

THE  
BRAHMAVADIN

“एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति”

“That which exists is one : sages call it variously.”

*Rig-veda. I. 164-46.*

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**“HINDU IDEALS AND THEIR PRESERVATION.”**

The following lecture on the above subject was delivered by Mr. M. H. Phelps of New York in the Hindu College Hall on the 28th ultimo:—

“Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen, Friends,

It is with much satisfaction that I rise to address a large and representative audience of Hindus such as this ; for I feel sure that we shall find common ground—that, in fact, our views and sentiments are in the main the same. I was born as far from here as it is possible to get on this terrestrial globe, but this fact seems only to indicate the truth of the saying, that space does not in fact separate, for in feeling, sentiment and sympathy I believe that I am as much a Hindu as any of you. Indeed, before I have completed this address you may think me more so—too much, in fact.

Well, this fellow-feeling of mine is the result of more than twenty years study of your sacred books and association with such of your spiritually-minded men as I could

reach. These have conferred upon me, as I will more fully explain later on, all that I chiefly value in my life, and have caused me to recognize a debt to India which I would gladly make any effort to repay. It is to give expression to, and to indicate to you, this fellow-feeling, that I have adopted your dress while among you.

A nation may best be judged by its ideals. They represent the goal of aspiration for its people, and the limit of their possible achievement. Their actual condition at any time will be measured by the extent to which their ideals find expression in their lives.

The ideals of the Indian people are noble and beautiful—the loftiest in the world. They are spiritual. They are embodied in the religion of your fathers, that soul-inspiring path to God which has no equal among men.

These precious ideals are threatened with destruction by Western influences.

The West is not spiritual. It is material—almost a desert of sensuousness and intellectuality. But in this, its field of activity, the West is strong and proud of its strength; masterful, brilliant. The danger is that it may dazzle you and induce you to adopt its ways.

Let us then consider,—

First, What the Indian ideals are.

Second, What the Western life, by which they are threatened, in fact is.

Third, How the danger which threatens may be averted.

I will mention first your sublime ideal of *Renunciation*. Other peoples have followed the path of *Desire*, of *Attachment*. Your ancestors first learned, and first taught, that to gain God the world must be discarded. Say the Upanishads, "not by wealth, not by offspring, by renunciation alone, immortality is to be gained."

And let me not be misunderstood. The renunciation which I mean is not running to the jungle, adopting the Sannyasin's robe, or deserting the duties of the world. It consists in this—while performing to the uttermost the duties of life, holding the mind and heart detached ; always remembering that the spirit is free and stands apart ; seeking no results, but performing action as duty, for its own sake ; realizing the great fact that it is not I, but the Lord, who the actor. "He is the constant renouncer (*nitya sannyasi*), who neither likes nor dislikes", says the Blessed Bhagavan.

Such renunciation belongs to India alone.

Secondly, what is your ancestral ideal of success in Life ? It is not honor among men, nor wealth, nor enjoyment, but Progress towards God. That life is held to have succeeded which carries a man nearer to that supreme goal than the last ; that life has failed which leaves him further from it.

No other people in the world of whom we know has measured success in life by this kind of progress.

Then, thirdly, your ideal of supreme success, supreme happiness, supreme achievement, what is it:—gratification of the sense, or the intellect ? Great wealth, honor, or distinction ? Far from it ; it is Union with the Supreme.

Then the Indian ideal of action. Your sages declare it to be action which is in accordance with *Dharma*; that is, action which is appropriate to the character and acceptable to God. It is action squared to the rule of conduct declared by holy men.

In the conduct of life, among your ideals are,

*Simplicity*; reducing your wants to a minimum and adjusting them so far possible to *what each man can do for himself*, in order that there may be more time for worshipping the Lord.

*Neighbourly Love.* Your neighbour is also to be worshipped. Relations among men should be so adjusted and maintained that love may grow in the heart. The purpose of life is the development of love. Hence the Hindu conception of *Law*, as a set of rules for the conduct of life which will best develop love in the heart; and the Hindu conception of *Justice*, as doing unto others as you would that they should do unto you—a norm of action ingrained in your civilization ages before it was declared by Christ.

And *Peace*: where but in India shall we find the ideal of *Peace*? *Shanti, Shanti, Shanti, Peace, Peace, Peace*, is a refrain which echoes alike from the temple, the palace and the cottage, for you well know that in peace and quiet only can the path to God be found.

Another of your ancestral ideals in the conduct of life is *divorce from sensuousness*. Your sages knew that gratification of the senses must be restrained—that sense, gratification chokes love for God, love for the neighbour, kills the spirit. The West does not know this, or has forgotten it.

A distinguished English barrister, Sergeant Ballantyne, was brought to India to defend a Maharajah accused of murder. He travelled all over India, and afterwards was heard to remark that none of the languages of India contained a word for “comfort,” nor had he found the article. Your people know that too much attention to the comforts of the body leads one away from the Lord.

Giving, generosity, unselfishness, is another of your ideals. Your sacred books say that others must be realized; that there is no other road to salvation. By the suppression of one's self, love must be nurtured. One of your wise men has said “The practice of giving suppresses the



proclivity of the mind and hand to receive, and is the direst road to renunciation.

"There are two tendencies in living—that in which giving is habitual, and its opposite. The consciousness becomes trained in one direction or the other. The habit of giving may be practised until receiving is a desecration."

And it is well to note that according to your sacred books, giving does not result in worldly loss. The bounties of the Devas come to those who give. Rain does not fall because men's hearts become dry. Whole communities are wiped out because they have no moisture of love in the heart. It has been said:—

"Whenever you see men congregated and prosperous, be sure that if you examine, you will find some among them who are, true lovers of the Lord and of men. A city may be preserved because of a few generous people. A country having such men is *punya bhumi*."

Gentlemen, the contemplation of such ideals as these ennobles the soul. They breathe inspiration. They stimulate aspiration. They are like heaven-wafted mountain air—pure, invigorating, stimulating.

These ideals and others like them are claimed by all India. Nowhere else in the world will such ideals be found. They are the soul of your literature and religion. They are your most precious and splendid possession; your noblest heritage, embodied in the lives of your ancestors.

Let Western influences mould the minds of your children, and these ideals will disappear. In what are but a few years in the life of a nation, they will be forgotten.

And what will take their place? What can take their place, but the aims, the modes of life, of the West? I do not say ideals, for they are not ideals—they are not worthy to be so named.

We must now turn to that picture. Yet, being a Westerner, why should I tell you things that do not reflect credit upon the West? I do so because these are things which you have a right to know; and because there is a higher loyalty than loyalty to country, or to locality. There is loyalty to truth, to God and to our brother man.

You have the right to know two things—first, what is the true nature of that social structure which demands your allegiance and which threatens to supplant your own?

Second, what has this much-vaunted Christian Church, which invites you so urgently to her fold, accomplished in her own land?

As to the first of the Indian ideals which we have considered *Renunciation* or *non-Attachment*, no such thing is known in the West. It was taught by Christ, but has been completely forgotten. The worker in the West looks first and always to the *results* to be accomplished. By them all action is measured and valued. The actor does not stand separate from the action, nor has he any thought of the freedom and independence of the spirit. He is wrapped up in the action and the anticipated results. It is the sort of action which leads to endless rebirth.

*Success in life* in the West is esteemed to be the achievement of wealth, honor, social position, distinction; the *Highest Happiness* is found in gratification of the senses, the tastes and the intellect, in palaces, yachts, motorcars, flying machines; in art, literature and sport, one much sought form of which is the killing of animals and birds. Progress towards God, Spiritual Growth, Union with the Supreme, have no place here.

Instead of action according to *Dharma* each man in the West aims to act *according to his desire*. Personal

will is pushed to the uttermost. The check is not God's will, but *not getting found out*. It is discovery that is the crime.

Instead of *simplicity*, we find in the West an ever-increasing *complexity*. Year by year the burden of *things* increases. More and more numerous become the number of these considered necessary to living. The burden of possessions has become well-nigh insupportable: life is crushed out. Of course little time is left for worship, or for the consideration of spiritual things.

I fear that you have already suffered seriously in this respect from the influence of the West. The apparel of the people I meet is largely European—and so, as to the furniture of your houses. Your horses and carriages are for the most part imported. Even this hall, in this Hindu seat of learning has European furniture. I think this is all a most lamentable mistake. Your ancestral appointments were more fitting, in every way better. How much more attractive and harmonious to the surroundings were the mats spread on the ground in the school houses in which I have been speaking, than these benches and chairs! Why should you change, even were the change to your advantage, instead of to your detriment, as it is? The dignity of your race should be upheld. European influence is but a thing of yesterday in the life of India, and will soon be a dream of the past.

But the important practical fact is that the cost of living is increasing. I am told that it is fourfold what it would be, had the simple habits of your ancestors been maintained. It follows that the time you can give to the real things of life is in like measure abridged.

Yet notwithstanding the increased cost of your living your ancestors led a more rational life, and I think you will admit that they were happier, than you. They

certainly had a greater control over their time and therefore of their lives ; they were more free.

This should give you pause. It is a most serious reflection. Complexity is the great burden of Western life. I strongly counsel you to avoid it.

For *Neighbourly Love* as a rule of life, the West has substituted *Competition*—keen, cruel, destructive. That means, not taking a fair return for your labour or your goods—not being satisfied with a fair profit, but *getting all you can*, whether your neighbour lives or starves. Competition is that treatment of others which will aggrandize you most, at their expense. It destroys love. It is worse than war. It results in horrible poverty.

It is said that one third of the population of England are wretchedly poor, in a state of actual suffering from poverty. I was in London last October. The nights were cold and wet, and 1500 to 2000 homeless people spent each night on the street called the Thames Embankment, shelterless and numb with cold. It was simply heart-rending.

In the provinces of England the condition is said to be still worse. Great numbers of people are huddled into factories, where they lead mechanical, dreary, unhealthy lives. The operations in many of these factories, permit the escape into the atmosphere of chemical fumes poisonous to life, by which all vegetation is destroyed for miles about. But people continue to live there, though they become prematurely old, toothless and bald. Last June, when the Imperial Press Conference was held in London, the assembled Editors were taken on a tour all through the United Kingdom ; and one of them wrote to his paper in Canada, that the most impressive fact encountered on the whole journey was the lines and masses of gaunt, hollow, *hopeless* faces which lined the streets of the

manufacturing towns—the haunting hopelessness of those faces he should never forget.

*Peace* is not sought by the West, but avoided. There, Excitement, Novelty, is the soul of life. It is sought in politics, in sports and games, in balls and entertainments, in theatres, operas and music halls, in sensational journalism, in horse races, in fast travel, by train, motorcar and flying machine. Since the time of St. Paul and the Athenians of old, the men of the West have ever been alert to "see or hear some new thing."

Instead of your ideal of non-sensuousness, the West eagerly seeks sense-gratification, in feasting, wine and strong drink, women, fast horses, fast means of travel, and all the innumerable comforts and luxuries of Western life. It has been aptly said that in the West "civilization" and "comfort" mean the same thing.

Even its Priests, its Ministers, its spiritual men, live luxuriously. Many a clergyman spends upon himself and his family a sum equivalent to 15,000, 20,000, 30,000, rupees each year, paid to him for his services as minister of the Gospel. Nothing can better indicate to you than this how far asunder are the Eastern and Western conceptions of spirituality.

From this blindness to the dangers of sensuousness has arisen the curse of drunkenness, which, having come to Ceylon and India in the train of Western civilization, is now blighting and destroying your people.

I rejoice that I can ascribe generosity to the West. That virtue it has and it means much. Splendid sums are given to education; there are magnificent public charities.

*Industrial Development* is much heard of as an aim of Western life. It is a function of properly ordered industry to minister to the growth of spirituality—to train



and sharpen the mind so that it may at length become a proper instrument for the unveiling of the spirit. But this, the real purpose of industry, has never been learned in the West, and Industrial Development has taken a direction which wholly ignores and suppresses this true function of work. Men are cooped up in factories—thousands in a single building. They are made into machines. A man may spend his life in fashioning the points of pins. Their souls are stifled, their minds dwarfed. And all this soul-destruction is for what? To multiply objects of sense enjoyment.

Finally, the great Shibboleth of the West is *progress*. Progress towards what? No one knows. It is concerned with the multiplication of forms of matter—the subdivision and re-fashioning of *Prakriti*, of which the changes are endless. There is Scientific Progress, Political Progress, Social Progress. But as to Progress towards God, it is not so much as heard of. Here too, as in all else which characterizes the West, the ultimate objects of effort is the comfort and convenience of the body and the diversion of the mind.

So the chief features of Western life—those which characterize it, may be summed up as—

Pursuit of excitement, sensationalism.

Pursuit of wealth, social position and distinction in the state,

Pursuit of gratification of the senses.

Pursuit of those pleasures which minister to the more refined tastes and the intellect, in the fields of literature, scholarship and the arts.

And in these pursuits the “rule of the game” is competition—self-aggrandisement, without attention to the sufferings caused thereby to one’s neighbour.

So it is, in its broad aspects, a civilization without a God, without a religion.

I do not mean to say that one will not find in the West good men—spiritual men. There are many of them—some in the Churches. There are many groups and associations of men and women intent on spiritual growth. There are lovable traits of character and life which, did time permit, I would gladly picture to you. For instance, there is the American university life, which for quiet dignity and artistic charm, is almost ideal. But these exceptions only emphasize the main proposition which I have advanced. The social, civic, public life—the life of the masses of men—goes on just as it would go on if men had actual knowledge that there was no God. Probably at least three-fourths of the men of America—I speak of America because I know it best—I think other parts of the West are much like it in this respect—go through the business and pleasures of the day, from the time they rise in the morning until they retire at night, without a single thought of God or spiritual things. The Churches have become for the most part mere social clubs, where men go to meet their friends and acquaintances. "Religion" is put on and discarded with Sunday clothes.

It is true that Christianity teaches better things than these ; but it is powerless to guide or control men. Why is that ? I ask you to attend carefully to my answer to this question, for I think it lies at the foundation of all the differences between the East and West, and is most important to be clearly grasped and always kept in mind. It is because Christianity is practically, at present, a dead, or dormant, religion. By that I mean this. Christianity was founded 2000 years ago by wise and spiritual men—men precisely like the *jivan-muktas* or sages now, and always in the past, to be found in India. Jesus and Paul

and John, being men of true spiritual discernment, taught the highest truth. Their words were recorded, and constitute the new Testament of the Christians. But those wise teachers have not had a line of successors. It is hundreds and hundreds of years since there was in the Christian Church a teacher who had direct knowledge of God and spiritual things. Thus *the Church has forgotten the meaning of its Bible*, and has no living witnesses to interpret it. So men have been forced since ancient times to depend upon the *mind* for discovering the meaning of the words of Jesus—a task which the mind without spiritual illumination is inadequate to fulfill. It is the nature of the mind to diverge and multiply. Thus many interpretations of the Christian scriptures have arisen. More than 200 different sects have a following in the West, each advancing its own view of the meaning of the Bible. And these interpretations are not only various, but, being divorced from truth, are illogical and lacking in persuasive force. They make no appeal to the reason of man; and hence the common demand of Christian preachers that their doctrines be accepted not on grounds of reason and judgment, but of “faith.”

The consequence is that few thinking or educated men are believers. Their confidence is made difficult by this divergence of interpretation, and they are repelled by the repugnance to reason of many of the doctrines advanced.

Therefore it is that religion has no hold on the people of the west.

It is otherwise among you. In India have always been found, as there are to-day, many men of spiritual knowledge, *jivan-muktas*, knowers of God. These Living Witnesses have instructed your ancestors, as they today instruct those of you who seek them, in the true meanings

of religion and the sacred books. Therefore, in India, religion is alive, is respected by men, and moulds their lives.

The facts that I have been telling you are very vivid to me, because they have formed a part of my personal experience. Until I was more than thirty years of age religion had no meaning for me. I never was a Christian, although raised and educated amid the most orthodox Christian surroundings. I never could believe the things the Churches asked me to believe, and I should no doubt have been a godless man today, but that in my 32nd year Hindu thought and religion was opened to me. I found here an exposition of the relations of God, the universe and man, which appealed to my reason. The more I studied this exposition the more satisfactory I found it. From that time I have never ceased to study your sacred books and seek your spiritual teachers, and to them I owe all of real value that life has brought me. You now see why I am so earnest in telling you these things, though some of them do not redound to the credit of the land of my birth. Religion—the preservation on the earth of lofty and spiritual ideals—is dearer to me than a thousand Americas.

Look, then, on this picture and on that. On the one side these noble and spiritual ideals; dearer than wealth—dearer than life itself; leading directly and luminously to the foot-stool of the Almighty.

On the other side a waste of arid materialism.

Shall these ideals be submerged by this avalanche of sensuousness and intellectuality?

This Christian Church which is pressing you so hard—luring you with offers of almost free education for your children—ask it what it has accomplished in its own land? Ask it to explain the empty Churches, the dearth of spirituality, the carnival of sensuousness, prevalent in the

West. Would it plunge India and Ceylon into this gulf?

No, Gentlemen; Westerners are not the men to consult about religion. They are excellent authorities on stocks and bond and railways and motor-cars and flying machines. But don't ask them about religion, or take their advice. On that subject they are ignorant.

I am told that great changes have occurred in Jaffna of recent years: that fifty years ago there were here probably a thousand pundits—men learned in your sacred books,—while now the number can almost be counted on the fingers; that at that time there were Hindu schools for primary and higher education in every village, while now there are hardly a hundred in the entire district. I am told that your boys often leave school taught to read, write and speak well the English language, but not Tamil; that many of your educated men do not know Tamil as a literary language; that leading men among you can be eloquent in English but not in Tamil. I am told that the ancient simplicity of your life is departing,—in a word, that you are becoming denationalised. I have talked with some of the greatest living Indians upon this subject, and I have found that they regard the situation with alarm.

"The coming of Western nations into our country." I am told by one of these, "is changing India. They bring with them their selfish mercantile principles, their worship of manners and wealth, and, as a consequence, the religious simplicity and the beautiful devotion to God and neighbour that prevailed among us are in danger. It is the wedge of selfishness and sensuousness that, entering in our minds, will destroy us if we do not take care."

In this Kali Yuga it is easy to descend,—the tendency is everywhere downwards. Your books say that in this age spirituality may be extinguished, even in India; that the Vedas themselves may disappear.



And you have much to contend with. The Missionaries have been very subtle—very adroit. Finding it impossible to convert you, they attack your society through your children; and if you continue to give them your children for education, they will certainly succeed. Humanly speaking, there is no hope for you.

It is a matter of easy demonstration. They are now educating at least three-fourths of the children of this district. Is it not certain that these children, though they may for the most part remain nominal Hindus, will become acquiescent in the Christian Church—more ready even than you to send their children to Mission schools? and can anything be more probable than that their children and grand-children will become, first nominal and then genuine members of the Christian community?

I think beyond question that unless you arouse yourselves, Hindu civilization and religion in Jaffna are doomed. I doubt whether India is at present seriously threatened; but your numbers and resources are too small to stand against these onslaughts without the greatest vigilance.

I have appealed to you as citizens, as members of society—to preserve your institutions. I shall now appeal to you as parents, to preserve your children.

By permitting the Missionaries to educate your children, you are not only allowing them to remain in ignorance of your institutions and your religion; you are acquiescing in the injection into their minds of disrespect and prejudice against these. Let me give you a conspicuous instance of how this occurs.

Western Scholars have evolved a theory which traces the origin of Indian civilization, and of the Aryan race, to Central Asia. Everybody acquiesces in this theory, and

therefore everybody believes it. Probably it is taught in this very institution. Let us consider it a moment.

One would expect that when the history of a people was in question, the traditions and literature of that people would be the first sources of information on the subject sought. But though you have the oldest civilization and literature in the world, and records which purport to recite your history for many hundreds of thousands of years, the Orientalists do not pay you this compliment. Your Books do not anywhere mention or suggest any other dwelling place for Indians than India. Their evidence is unanimously and distinctly to the contrary. For instance, Rama flourished in India and conquered Ceylon in Tretha Yuga, not far from a million years ago. But the orientalists do not vouchsafe your books or your traditions the slightest consideration. They proceed to construct a theory of their own, which they introduce by remarks of this kind—I quote from one of their principal books, Muir's Sanskrit Texts.

“I must begin”, says this scholar, “with a candid admission that, so far as I know, none of the Sanskrit books, not even the most ancient, contains any distinct reference to the foreign origin of the Indians”.

The theory is, as I have said, that the Aryans came to India from Central Asia. At first 1000 years or so B. C. was considered early enough for this migration. Now, I believe, they have gotten the date back 5,000 or 6,000 years earlier than that.

On what do they base this theory? I will give you samples of their principal arguments, and beg you to note well their character.

There are many names in the Rig Veda, some of which are thought to denote Indian rivers. Now, they say, the Ganges is mentioned in the Rig Veda but once, and

towards the end. But the Indus, or Sindhu, is mentioned early and often. This shows that your ancestors during most of the time of the composition of the Rig Veda hymns, were dwelling near the Indus, that is, in the Punjab and Afghanistan, and did not reach the Ganges until the later hymns were composed.

Very good ; but when we look into the meaning of "Sindhu", what do we find?

First, that it is a name of Chandra, the presiding Devata of the moon.

Second, that is a name for the ocean.

Third, that it is used to denote any great confluence of waters, and finally (Sankaracharya, in the Bashya Hridaya), that it is another name for the Ganges itself.

Having adopted the theory, the Orientalists proceed to build it up by interpreting everything to support it. For instance, the Rig Veda mentions the "Sarayu." There is a river of that name in Oudh, falling into the Ganges below Benares. This river is too far South to fit their theory. So they say—I quote one of their leadingmen, Lassen—"Perhaps it is an affluent of the Sarasvati (a river of the Punjab); in any case, *it is to be distinguished from the well-known affluent of the Ganges.*

Well this, Mr. Chairman, is calculated to make a lawyer smile. We know how cases are built up. But perhaps I should not disclose the secrets of the profession.

Then as to writing, Their theory requires them to make you illiterate in ancient times, for otherwise how can the silence of your literature on this important subject be explained ! Your books must be more recent than these events, if the theory is to stand. "An illiterate people", says A. W. von Schegel, "ignorant of writing, which has adopted a stationary home after long and

arduous migration, might, after a few centuries, easily lose all recollection of its change of habitation”.

So they say that, inasmuch as they can find no proof to the contrary, your ancestors could not write more than 2300 or 2400 years ago. But they cannot deny that you were a great people, with abundant commerce. Megasthenes shows that ; even Solomon got merchandise from India. How was your business conducted without writing? Because no records are found, is a very slender basis on which to deny the knowledge of writing to a great, civilized and commercial people.

I cannot continue this subject for want of time, but the examples I have given are sufficient to illustrate the flimsiness of the arguments of the Orientalists. These theories are the merest and most random speculations, and impudent speculations at that. But the point with which we are now concerned, is the utter disregard and disrespect with which they treat your traditions and the effect which such treatment, endorsed by their teachers, necessarily has upon the minds of your children.

Then as to the study of History. In the Mission Schools your children learn next to nothing of the history of Ceylon and India, and that notwithstanding that in the Mahavamsa you have one of the oldest and most authentic histories in the world. They learn nothing of your great men—of the heroes and moral exemplars of your past. They learn of Rome, Europe, England—of Caesar, Napoleon, Nelson, Wellington, Cromwell. How are they benefited by this? They learn how on repeated occasions a handful of valiant Englishmen put to flight vast numbers of the “natives” of your country. Are they likely to gain respect for their ancestors from such tales?

So all through Literature and Science. These seemingly “exact” sciences, these instruments and methods

of "precision" seem so unassailable, so unquestionable, that your children are paralyzed. They have not a word to say in defence of their ancestral traditions. They are out of court at once.

But if they had studied your books *first* their hearts would have been won by their beauty ; and they would have suspected the wisdom of spending *all* one's life and energy in measuring and classifying *prakriti*, the ever-changing ; the absurdity, for instance, of building up a science of the nervous system and calling it Psychology.

If you say—our children must have Western learning in order that they may have the increased earning capacity which it confers—I reply—It is not Western learning, but the *influences under which it is imparted*, that are dangerous. If you teach your children *yourselves*, you may teach them what you will.

To the child educated under foreign, *i. e.* Missionary, influences, the whole of the Hindu religion becomes unreal and shadowy. Though he may maintain his nominal allegiance to it, its compelling force is gone; his religion is practically lost. No misfortune in life can be so great as that. For the sanction of the lost religion is replaced by no other effective sanction. An adopted religion can never mould the character as the religion of one's fathers. In most cases *moral death*, more to be deplored than physical death, results. The life is wrecked—the purpose of life is wrecked—the purpose of life is wholly missed. But I need not dwell upon this unpleasant subject. You know well the hypocrisy of life which generally follows upon so-called "conversions" among you: you know the shockingly common moral degradation of "native" converts to Christianity. I know it from my own experience, years ago, in this island, and all men of experience, in the East who are free from self-interest, testify to it.



I have known many young Indians in just this position. Their lives were spiritually wrecked; whereas they only needed a fair start, a preliminary grounding in their ancestral learning, to have carried them safely past this danger.

The injury to your girls is a still greater misfortune. They will govern your families, they will train your grandchildren.

If you fully grasped the deadly character of the probable result, I think you would prefer for your child the funeral pyre to the Mission school.

Yet I wish by no means to be understood as speaking against the character of the Missionaries. I think that most of them are sincere and kindly men, who wish you well. But as a class they are very ignorant on the subject of religion. They have not studied Hinduism. They do not know its grandeur. They do not know that religions are all one in origin—all equally paths to God. They do not know that the religions of Jesus, as he propounded it, is the same as that of the Aryan Rishis. They do not realize the terrible responsibility of unsettling the religious convictions of a human soul. If they did they would flee from it as from a conflagration.

Much of the money also which is given in America to support these mission schools, is given from the best of motives. The givers really believe that they are doing you great good, and make genuine sacrifices in parting with their money. But it is not all given in this spirit. Great sums are given for this purpose by wealthy men whose object is to gain a reputation for generosity. And much of it is given from a still unworthier motive—because such gifts are thought to bring commercial returns. Many of you have heard of John D. Rockefeller, the Standard Oil magnate, the wealthiest man in

the world. He gives vast sums to foreign Missions. Several years ago I read in a New York daily paper an interview with his secretary, Mr. Gates, in which that gentleman said that Mr. Rockefeller's donations to foreign Missions are found to be an excellent investment, in that they lead to the increase of business transactions with the peoples among whom the missions are located.

Do not overlook the kindly motives which have prompted many Missionaries and supporters of Missions. But do not let your gratitude obscure your duty to God and to your children—your duty to transmit to them the spiritual heritage which you have received from your ancestors, and which they may rightfully claim from you.

Since I prepared this address, some school statistics have been furnished me. The Christian population of the district is less than one-tenth of the whole—more than ninety-ninths are Hindu; but out of a total of 400 schools, 300 are Mission Schools. Having legitimately but one-tenth of the children, the Mission Schools are educating *three-fourths* of the children of the district.

Still further, but about half the hundred Hindu schools are aided by Government, while almost all of the other schools are aided schools. Therefore of the public money, chiefly collected from taxes on Hindu property, spent for education in this district, only *one-eighth* goes to give Hindu education to Hindu children, while *seven-eighths* are devoted, for the most part, not to giving your children a beneficial education, but to leading them by a short road to moral and spiritual ruin.

A very conservative estimate puts the number of pupils at 50 for each schools. There are then at least 20,000 children in the schools of the district, and doubtless many more.

Assuming that there are as many as 2000 Christian

children, the Mission Schools are educating at least 13,000 Hindu children in the District. For higher education there are in this district six girl's boarding schools, all Missionary, and six boy's colleges, of which but two are Hindu.

Is not this most an alarming situation? Can you regard it with any sort of equanimity? It clearly calls for the most energetic and unmeasured efforts on your part. Be assured that in their contest for your children the Missionaries will never relax their exertions. Their livelihood, the very existence of their establishments, depends upon holding your children. 13000 Hindu children in the Mission Schools of Jaffna—what an appeal can be made in America for money on that statement! It is worth to them many lacs of rupees every year. So they will fight you hard. If they see that you are in earnest about building up your schools, they will probably offer you *absolutely free* education. But their education would cost you dear, even did they pay you untold sums to accept it. This is a matter far above all money values.

Can you disentangle yourselves from these toils? Certainly you can, if you put forth sufficient effort. Lose no time in rescuing your children from the Mission schools. *Educate them yourselves.* Are your present schools insufficient? Create new schools. Resolve that whatever is necessary *shall be done.* If necessary to accomplish it, impoverish yourselves. What is money in comparison? If you lack money, *simplify your lives.* Discard expensive European habits. Return to the simple ways of your fathers.

As an example of the crying needs of education among you, look at this College, in the hall of which we are to-night. It is really the only dependence of your boys for higher education; and yet how precarious is its

condition. Without a general fund, if for any cause the Government grant were delayed or withheld, it would be in great difficulties. It has no library. A College without a library! No chemical or physical laboratory, no play ground. And because of this lack of equipment the Madras University will not affiliate it.

If there is still time, I wish to close by reading a passage written by that grate Indian, the Swami Vivekananda. As your Chairman has said, I knew him. I first saw him at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. I shall never forget his handsome and brilliant face and his fine form, most impressively set out by his orange robe and turban. When he first spoke, before many thousands of people in the great auditorium, he took that vast audience by storm.

I saw him frequently in New York between 1893 and 1896. For a while he was a guest at my house.

The education of his people was very near his heart. We had many talks about it.

The passage I am about to read is in a manner a part of his legacy to India. It is from a manuscript found among his papers. He had commenced a book, "India's Message to the World", of the preface of which these words form a part. I read them because of the splendid ideal of India which they embody—that they may sink into your hearts, and remain their long after what I have said is forgotten.

"What a land is India! Whosoever stands on this sacred land, alien or a child of the soil, feels, unless his soul is degraded to the level of brute animals, himself surrounded by the living thoughts of earth's best and purest sons, working to raise the animal to the Divine, through centuries whose beginning history fails to trace. The very air is full of the pulsations of spirituality. This

land is sacred to philosophy, to ethics and spirituality, to all that tends to give respite to man in his incessant struggle for the preservation of the animal, to training all that makes man throw off the garment of brutality and stand revealed as the Spirit immortal, the birthless, the deathless, the ever-blessed,—the land where the cup of pleasure was full and fuller has been the cup of misery till here first of all man found out that it was all vanity; till here first of all he broke through the fetters of delusion, in the prime of youth, in the lap of luxury, in the height of glory and plentitude of power,. Here in this ocean of humanity, amidst the sharp interaction of strong currents of pleasure and pain, of strength and weakness, of wealth and poverty, of joy and sorrow, of smile and tear, of life and death, in the melting rhythm of sternal peace and calmness, arose the throne of renunciation. Here in this land, the great problems of life and death, of the thirst for life and the vain mad struggles to preserve it only resulting in accumulation of woes, were first, grappled with and solved—solved as never they were before and never will be hereafter, for here, here alone, was discovered that even life itself is an evil, the shadow only of the real. This is the land where alone religion has been practical and real and where alone men and women have plunged boldly in to realize the goal, just as in other lands they rush madly on to realize the pleasures of life by robbing heir weaker brethren. Here and here alone the human heart expanded till it included not only man but birds, beasts and plants; from the highest gods to grains of sand, the highest and the lowest all find a place in the heart of man, grown great, infinite. And here alone the human soul studied the universe as one unbroken unity whose every pulse was his own pulse.

We hear much about the degradation of India. There



was a time when I also believed in it. But to-day, standing on the vantage-ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive predispositions, and, above all, the highly colored pictures of the countries beyond the seas toned down to their proper shade and light by actual contact, I confess in all humility that I was wrong. Thou blessed land of the Aryas, thou wert never degraded. Sceptres have been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has rolled from hand to hand, but in India courts and kings always touched only a few, and the vast mass of the people have been left to pursue its own inevitable course, the current of national life flowing at times slower and half conscious, at others stronger and awakened. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain but flaring up with added brilliance in the next. There she is, walking with her own majestic steps, my motherland, to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.

Aye, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as old as the days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge unto the world "Not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached." Race after race has taken the challenge up and tried to their uttermost to solve the world riddle on the plane of desires. They have all failed in the past,—the elder have gone down under the weight of wickedness and misery which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the younger are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided by them whether peace will survive or war, whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness, whether muscle will survive or brain, whether worldliness will survive or spiri-

tuality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to the solution through good fortune or evil, and man to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation.

This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence—the *spiritualization of human race*."

There she is, walking with her own majestic step, unshaken, to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or heaven can check—the regeneration of man, the birth into man the God.

Aye, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as old as the days of the Upanishads, we have known the challenge unto the world: "Not by wealth, nor by power, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached." Race after race has taken the challenge up and tried to their uttermost to solve the world riddle on the plane of desire. They have all failed in the past—the elder have gone down under the weight of wickedness and misery which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the younger are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided by them whether peace will survive or war, whether patience will survive or non-attachment, whether goodness will survive or wickedness, whether mind will survive or brain, whether worldliness will survive or spiritual-

## MORAL EDUCATION.

### I.

There is a cry on every side for the moral education of children in India. Governors speak about it, bishops bemoan the absence of morality and religion in Indian educational schemes ; educational officers say that something in that line has to be done but do not know exactly what to do ; and Indians come forward and speak in support of the officials who have delivered themselves of such sentiments ; and the Government of India feels compelled to attempt a solution and publishes a resolution on the subject pointing out the supreme importance of moral instruction, and throwing out a few suggestions, or appoints a committee to consider the question and submit recommendations. It may even be that a native state like Mysore makes a bold experiment and rules that half an hour a day should be spent by the boys in moral instruction classes i.e. in the reading of a text book like the one issued by the Theosophical society. There is certainly a good deal of well-meant educational activity. But it is open to doubt if those responsible for instruction in schools really understand what the problem is.

Moral Education is proposed as a remedy to counteract certain tendencies noticed in the school going population, which it is feared will end in the destruction not only of domestic and social authority but of the authority of government. The condition of India at the present day would seem to support this view. That tendencies of this nature exist is an admitted fact. The question now is what do they indicate, do they indicate a diseased condition and what is the diagnosis. Then we

can search for the causes and consider what remedies to apply.

In a country where religion is the supreme factor in the life of the people, where politics and administration have for centuries been looked upon as auxiliary to the highest aims of religion—the making of manhood, the development of high character,—the English, chief among the European nations, inaugurated a new era of secularism. For more than fifty years secularism and the government of the country by a chartered trading company were the chief features in the affairs of the Indian people. Secular morality was then the dominant note even of English life and hence of English educational methods. The close of this period of secularistic thought in Indian affairs and the beginning of the next period were marked by some important events. The introduction of railways and electric telegraphs, the application of science to industrial arts and the rise of the masses into political power which changed the conditions of life throughout the world, exercised tremendous influence on the stable east. The combined result of all these forces has been the awakening of a self-consciousness in the working man as well as in nations. This has happened in Europe, India and in other Asiatic countries.

One noteworthy feature of the recent history of the civilized nations both in the East and West is the increasing importance of Education. The need for the education of classes has for long been admitted and the state has in every case provided for it. But when it came to the extension of the principle to the masses, the problem took quite a different aspect. Education came to be considered a necessity not so much on account of the spiritual value it possesses but on account of higher value in the labour market of the educated man. The educated labourer

realising his own important place in the making of national wealth demands better returns and larger rights. A system of education based upon a low commercialised view of knowledge, and upon an erroneous theory of human labour operating upon peoples whose self-consciousness has been roused, has brought into existence, wherever these forces are at play, a school of thought which believes in force and violence, which looks upon anarchism and destructive revolutionary methods with more or less approval. This perverted view of educational policy is the root cause of unrest and disquietude. It won't do to administer the nostrums of moral education and industrial education whenever the condition is acute, to follow the symptomatic method of treatment in educational matters. The whole educational policy must be revised and based on a saner view of human nature. Theories of Progress and order must be better and more truly correlated to the essential spirituality of man. Man possesses a mind ; he is a spirit dwelling in a body and not merely a living machine to be worked for the purposes of the capitalist's or the employer's gain.

This is the Indian view and the true view of man's place in society. The Western view makes man an aggregate of organs and functions. It deprives man of his innate spirituality. They believe that his higher nature is determined by training and education and other external conditions. Starting from such a view the Western nations naturally think that it is only education that can endow a man with moral or spiritual qualities, that the qualities which we wish a man to exhibit have to be taught to him in his school days. The Indian on the contrary holds that man is by nature spiritual, pure and perfect and that the function of education is to help in removing the shrouds which cover up and hide from him his real nature. It is



interesting to trace the consequences of these two opposite views. The Hindu, once he comes to know his true nature, works only to realise and manifest his innate perfection. The satisfaction of his material wants and sense gratification occupy only a very minor place in his life. If he gets his barest wants satisfied he does not care to think much over the problems of this material world. Himself in search of leisure from labour, mental peace and equanimity he never supports conflict, discord or disorder of any sort, in the external world. The nations of the West, on the contrary, judge life by the standard of external possessions. The European cannot bring himself to work for eight or ten hours a day, year in, year out, unless he is assured of command over those external possessions which alone can procure for him status, position and rank in Society. A life of such strenuous activity for obtaining the world's goods produces a violent reaction when the conditions of this competitive commercial age are adverse to him. From such a position it is not difficult to pass to a philosophy of revolution in which force and violence are admitted as fair methods to set right the unequal distribution of wealth and property. The problem which statesmen in Europe and America have set before themselves to solve is how to reform education so as to prevent the birth of violence, anarchism and all warring elements in Society. In India and in other Asiatic countries the problem has taken a peculiar form. The civilization of the West has been superimposed on peoples who have attained a high degree of moral and social order with which the new civilization is not quite in tune. Even in Europe statesmen have as yet come to no satisfactory conclusion in educational matters. They would seem to think that industrial and technical education would teach the people how to get their living and earn their wages and how to keep themselves above

want, and that moral education will teach them qualities of thrift, temperance and purity, and how to live peacefully with one's neighbours and rulers. If these be done they hope that there will begin a reign of contentment and happiness, a reign of law and order. This is still a hope in the West. It is often forgotten that in India this discordant superimposed civilization has brought with it, its own train of social evils. For these imported social evils the remedies proposed are also of European origin. The proper method is to leave the whole matter in the hands of the Indians themselves.

To lead a crusade against cigarette smoking and such like evils, which are weedy growths incidental to a loosening of bonds consequent on the presence of conflicting ideals and civilizations, seems a queer way of imparting moral ideas or correcting bad conduct among school-boys. Europeans are responsible for the impression that higher civilisation means increasing our wants and our comforts. So deep rooted is this idea that a young man who does not smoke or drink or take coffee or tea is often considered as a boor, a man without refinement. Simplicity of life is not esteemed a virtue. The man who adopts costly European habits in dress, food and manners is considered entitled to and is paid a better salary both by the private employer and by public officials who have patronage in their hands. This sort of indirect encouragement to costly and often evil habits weakens character. There is again the influence of European and Europeanised Indian teachers. Young boys are told that their parents, their ancestors belonged to a low stage of moral and mental development. The child is taught unassimilable things which are against his traditional ideas; and this is done in a way that drives away from his impressionable mind all respect for parents and for his past. And of

what good will be the teaching of morals in schools against the operation of insidious evils. The old discipline is gone and there is nothing in the domestic life to counteract this tendency. There is a general loosening of all social and moral bonds. If we adopt the present commercialism of the new civilisation we must be prepared for its consequences. If, on the contrary, we go back to our old discipline and value the simplicity of our forefathers, if we assert our spirituality in domestic life as well as in education and the other concerns of life, there will not be much need for special courses of moral training. The Hindus are the most moral race in the world. To teach them morality is what we cannot understand. What the Hindu has to learn is first the science of the West and its application, then the capacity to be aggressive without losing his spirituality and his high moral qualities. The former can be learnt in schools and workshops, and the latter can be acquired from field games and athletics, and from participation in public activities and from living in countries where public opinion is well organised, and national life well formed.

The vices of modern commercialism will not take any deep hold in India provided we keep the core of our national life pure and strong. We require, not a system of moral education under the control of Indians leaving general education to secular and foreign agencies, but general education, scientific and technical education wholly under the control of our men and the best of them. The cry for moral education on any non-denominational basis appears to us to be without any meaning. Our strong hold is religion; let us be true to it and then learn the arts and sciences, encourage foreign travel, promote the modern field games and athletics. Let us respect our parents, our ancestors and the heritage they have left us,

while at the same time we cultivate the scientific attitude of mind, the attitude of severe criticism in all branches of knowledge. In the harmonious working of these lies the salvation of our land.

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Constructive proposals will follow in a subsequent number.

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## NOTES OF SOME WANDERINGS WITH THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

*Continued from page 112.*

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*Persons :—The Swami Vivekananda ; gurubhais, and disciples.*

*A party of Europeans, amongst whom were Sthir Mata, the ' Steady Mother ' ; ' One whose name was Joy ' ; and Nivedita.*

*Place.—Kashmir.*

*Time.—June 20th to October 12th 1886*

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The next morning, a motley gathering of coolies assembled beneath the apple-trees and waited some hours, to take us to the ruins of Marttand. It had been a wonderful old building,—evidently more abbey than temple,—in a wonderful position, and its great interest lay in the obvious agglomeration of styles and periods in which it had grown up. Never can I forget the deep black shadows under the series of arches that confronted us, as we entered in mid-afternoon, with the sun directly behind us, in the west. There were three arches, one straight behind the other, and just within the farthest of them, at two-thirds of its height, a heavy straight-lined window top. The arches were all trefoil, but only the first and second showed this,



as we saw them at the moment of entering. The place had evidently originated as three small rectangular temples, built, with heavy blocks of stone, round sacred springs. The style of these three chambers was all straight-lined, severe. Taking the middle and furthest East of the three, some later king had built round it an enclosing wall, placing a trefoil arch outside each low, lintel-formed doorway, without interfering with the original in any way, and then had added to it in front, a larger nave, with a tall trefoil arch as entrance. Each building had been so perfect, and the motive of the two epochs of construction was so clear, that the plan of the temple was pure delight, and until one had drawn it, one could not stop. The dharmasala or cloister, round the central building, was extraordinarily Gothic in shape, and to one who has seen this, and the royal tombs of Mohammedanism in the north of India, it is at once suggested that the cloister is, ideally, the whole of a monastery, and though, in our cold climates, it cannot be so retained, its presence is a perpetual reminder that the East was the original home of monasticism. The Swami was hard at work, in an instant, on observations and theories, pointing out the cornice that ran along the nave from the entrance to the sanctuary, to the West door, surmounted by the high trefoils of the two arches, and also by a frieze; or showing us the panels containing cherubs; and before we had done, had picked up a couple of coins. The ride back, through the sunset light, was charming. From all these hours, the day before and the day after, fragments of talk come back to me.

“No nation, not Greek or another, has ever carried patriotism so far as the Japanese. They don't talk: they act, die, or give up all for country. There are noblemen

now living in Japan as peasants, having given up their princedoms without a word to create the unity of the empire.\* And not one traitor could be found in the Japanese war. Think of that!"

Again, talking of the inability of some to express feeling, "Shy and reserved people, I have noticed; are always the most brutal when roused."

Again, evidently talking of the ascetic life, and giving the rules of brahmacharya.—"The sanyassin who thinks of gold, to desire it, commits suicide," and so on.

The darkness of night and the forest, a great pinefire under the trees, two or three tents standing out white in the blackness, the forms and voices of many servants at their fires in the distance, and the Master with three disciples, such is the next picture. Of the road to Vernag, under the apple-orchards and along the common-sides, of the pouring rain, and the luncheon in the hard-won sunshine, of that grand old palace of Jehangir, with its octagonal tank at the foot of the pinewooded hills, much might be said. But the crown of the day came in the hours after dinner, when we were, at long last, alone, and the constant file of visitors and worshippers, with their gifts, had ceased. Suddenly the Master turned to one member of the party and said "You never mention your school now, do you sometimes forget it? You see," he went on, "I have much to think of. One day I turn to Madras, and think of the work there. Another day I give all my attention to America or England or Ceylon or Calcutta. Now I am thinking about yours."

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\* This is, I think a mistake. It was their political privileges, not their estates, that the Japanese *Samurai* renounced.

At that moment the Master was called away to dine, and not till he came back could the confidence he had invited, be given.

He listened to it all, the deliberate wish for a tentative plan, for smallness of beginnings, and the final inclination to turn away from the idea of inclusiveness and breadth, and to base the whole of an educational effort on the religious life, and on the worship of Sri Ramakrishna.

"Because you must be sectarian to get that enthusiasm, must you not?" he said. "You will make a sect in order to rise above all sects. Yes I understand."

There would be obvious difficulties. The thing sounded, on this scale, almost impossible, for many reasons. But for the moment the only care need be to will rightly, and if the plan was sound, ways and means would be found to hand, that was sure.

He waited a little when he had heard it all, and then he said, "You ask me to criticise, but that I cannot do. For I regard you as inspired, quite as much inspired as I am. You know that's the difference between other religions and us. Other people believe their founder was inspired, and so do we. But so am I, also, just as much so as he, and you as I, and after you your girls and their disciples will be. So I shall help you to do what you think best."

Then he turned to Dhira Mata and to Joy, and spoke of the greatness of the trust that he would leave in the hands of that disciple who should represent the interests of women, when he should go west, of how it would exceed the responsibility of work for men. And he added, turning to the worker of the party, "Yes, you have faith,

but you have not that burning enthusiasm that you need. You want to be consumed with energy. Siva ! Siva !” and so, invoking the blessing of Mahadeva, he said good-night and left us, and we, presently, went to bed.

The next morning, we breakfasted early, in one of the tents, and went on to Achhabal. One of us had had a dream of old jewels lost and restored, all bright and new. But the Swami, smiling, stopped the tale, saying “Never talk of a dream as good as that!”

At Achhabal, we found more gardens of Jehangir. Was it here, or at Vernag, that had been his favourite resting-place ?

We roamed about the gardens, and bathed in a still pool opposite the Pathan Khan's Zenana, and then we lunched in the first garden, and rode down in the afternoon to Islamabad.

As we sat at lunch, the Swami invited his daughter to go to the Cave of Amarnath with him, and be dedicated to Siva. Dhira Mata smiled permission, and the next half-hour was given to pleasure and congratulations. It had already been arranged that we were all to go to Pahlgam and wait there for the Swami's return from the pilgrimage. So we reached the boats that evening, packed, and wrote letters, and next day, in the afternoon, started for Bawan.

*(To be continued.)*

## BHAGAVAD GITA—AN ESSAY.

(Continued from page 123.)

### VIII.

*First Reason.*

कर्मज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।

शरीरयात्रापि च तेन प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥

“Action is superior to inaction: even the maintenance of the body would not be possible for thee by inaction.”

Here अकर्म (inaction) means Gnâna. Hence कर्मज्यायो-ह्यकर्मणः means Karma Yôga is superior to Gnâna Yôga. How? In the first place, a Gnâna Yôgi who is possessed of the real âtma-knowledge may work and yet look upon himself as no agent of the act. In the second place, how can a Gnâna Yogi, if he resigns action, support his bodily existence which is necessary and helpful to him in his practice of Gnâna Yôga? Is not maintaining the body a *sine qua non*, till one finishes the particular method one has adopted and reaches the end in view? Hence Karma Yôga is necessary, nay, *sine qua non*, to maintain the body.

Here an objection is raised to the effect that action leads to bondage and involves the vanities of I-ness and My-ness &c.

Our Lord replies :

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्तल्लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।



“The world is bound by action, unless performed for the sake of sacrifice.”

All action, if done in the service of Parama Purusha, becomes sacred and does not bind the world. The statement, therefore that action leads to bondage must be taken with a limitation.

### *Second Reason.*

Prajâpati, at the time of creation, saw the entities (chit) entangled in matter (achit). Out of infinite mercy, He projected the former into manifestation and along with them inaugurated the institution of Yajnas. As Our Lord says :

सहयज्ञाःप्रजाःसृष्ट्वापुरोवाचप्रजापतिः ।

अनेनप्रसविष्यध्वमेषवोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥

“Having formerly, created mankind together with Yajnas Prajâpati said “with this, multiply: verily it is your desire-giver.”

The direction of Prajapati being “multiply with sacrifice,” a question crops up thus “How or in what manner can this be achieved?”

The Lord answers :

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवाभावयन्तु वः ।

परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥

“By this, serve the devas: let the devas serve you Reciprocating services in this manner, you will attain the highest good,—i.e., Moksha.”

If, on the other hand, you enjoy the gifts of the Devas without your sacrifices to them, listen to what our Lord says on the point :

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुंक्तेस्तेन एवसः

“ A thief verily he is who enjoyeth what is given by them (devas) without returning them aught.”

Again,

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तोमुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।

भुञ्जतेतेत्वग्रं पापाये पचन्त्यामकारणात् ॥

“ The righteous, who eat the remains of the sacrifice, are freed from all sins : but the impious, who dress food for their own sakes, verily eat sin.”

### Third Reason

Having referred to the *moral* necessity of Yajna, the Lord proceeds to dwell upon the *physical* necessity of it. That is to say, its omission is shown to be attended with evil consequences. In the first place “the wheel of the world” must be understood.

अन्नाद्भवन्तिभूतानिपर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।

यज्ञाद्भवतिपर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः

कर्मब्रह्मोद्भवविद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवं ।

तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्मनित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

“ From food creatures come : from rain comes food : from action arises sacrifice : Know, from Brahma grows action and from the Imperishable comes Brahma. So the all-obtaining Brahma is necessary for Yajna.”

M. S. RAMASWAMI AIYAR B.A. L.T.

(To be continued.)

VEDANTA WORK.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA.

ANNIVERSARY.

The seventy-seventh Birth-day Anniversary of the Swami was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Home, Mylapore, on the 20th March. In the morning there was a very grand bhajana in which Swami Baba Premananda Bharati took the leading part. Many of the young and the old who had gone to the Hall merely as spectators, seeing the ecstatic dance of the Swami Baba forgot themselves and joined the bhajana, so that almost everybody in the Hall was dancing and singing to God. From morning nine till evening four about 7,000 poor people of all classes and creeds were fed the chief feature in the feeding being that a number of boys belonging to respectable and well-to-do Brahmin families took part in the service. In the after noon between 2-20 and 5, Mr. M. K. Tatachariar, B.A., performed a Harikatha on "Sarasetu bandhanam" which the audience appreciated much.

At 5-30 P.M. a lecture was delivered by the Hon' ble Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar on "The all embracing love of Sri Ramkrishna" with the Hon'ble Mr. P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar in the chair. Swami Baba Premananda Bharati also expressed his views on the subject.

### THE LECTURE.

The Hon'ble Mr. Seshagiri Aiyar delivered the following interesting lecture:—

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN.—Sri Krishna says "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness then I myself come forth." I truly believe that it is in fulfilment of this promise of the Lord and in conformity with the laws of Nature that Sri Ramkrishna

Paramahansa was born amongst us. I do not intend this evening to give you a biographical sketch of the great Divine. It is ancient history now. I have undertaken to say a few words upon the example of his life to us and upon our neglect of the lessons which he taught. Principally, I desire to draw your attention to the Swami's attitude towards what are known as the depressed classes of this land and how by precept and by example he has left us a legacy whose true value we have not been able to appreciate. His love was all embracing. It knew no limitations of caste or colour. I believe that the lower a man's status in the social scale, the greater was Swami Ramakrishna's love to him.

It is said of Sri Ramakrishna that he used to sweep the houses of Chandalas. To him ceremonialism and outward purity had no meaning. He never was a Philistine. He worshipped at every shrine. He bowed to every good man to whatever class, creed or nationality he belonged. In this as in other matters he was a true representative of the old teachers. In the good old days nobility of soul and greatness of heart won allegiance and not pedigree or the colour of the skin. In our Puranic legends no name stands in higher estimation than that of Prahlad. He was not a Brahmin. He was outside the pale of castes. He was an Asura: Again if the followers of Ramanuja have studied the life of their great teachers they will find that he drew his disciples from all classes. There are Alvars and Acharyas among the Vaishnavites in whom there was not a drop of Aryan blood. Coming to modern days, the great Nanda belonging to the lowest rank in our social scale has been deified and there is not a soul which does not thrill with joy at the recounting of the trials and sorrows of this truly great man and at his ultimate triumph.

One would have thought that contact with other civilizations and the progress of democratic principles all over the world would have opened the eyes of educated Indians to the necessity of recasting their social code. The days of vested

rights are gone. No one has any right to the respect of his fellowmen and to the love of his neighbours, who bases his claim on birth or parentage. We have failed to realise this. In my opinion, no one is more to blame than the Brahmin upon this question. I shall presently show that the initiative in this direction should come from him and that his failure to grasp the strength of the forces at work around him will soon annihilate him, if he delays any further,

Comparing the figures of the last three censuses for the years 1881, 1891, 1901 respectively, I find that, whereas in 1881, out of every 10,000 peoples, there were 9,143 Hindus, 620 Mahomedans, and 228 Christians; in the year 1891, the census showed 8,983 Hindus, 630 Mahomedans and 244 Christians for every 10,000; in 1901, the figures were 8,916 Hindus, 642 Mohmedans and 269 Christians. These figures speak for themselves.

Now I feel no doubt that when the figures of the next census are announced, it will be found that the Christian and Mahomedan population will have considerably increased while the Hindu population will have decreased proportionately. In one sense, I am not sorry for the result. The low caste man of yesterday who is converted to Christianity or Mahomedanism is not "kicked by the Brahman as a stranger cur from his threshold," but is admitted into his house. The wonder of it is that more panchamas have not forsaken their old faith. The truth is that notwithstanding calumnies and interested and frigid lies," the panchama has been treated with exceptional kindness by those for whom he works. It is true that you keep him at a distance. It is true that you consider that contact with him will pollute you. It is equally true that you clothe him, feed him and get him married. You are his banker although he has no credit but your good will to fall back upon. But all your kindness, all your solicitude for his welfare bear no fruit because of your stupid feeling that he should not see you eat, that he should not come near you.



I do not think that the Brahmin recognises what he is losing. One good word, one kind look, a little less superciliousness and a little more consideration for the intellectual elevation of the Panchama will make him as devoted to the Brahmin as of old. If he neglects all this the result will be disastrous. To prove how much the intolerance of the Brahmin has contributed to his losing his hold upon the lower classes, you have only to look at what is going on in Malabar. I am not sorry because these low caste men embrace other faiths, I am not afraid that the great Religion of this land will thereby lose its hold upon its children. No. I am sorry for the disunion and social disintegration which this involves. As soon as a low caste man becomes a convert, the village has to face a new situation. Land disputes arise, criminal proceedings are taken and the village autonomy is torn asunder. This is no fanciful picture. I can cite specific instances of what I have stated. The feeling of unity disappears and you have in the village and elsewhere a spirit of antagonism and of unhealthy rivalry. Is it not time that we take stock of our influence and of the forces at work around us, and adopt a different attitude, if not in the name of humanity, at least in self-interest? It is not religion that stands in the way. Ours is the most tolerant of all religions. We count all kinds of beliefs as pertaining to Hinduism. Atheists and Agnostics are Hindus, and Lord Sri Krishna has said that no caste can claim Him and no clan. It is the pure in heart and the selfless that are dear and near to him. Do the example and teaching of our Gurus stand in the way? Baghavan Sri Ramanuja's life is a refutation of this. I have already referred to other devotees. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna whom we all so lovingly venerate has taught us a lesson in this respect. What then stands in the way of our recognising these brethren of ours as entitled to a more considerate treatment? It is inert and unwillingness to move out of the groove and nothing more. I said at starting, it is from the Brahmin that this reform should come. It is his influence that stands in the way of the Panchama elevation. That

influence, I feel no doubt, is also responsible for the general contentment in which the lower classes are found. But he has no vested right to keep them where they have been. Has he not changed? Is he the same spiritual preceptor that he was before? He has thrown off his old pursuits and has sought new avocations. It is his duty to take his less fortunate brethren along with him. He must lead them on to higher planes of life and to nobler pursuits. He must not stand aloof. If he does, he will find that he is overtaken in the race of life and that he is handicapped by those whom he has failed to raise up and conciliate. He may not agree with the *Madras Times* when it says that the Brahmin should for ever continue to beg. If that theory were pushed to its logical end, one might question the right of the writer to sit in the editorial chair. In ages gone by, the Brahmin was kind and considerate towards his social inferiors. Times have changed and to-day he is bound to take steps to raise up these men, so that their allegiance and co-operation may not be lost to the nation. Imitate the example of the Paramahansa, who was a true Brahmin and a true patriot. If you love India, if you are anxious that your social status should not be synonymous with unwise intolerance towards the lower classes, you must take Ramakrishna's lessons to heart and work up to his ideal of toleration and humanity.

I have thus far been dealing only with one aspect of the life of a great Yogi. One can speak for hours upon his wonderful life, its purity, its simplicity and its usefulness. But if I were asked to sum up in one sentence how we can best realise the truths inculcated by the Paramahansa, I would say "watch, study and follow the life of his revered pupil Sri Ramakrishnananda" and you will find in him the epitome of all that is good and practicable and of all that you and I can imitate and adopt. Written words and abstract generalisations have a glamour for us all. We forget that it is easier to be and to become, by closely following in the footsteps of a living saint. It was not so with the ancients. They cared less for

books and lectures than we do. They cared more for practical examples and guidance than we do. Sri Ramakrishnananda has lived in our midst for nearly 12 years. Full of true love to suffering humanity, without any thought of self, living only for others, simple, devoted untouched by the desire for worldly things, unaffected by worldly pleasures, he has been to us all a source of strength, of true happiness and the fountain of love and wisdom. Yet how few of us recognise in him the saint that he is! As I said before, if I had my way, I would say to those who asked me to say a few words on the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, "Look at the life of this disciple before you and tread in his footsteps; you will learn everything that the great teacher had to impart." But I know that paraphrases of what has been said a dozen times before, plagiarisms of other peoples' thoughts and words have a fascination for us all and you will not find me behind others in this art of literary pilfering. The Paramahansa was a true Sanyasin. He was not in the language of the old saying, one who donned the yellow garb, shaved himself completely and yet not a particle of desire for the goods of this world had left him. He renounced wealth, wife and health too in his devotion to the Mother. Max Muller says that he is satisfied that Sanyasins will never find followers and imitators in Europe. This is quite true. In the materialistic civilization of the West where is there any room for a sanyasin? The true Sanyasins will have no place in the life of Europe and America. Abnegation of self and annihilation of desires will never gain ground as the true science of life in these far off countries; but in India no permanent change for the benefit of mankind, no abiding reformation in the manners and customs of the people have been and will be inaugurated unless the reformer renounces self and works as the humble servant of all his fellowmen and as a participant in their joys and sorrows. Baghavan Ramakrishna was such a reformer, He was a true Sanyasin. He lived to bless others and not to enrich himself. He realised his oneness with the Supreme Lord in order that his fellowmen may be taught to

follow in the same wake.

"It is said of Sri Ramakrishna that he worshipped at every shrine and bowed to every devotee. Professors of other religions speak of Hindus as idolators and they express surprise that even educated Hindus should be found to worship idols. The truth is that these critics have no conception of Hindu theology. As Swami Vivekananda used to say, in other religions there is but one coat—not Lord Morley's fur-coat—which every one is expected to wear whether it fits him or not. The child, the boy, the man, the soldier, the divine and the philosopher have to put on this over-garment whether they look neat and trim or whether they look ridiculous under it. It is not so with Hinduism. From birth to boyhood, from youth to old age there are different object lessons leading to the same goal. The child in his nursery is taught stories which satisfy him that a Divinity watches over him and that if he is good and wise, he will attain to prosperity and greatness by the grace of God. If he is a little advanced by object lessons in temples where good and holy men congregate, he is led to think of the Form Divine. In manhood, the Upanishads satisfy his soul and so on. When I speak of the young and the old, I am referring not solely to physical development, but also to intellectual growth. Some men are boys whatever their age may be. To them "Tatwamasi" will never have any meaning. It is in this way that variety leading to unity, which the foreigner is unable to grasp, is taught by all-comprehensive religion. Outside critics of Hinduism are like the blind men whom Swami Ramakrishna refers to as having dogmatised upon the physical proportions of an elephant by having felt the tail. The Baghavan knew what the various shrines meant to persons of different mental calibre. He worshipped everywhere because he found God everywhere. He also wanted people to know that the great God was as well in the image before them as in any other place. This lesson has been our heritage for ages past. Have we profited by it? Hindus and Mahomedans can live together in amity, in

brotherhood and in peace, if they take this lesson to heart. Smarthas and Vaishnavites fight among themselves. The lives of our great men have been lived in vain in the face of these everlasting disputes. Blasphemy in the name of God is what we hear every day. Hatred oppression and persecution are indulged in, as if they please the Almighty. If there is any lesson to be learnt from the life of the Paramahansa who worshipped Sri Krishna, Mahadev, Allah and Jesus Christ it is utter futility of these wranglings and of the unpardonable sin of indulging in these bickerings.

Gentlemen, I think I have said enough, to set you thinking. I want you to study this great life. I request you to ponder over his teachings. His sayings are a mine of practical lessons for those that have not the time to seek them in our scattered books. The Paramahansa was ridiculed in the beginning for his eccentricities. When he was found to be persistent, He was regarded as a mad man and resort was had to medical men to cure him of his insanity. Then came a time when these sapient critics thought it best to leave such unpractical man alone. Ridicule did not kill him. Contempt did not dissuade him from his path. Neglect had no effect in turning his thoughts away from the aim he had in view. He had his reward ultimately. Men of all shades of opinion, philosophers, divines, reformers, orthodox pundits, and atheists sought him in his retreat. They were enraptured by his discourse and were captivated by his simplicity. Men of eminence and of high intellectual attainments sat under his feet and were proud to own him as their Guru. After death deification in the true sense of the term has come to him and to-day we revere his memory and cherish his personality as that of one of India's noblest sons. All these show how steadfastness of aim and singleness of purpose, if they are yoked to high resolve and noble ideals, will earn for any man the love and veneration of his fellowmen and the gratitude and adoration of posterity. To young men in this hall and outside, I would earnestly recommend the study of this



great life. Be true be honest; be kind and considerate to all men; love your fellowmen, cherish no hatred because of class or creed. You will find as the history of the life of Baghavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa shows, that you are a benefactor to mankind, and that you have helped the world to move on in the path of peace and progress, you will also leave behind you a name which will be cherished gratefully by all with whom you have come in contact. Never deviate from the Sanatana Dharma which while extolling courage and consistency repudiates with vigour and scorn cowardly assassination and brutal murder. No nation can move along and rise by deeds of violence and anarchy. If there is any patriotism in us, as Hindus who have withstood the ravages of centuries upon our ideals of morality, of religion and of civilisation while younger nations which have had short spells of glory and of government have been dead and buried, we must stand steadfast to the watchword that has sustained us so long and which is everlasting—namely, “Om ! Santi, Santi, Santi,” Peace ! Peace !

#### CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS.

The Hon'ble Mr. P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyar said that he was not going to make any lengthy speech but he would call upon Swami Baba Bharati to make a speech which would certainly stir all their hearts to inmost depths. There was one reason of his making a few remarks at that time, instead of reserving them to the end. He did not wish to follow Baba Bharati after the eloquent speech which they would all wish to hear from him. He would rather prefer that they should all go home with the cadences of the Swami's voice ringing in their ears. A function like the present one served an exceedingly useful purpose. It would recall to their minds the number of years a certain individual had spent and the lessons of his great and noble life. The sayings of Sri Ramakrishna made public by Swami Vivekananda yielded to none of those of the great sages in any age past or present in the matter of true

wisdom or profundity. Anybody who read those sayings in the Maxmuller's life of Sri Ramakrishna or in the pages of Brahnavadin could not fail to be struck with the sincerity and the grandeur of the truths of those sayings. What appealed to the Hindus most forcibly were the Swami's spirit of complete self renunciation and the life of ascetecism. Missionaries were coming very often to the Hindus to preach to them foreign religion, but the Hindus were not moved by their teaching unless the life they were leading was one of simplicity and self-renunciation. That was why the Roman Catholic religion had succeeded in making more converts in India than the Protestant religion. Another important feature in the Swami's life which appealed to them all was the way in which he realized the teachings of Lord Krishna Bhagavat Gita, the Gospel of Gospels to the Hindus. The Hindus very often failed to translate that teaching of the Gos-pel of love into daily practice. The Swami's noble and unselfish life was dedicated to the practical realisation of that Gospel and so had a most stimulating and wholesome influence upon the hearts of the people of India. The doctrine of Universal love found place in the oldest religions of the world and certainly in Hinduism more than in any other religion. At the present time it was desirable that they should all take stock of their moral and religious progress, conduct a process of self-examination and find out how far they had adhered to the teachings of the Lord and followed the life of great men who had recently departed from them and to what extent they had yet to improve. In every nation there were backslidings and times of transition when owing to various circumstances, particular aspects of a religion were not sufficiently remembered by the people. The doctrine of universal love found practical acceptance among the Hindus for many and many a century, but was overloaded in latter days by incrustations of prejudices or sentiments which had a tendency to divide them among themselves. In making this self-examination, in confessing the shortcomings, and in expressing a desire to raise

themselves to the ideals that the Swami had preached they should not suppose that they were furnishing a handle to those who wished to cast a stone at them. It was sometimes said that the doctrine of universal love and brotherhood was entirely the gift of Christianity to India and that the present day institutions of the Hindus were inconsistent with any theory of universal love and brotherhood if such was to be found in their books. In answer to that they had only to turn round to the example of the people who hurled that reproach at them to find that they in their own treatment of other races and other nations were certainly not guided by any more practical sense of the spirit of universal love or brotherhood. When a friend of his was told by a christian missionary about the manner in which the Hindus were dealing with the lower classes, the friend acknowledged that with regret, but said that the western people had no such problem among them, because the moment they came in contact with people of inferior civilization, they wiped the latter out and thus there was no collision between superior civilization and inferior civilization. He the lecturer, did not endorse that sentiment to the fullest extent, but it contained a grain of truth. Just as the Hindus in their dealings with lower classes may legitimately be charged with not keeping to the high ideals so other nations and communities were also liable to a similar charge in the way in which they treated other races and nations with whom they came in contact. But that was no justification for the Hindus in regard to the treatment of the depressed classes. The way in which the lower classes were treated by the Christian Missionaries aroused the Hindus to a sense of their duties. To lower classes conversion to christianity meant their elevation in the social scale, it put them to a better sense of self-respect and made them more manly and independent. To that extent the Hindus were under obligation to the missionaries preaching in this land. At the same time that duty was not one which could not be discovered in the ancient Hindu scriptures. It was often and often laid down and insisted upon in no uncer-

tain terms. That duty was forgotten owing to a number of circumstances and conditions. One great lesson to be learnt from the life of Sri Ramakrishna was the catholicity of love which they should not merely admire but translate into practice. There were numerous social difficulties in the way of carrying out the ideals into immediate practice. But it would be unworthy of them all, if they sat with folded arms and made no endeavour to overcome the difficulties and to elevate the condition of the depressed classes.

The chairman then referred to the loss sustained by the Hindu community in the death of Mr. Alasinga Perumal who had done very useful work in connection with the Ramakrishna Home, with the Brahnavadin and in various other ways.

#### SWAMI BABA'S SPEECH.

The Swami referred to the noble qualities of Sri Ramakrishnananda, and illustrated the all-embracing love of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa by particular instances. He said that education was unnecessary to develop knowledge of God. In conclusion he said Brahman Grihastas should not eat from the hands of Chandalas but all the same they must love them heart and soul, elevate them and Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an example of that love.



## NOTES and THOUGHTS.

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### ON LOVE.

WHAT is love ? Ask him who lives, what is life ? ask him who adores, what is God ?

*Thou* demandest what is love ? It is that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void, and seek to awaken in all things that are, a community with what we experience within ourselves. If we reason, we would be understood ; if we imagine, we would that the airy children of our brain were born anew within another's ; if we feel, we would that another's nerves should vibrate to our own, that the beams of their eyes should kindle at once and mix and melt into our own, that lips of motionless ice should not reply to lips quivering and burning with the heart's best blood. This is Love. This is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists. We are born into the world, and there is something within us which, from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness. It is probably in correspondence with this law that the infant drains milk from the bosom of its mother : this propensity develops itself with the development of our nature. We dimly see within our intellectual nature a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of everything excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man. Not only the portrait of our external being, but an assemblage of the minutest particles of which our nature is composed ; a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms



of purity and brightness; a soul within our soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise, which pain and sorrow, and evil dare not overleap. To this we eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it. The discovery of its anti-type; the meeting with an understanding, capable of clearly estimating our own; an imagination which should enter into and seize upon the subtle and delicate peculiarities which we have delighted to cherish and unfold in secret; with a frame whose nerves, like the chords of two exquisite Lyres, strung to the accompaniment of one delightful voice, vibrate with the vibrations of our own; and of a combination of all these in such proportion as the type within demands; this is the invisible and unattainable point to which Love tends: and to attain which, it urges forth the powers of man to arrest the faintest shadow of that, without the possession of which there is no rest nor respite to the heart over which it rules. Hence in solitude, or in that deserted state when we are surrounded by human beings, and yet they sympathise not with us, love the flowers, the grass, and the waters, and the sky. In the motion of the very leaves of spring, in the blue air, there is then found a secret correspondence with our heart. There is eloquence in the tongueless wind, and a melody in the flowing brooks and the rustling of the reeds beside them, which by their inconceivable relation to something within the soul, awaken the spirits to a dance breathless rapture, and bring tears of mysterious tenderness to the eyes, like the enthusiasm of patriotic success, or the voice of one beloved singing to you alone. Sterne says that, if he were in a desert, he would love some cypress. So soon as this want or power is dead, man becomes the living sepulchre of himself, and what yet survives is the mere husk of what once he was.

**MR. M. H. PHELPS B. A., LL.B.,**

This gentleman is an American of New York. He was a lawyer in large practice in that city, but has now given up his profession and is greatly interested in educational and social movements. He is a preacher of universal brotherhood and a great friend of the Hindus, an admirer of their Religion and literature. Mr. Phelps is now practically a Hindu Vedantist in religion, dresses himself as a Hindu, and is a vegetarian. Swami Vivekananda was the guest of Mr. Phelps when he went to America on his great religious Mission. He visited Ceylon some years back and was the guest of Mr. Ramanathan K. C., C. M. G., in Colombo, and Mr. Ramanathan's visit to America a few years ago was at the instance of this gentleman. Mr. Phelps is now in our midst. He accompanied Mr. Ramanathan here, and on finding the great educational work which the latter has started here, he has made up his mind to remain in Jaffna for a month and to help the Siva Educational Association in organising the village schools which are to be the feeder schools to the Girl's College at Maruthanamadam. Seventeen meetings have been arranged in different parts of the District for Mr. Phelps to be present, in company with the members of the Executive Committee of the Saiva Educational Association, and he has already attended and addressed two meetings—one at Maviddapuram on the 13th meeting and the other at Alavetty last night. Mr. V. M. Muttukumar, interpreted into Tamil the speeches of Mr. Phelps at those two meetings.

