Buddhistic age, the Indian medical science took a considerable flight in India and outside India, under the impetus given to it by Charaka and Sushruta, whose fame went as far as Bagdad of Haroon-al-Raschid. History reveals to us that two Hindu doctors were engaged at the royal court of Arabia and that Alexander the Great, during his visit to India, had always two Hindu doctors in his tent to give him care and treatment in case of need. 'Glorious past which shines so resplendent even in the glow of today's reality!'

And it is to bring to life again that past, to revive the genius of that 'India in rags' that Ramakrishna, and later Vivekananda, and after these two prophets, a band of men of goodwill, disinterested and devoted, undertook their beneficent and regenerating work, an atom of which is now witnessed in the activities of the Mauritius Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission, which strives after the establishment of brotherhood among the followers of different religions, actuated by the knowledge that all are but divers forms of one and the same universal religion.

Vivekananda has bequeathed to us valuable teachings, one of which aims at the union of men, without which the world would be in perpetual conflict. It is difficult, nay, impossible, to bring about a universal understanding by force of arms or by threat of sanctions; witness the League of Nations, whose magnificent palace at Geneva is in a fair way to become a relic of the past as the Acropolis of Athens. But where armed force fails, spiritual force can succeed. It would perhaps require centuries to bring the different peoples of the globe to swear universal brotherhood before the altar of the Spirit, but it is not less true that God always triumphs over evil.

Happy and unforgettable time, when Hindus and Moslems, children of the same soil, and, above all, brothers of the same blood, united in the common struggle for justice! Period temporarily gone, but the return of it is certain, if there still exist a Mahatma Gandhi and men of universal spirit like the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission. Yes, I have faith in the future greatness of India, I have confidence in the

Ramakrishna Mission. I have judged it by its works as a tree is judged by its fruits. I have judged it by its monks, Franciscan-visaged, who, in India as well as in foreign countries, sow with full hands the seeds of true Thought: love and union, without which, any nation, however powerful it may be, is liable to disappear. And to end this credo, I wish that time would strengthen that faith and in a near future, may we see the Mission which our Swami is managing with so much tact, disinterestedness, and piety rank among the best of the Indian Missions across the seas.

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, CHERRAPUNJI

REPORT FOR 1944 AND 1945

This institution was started in 1931, and has made satisfactory progress in achieving its aims and objects. The school was permanently affiliated to the Calcutta University in 1945. The strength of the school was 224, consisting mostly of boys and girls from the K. & J. Hills. The staff consisted of 13 teachers. Attempts were made to give boys training in agriculture and girls training in weaving, in addition to their school studies. There were 4 looms working under the care of two trained teachers.

The hostel attached to the school accommodated 35 boys who followed a healthy routine of work, study, prayer, and games. In May 1945, Mr. Gopinath Bordoloi, Premier and Minister of Education, Assam, attended the prize distribution of the school and expressed high appreciation of the new system of education introduced in the Mission school.

The following are some of the needs of the institution: (1) School extension Rs. 20,000; (2) Hostel Rs. 5,000; (3) Agriculture section Rs. 10,000; (4) Arrangement for water supply Rs. 3,000; (5) Industrial school Rs. 5,000; (6) Playground Rs. 3,000. The financial position of the institution is far from satisfactory. Although the enrolment has increased from 131 in 1943 to 224 at present, there has been no corresponding increase in grants and public contributions. The Secretary of the High School appeals both to the Government and the public for urgent help in order to place the institution on a financially secure basis and effect further improvements in as many ways as possible.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls on the 13th January 1947.