

THE  
BRAHMAVĀDIN.

“एकं सत् विप्रबहुधा वदन्ति.”

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

—*Rigveda*, I, 164. 46.

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[Vol. III.]

APRIL 1, 1898.

[No. 14.]

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IMAGE-WORSHIP.

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Worship is as old as religion, and religion is at least as old as man himself. How image-worship came into existence in the history of religion cannot but be interesting as well as instructive to all those who believe in the importance of religion as an institution calculated to uphold truth and to ennoble the humanity of man. In some quarters it has now become a sort of fashion to call all kinds of image-worship by the noxious name of *idolatry*, and then condemn them all at once and completely without even feeling faintly that it is necessary to examine well the origin and nature of image-worship before dogmatically pronouncing against it in unmeasured language. That there are some in modern times who feel that they can look after their spiritual interests and perform their religious worship without the aid of physical images of any kind, is a thing which is so well-known all the world over. But what right they have to condemn all that they call by the name of *idolatry* it is indeed very difficult to make out. Almost every person, who is at all well acquainted with English Literature knows that Carlyle was a great hater of shams, and rash critics of image-worship may surely

learn one or two valuable truths from the following remarks of the sham-hating Sage of Chelsea on this vexed question of idolatry.

He says in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.—"We will not enter here into the theological question about idolatry. Idol is *Eidolon*, a thing seen, a symbol. It is not God, but a symbol of God; and perhaps one may question whether any the most benighted mortal ever took it for more than a Symbol. I fancy, he did not think that the poor image his own hands had made *was* God; but that God was, emblemed by it, that God was in it some way or other. And even in this sense, one may ask, is not all worship whatsoever a worship by symbols, by *eidola*, or things seen? Whether *seen*, rendered visible as an image or picture to the bodily eye; or visible only to the inward eye to the imagination, to the intellect: this makes a superficial, but no substantial difference. It is still a Thing Seen, significant of Godhead; an Idol. The most rigorous Puritan has his Confession of Faith, and intellectual Representation of Divine things, and worships thereby; thereby is worship first made possible for him. All creeds, liturgies, religious forms, conceptions, that fitly invest religious feelings, are in this sense *eidola*, things seen. All worship whatsoever must proceed by symbols, by Idols:—we may say, all Idolatry is comparative, and the worst idolatry is only *more* idolatrous. Where, then, lies the evil of it? Some fatal evil must lie in it, or earnest prophetic men would not on all hands so reprobate it. Why is idolatry so hateful to prophets? It seems to me as if, in the worship of those poor wooden symbols, the thing that had chiefly provoked the Prophet, and filled his inmost soul with indignation and aversion, was not exactly what suggested itself to his own thought, and came out of him in words to others, as the thing. The rudest heathen that worshipped Canopus, or the Caabah Black-stone, he, as we saw, was superior to the horse that worshipped nothing at all, Nay, there was a kind of lasting merit in that poor act of his,

analogous to what is still meritorious in Poets : recognition of a certain endless *divine* beauty and significance in stars and all natural objects whatsoever. Why should the Prophets so mercilessly condemn him? The poorest mortal worshipping his Fetish, while his heart is full of it, may be an object of pity, of contempt and avoidance, if you will, but cannot surely be an object of hatred. Let his heart *be* honestly full of it, the whole space of his dark narrow mind illuminated thereby ; in one word, let him entirely *believe* in his Fetish,—it will then be, I should say, if not well with him, yet as well as it can readily be made to be ; and you will leave him alone, unmolested there. But here enters the fatal circumstance of Idolatry, that, in the era of the Prophets, no man's mind *is* any longer honestly filled with his Idol or Symbol. Before the Prophet can arise who, seeing through it, knows it to be mere wood, many men must have begun dimly to doubt that it was little more. Condemnable Idolatry is *insincere* Idolatry. Doubt has eaten the heart of it : a human soul is seen clinging spasmodically to an Ark of the Covenant, which it half-feels now to have become a Phantasm. This is one of the balefulest sights. Souls are no longer filled with their Fetish ; but only pretend to be filled, and would fain make themselves feel that they are filled."

From this rather long quotation a few things of interest become clear. First of all we are made to see that all worship must be with the help of symbols. It is indeed remarkable how much symbols have contributed to the progress of civilisation and the realisation of man's humanity as well as his divinity. The art of writing began, they say, with pictorial representations ; and that most potent of all instruments of thought and enlightenment, namely, speech, had its gross origin in gestures and imitative and interjectional sounds. Our most abstract and immaterial thoughts we now think with the help of our highly developed languages ; but a fairly close examination of the history of such words in our languages as are made to express

abstract notions about which there seems to be almost nothing that is concrete or gross, cannot fail to bring to light the great fact that in all our languages conceptions of an originally concrete significance are by the process of metaphor led to express even the most highly abstract ideas. Imitation is at the root of language, and metaphor has been its very bread of life. We cannot write without symbols, we cannot speak without symbols, we cannot think without symbols. Can we then pray without symbols, worship without symbols? All religions and all philosophy are at best only symbols of the Divine Principle. Under these circumstances where is the harm in image-worship, or even in idolatry as they call it? Carlyle is perfectly right when he says that whatever harm there is in idolatry is to be found in the insincerity that is often associated with it. Even in the matter of the symbolic representation of the truth of things and the commonly and naturally concrete conception of religion and worship, there is such a thing as the passage from the gross to the refined, and from the more concrete to the less concrete. Sticking to the older, less refined, and more concrete conceptions of the past stubbornly, even when one or more steps of advancement are possible in the direction of refinement, righteousness and progress, is in every way worthy to be condemned as pernicious idolatry—not only in regard to religion but also in regard to all other matters associated with the historical life of humanity. Not to progress, when it is both possible and desirable to do so, is certainly injurious to the best interests of civilisation and culture. Not to work for the improvement and elevation of those, whose religious and moral conceptions are not quite as refined as they might be, is undeniably a moral weakness. But as long as even the best of us cannot think without symbols, cannot pray without symbols, and cannot worship without symbols, we ought to do nothing but bless all sincere forms of worship, whatever may be the actual magnitude of the concreteness of their conceptions and their symbols. Here, as

elsewhere, sincerity is indeed the test of truthfulness. When we cannot know and comprehend and get hold of the truth as it is, we have no right to laugh at any kind of human effort to rise from the known to the unknown, from the human to the divine.

Like thought, language, and writing, worship too began symbolically. The need for religion is implanted in the heart of man, and therefore it is a part of his psychic and spiritual nature. But its first expression was very naturally symbolic. It is known that the earliest form which worship assumed was that of sacrifice. And what has been the meaning of sacrifice? This question has been remarkably well dealt with by the late Professor Robertson Smith in his highly interesting lecture on the *Religion of the Semites*, and with the help of a very large amount of convincing evidence he has arrived at the conclusion that sacrifice is symbolic of the establishment of kinship between the worshipper and the deity worshipped by him. This question of sacrifice and its meaning, as they come out from the study of the religious history of India, we do not now take up for consideration, but content ourselves by saying that the conclusions of Professor Robertson Smith, regarding sacrifice and its original meaning, are fully borne out by a very large amount of highly interesting evidence deducible from the institutions of Hinduism. There is no denying that, even in the most progressive religions, all the later forms of worship have simply been more or less manifest modifications of this earliest form of sacrificial worship; and from very early times at least two very different forms of sacrifice seem to have been known. These are bloody sacrifices and sacrifices performed by the offering of oblations to the fire. Before man discovered how to make and to keep fire, he must have been naturally in the habit of worshipping by means of bloody sacrifices, in which the blood of the victim smeared to an image or an altar represented the bond of kinship between the worshipper and his deity. Totemism, which

is supposed to have been a common institution to the whole of mankind at one time or other in the course of the evolution of civilisation, is, in all probability, responsible for the use of physical objects to represent supernatural agencies. In this way out of the natural needs of early society and the institution of bloody sacrifice, image-worship must have first come into existence. Such, at any rate, seems to have been the origin of idolatry among the Semitic peoples; and arguing from the common features in the different stages of the evolutionary progress of civilisation in the different parts of the world, we are led to think that with us also in India totemism and the bloody sacrifice must have caused the commencement of image-worship.

This idea gets strengthened from the fact that the religion of the Vedic Aryas in India seems to have been free from image-worship, and these Vedic Aryas worshipped their gods by the offering of oblations to the fire. Agni, the god of fire, was considered by them to be the messenger of the gods and the carrier of oblations. In fire-sacrifices it is the ascending smoke that forms the visible bond of connection between the embodied worshipper and the invisible gods, and the conversion of the visible oblations into invisible vapours and gases naturally went to strengthen the belief that the offerings were accepted by the gods. Where the shedding of the blood of the victim on an altar or the smearing of it on an image of the deity is taken to denote the completion of the sacrifice, they cannot help having images or some natural physical objects as representatives of the deity; fire-sacrifices, however, do not stand in need of such representatives. This does not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that image-worship does not at all come into existence among peoples whose offerings are all mainly, if not wholly, burnt offerings. Images of their gods were known to the Greeks and to the Romans, and they knew burnt offerings also. We have heard it said that, when a young Hindu asked Swami Vivekananda

why Hindus were idolatrous, the Swami replied that it was because they had their Himalayas. A little thought bestowed on this answer will show us that there is another impulse in the heart of man in answer to which also physical images of the divinity come into existence in a community of worshippers. This impulse arises out of the power which the beauty and the sublimity of nature has to enrapture and enslave the inner essence of man. Where the majesty of nature is grand and her beauty great, can man really suppress the welling forth of poetry from the profoundest depths of his soul? Is not the essence of poetry in imitation and the imaging forth of the felt beauty and sublimity of nature? This poetry may, and does, find expression in more ways than one; and when religion becomes naturally associated with the expression of the divine inflatus of such poetry as ever enlivens the inner sanctuary of the soul, religious myths come into existence in steadily growing numbers. Such indeed is the psychological explanation of the origin of myths; they may owe much to what Professor Max Müller has called a "disease of language", or, as his opponents contend, their cause is to be found in the actual conditions of early society and primitive culture. However, as to why myths are associated with religions, we have to seek our explanation elsewhere; and if we do so, we may find it in that admirable proneness of man to be carried away by poetic influences and their charms, whenever they happen to be sufficiently near to him to work even unconsciously upon his pliant and impressionable soul. The genius of the poet and the inspiration of the prophet are not at all dissimilar, and in the mythology of the Aryan nations we have them most remarkably fused together to form a harmonious whole. When myths give rise to images of gods and goddesses, there is nothing unnatural or harmful in the process; and these images are intended to express the poetry and the religious devotion embodied in myths by means of the visible language of the sculptor. That Hera and Isis should have their chariots

drawn by a pair of peacocks and that Subrahmanya or Kumara, the solar god of Indian Saivism, should be made to ride on the peacock, and that Kronos should be a winged god, are all easily intelligible, if we understand the natural correlation that there is between the language of words and the language of painting or of sculpture. In this way the exuberant poetry of religious mythology is also largely responsible for the origin of image-worship.

Image-worship has found its way into Vedantic Hinduism through both these channels, and the Vedanta does not condemn such worship at all. As a matter of fact the Vedanta has no word of condemnation to say in connection with any form of worship, provided that there is nothing inhuman or immoral associated with it. As we have more than once pointed out in these columns, the Vedantic religion of righteousness, renunciation and love is really intended to supersede the religion of sacrificial rituals. Instead of the physical symbolic sacrifice of animals, the Vedanta insists upon the sacrifice and the complete annihilation of the animal in man. Nevertheless, the Vedanta knows the value of symbols as helps to worship, and the value of worship as an aid to religious progress and spiritual purity and perfection. The worship of *Pratîkâs* and *Pratimâs* is recognised by the *Vedantin* as helpful to divine realisation, the *Pratîkâs* being substitutes and the *Pratimâs* being images. In the *Upanishads* we find that we are asked to worship the fire as the *Brahman*, to worship the sun as the *Brahman*, to worship the sky as the *Brahman*, and to worship the mind as the *Brahman*, and so on. The object of all such injunctions is to enable struggling man slowly to realise the infinity and the immateriality of the *Brahman* who alone can of right be the object of all human worship. Similarly image-worship also is encouraged, provided that the image is expressive of some great truth or other regarding the divine principle and its relation to man and his historic life on earth. What Swâmi Vivekânanda says regarding the worship of

*Pratîkâs* and *Pratimâs* is really of great interest in this connection ; and so we make no apology to quote a few sentences from his *Bhakti-Yoga*. " The word *Pratîkâ* means going towards, and worshipping a *Pratîkâ* is worshipping something which, as a substitute, is, in some one or more respects, like the *Brahman* more and more, but is not the *Brahman*. Along with the *Pratîkâs* mentioned in the *Srutis* there are various others to be found in the *Purânas* and the *Tantras*.....If, as it may happen in some cases, the highly philosophic ideal supreme *Brahman* is Himself dragged down by *Pratîkâ-worship* to the level of the *Pratîkâ*, and the *Pratîkâ* itself is taken to be the *A'tman* of the worshipper, or his *Antaryâmin*, the worshipper gets entirely misled, as no *Pratîkâ* can really be the *A'tman* of the worshipper. But where *Brahman* Himself is the object of worship, and the *Pratîkâ* stands only as a substitute or a suggestion thereof, that is to say, where through the *Pratîkâ* the omnipresent *Brahman* is worshipped—the *Pratîkâ* itself being idealised into the cause of all, the *Brahman*—the worship is positively beneficial ; any, it is absolutely necessary for all mankind, until they have all got beyond the primary or preparatory state of the mind in regard to worship.....This explains how, in many cases, both in the *Srutis* and the *Smritis*, a god, or a sage, or some other extraordinary being is taken up and lifted, as it were, out of its own nature and idealised into *Brahman*, and is then worshipped. Says the *Adwaitin*, ' Is not everything *Brahman* when the name and the form have been removed from it ? ' ' Is not He, the Lord, the innermost Self of every one ? ' says the *Visishtâdwaitin*.....The same ideas apply to the worship of the *Pratimas* as do to that of the *Pratîkâs* ; that is to say, if the image stands for a god or a saint, the worship is not the result of *Bhakti*, and does not lead to liberation ; but if it stands for the one God, the worship thereof will bring both *Bhakti* and *Mukti*. Of the principal religions of the world we see Vedantism, Buddhism, and certain forms of

Christianity freely using images ; only two religions, Mahomadanism and Protestantism, refuse such help..... Again in Christianity and Mahomadanism whatever exists of image-worship is made to fall under the category in which the *Pratikâ* or the *Pratimâ* is worshiped in itself, but not as a 'help to the vision' of God ; therefore it is at best only of the nature of ritualistic *Karmas*, and cannot produce either *Bhakti* or *Mukti*. In this form of image-worship the allegiance of the soul is given to other things than *I'svara*, and, therefore, such use of images or graves, of temples or tombs, is real idolatry ; yet it is in itself neither sinful nor wicked—it is a rite—a *Karma*, and worshippers must and will get the fruit thereof."

Such is, indeed, the attitude of the Vedânta towards this vexed question of image-worship ; and the images of bloody sacrifices as well as those belonging to Aryan mythology acquired a philosophic significance as soon as they came under the elevating and harmonising influence of the sweet reasonableness of the Vedânta. To explain fully the meaning of the symbology adopted by the institutions and rituals of Hinduism is not at all an easy task. Nevertheless, the thoughtful student of the antiquities and the origins of Hinduism will surely be able to make out that the gods and goddesses of that religion have all a philosophic significance, the goddesses representing the *Prakriti*, and the gods representing the supreme *Purusha*. We have shown more than once in our columns that the many gods and goddesses of Hinduism are not at all indicative of that religion being a polytheistic one. The one God has many names, and He has the one *Prakriti* that underlies the whole universe wedded to Him and depending upon Him quite as closely as the wife is wedded to, and depending upon, the husband ; and as the one God has many names, the one goddess also has many names. And then there is the influence of mythology. The *Upanishads* sanction the worship of Agni, the God of fire, and of A'ditya, the sun, as *Pratikâs* of the *Brahman* who is infinite and one only without

a second. This kind of *Pratîkâ-worship* of Agni has given rise to Saivism, in the same way in which the *Pratîkâ-worship* of the sun has given rise to Vaishnavism ; and therefore it is no wonder that myths connected with fire and heat and light became embodied in Saivism and obtained concrete expression in associated images; similarly, solar myths became embodied in Vaishnavism and obtained concrete expression in images associated with it. The ignorance of this underlying unity of principle in the midst of the great confusing multiplicity and heterogeneity of images makes the institutions of worship connected with Hinduism appear meaningless to many minds. These institutions owe their origin to the ancient school of the *Bhâgavatas* and to the school of the *Pâsupatas*, the difference between these schools being chiefly in the nature of the *Pratîkâ* taken up for worship. The *Bhâgavatas* took up the sun under the name of Vishnu and made Him representative of the Supreme Deity, while the *Pâsupatas* took up the fire under the name of Rudra to represent the same Supreme Deity ; and the teaching of the *Bhâgavatas* in regard to image-worship brings out the meaning and the purpose of image-worship as accepted by the Vedanta in a remarkably clear way. According to them there are five different ways of man apprehending God. He may be apprehended as the one Supreme Absolute Being who is unconditioned by space, time and causation, and is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Or, He may be apprehended as the foundation and the cause of the totality of the processes of universal evolution and involution. Or, He may be brought home to our hearts by means of the excellence of the greatness, wisdom, and power of particular incarnations. Or again, He may be realised as the Indwelling Controller of all that is—of all that lives and moves in this our great and wonderful universe. And lastly, He may be apprehended and worshipped through images. As realised through images, He is said to exhibit to the fullest extent the power of producing in His wor-

shippers the love of religion and purity, so that they may see in Him the home of all goodness, the refuge of the whole world, and the object of all divine and spiritual experiences of all kinds. Apprehended in these five ways, our God appears to us to have five different aspects to His nature; and these are called by the names of *Para*, *Vyúha*, *Vibhava*, *Antaryámi* and *Archá avatâras*. From the worship of images one is expected to rise to the level of realising God as the Indwelling Controller of all things in the universe; and from this level of realisation, one is expected to rise to the still higher level of seeing and worshipping the manifestation of the Divinity in the glory of the greatness and goodness of Incarnations. We are here reminded of a well-known saying of Novalis to the effect that whoever cannot see God in stocks and stones, and in plants and trees and animals, surely cannot see Him incarnated as the Divine Man. After realising the Divinity of Incarnations, it is easy to ascend to the higher height of realising God as the true and firm foundation and purpose of the whole of the phenomenal universe. And one more step of ascent is all that is needed to take us to the highest mountain-top of Divine Realisation, the superb glory of the light whereon is such as will completely kill all darkness and make the struggling aspirant feel that he has after all reached his home of unlimited freedom which is no other than the one Absolute of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Image-worship is, therefore, rightly looked upon as one of the steps in the ascent of the pilgrim to the high and holy sanctuary of Divine Realisation, and let not those who believe that they have reached the higher stages of the journey give room for surprise and sorrow by declaring that to pass through the lower stages thereof is sin and suffering. The whole length of the way that leads the pilgrim up to the feet of God is quite as holy as His footstool itself, so much so that no one part of it can be said to be holier than another; and let us have nothing other than love and

reverence for the way that leads us to God, as we surely can have nothing other than love and reverence for Him who is the end and aim of the great pilgrimage of human life.

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## UNITY IN VARIETY.

### THE VEDANTIC VIEW.

BY THE SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

Unity in variety is the fundamental principle of the Vedanta philosophy. It is likewise the ultimate conclusion of modern science. After studying the diverse phenomena of the external and internal nature, science has arrived at the conclusion that the whole universe is but the manifestation of one eternal Energy, which manifests in the objective world as matter, motion, and force, and in the subjective world as mind, thought, and will. The same Energy appears in external nature as gravitation, electricity, heat, and light, and in the internal nature as intellect, understanding, emotion, and feeling.

These various forces, according to science, are not the Reality, but *symbols* of reality. Herbert Spencer says, in his "First Principles," that matter, motion, and force are but symbols of the unknown Reality. He also says, in his "Psychology": "that unknown Reality appears subjectively and objectively." J. Arthur Thomson, one of the eminent scientists of the present day, says: "there is an entity, which is known objectively as matter and energy and subjectively as consciousness." Thus we see that the tendency of modern science is to find out the underlying unity in the variety of phenomena. Its investigations have subverted the old crude explanations given by the scriptures and theologians of different countries and have dethroned the extra-cosmic personal God who was said to be the creator and ruler of the universe. The established fact of evolution has supplanted the theory of creation out of nothing. Science tells us that the whole universe is the result of the evolution of one self-existing eternal Energy.

In India, the ancient seekers after truth arrived at similar conclusions at a very early period. If we read the Vedas we find such passages as the following: "That which exists is

One; men call it by various names." "As one fire coming into this world appears in various forms, so the one Reality appears in the innumerable forms and names of the phenomenal world." "As one clay takes the various forms of pots, basins, etc., so the one eternal Reality manifests variously in the universe." The Upanishads are filled with such passages, which show how clearly the Indian sages recognised unity in variety even a thousand years before the birth of Christ. Not only this, but when once they grasped the idea of the ultimate Unity they began to explain through that unity the creation of the universe and the relation of the visible to the invisible—at first by postulates and guesses, and then through strict reasoning and proper analysis of the nature of matter, mind, and spirit.

This reasoning and analysis gave rise to different schools of philosophy and science in India, whose object was logically to explain the phenomena of the universe—their beginning and end. One philosophic school, called *Vaiseshika*, starting from the analysis of external objects, at last arrived at the conclusion that the universe existed before creation in the form of subtle, invisible atoms. It was held that these atoms were the material cause of the universe and God the instrumental cause. This explanation gradually developed into the more scientific system of *Sankhya*, founded by Kapila, who lived about the seventh century before Christ. Kapila rejected the atomic theory insisting that, as the whole universe is bound by the law of cause and effect, those subtle atoms themselves must have had some producing cause. Accordingly, he searched beyond the atoms, and at last succeeded in discovering their cause, which he called *Prakriti* (Latin, *procreatrix*), which means "the one undifferentiated Energy." Kapila denied the existence of an extra-cosmic personal God, "because," he said, "such a God cannot be proved." Nearly twenty-five centuries ago, therefore, Kapila said what John Stuart Mill, the great logician of the present century, says in almost the same words.

Some of the interesting and suggestive conclusions which Kapila arrived at are as follows: (1) Something can never come out of nothing. (2) Nothing in the universe can be annihilated; destruction means reversion to the cause.

(3) The effect lies in the cause : in other words, the unmanifested state is the cause ; effect is the manifested state. (4) The law of nature is regular and uniform ; that which exists in the microcosm exists also in the Macrocosm. (5) The universe is the gross result of the evolution of Prakriti, or eternal Energy, and atoms are the subtle forms thereof.

It was Kapila who first explained, in India, the theory of evolution, through logic and science. In the Sankhya system, many *Purushas* (pure, intelligent souls) have been admitted. Each of the *Purushas* is by its nature absolute and unchangeable ; so in this system the ultimate Unity is not established.

At length the Sankhya philosophy developed into a still more reasonable and scientific system called *Vedanta*. This term is a Sanskrit compound consisting of *Veda* (knowledge, or wisdom) and *anta* (end). *Vedanta*, therefore, means literally the end of all wisdom. All knowledge ends in the realization of the unity of existence. According to this system, there cannot be a plurality of *Purushas*, or absolute, individual souls ; the Absolute must be one and infinite. *Prakriti* is not separate from the *Purusha* ; it is the *Maya*, divine energy, or the power of the one infinite and absolute Reality called *Brahman*. Thus *Vedanta* resolves the manifold phenomena of the universe into one all-pervading Reality.

*Vedanta* is the only system that thoroughly harmonizes with modern science. So rigorous a logician and philosopher as Schopenhauer declares his complete submission to the teachings of *Vedanta*. He says : " *Vedanta* has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death." Ralph Waldo Emerson says in his journal that the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* were his favorite studies ; and his poem on " *Brahma* " and his essay on " *The Oversoul* " show his keen appreciation and comprehension of the doctrines of *Vedanta*.

According to *Vedanta*, this universe is the objectified divine Energy, or *Maya*. It was not created by an extra-cosmic personal God, but is the objectified thought of God. The God of *Vedanta* is an all-prevading Deity. He is immanent and resident in Nature. In him we live and in him we move ; through him we exist, and without him there would be and could be

nothing ; indeed, we are already one with him, whether we be conscious of it or not.

Although in the teachings of Jesus we find this idea of unity suggested here and there, yet we do not really understand the spirit of such a saying as "I and my Father are one." If we would understand the fatherhood of God and the sonship of man—which is only a metaphorical way of expressing intrinsic unity and extrinsic variety—we must realize the true nature of the unity of existence. The Vedantic explanation of this unity in variety is not through metaphor, allegory, mythology, or poetry, but through solid reasoning based upon logic and science.

Some persons are trying to impress upon the minds of students that Vedanta is a narrow sect because it teaches that ultimate Truth is one. They might as well say that modern science is going to form a sect because it teaches the unity of existence in diversity of phenomena. The fact is, that those who believe that ultimate Truth is manifold, not a unit, cannot comprehend the idea of oneness ; consequently, they try to differentiate their ideas from Vedanta by calling it sectarian. To such persons, Vedanta says there are three principal stages of knowledge, one above another. From the recognition of the multiplicity of existence we ascend to that of duality, and from duality to unity. There cannot be anything higher than this unity of existence. All science, philosophy, and religion end in unity. Unity does not mean "many things of the same species, each having its own peculiarity separate from that of the others ;" it means *the infinite mass of indivisible Reality*.

Although Vedanta was started originally as one school of philosophy, yet it now includes every other system within its all-embracing arms. Professor Paul Deussen, the great German philosopher—a Sanskrit scholar who lived in India for several months—says, in his "Metaphysics":

"It is true that most of the ancient *Darsanas* [systems of philosophy], even in India, find only a historical interest; followers of the Sankhya system occur rarely ; Nyaya [logic] is cultivated mostly as an intellectual sport and exercise, like grammar or mathematics ; but Vedanta is, now as in the ancient times, living in the mind and heart of every thoughtful Hindu."

Vedanta cannot be a sect, because (1) it points out the underlying *unity* of all sects and creeds that exist on earth, and (2) it teaches their common basis and accepts all that is logical and scientific without killing the higher aspirations and purposes of other religions. Professor Max Müller, a most unbiased scholar and a staunch advocate of truth, says :

“For all practical purposes, the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its objective and subjective character, should be accepted as real. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind. It is not mere emptiness, as the Buddhists maintain. And thus the Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness, and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life. It leaves him a Deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religions. It has room for almost every religion ; nay, *it embraces them all.*”—*Mind*, March 1898, New York.

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## INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS OF INDIA IN ENGLAND.

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The following is a lecture delivered by Miss Margaret Noble, on Friday the 11th March, at the Calcutta Star Theatre, under the presidentship of Swâmi Vivekânanda. We gladly publish the proceedings of the meeting in which the lecture was delivered, as reported in the *Indian Mirror* of April 1st 1898:

Swâmi Vivekânanda in rising to introduce Miss Noble was loudly cheered and he said :—Ladies and Gentlemen,—When I was travelling through the Eastern parts of Asia one thing specially struck me—that is, the prevalence of Indian spiritual thought in Eastern Asiatic countries. You may imagine the surprise with which I noticed written on the walls of Chinese and Japanese temples our celebrated symbols *Om Namô*, and possibly it will please you all the more to know that they are all in Bengali characters even in the present day, standing as a monument of missionary energies and zeal displayed by our forefathers of Bengal. (Cheers).

Apart from these Asiatic countries the work of India's spiritual thoughts is so widespread and clear that even in Western countries, going deep below the surface, I found traces of the same influence still present. It has now become an historical fact that the spiritual ideas of the Indian people travelled towards both the East and the West in days gone-by. Everybody knows now how much the world owes to India's spirituality, and what a potent factor in the present and the past of humanity have been the spiritual powers of India. These have taken place in the past. I find another most remarkable phenomenon, and that is, that the most stupendous powers of civilization and progress towards humanity and social progress have been effected by that one wonderful race—I mean the Anglo-Saxon. I may go farther and tell you that had it not been for the power of the Anglo-Saxons we would not have met here to-day to discuss as we do, the influences of our Indian spiritual thoughts. And coming towards our own country, coming from the West to the East, I find the same Anglo-Saxon powers working here with all their defects and peculiarly characteristic good features, to see that at last the grand result is achieved. The British idea of expansion and progress is forcing us up, and let us remember that the civilization of the West has been drawn from the fountain of the Greeks, and that the great idea of Greek civilization is that of *expression*. In India, we *think*—but unfortunately sometimes we think so deep that there is no power left for expression. Gradually therefore it came to pass that our force of expression did not manifest itself before the world, and what is the result of that? The result is this—we worked to hide everything we had. It began first with individuals as a faculty of hiding, and it ended by becoming a national habit of hiding—there is such lack of power of expression with us that we are now considered a dead nation. Without expression, how can we live! The backbone of Western civilization is “expansion and expression.” This side of the work of the Anglo-Saxon race in India to which I draw your attention is calculated to rouse our nation once more to express itself—and is exciting it to bring out its hidden treasures before the world by using the means of communication provided by the same mighty race. The Anglo-Saxons have created a future for India, and the space

through which our ancestral ideas are now ranging is simply phenomenal. Aye, what great facilities had our forefathers when they delivered their message of truth, and salvation? Aye, how did the great Buddha preach the noble doctrine of universal brotherhood? There were even then great facilities here in our beloved India for the attainment of real happiness, and we could easily send our ideas from one end of the world to the other, and now we have reached the Anglo-Saxon race. This is the kind of interaction now going on, and we find that our message is heard, and not only heard but is being responded to (cheers). Already England has given us some of her great intellects to help us in our mission (cheers.) Every one has heard and is perhaps familiar with my friend Miss Muller who is now here on this platform. (Loud applause). This lady, born of a very respectable family and well educated, has given her whole life to us out of love for India, and has made India her home and her family. Every one of you is familiar with the name of that noble and distinguished English woman who has also given her whole life to work for the good of India and India's regeneration. I mean Mrs. Besant. (Loud Cheers). To-day, gentlemen, you meet on this platform two ladies from America who have the same mission in their heart; and I can assure you that they also are willing to give away their lives to do the least good to our poor country. (Cheers). Gentlemen, I take this public opportunity of reminding you of the name of one great countryman of ours—one who has seen England and America, one in whom I have great confidence, and whom I respect and love much, and who would have been present here but for an engagement in the up-country—a man who is really an intellectual giant, working steadily and silently for the good of our country—a man of intense spirituality—I mean Mr. Mohini Mohun Chatterji. (Cheers.) And now England has sent us another gift in Miss Margaret Noble, from whom we expect much; and without any more words of mine I introduce to you Miss Noble, whom you shall hear immediately. (Cheers.)

Miss Margaret Noble, who was received with repeated cheers on rising, said:—I am here to-night to sound a note of no doubt, no fear, no weakness, no failure, and no hesitation whatever. I am here to-night to sound a note of infinite joy and victory.

The name of the Inaugural Meeting of the Ramakrishna mission is wrongly applied to this assembly. That mission held its true inaugural meeting, I think, one day long years ago, in the shadowy gardens up there at Dakshineswar, when the master sent his disciples forth to all the world, as the greatest teachers have always done, to preach the gospel to every creature. (Cheers). And perhaps some of you may consider that the inaugural meeting of the Ramakrishna mission took place on that other day, not long ago, when his friends went to say God-speed to a wandering Sannyasin, going friendless and ill-provided, to a rich and powerful country in the West. This mission is, to the national life of India, as a great symphony of many movements. One movement is already over, and the first chord of the second is struck. In the passage that is ended there have been discords, there have been moments of great anxiety and doubt, perhaps even of fear and sadness. But all that is gone, and at this moment, I say with all sincerity, there is no doubt, no fear, and no discord ; it is all hope and strength. We know that we will win and shall not fail. (Cheers). I am not afraid of over-estimating or exaggerating the importance of this movement to Indian national life, it would be easier, I think, to make too little of it than too much. Great are these doings we are living through, and great is the Ramakrishna Mission, and I say that this Mission is bound to be a success after all. (Cheers.)

I am here to tell you something definite about the work done in England about a year and-a-half ago in spreading your spiritual thoughts among us. I am not here to give you the details that newspapers have given you. I am not here to lavish personal praise upon one who is present with us here on this platform. But I am here to try in a few words to tell you something of the significance to us in England of the message you sent to us through him. (Cheers). You in India have deep and subtle and profound views on destiny. You know that no success like that of Swâmi Vivekânanda is ever achieved unless there are souls waiting whose destiny it is to hear the message and to use it. These waiting souls in the West number thousands and tens of thousands. Some few have heard but many have not yet heard the message. I may just try for one moment to say some of the reasons why this message of India to the world is so really needed by us. For the last fifty years, in the

West of Europe, we have been religiously and spiritually the most intellectual men and women of the day. For some years, however it has been the position indeed of overwhelming and complete despair. I do not mean to tell you in India how there comes a moment in the life of any man, who has been brought up according to the method of mythology, when that man will find his life a life of complete rupture from all the associations of his childhood, when his intellect is growing and expanding day by day as he progresses towards the higher life of wisdom. That moment comes to every man. In that moment a terrible struggle begins within the soul. Doubt and negation take possession of the soul with all their peculiar consequences. What a terrible moment it is indeed! The reason why such a moment is universally visible in the lives of Western peoples is, of course in the scientific movements. You all know Darwin's *Origin of Species* came to England only to enforce scientific precision in connection with things known to philosophers centuries and centuries ago. It did more. It made the idea of evolution popular. People had carelessly accepted the inspired sayings of our Bible, 'God is Love'; here was nature 'red in tooth and claw', and how can the two things be true? So doubt and agnosticism became common property. At the same time, there was growing over the religious life of England a great wave of longing for that old personal, picturesque, and symbolical worship which was known to our forefathers and, to yours. That was a great movement which preceded the agnostic one and they have borne combined fruit in the fact that man today stands longing for catholic reality, yet unable to find his message in dogmas by reason of his passion for, and faculty of judging of, the truth. The scientific movement has done that. It has given us a power of discrimination and tremendous passion for the truth. But in the last ten years or so, a change seems to have been manifested. You all know the names of Professor Huxley and Professor Tyndall as the exponents of agnosticism. Perhaps some of you also remember an essay that appeared in some of the Reviews after the death of Professor Huxley, shewing that his latest conviction was that Humanity was unlike the rest of the animal kingdom in being *dominated* by something higher than mere physical evolution. Long before this, Herbert Spencer had abandoned

the position of complete negation and had devoted four chapters of his well-known "First Principles" to the theorem that a first cause existed, and of it we can know nothing intellectually. And so, gentlemen, you see that there has been a turn in the tide. For those who have once left the narrow channels of belief in a personal God who controls the weather, no re-ascent of the river bed is easily possible. They are out in the great ocean of truth, bathing with stony waves; yet as in orthodoxy they begin to suspect that their view is but partial after all and not complete and perfect. It may be that some great personal emotion strikes its note of Love and Sacrifice across their lives by means of words like "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee;" or that great utterance that stayed the giant soul of Martin Luther, "A strong mountain is our God". At such a juncture the gospel of your great truth, "God is One without a Second", brings infinite enlightenment to the soul of man.

We in Europe have known for a hundred years that India's name is bound up for you with the doctrine of the Real and the Apparent. But to realize all that this means, the voice of the living preachers was needed. "God is One without a Second." If this is so, then misery and sin, evil and fear, are mere illusions. The truth had only to be put clearly and vigorously before us by your great Swâmi Vivekânanda (cheers) to be grasped at once by some, and sooner or later by many. But the great aim of the Ramakrishna Mission is to preach the true relation of all the religions of the world to each other. (Cheers). And this is a doctrine which no doubt commends itself with peculiar strength to some of those who have come under the influence of your thought. It formulates and harmonizes what we already know of the doctrine of development, and let me, gentlemen, tell you that, when a principle finds experience ready, it takes far deeper root than if it had come as a mere theory to be proved. I cannot tell you in detail of the personal energy that has been shewn by people, whom I could name, in consequence of their intense realization of the world as the manifestation of God, and of themselves as identical with God; and for whom, therefore, errors, sins, and impossibilities cannot exist.

It is indeed a new light. It is a new light to the mother

in dealing with her children. Because, if sin does not exist, if sin is only ignorance, how changed, how different is our position towards wrong and towards weakness and towards fear, instead of the old position of condemnation? The old notion, the old conception of any sort, which has at the bottom hatred, goes away, and instead there is love—*all love*. But I think there is one thing that we in the West did possess. That was the great passion for service. Twenty years ago, when the doctrine of agnosticism was the burden of all teachings, you find that one reservation was purposely made. There is one thing left for us, and that is “service,” and “fellowship.” The more the minds of men were driven back from orthodoxy, the more positively and the more intensely they grasped the thought of mutual Brotherhood. Even here your Eastern wisdom brought the light of non-attachment. (Cheers.)

We had yet to realize that the love of self, the love of friends and relations, the love of country are nothing at all, if that love did not simply mean love of the whole world. That if it is a matter of the least consequence to us, whom we serve, then, our service is as nothing. But all society is reflexible society; as our friend Swâmi Vivekânanda said, there is a great power of progress and expansion in it. In India it would be a great drawback, indeed, to introduce any such theory of national exhaustion, because in India flexibility and easy expansion are impossible. You have the ingenuity of 6,000 years of conservatism. But yours is the conservatism of a people who have through that long period been able to preserve the greatest spiritual treasures for the World, and it is for this that I have come to India to serve here with our burning passion for service. In coming to serve India, one must know the innumerable difficulties, the needs, the failures, and the defects of India. I need not trouble you any more as our chairman will no doubt address you with greater knowledge and greater wisdom than I am in a position to do. Before I sit down allow me to utter those three words which are in your own language.—

“Sri Sri Ramkrishno Jayati.” (Cheers).

Roy Yatindra Nath, M. A., B. L., proposed a vote of thanks to the learned lady lecturer. After this at the kind request of

Swâmi Vivekânanda Mrs. Ole Bull spoke a few words. She said that she considered herself greatly honored in getting this privilege of saying a few words. She could not refrain from thanking the Swâmi for the opportunity offered to her to say how much the Eastern people are doing for them in America. She said that the literature of India had become a living one to them, and specially those of Swâmi Vivekânanda which have become the house-hold books of the Americans. (Loud applause).

Miss Müller addressed the meeting as follows:—My dear friends, and I hope you will allow me to call you in one sense my fellow-countrymen, for, I think all of us here upon this platform, though born in the West, have come to your country not with the feeling of a stranger or an exile, but with the feeling that we have come to our home—home not only of spiritual enlightenment and religious wisdom, but the dwelling place of our own kindred; and I feel that I am speaking for all Western people who have come to you with that aim in their heart. We feel that it must be a source of great pleasure and satisfaction to know how very precious-ly and how very dearly we value those wonderful and transcendental and spiritual truths which even now have become the common property of us all, and which were not accessible to the people outside India owing to the Books being written in Sanskrit, but the progress of time has placed before us, at all events in a literary form, the old wisdom and truths of India; and, therefore, I say that the time has now come when we of the West are made rich and happy by hearing and reading these truths of India's spirituality voiced forth in a living voice, and they are presented to us in a form which makes them not only acceptable and practicable, but they have already given new life and spirit to the dead bones of the Western nations. (Cheers). Swâmi Vivekânanda has told you little about the work that he has done in the West; he himself can measure in a very small degree how great is the reformation, how tremendous is the change and modification, which he has instituted in public and social life in the West. And he has also carried that great change of ideas, that great change of spirituality and religion right into the very homes and hearts of those people who have been fortunate

enough to hear him. (Cheers). It is not only that we have heard his voice, it is not only that we have learned those noble doctrines which till now were unknown to us, it is also that we have received them into our hearts, we have carried them into our homes, to our fathers, mothers, daughters and children who are all trying to put the great spiritual wisdom of India into practice—the wisdom that has been yours since time immemorial. (Loud applause.)

Dr. Salzar made a few remarks and said that Miss Noble had, to a certain extent, misrepresented Christ. Dr. Salzar was of opinion that the personal God was the only *Para Brahman*. He also observed that modern Christianity was not the Christianity of Christ. Christ also had taught those high principles which Hinduism in its philosophy has revealed to us. He was sorry that he should have to say something against the lecturer.

Miss Noble again rose to reply to what had been just spoken by the learned Doctor. She said that she did not mean Monotheism when she spoke of God being One without a Second ; on which Dr. Salzar said that he did not mean that there was only one God, but that he meant to say that everything was God.

#### SWA'MI VIVEKA'NANDA'S SPEECH.

The Swâmi rose amidst loud and continued cheers and said :—I have only a few words to say. We have had an idea, gentlemen, just now that we, Indians, can do something and amongst the Indians we Bengalis may laugh at this idea, but I do not ; and my mission in life is to rouse a struggle in you. Whether you are an Advaitin, whether you are a qualified Monist or Dualist, it does not matter much. But let me draw your attention to one thing which unfortunately we have always forgotten. That is, I say, “Oh man, have faith in yourself, and that is the way by which we can have faith in God. Oh man, whether you are an Advaitist or a Dualist, whether you are a believer in the system of Yoga or believer in Sankaracharya, whether you are a follower of Vyasa or Visvanitra, it does not matter much.” But the thing is that on this point Indian thought differs from that of all the rest of the world. (Cheers). Let us remember for a moment that, whereas in every other religion and in every other country the power

of the soul is entirely ignored—the soul is almost a zero, powerless, weak, and dead, we in India consider the soul to be eternal, and hold that it will remain perfect through all eternity. In any case, we have to remember the words of the *Upanishads*.

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Remember your great mission in life. We Indians, and specially those of Bengal, have been invaded by a vast amount of foreign ideas that are eating into the very vitals of our national religion. Why are we so backward now-a-days? Why are the ninety-nine per cent. of us made up of entirely foreign elements and ideas? This has to be thrown out if we want to rise in the scale of nations. If we want to rise we must also remember that we have many things to learn from the West. We must learn from the West her arts and her sciences. Ladies and gentlemen, from the West we have to learn the sciences of physical nature, while on the other hand the West has to come to us to learn and assimilate religion and spiritual knowledge. We Hindus must believe that we are the teachers of the world. Gentlemen, we have been clamouring here for getting political rights and many other such things. Very well; rights and privileges and other things can only come through friendship, and friendship can only be expected between two equals. When one of the parties is always a beggar, what friendship can there be? It is all very well to speak so, but I say that without mutual co-operation we can never make ourselves strong men. So, I must call upon you to go out to England and America, not as beggars but as teachers of religion. The law of exchange must be applied to the best part of our power. If we have to learn from them, the ways and methods of making ourselves happy in this life, why, in return, should we not give them the methods and ways that would make them happy for all eternity? Work above all for the good of humanity. Give up the so-called boast of your narrow orthodox life. Death is waiting for every one, and mark you this—the most marvellous historical fact that all the nations of the world have to sit down patiently at the feet of India to learn the eternal truths embodied in her literature. India dies not. China dies not, Japan dies not. Therefore, we must always remember the backbone of our spirituality, and to do

that we must have a guide who will show the path to us, that path about which I am talking just now. If any of you, gentlemen, do not believe it, if there be a Hindu boy amongst us who is not ready to believe that his religion has spirituality, I do not call him a Hindu. I remember in one of the villages of Cashmere, while talking to an old Mahomedan lady, I asked her in a mild tone, "what religion is yours" ? She replied in her own language. "Praise the Lord ! By the mercy of God I am a Mussulman." And then I asked a Hindu, "What is your religion?" He only replied—"I am a Hindu." (Cheers). I remember that grand word of the *Katha Upanishad*—" *Sraddhâ*" or marvellous faith. An instance of *sraddhâ* can be found in the life of *Nachiketas*. To preach the doctrine of *sraddhâ* or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat unto you that this faith is one of the potent factors of humanity, and of all religions. First, have faith in yourself, knowing that one may be considered a little bubble and another may be mountain-high, but behind both the bubble and the mountain there is the infinite ocean. Therefore, there is hope for every one. There is salvation for every one. Every one must sooner or later get rid of the bonds of *Mâyâ*. This is the first thing. Infinite hope begets infinite aspiration. If that faith comes to us it will bring back our national life to the days of *Vyasa* and *Arjuna*—the days when all our sublime doctrines of humanity were preached. To-day we are far behind-hand in spiritual insight and spiritual thoughts. India has plenty of spirituality, so much so that her spiritual greatness has made India the greatest nation of the existing races of the world; and if traditions and hopes are to be believed, these days will come back once more to us, and that depends upon you. (Cheers.) You, young men of Bengal, do not look up to the rich and great men who have money. The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world. (Cheers.) You, poor men of Bengal, come up, you can do everything, and you must do everything. (Cheers.) Many will follow your example, poor though you are. Be steady, and above all be pure and sincere to the very backbone. Have faith in your destiny. (Cheers.) You, young men of Bengal, are to work out the salvation of India. Mark that, whether you believe it or not. Do not think that it will be done to-day or to-

morning. I believe in it as I believe in my own body and my own soul. (Cheers.) Therefore, my heart goes to you—young men of Bengal. (Loud laughter). It depends upon you who have no money ; because you are poor, therefore, you will work. Because you have nothing, therefore, you will be sincere. Because you are sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just now telling you. Once more I repeat this to you. This is your mission in life, this is my mission in life. I do not care what philosophy you would take up ; only I am ready to prove here that throughout the whole of India, there runs a mutual and cordial string of eternal faith in the perfection of humanity, and I believe in it myself. And let that faith be spread over the whole land.

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## VEDANTA MISSIONARY WORK.

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### NEW YORK.

In the past four weeks of February Swâmi Abhedânanda has continued his lectures and other Vedânta work in New York. His many friends are much gratified to observe that his audiences steadily increase, not only in numbers, but what is more important, in the earnestness of their interest. On Sunday, 13th February, our lecture hall was so full that many had to stand up during the lecture.

This interest is the more encouraging, because New Yorkers are pre-eminently people much like the ancient Athenians, who “ spent all their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.” A demand for constant novelty is quite as much the characteristic of our city at the end of the 19th century as it was of Athens, when St. Paul visited it some 1800 years ago. For this reason, Vedantists in New York are greatly pleased to find that the Vedânta philosophy has secured more than a passing interest, and that, after attracting hearers by its novelty, it retains their attention and secures their respect through its own intrinsic worth. Several of the lectures that Swâmi Abhedânada has given this month were repeated by special request of those who had enjoyed them so much on their first hearing, that they were anxious to hear them again.

Some of the best lectures, as that on "Reincarnation" for instance, have even been given three times and a fourth time has been requested.

These doctrines are so new to many and so foreign to the usual trend of Western thought, that many repetitions are needed to fix the ideas in the minds of the listeners and enable them to really grasp and comprehend them. The audiences are highly intelligent and some prominent persons have occasionally attended the lectures. In addition to this, Swâmi Abhedânanda has enjoyed exceptional facilities for meeting some of our representative thinkers in private life, and his unfailing courtesy and his readiness in answering questions have commanded their friendly interest. One of the most liberal and enlightened of our New York clergymen has even gone so far as to distribute our lecture programmes among his congregation, advising them to go and listen to the Swâmi's teachings. Would that such broad-minded, truly Christian men were more numerous! The Western world badly needs such just now, men who are able to take a correct view of religion other than that particular aspect of it which they themselves follow, and who can recognise real worth, wherever they find it,

Swâmi Abhedânanda's careful studies in Western science and philosophy give him a great advantage in discussing many subjects where his hearers would have no respect for any but Western authority.

If Huxley, or Tyndal, or Spencer, or Kant agree with any particular view advanced by Vedânta, it at once assumes an importance that no amount of Oriental authority could possibly command for it. This is only natural, and but reverses the attitude Hindûs would take in a similar case. Every man is more or less bound by adherence to what *he* recognises as a standard of authority. It saves so much mental labor when we can take ready-made the views of those whose authority we have elected to follow! In the case of religion, nine-tenths of the church goers are quite content to let their clergymen do their thinking for them, and accept their conclusions without any question. The fact that Vedânta is so much in harmony

with some of the most advanced ideas of modern science, is a great help to its spread in the West.

A NEW YORK FRIEND.

We publish the following extract from the *New York Tribune*, March 6, 1898, which more than bears out the statement made in the above letter of our New York friend, in regard to the success of Swâmi Abhedânanda's work to spread the teachings of the Vedanta in America. :—

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### THE STUDY OF THE VEDAS.

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DOCTRINE OF HINDOO TEACHERS HAS MANY FOLLOWERS HERE.

*Vedanta, the end of all wisdom, and its teaching—its aim to apply religious principles to human life, rather than to inculcate new dogmas.*

The Vedas or ancient Hindoo Scriptures have many interested students in this city, and not a few of these are studying Sanskrit with the object of having Gitas and other ancient literature as yet untranslated opened up to them. After the departure of Swami Vivekananda, two years ago, a brother Swami, or teacher, was invited to come to this country by American students, and he has but recently returned to India to resume work there. The urgent demand for this teacher, Swami Saradananda, at Cambridge, Mass., and at the Monsalvat School of Comparative Religions at Greenacre, Me., left the New-York society without a teacher, and an invitation was extended to Swami Abhedananda, who had been working successfully in London for nearly a year. Arriving in New-York last August, he gave his first lectures in September, in Mott Memorial Hall, No. 64 Madison-ave., and he has since spoken there three times a week.

In reply to questions regarding his work in New-York, Swami Abhedananda said that it was not a missionary movement begun in India, nor an effort to make proselytes. Especially, it was not intended to antagonize Christianity. The object of the teachings is to propagate the principles propounded by all great religious teachers and illustrated by their

lives, for the benefit of humanity, and to help mankind in the practical application of these principles in their spiritual, intellectual and physical needs. Vedanta, that is, the end of all wisdom, is universe-wide, and cannot be sectarian, and the Swamis have no intention of forming any sect. Sects already abound the world over; but the spirit of sectarianism should not exist. The fundamental idea is to find unity in the variety of creeds and sects. The ultimate aim of all these is one eternal truth, and all creeds and sects are like so many paths which lead to the same goal.

#### THE TEACHING OF VEDANTA.

Vedanta teaches the spiritual laws which underlie the teachings of Christ. It makes provision for the dualist, the monist, atheist and agnostic, not by giving them dogmas, but by pointing out the true nature of their individuality. Vedanta teaches the truths which Christ taught and brings light to dispel the darkness of ages and make clear the real spirit of His teachings. Vedanta is not built about any particular person, and it does not depend on any particular book, but it includes the teachings of all great prophets who flourished in the past and who will flourish in the future, irrespective of their creed, caste or race, and points out the harmony that exists in the different Scriptures of the world. Going beyond toleration and the brotherhood of man. It recognizes God in every soul and in all nature, It teaches that Christ's saying "I and my father are one" can be realised by various methods, as through unselfish work, by devotion and love to the highest ideal, by discriminating between the real and the unreal, by practising concentration, etc.

Continuing, the Swami said that the teaching of Vedanta harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, and shows that this world was not created out of nothing, but is the evolution of one eternal energy. It denies the existence of an extra-cosmic personal God as eternally separate from the world and from man, and asserts that the soul of the individual is the image of God, is divine and is one with Him. It teaches that the difference between good and evil is only in degree and not in kind; that "reward" and "punishment" in this life and in the life to come are inevitable reactions of our

own actions. The idea of Vedanta is not only love to all men, but to all creatures, and non-injury and non-killing of animals is taught. Professor Max Muller has said of Vedanta: "It has room for almost any religion; nay it embraces them all."

#### THE LECTURER AND HIS WORK.

The Swami Abhedananda is young, above medium height, sturdy, with the remarkable chest development of his fellow-teachers, from lifelong practice of breathing exercises, which are a part of their religious practices. His dark-hued face is finely chiselled, and with unusual intellectual strength shows the singular dignity, gentleness and repose of his people. His hands are no less individual and expressive of high character. He wears a turban of light orange color and a simple robe of deep terra-cotta color, the gown of the Sannyasins, the most ancient order of religious teachers, which has existed in India since prehistoric times. His work is done without money consideration, and the lectures are free to all, his support depending upon voluntary gifts.

As a speaker he is self-contained and attractive, and his lectures are clear, original explanations of philosophic subjects related to practical living. His command of English is as perfect as is his pronunciation, with rarely a slip in accent, which adds to the charm of a pleasing delivery. Among subjects of recent lectures are: "Scriptures, What Do They Teach?" "Renunciation Through Love," "Immortality," "Salvation Is Freedom," "The Secret of Work." The popularity of the lectures is attested by the repetition of a number of them by request. Special features in the addresses are quotations in Sanskrit from the Vedas, with the translation, and after the lectures lucid and able answers to questions. To an occasional attendant the growth of interest is unmistakable in steadily increasing audiences of intelligent persons, many of them members of orthodox churches, with a representation of well-known persons in public life.

The Swami has lectured before clubs, including the Twentieth Century Club and the Metaphysical, of Brooklyn; the Twilight Club of New-York, and regularly in Montclair, N. J., besides having classes in Brooklyn on the Bhagavadgita, the Indian poem familiarized by Sir Edwin Arnold in "The

Song Celestial." Considerable literature of the Vedanta philosophy has been published here by the Vedanta Society, a regularly incorporated body, and pamphlets and books cover a wide range of subjects, including American lectures and translations from Indian classics and English magazines, on the subject published in India.

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In connection with the Vedantic work of Swami Abhayânanda, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, referred to in our last Chicago letter, we publish the following Press—  
notices.

SPEAKS AT ATHENÆUM BUILDING ON  
"THE SEARCH AFTER TRUTH."

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The Swami Abhayananda spoke yesterday morning at the Athenæum building, No. 26 Van Buren Street, taking for her subject: "The Search After Truth." She said in part:

Just as all physical motion is attracted by the great luminary, so all mental and spiritual motion is attracted by infinite truth. One is the generator of physical life, the other is the generator of spiritual life. One is as necessary as the other for the existence of a creature.

Jesus said to the tempter: "Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." From the atom to the planet, from the amoebæ to the highest type of man, all are looking toward the light, all are striving to grow and unfold, to occupy more physical space, to absorb more ideas, to possess more knowledge, to conquer a larger and larger sphere of the material and spiritual domain of nature. This looking up, this searching for things yet undiscovered, this indomitable longing to soar higher and higher in the mental and spiritual atmosphere, this marvellous power of endurance by which tier after tier of the steep mountain of experience is scaled, is simply the omnipotent pulsating motion of the soul within the being seeking to burst the material envelope, as the butterfly seeks to burst the skin of the caterpillar to rend the space by its aerial powers and gladden the eyes by its brilliancy.

Motion to the scientist is all that exists, the source of all phenomena; it is the Isis of the Egyptians. "I am all that is, all that has ever been, all that I shall ever be, no mortal has ever drawn aside my veil." Motion is the atman of the Hindoo philosopher, the source and the refuge of all manifestation. Motion is the spirit involving itself in its own shadow (in matter), and then ascending to evolve out of it and rejoin itself. This is the impelling force of growth, the irresistible impulse in bodies to look up to the beautiful, the lovable, the perfect, viz., Truth. Says Jehova: "All tongues shall confess me, all knees shall bend before me." Truth is the pure, soft light which towers over the gigantic mountain of life experiences. Each man has a partial view of it, sees it from his own standpoint, realizes it from his own mental and spiritual status. Each man must hew in the adamant sides of the mountain steps to place his feet and scale higher and higher in order to behold more and more of the light above. Steps hewn in the rock by a man cannot serve as footholds for another man—each has his own nature, his own needs, his own capabilities, his own range of vision—each must do his own work. No external power can help him except as a suggestion. The great teacher is within man, nowhere else. From partial truth we rise to absolute truth, and when the mountain is scaled, when the summit is reached, absolute truth is seen to be infinite truth; then the beholder, immersed in bliss at the realization of the inexpressible, finds no words to utter. Silence, silence, silence. "What is truth?" asked Pilate of Jesus. How could Jesus answer? He had reached the summit.—*Chicago Inter Ocean*, 16th January, 1898.

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#### THE VEDANTA RELIGION.

*Swami Abhayananda Preaches Before the Adwaita Society.*

The Swami Abhayananda gave the sixth sermon of a series on the "Vedanta Religion" last evening at the headquarters of the Adwaita Society, 76, East Twenty-fourth Street. Her subject was "Man's Relation to Himself." She said in part:

We read in history that when Alexander the Great was in Corinth he saw Diogenes, the cynic sitting at his door, and

approached, saying: "I am Alexander the Great." "And I am Diogenes the cynic," replied the philosopher. "In which way can I serve you?" continued the emperor. "Cease to stand between me and the sunshine," retorted the cynic. Struck with the bold and meaningful reply, Alexander exclaimed: "Were I not Alexander I would be Diogenes." Well might Alexander be struck with admiration for the man who in a few words had defined all the obligations that man owes to himself, all the relations which exist between the aspects of his complex nature.

The object of life is the unfolding of the latent powers of the individuality of man, the element which persists, through the activities, the experiences, the knowledge, the wisdom which are the outcome of the personality. This process, which is one both of growth and evolution, can fulfill its natural object only when all obstructions, all encumbrances, are removed from the path of man. The nearer we are to nature the greater our advancement in knowledge and realization.

Man must stand face to face with his God. No shadow must step between himself and his light. Salvation he must reach through his own efforts. No one can carry his cross, no one live his life, think his thoughts, eat his food, sleep his sleep, dream his dreams. The saviors of the world appear among us to show us how to work, how to attain the good, but "each one must carry his own burden." "Cease to stand between me and the sunshine," said Diogenes to Alexander the Great.

#### VEDANTIC IDEALS OF THE GODHEAD.

*Swami Abhayanda Lectures before the Advaita Society.*

The Swami Abhayanda yesterday continued his discourses on the Vedanta religion in the headquarters of the Advaita Society, No. 76, East Twenty-fourth Street. He spoke on "Man's Relation to God." He said in substance:

All we can know of God is his manifestations. The greatest of all mysteries is the descent of the spirit into matter, the incarnation of the word into flesh. "The word became flesh and lived among us, and we beheld his glory." The infinite oneness is inexpressible, unthinkable but not unrealizable. No word can describe that in which the subject and the object have merged into one—that which is beyond time, space and causation. But

through the inscrutable powers of the one, infinite, formless, limitless, a world of forms, of limitations, a variety of beings, is produced.

The thought-power becomes the word uttered and manifest, the son, the logos. The Christ is ushered on the plane of embodied consciousness. The phenomenon is but the infinite God rendered manifest, cognizable through its own ineffable power. Can we adore God and yet spurn him in the form he manifests? Can we serve God and yet use the creatures which are himself for our self-aggrandizements; use them as if they were but insignificant beings, use them as if they were simply objects of commodities, mere useful instruments for securing to ourselves comforts, power, wealth, and fame?

Of that beautiful and orderly series of forms which we call the universe, man is the highest, the most developed. The wonderful complexity, symmetry, and beauty of his physical and mental organism declare him the king of creatures. In all men—all without exception—shines the divinity; radiates the immortal, the pure. These qualities shine and radiate on different planes, with a luminosity more or less brilliant, more or less obscure, but it is present there, always.

To the extent that the divine nature is developed in ourselves, to the same extent do we perceive it in others. The more we see the Christ in others the more it is within us. We never can get out of our own thoughts, it is by our own standard that we measure others. He who says that a man is bad, wicked, and so forth, is hypnotizing himself, stilling the silent voice within him. To say of a man, "He is my enemy; he is but a stranger," is to utter blasphemy. The undeveloped, comparatively rude, unrefined man is simply in his infancy—his stature is short, but he will, he shall grow and unfold. Why look down on him? Shall we spurn and ostracize the child because he is not as tall and as strong physically as his father? No he shall grow and reach to the stature of the father. It is to teach us this, that Messiahs are born from time to time. Says Krishna: "Whenever there is a decrease of religion and an increase of irreligion, from time to time I project myself into creation." In the words of John the Baptist, "The work became flesh and lived among us and we beheld his glory."

“No man hath beheld God at any time, if we love one another God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”  
—*Inter Ocean*, Dec. 27, 1897.

NON-RESISTANCE.

The Swami Abhayananda spoke yesterday morning at Athenæum buildings upon the subject of “Non-resistance.” She said in part :

“A mason is requested to build a structure. What kind of a structure will it be? he inquires, and before the plan of architect is laid before him he cannot possibly commence his labors. The general character of the building, as well as its details, shall direct him in the method of arranging these materials.

“Such is man’s attitude in relation to life. Ere he understands what the object of life is he cannot intelligently devise means and methods by which he may attain to that object. Various schools of thought have given various ideas in relation to this. ‘The object of life,’ says the school of endemonism, ‘is to secure happiness.’ All ethics should lead to that goal. To the devout man the object of life is to worship God and gain heaven.

“‘What is the aim of life?’ asked a Brahmin of Socrates, whom he met in the streets of Athens. ‘To know man,’ replied the Greek philosopher. ‘How can you know man before you know God?’ retorted the Brahmin. To the Vedantist the object of life is to obtain knowledge first, objective knowledge through experience, then subjective knowledge, then knowledge, absolute, that which transcends objectivity and subjectivity; it is to rise from step to step where partial truth is seen until the ascent is completed, the summit is reached and all the innumerable sides of truth stand revealed.

“The Vedantic conception comprises all the others, for it is the synthesis of all thought, of all inquiry. Granting for a moment the endemonistic theory, viz. : happiness to be the aim in life. Happiness means the removal of pain, and this can be obtained only through knowledge which is the result of observation and experience. Thus the theory of ‘happiness’ as being the aim of life obviously slides into that of the Vedanta or ‘knowledge’ being the aim of life. The entire speculation, of

course, hinges on what is understood by 'happiness.' Each man translates happiness in accordance with his own conception of it, but whatever the translation may be the same idea underlies it all, viz.: the idea of peace, of rest, of freedom from disagreeable association.

"Whether we are, conscious of it or not, by seeking 'happiness' we seek to attune our vibrations to the vibrations of our environments, or rather we seek to call out surroundings whose vibrations are attuned to our own. Scientifically speaking, pain is discordant vibration and the removal of the pain depends on the removal of the discord.

"In the domain of physics pain is the clashing of a moving body with the obstruction or the resistance it meets on its way.

"A man is suddenly thrown into a fortified inclosure out of which there seems to be no means of escape. Anxious to free himself and maddened by fear, that man may in his excitement attempt to escape by means that will prove full of difficulties and dangers and in all probability he will fail in his attempt.

"It is only when the mind has become calm that he will seek the means the least fraught with difficulties and the most adapted to success. Then all chances of success available shall work towards his deliverance. Why so? Because there is an immutable law of nature by which 'bodies move along the line of least resistance.' Bodies moved by force or by instinct do so invariably; bodies moved by reason do so when they are wise, and do not do so when they are foolish. The result of the foolish act is suffering, the result of suffering is experience the result of experience is knowledge, which may or may not be transmitted into wisdom.

"Materially speaking, resistance is always accompanied with suffering. The act may be one of necessity, but the suffering cannot be avoided, and while the act of resistance may not be qualified as wrong, yet it is right-wrong. In accordance with a wise sense of self-preservation resistance must be avoided, discordant vibrations must be removed and peace established; peace that shall confer bliss on us and on all of those around us."—*Chronicle, Feb. 7, 1898.*

## “FORGIVENESS,”

The Swami Abhayananda spoke yesterday at the Adwaita society head-quarters, at 76 Twenty-fourth street. She said in part, speaking on the subject of “Forgiveness” :

“It is true, as Darwin explains in his ‘Descent of Man,’ that the first law of nature is that of self-preservation. It is also true, as H. Drummond states in his ‘Ascent of Man,’ that the second law of nature is that of the preservation of others. Thus we have two laws, or, is it were, two parallel lines of existences, one whose impulse is the assertion of the personality, *i. e.*, separateness ; the other whose impulse is the surrendering of the personality, *i. e.*, oneness.

“One impulse is pulling downward to the region of egoism, the other is pulling upward to the region of self-abnegation. These two impulses or motive powers in man correspond to the two motive powers in nature, *viz.*, repulsion and attraction, aggregation and segregation, the centripetal energy and the centrifugal, creation and destruction.

“These two different streams which flow in the bosom of man cause two different sets of feelings to pour out of him, which are the generators of his misery and his happiness, of his pains and his pleasures. When the downward impulse, egoism, separateness, is dominant, the man seeks to draw things to himself, to absorb of the world all he can ; when the upward impulse is dominant, the self-surrendering, he seeks to give of his own substance to others.

We feel the pangs of pain to the extent that we are anxious to cater to our own personality as separate from the personalities of others. Pain is discordant vibrations, *i. e.*, vibrations to which we are not attuned, vibrations to which we oppose the hostile vibrations of our own personality, the result of which is conflict. The presence of suffering is the indication that our own ego has been chaffed, that the circle of its circumference has been battered on some points.

“When a man suffers from injury inflicted upon him by others, it is simply that he and the man who injured him are on the same plane of mentality, and being such, they appreciate each other, but the set of vibrations of the one repels those of the other. The result of the conflict is anger in both

the injured and the injuring one, and on the side of the victim is added the destructive passion of dislike, perhaps hatred, or, even revenge. Arrived at this junction, sufferings deep and lasting become the lot of the hating, revengeful one, sufferings which never can end or slacken until hatred is wiped out of his breast.

“The responsibility of the conflict and its disastrous results, however, lies mainly at the door of the injured man, for by permitting himself to recognize the evil deeds of the man who injured him, he has descended to the level of that man. Had he stood above the man and his evil propensities, he had not recognized the deeds, and they had failed to reach to his heart. The pure, strong man forgives injuries, because the strong man is always generous; the wise man forgives injury because he knows that evil deeds are the result of ignorance, that as all motion is in a circle, the evil deeds shall return to the evil doer.

“Once, while Buddha was sitting in his cave, a man who was adverse to his teachings came to the door and commenced abusing him bitterly. Buddha listened silently, pitying his folly. The man having finished Buddha said to him :

“‘Son, if a man declines to accept a present made to him, to whom does the present belong?’

“‘In that case,’ answered the man, ‘it would belong to the man who offered it.’

“‘Very well,’ continued Buddha, ‘I decline to accept your abuse and I request you to keep it yourself.’

“Jesus of Nazereth, the sublime teacher of love, prayed on the cross, saying :

“‘Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.’”

—*Chronicle, Jan. 31st, 1898.*