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दा० पु०/ N. L. 38.

MGIPC-S4-S9 LNL/64-1-11-65-100,000.

THE TEACHING
OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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BY THE

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MADRAS:
PRINTED AT THE M. E. PUBLISHING HOUSE, MOUNT ROAD.
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1898.

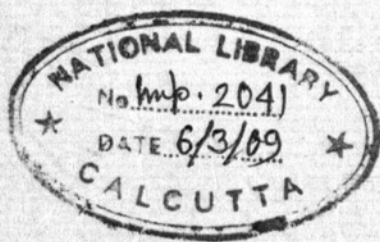
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N.B.—The following contractions are used:— B. for 'Brahmavadin,' R. for 'Raja Yoga,' C. to A. for 'From Colombo to Almora.'

PREFACE.

THE substance of the following chapters has already appeared in the columns of the "Christian Patriot." This little book is the outcome of a study of the writings of Swami Vivekananda. The reader will discover that the earlier chapters are expository of the Swami's teaching, the middle are mainly critical, while towards the end of the book allusions to the Swami are few and far between. I must frankly confess that, in the course of writing the original articles, the feeling deepened, that most of what the Swami has said in public is undeserving of criticism. It would be foolish to take him too seriously. It is as futile to attempt to piece together a consistent whole out of his utterances as to construct a rational theory of human society from the popular harangues of a street orator. There is a total absence of those traits which we look for in a scholar and philosopher. Humility and readiness to admit ignorance or error, moderation and accuracy in the use of language, regard for consistency—all that is meant by intellectual conscience—these qualities will be found wanting in him. Of Western Science and Philosophy he has acquired the merest smattering, a knowledge limited to the ideas, that are now afloat in the air. His lectures abound in scraps from the Science of Comparative Religion without catching the scientific spirit of that study. We ought to be prepared to receive and honour a religious teacher, who is ignorant of all these things. But, when a man presumes to pass judgment in any and every department of human enquiry, when he assumes the magnificent rôle of an arbitrator between Eastern and Western thought, these defects are intolerable. The absence of moral restraint and discipline make Swami Vivekananda unsafe even as an exponent of purely Hindu thought. The English reader, who is familiar with the works of European *Savants* on the Vedanta, will find little of value in the Swami's setting forth of that system. These chapters would never have been republished, if my sole aim had been to refute the teaching of Swami Vivekananda. That will perish from its own lack of honest worth and calls for no rejoinder. I trust, however, there are some

elements of a more permanent interest in this book. There is here an endeavour to faithfully present some aspects of Hindu and Christian thought. The contrasts have been emphasized rather than the resemblances. But is it not necessary to-day in the face of a slovenly eclecticism to insist upon vital distinctions being observed? The oneness of the Vedanta and Christianity is glibly asserted; it has never yet been demonstrated. It seems to me, that the antagonism is never so marked as when we come to the ultimate principles of either religion. There is a root opposition between the two; and the controversy turns around that word—*personality*. The difference of view upon this one question causes the two systems to diverge from each other through their whole course. It affects the doctrines of the nature and existence of God, of the nature of man, of the state after death, and the entire treatment of morality. While, however, the controversial element prevails, I hope that there is no lack of charity in these pages. It is my happiness to have to do with not a few educated Hindus. I can only pray that they, along with my Christian brethren, will find here something, which shall assist us in coming nearer to the truth.


BANGALORE,)
13th February 1898. }

E. W. THOMPSON.

THE TEACHING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

I.—The Last Truth.

It is always a great advantage when one who assumes the part of a religious leader submits his doctrines to the public mind in a form more permanent than the spoken word, for otherwise we are at the mercy of popular report, which cannot be trusted to form a safe and discriminating estimate where abstruse questions of religion or philosophy are concerned. When doctrines are only proclaimed orally, the preacher of them may suffer injustice in the general verdict. Either he will be unduly extolled for merits which neither belong to him nor his system, or he may undeservedly receive condemnation for omissions and errors of which he is innocent. Few have suffered more in this way than Swami Vivekananda. It is certain that he has enjoyed excessive adulation in the mouths of the indiscriminating and it is possible that among the sober-minded credit has not been given him for those elements of truth and courage, which may be found in his utterances. Some months have now elapsed, since the Swami made his

 In these Chapters C. to A. denotes "From Colombo to Almora," B. "Brahmayadin," R. "Raja Yoga."

triumphal progress through India, and the calmer moments, which have supervened, afford a suitable opportunity for gathering up what is to be learnt about the man and his message and forming a dispassionate judgment upon the whole. We hope in this series of articles to review the teaching of Swami Vivekananda, so far as it can be known from his published works, and though we have to admit that these are neither very extensive nor systematic, we consider that sufficient opportunity has been given to the Swami to declare himself and that longer delay will not witness any material additions to a system, whose essential features have already been outlined. In 1896 a volume appeared on the Raja Yoga, containing a free translation of the Sutras usually attributed to Patanjali and an introductory course of eight lectures, which were delivered in New York. In the "Brahmavadin" will be found a number of articles, which almost invariably are reproductions of lectures given either in England or America. Some of these, dealing with Bhakti Yoga, have been published as a separate volume, while to a few others the honour of re-issue as pamphlets has been granted. Finally within the last few weeks the speeches, delivered by the Swami in response to the addresses of welcome which were given him in various cities of India and Ceylon, have been collected and published under the title of "From Colombo to Almora."

We have therefore on the one hand a large portion of the argument which is to convert the Western-world to the Vedanta,—and since the Swami permits the publication of these English and American lectures we presume that he deems them of more than ephemeral value,—and on the other the Swami's characteristic message to his own people, reiterated again and again in a series of public ad-

dressess. Such are our materials and we propose by an examination of them to arrive at an understanding of what the Swami has to teach men and to remove ourselves from the uncertainties of popular outcry.

The first question to ask is, "What does the Swami hold to be the highest conception of God and Man?" He comes as a teacher of religion, and in religion the nature of God and Man and the relation of these to each other is the great enquiry. Swami Vivekananda calls himself a Vedantin and his mission he believes to be the spread of the Vedanta not alone in India but also in the West, where its philosophy is sorely needed as a complement to and corrective of materialistic thought. The Vedanta is the system—perhaps we should say systems—which comes to ripeness in the Upanishads. These have been and are to-day, says the Swami, the final standard of appeal among all Hindu sects and the test of orthodoxy; but they must serve a wider function for they possess value and authority for the whole human race. Listen to these words:

"This Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upanishads, I would make bold to state has been the first as well as the final thought, that on the spiritual plane has been vouchsafed to man." (C to A, 241.)

While then the Upanishads occupy this supreme place among the sacred books of the world, it must not be supposed that they are homogeneous. Within them will be found a great diversity of standpoint and view. The Swami believes in an evolution of theological thought through the first low stages of demonism and tribal gods to Iswara, the noblest ideal of the Personal God, until we come to that which is impersonal and indescribable in human speech. Just as the earth contains within itself the record of the past in the successive strata that compose its surface, so these Upanishads with the other Vedas comprise

the numerous conceptions of God and the world culminating in one highest. Thus the Swami writes of the authors of the Vedanta :

"Instead of denouncing these old ideas as unfit for modern times, they began to seek out the reality that was in them and the result was the Vedanta philosophy, and out of the old deities and out of the monotheistic God, ruler of the universe, they found higher and higher ideas in what is called the Impersonal Absolute, in finding Oneness throughout the universe." (B. vol. ii, 215.)

In particular the tenets of both Dwaita and Adwaita sectarians are in the Upanishads. Formerly these disputants would not allow that anything save their own peculiar opinions were there and it was sought to explain away obnoxious texts by all manner of exegetical devices, but the Swami will have no "text-torturing." Both parties are represented—the one as a lower, yet necessary phase of thought, and the other as final and ultimate truth.

"It is foolish to attempt to prove that the whole of the Vedas are dualistic. It is equally foolish to attempt to prove that the whole of the Vedas are non-dualistic. They are dualistic and non-dualistic both. We understand it better to-day in the light of newer ideas. These are but several conceptions leading to the final conclusion and these conceptions are necessary for the evolution of the human mind and therefore the Vedas preach them. In mercy to the human race the Vedas show the various steps to the higher goal." (C. to A., 199.)

"I do not know whether I shall be able to express it or not, but this is my attempt, my mission in life, to show that Vedantic schools are not contradictory, that they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and one as it were is the stepping-stone to the other until the goal, the Adwaita, the *Tat twam asi* is reached." (C. to A., 243.)

The whole of truth is wrapped up in that one saying *Tat twam asi*—That art thou. It is the Vedanta philosophy in a nut-shell, and the rest is mere explication. Men in their usual modes of thinking share in a conviction of

the existence of themselves and God as separate individuals and of the world as external and different from either, but this common sense of mankind is a delusion and a snare. We must be taught better.

"There is no *I* nor *you*; it is all one. It is either all *I* or all *you*. This idea of duality, of two, is entirely false and the whole universe is the result of this false knowledge." (B. vol. i, 310.)

"The theory of the Vedanta, therefore, comes to this that you and I and everything in the universe are that absolute, not parts, but the whole. You are the whole of that absolute and all of them, because the idea of part cannot come into it." (B. vol. ii, 225.)

The motto prefixed to the Raja Yoga commences with the words "The soul within is potentially divine, the goal is to manifest the deity within." But if we are God and all is God and the problem of religion is how man shall get back to this primal knowledge, what shall we say of the present conditions of our life which compel us to see difference no less than unity? "The one difficulty has been summed up in the word *Avidya*," says Swami Vivekananda. The soul is driven by a force, otherwise termed *Maya*, to imagine what is false. All the course of consciousness is warped by this mysterious and malign influence from the path of truth and reality, so that we postulate a difference, where all is verily unity. Poor deluded mortals predicate individual existence of themselves and God and externality of this world. To men under the power of this delusion, enveloped in *Maya*, comes the Vedanta.

"There is a very bold theory of the Vedanta and the theory is that this universe as we know and think of it does not exist, that the unchangeable has not changed, and that the whole of this universe is mere appearance and not reality, that this idea of parts and little beings and differentiations is only apparent, that God has not changed at all and has not become the universe at all." (B. vol. ii, 225.)

This "bold theory" is re-stated in a modified form :

"What is meant by God not having changed and this universe being only apparent is really this, not that this universe has no existence, but that this existence is only a mental creation, it is not a true existence." (*Idem.*)

And when the knowledge of the soul's identity with God and the falsity and non-existence of all else breaks upon the soul, it is free. Salvation has been reached.

"He, who sees in this world of manifoldness that One running through it all; in this world of death he who finds that one infinite life, and in this world of insentience and ignorance he who finds that one light and knowledge, unto him belongs eternal peace. Unto none else, unto none else." (B. vol. ii. 215.)

This is the last truth, says the Swami, and beyond it there is nothing higher.

II.—The Perfect Vision.

A well-known English exponent of Hegel's philosophy has written of him, that it was his endeavour to demonstrate the intelligibility of the whole universe and to state it in terms of Reason as against Jacobi, who believed that ultimate truths are to be known only in a kind of ecstatic vision and by the power of faith. From the preceding article we have learnt that Swami Vivekananda accepts the Vedanta theory of the world as truth ; and according to this theory the souls of men are involved in a mist of error and ignorance whereby they are made to lose sight of their identity with each other and with the Supreme Spirit, that remains unchangeable in a timeless existence. Salvation or deliverance comes with the knowledge of ourselves as we really are, identical with that Brahman which is all in all. The question now arises as to the nature of that knowledge. Is it something which transcends and is un-

related to the ordinary modes of cognising, or does it move within the circle of human reason, and may we submit it to the tests of ordered or scientific thought? In other words, are we to rank the Vedantist with Jacobi or with Hegel,—with one who teaches that as the forms of human knowledge are inapplicable to highest Being, so human language is totally incapacitated from formulating in words a truth seen and known only when the mind has transcended its limits or with him, who would make Reason the lawful judge of all systems of knowledge whatsoever, in the belief that it contains within itself the power of comprehending the universe? There can be little doubt as to the position which the Vedantist legitimately occupies. He sides with the former against the latter. The highest category known to modern philosophy is the category of self-consciousness, but in the Raja Yoga Swami Vivekananda tells us that there are three planes, the unconscious, the conscious, and the super-conscious, and that the first and third are alike in “being unaccompanied by the feeling of egoism.” How then do we know, that the so-called “super-conscious” condition is not really inferior to that middle state, in which the “I” is present? Because, says the Swami, he who passes into the sub-conscious state of sleep returns thence no wiser than he was before, but the man that has attained to *Samadhi*, though ’erstwhile he was but a fool becomes a sage. In that high state beyond egoism the sum-total of knowledge is his. The perfect knowledge therefore comes when the last category of reason—self—has been transcended.

“It is beyond this circle of reason that lies all that humanity holds most dear. All these questions whether there is an immortal, whether there is a God, whether there is a supreme intelligence guiding this universe are beyond the field of reason.”

The same book tells us that while Kant "proved beyond all doubt that we cannot penetrate this tremendous dead wall called Reason," Indian thought takes its stand upon the negation and succeeds in finding something beyond.

"Reason leaves us at a point quite indecisive; we may reason all our lives (and find) we are quite incompetent to prove or disprove the facts of religion. Man has in him the faculty or power of transcending his intellect and that power is in every being, every creature." (R. chap. 1. Sutra 49.)

We must therefore clearly understand that religion is not philosophy, for philosophy is within Reason, but religion is truth transcendently apprehended. There may be a realisation of it, but no formulating of it by philosophy. Thus the Swami speaking of the relation between realisation and philosophy says:

"Is it possible to realise this? So far it is doctrine philosophy, but is it possible to realise it? . . . There is, you must remember, the difference of pole to pole between realisation and talking. Any fool can talk. Even parrots can talk. Talking is one thing and realising is another. Philosophies and doctrines and arguments and books and theories and churches and sects and all these things may be good in their own way, but when that realisation comes, these things drop away . . . Realisation is the soul, the very essence of religion." (B. vol. i, 312, 313.)

Again the same distinction is enforced in another place.

"Thus here is a tremendous statement made by all religions, that the human mind at certain moments transcends not only the limitations of the senses but also the power of ordinary reasoning. It then comes face to face with facts which otherwise it could never have reasoned out. These facts of man's super-conscious experience are the basis of all the religions of the world." (B. vol. ii. 106.)

The Vedas are not themselves the perfect exposition of truth. We must "go beyond them," for even in their

highest aspect as philosophy they fall within the province of Reason.

"The peculiarity of the Vedas is that they are the only scriptures which again and again declare to you that you must go beyond them. The Vedas say that they were given out for the child mind, and when you have grown, you must go beyond them." (B. vol. ii. 86.)

Now this position is inevitable, if once the Vedanta doctrine of *Maya* be conceded, for in agreement with that we must hold that all the activities of the human mind from the crudest sensation to the most general and abstract concept are exercised within *Maya*—nay, are the very product of *Maya*. This whole universe, as Reason knows it, is a delusion and void of reality.

"We are born in this *Maya*, we live in it, we think in it, we dream in it. We are philosophers in it, we are spiritual men in it, nay, we are devils in this *Maya*, and we are gods in this *Maya*. Stretch your ideas as far as you can, make them higher and higher, call it infinite or by any other name you please, even that idea is within *Maya*. It cannot be otherwise and the whole of human knowledge is generalisation of this *Maya*, trying to know it as it really is. This is the work of *Nama Rupa*—name and form. Everything that has form, everything that calls up an idea in your mind is within *Maya*, for as the German philosophers say, everything that is bound by the laws of time, space and causation is within *Maya*." (B. vol. ii. 213.)

If the whole process of human thought from its crude beginnings in sense to the generalisations of philosophy are thus contained within a realm of unreality which is unrelated to the real, it is impossible that thought under the conditions of human life should ever mirror the True. There is a fatal divorce between human knowledge and the Existent—a gulf that can never be passed. The knowledge which is given in ecstatic vision can no more be translated into thought and language than the blind man can conceive the nature of light from the analogy of touch. There re-

mains nothing but to state the fact of that transcendental knowledge, but as to its mode of cognition or its contents the severest silence must be maintained. Agnosticism—by which we mean not the denial of the existence of that knowledge but of any true conception of it by men moving on the plane of reason—is the only proper attitude. Every effort of the thought to conceive it is a vain imagination and in opening our mouths to name it the breath of speech has already dimmed its bright effulgence. The predication of any quality in that Impersonal One must be withdrawn in the very act of attribution. Of it we can only say “not this—not that.”

“No adjective can illustrate where there is no qualification and the Adwaitist would not give him any qualities except the three, *Satchitananda*,—existence, knowledge and bliss. This is what Sankara did. But in the Upanishads themselves you find they penetrate even further and say nothing can be said except *Neti, Neti*—*Not this, Not this*.” (C. to A., 256.)

What we have to set before us as the ideal, is Rishihood—the state in which we have risen above the trammels of thought, where neither self nor time nor space nor causality are, and apprehend the truth incomprehensible to us now in a mode of which we can only say figuratively, it is vision, seeing face to face.

“The Rishi is a man who sees religion, to whom religion is not merely book-learning, not argumentation nor speculation nor much talking but actual realisation, coming face to face with truths which transcend the senses; as he is called in the Upanishads, not as ordinary man but *Mantra Drashta* and this is Rishihood. (C. to A., 87.)

“The proof therefore of the Vedas is just the same as the proof of this table before me, *pratyaksham*, direct perception. This I see with the senses, and the truths of spirituality, we also see in a super-conscious state of the human soul . . . Aye, my friends, until each one has become a Rishi and come face to face with spiritual facts,

religious life has not begun for you Becoming the Rishi, the *Mantra Drashta*, that is freedom, that is Salvation." (C. to A., 169—171.)

We close this article with two quotations from a German scholar, whose sympathetic understanding of the Vedanta has received the special commendation of the Swami and whose summary exposition of the doctrine is thought worthy to be translated and published in the "*Brahmavadin*."

"The higher Brahman is in its nature without attributes (*nirguna*), without form (*nirakara*) without difference (*nirvishesha*), and without limitations (*nirupadhika*). It is different from what we know and from what we do not know. 'Words and thoughts turn round it without finding it,' and the wise Bahva met the question concerning its essence by silence."

So much has Dr. Deussen said of the object of the higher knowledge and of the conditions, upon which the knowledge itself depends, he writes :—

"It cannot be searched for or treated like an object; the knowledge of it cannot be arbitrarily obtained, not even by searching the scriptures, which serve only to clear away the mysteries surrounding the knowledge. Whether the *atman* shall be recognised depends as the knowledge of every object on whether it shows itself to us, and consequently by itself. In the lower wisdom therefore where the *atman* is regarded as a personal God, knowledge is a grace of God; in the higher wisdom as *atman* cannot be treated as object, all further enquiry of the cause of knowledge is futile."

Thus in regard both to the content of the transcendental knowledge and the mode of its attainment, none can speak; for even the Rishi, if he return to conscious life from that far realm, has seen that which lips cannot utter. The philosopher is he who is sufficiently elevated above the common herd to recognise his impotence and his greatest merit is that he may say with the old Greek sage of famous

irony "I know that I know nothing and others do not even know this." Philosophy is not religion but negative preparation for religion. At best it is no more than a means to an end, and that end the unthinkable perfect vision.

III.—The Perfect Agnosticism.

In the two paragraphs of Dr. Deussen, which we have quoted, there is a clear and powerful statement of the Agnosticism in which the Vedanta consistently developed ends. With it religion becomes a "mystery" in the technical sense, not only elevated above the consciousness of every-day life, but wholly unrelated to it. There can be no evasion of this result, when once the doctrine of *Maya* is conceded, for according to that doctrine the whole mental constitution of man—his intellect, his will and his emotions—are themselves the product of unreality and conspire against the soul to blind it to its identity with Brahman, or in the language of Swami Vivekananda they paint upon that Changeless One a panorama of illusory appearances. It follows therefore that until there is a complete dissolution of what is called human nature with its varied faculties, the mode of being which is in Brahman cannot be realised. How is it possible that a consciousness, which is compelled to refer every affection to the "I," should understand the nature of that intelligence in which the self knows itself selflessly or, to use the Vedantic imagery, shines in its own light? How may a Reason, that moves under the limitations of the formal ideas of space and time conceive the characters of timeless and non-spatial knowing? Before the light within may stream forth and join the universal light this pitcher of the mind

must be broken and cast aside. "As the light of a lamp, unable to illuminate the sun's light, is overpowered by it, so, too, the Intelligence which is there reflected in that modification of the internal organ being incapable of illuminating the Supreme Brahma, non-different from individuated self, is overpowered by it; and its associate, the modification of the internal organ (shaped) on the Indivisible, having been destroyed, it becomes the Supreme Brahma, non-different from individuated self; just as, on the removal of a mirror the face reflected in it lapses into the face itself." (Vedantasara, Jacob's Trans., p. 96.)

While such a theory of the relation between the internal organ and Brahman, or human knowledge and Being, obtains, no ground of reconciliation can be found between them. Man is compelled to think in accordance with his mental constitution, and all his thought is necessarily anthropomorphic, whether in discoursing of nature or of God. If then this constitution of his is essentially false, he can never know what it is to be God until he has ceased to be man. The doctrine of *Maya* lays the axe at the root of all human thought and deprives it at once of all validity and relation to the Real or the True. It might have been expected that the authors of the Vedanta would have carried out their system to its logical conclusion in a thorough-going scepticism, which does not know even that it does not know and doubts that it doubts. But it never happens that a philosopher, however great or wise, anticipates to the full all the consequences which can be legitimately deduced from his teaching. This is a task which devolves upon a later generation, less under the domination of the limited number of ideas, which ruled the course of the philosopher's thought. Those early Aryan thinkers lived in a creative age; ours is the critical, and without refusing to

admire them for the boldness and insight of their speculations, it would be idle to deny that the course of time has brought to the modern philosopher a more accurate and refined diction than the crude terminology of the Upanishads, and a more rigid and powerful dialectic. Further mankind has never been brought to acquiesce for any length of time in a system of Agnosticism or Scepticism. We are impelled by an invincible instinct to believe that those ideas which we can frame of things divine are not wholly at fault and that there is a correspondence of truth between our knowledge and the Existent. Thus it is not surprising that we find the Vedantist endeavouring to illustrate the supernatural by means of the natural, the super-sensible by things of sense, even though this is counter to the sceptic tendency of his thought.

Let us look at a few of the classical illustrations by which it is hoped to make the conception of the Absolute One intelligible to the sensuous imagination. "All is truly one," says the Vedantist, "and it is only by the imposition of *Nama Rupa*—Name and Form—upon the Real that these unreal differences become apparent. Take the wave of the sea. It has a name and a form. If these be removed it sinks into the sea and is one with it, the Infinite." The common-sense man will reply, "There was first a difference and then a name. Names do not create differences but mark created differences. The difference between the wave and the sea is real, and could not have arisen except there had been something, not the sea, acting on the sea. And the wind is as real an entity as the sea, having existence of the same order. And even when the wind ceases and the wave sinks to rest, I cannot imagine the sea as one; for I am compelled to think of it as extended and therefore having parts. That which made the wave I still re-

gard as a part existing separately in the whole, though it is no longer visible. And let the particles which compose it be scattered far and wide, as they surely will be, by no effort of the imagination can I identify the aggregate of them with that larger aggregate in which they are merged." Then there are our familiar friends the clay and the pot. "What is that lump of clay, knowing which I shall know the universe?" asks the student of the Vedanta. "As by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only a name, arising from speech, but the truth being that all is clay—thus, my dear, is that instruction." (Chhandogya Upanishad.) Our thought will take the same course towards this example also. Language marks differences, but it does not create them. There is a real difference between the pot and the clay; for the pot is the clay PLUS the potter. And except there had been a second thing not clay, which acted upon clay, there had never been a pot. The clay and the potter are two, not one. So lastly there is that other Vedic image, which Swami Vivekananda especially commends. The sun, shining upon a million rain-drops, produces a million images of itself; yet the sun is not many, but one. The conclusion is true enough though trite; for common-sense admits that a thing is itself and not another. But it adds, the rain-drops are as real as the sun, for they have existence of the same order, and neither could the appearance of manifoldness in the sun have arisen except there had been something not the sun, which was acted upon by the sun.

It becomes apparent therefore that these illustrations exemplify the very difficulty they are intended to remove and that the Vedantic conception of the *one* cannot be presented in sense. Just as it remains aloof from the universal flux, so the picture of it is outside the imagination.

We have only to reflect upon the nature of human thought, to conclude that no place can be found for it anywhere in mind. Our thought is essentially a unity in difference. The unity cannot be separated from the difference, nor the difference from the unity. Neither exists apart from the other. Subject, Object, Relation—these three are the elements into which every act of the understanding may be analyzed. A Relation between Subject and Object is the mould into which every thought must be cast. And when the Vedantin wishes to express the last truth of his philosophy—he, who would deny difference, is compelled by a strange irony to furnish a demonstration of its inevitable existence. "*Tat twam asi.*" Here we have Subject, Object and Relation in a sentence, which is declared to be the highest pronouncement of philosophy on the universe. The Vedantin seeks by grammatical and rhetorical devices to reduce the "*Tat*" and the "*Twam*" to one and the same thing; if he could succeed, the saying would cease to be a thought. In the equation $x = x$, there is a difference no less than an identity. The equation means " x on THIS side" is the same as " x on THAT side" or " x which I think of now" is the same as " x which I thought of THEN." Destroy the differentiating attributes of x and you have destroyed the equation. If, as philosophers say, there is no absolute difference—that is, no entire separation between objects, for they must at least have a common relation in thought—so there is no absolute identity, for no identity can be so complete that there is not in it some differentiation of thought. To know absolute identity or Vedantic unity we must cease to think. If the Vedantist solution of the world-problem be correct, we can neither know that Absolute One while compassed with mind, nor seek after it. Agnosticism, as prohibitive of action in relation to Brahma as it

is of thought, must be ours. "The Vedanta is truest to itself in such words as these of the Absolute, "from whom words turn back together with the mind, not reaching him." "The eye goes not thither, nor speech, nor mind." "Not this, not this."

IV.—Reason—the Arbiter. Brahman as General Concept.

OUR argument has conducted inevitably to the conclusion that, so long as the soul or Intelligence within is under the constraint of Reason or the mental constitution of man, it is impossible for us to arrive at the realisation of Brahman, and that it would be as absurd to attempt to submit the truth, seen in perfect vision, when Reason has been cast off and left behind, to the bar and judgment of that same Reason as for the blind man to presume to adjudicate upon questions of colour. The Vedantin must negative all the efforts of Reason to form a conception of what Brahman and the soul are, and, unless the blest vision has broken upon his spiritual sight, there is nothing for him but an unrelieved agnosticism. We have already quoted passages in which Swami Vivekananda recognises that this is the terminus to which his doctrine leads, and we need only to add here another word or two in further confirmation. He identifies the universal Forms of Thought with *Maya*.

"It was Sankara," he remarks, "who first found out the idea of the identity of time, space, and causation with *Maya*." (C. to A., 262.)

It is superfluous to say that the category of *self*, which Western philosophers place even higher than those of time, space and causality, and regard as more essential to knowing, is relegated by the Swami to the same region of *Maya*.

The notion of the *Ego* will dissolve in the high light of realisation. With a mental constitution, thus radically fallacious, there can be no hope of reaching the knowledge of the Existent save by the annihilation of our whole intellectual apparatus. There are many who trust, that the development of the faculties of Reason in the course of the ages will remove the difficulties that now embarrass thought, and that, what is for the present believed in as a mystery by the religious, will ultimately be set in the light of clear understanding. But Swami Vivekananda severs himself from those who have this confidence. No progress of mankind in the future, no refinement of Reason to the highest imaginable pitch of discernment can ever yield the supreme knowledge which is the soul's quest.

"No amount of knowledge of the external world would answer the problem. We find here we were just beginning to know a little; wait for a few thousand years and we shall get the solution. 'No,' says the Vedantist, for he has proved beyond all doubt that the mind is limited, we cannot go beyond certain limits; we cannot go beyond time, space and the law of causation. As no man can jump out of his own self, so no man can go beyond the limits which have been put upon us by the laws of time and space. Every attempt to solve the law of causation, time and space would be futile, because the very attempt would have to be made by taking for granted the existence of the three." (B. vol. ii. 240.)

Until a kind fate removes this skin of egoism, time, space and causation, in which we are most unfortunately enveloped, we must despair of attaining that impersonal and outside view of ourselves which the Vedanta enjoins, and no idea of Brahman, formed in the human mind, can be a copy of the truth, for the very mould in which it must be cast is false.

It has already been observed that men cannot rest in an agnosticism of this kind and that they instinctively attrib-

ute some measure of validity to their modes of thought. We have noticed the latent inconsistency in the authors of the Vedanta, when they endeavour to express in sense-image and logical proposition the nature of the absolute; for every such attempt must stand self-condemned and prove futile from the outset, unless Imagination and Reason are related to the Real. It is reserved for Swami Vivekananda to develope this inconsistency to an almost incredible degree. He stands forth to mediate between the physical sciences of the West and the Theosophy of the East. The struggle between Religion and Science has engaged his sympathy and he proposes to reconcile the two antagonists.

"Are we to justify ourselves by the discoveries of Reason through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same investigations, which we apply to sciences outside and knowledge outside to be applied to the Science of Religion? In my opinion this must be so The essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of all this investigation, not only will they come out with greater strength, but they will be made scientific, as scientific at least as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry." (B. vol. ii. 272, 273.)

But religion is not only at war with science; it is manifold and there is internal strife betwixt religion and religion, and the Swami would make Reason the court of appeal.

"Now the question arises, if this light of reason is able to judge between inspiration and inspiration, has it the power of understanding anything whatsoever of religion? If it has not, nothing can determine the hopeless fight of books and prophets, which means that all religions are mere lies, hopelessly contradictory, without any constant idea of ethics. *The proof of religion depends on the truth of the constitution of man.*"

That this is in flagrant contradiction with all that has preceded will be apparent to the reader. This last statement of the Swami, if true, overthrows the whole structure of the Vedanta from base to summit. But he does not stop at this

point, he will exhibit the doctrine of Brahma in such a manner as to satisfy the scientific understanding. Two principles, which operate powerfully in Reason, are those of generalisation and causality, the one impelling the mind beyond particulars to the general concept and the other, urging it to discover the necessary and invariable antecedents of any effect. "Can there be a religion satisfying these two principles? I think there can be." The Brahman of the Vedanta fulfils the former condition because it "is the last generalisation to which we can come." The mind pursues its way through particular examples such as cat, man, dog to the general concept of animal, which again is subsumed under the wider concept of animate being, and all is finally taken up under the idea of the Existent. This is the "very ultimate generalisation which the human mind can come to." Since existence is one of its attributes, Brahman stands as the last term in the series of general concepts and under it all ideas whatsoever are subsumed. But at this point we feel compelled to remind the Swami that he has said elsewhere "the whole of human knowledge is generalisation of this *Maya*," and you may generalise *Maya* to the remotest point of generality, to the universal in *Maya*, and be as far from Brahman as ever. The Swami tells us that the Hindu intellect has a distaste for particulars and flies at once to the universal. It is a serious charge to make, for, in so far as it is true, the Hindu intellect must be condemned as unscientific and unsound. There can be no accurate generalisation without first that careful collection and treatment of particulars which is known as induction. A man does not learn to swim without going into the water, nor to frame general concepts without a multitude of particular perceptions. The general concept does not exist

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apart from the particulars, and if Brahman is to be known as the highest possible generalisation, then it must be viewed in relation to an infinitude of details. Destroy the manifold of them and you destroy also the concept under which they are included. One has no meaning or existence apart from the other. This position, however, is the last which the Vedantist would wish to occupy. He must say consistently that the knowledge of Brahman is not given in the most universal concept, for it belongs to that silent plane of which we can predicate neither particularity nor generality. So far from satisfying the intellectual craving for an all-embracing concept, the Vedanta logically developed, rebukes the presumption that the infinite should be in any way measurable in terms of the finite. The concept is in Reason, and Reason "goes not thither."

V.—Reason—the Arbiter. Brahman as Material Cause.

TURNING now to the second principal, Swami Vivekananda states the modern doctrine of causation in the words, "All the potentialities of the effect are present in the cause"; or, to put it otherwise, the effect is the cause; the latent conditions in the cause have only become patent in the effect. The explanation of a thing must come from within itself, and Brahman satisfies the requirements of the notion of causality even more completely than the demands of the generalising instinct, for "All this indeed is He; He is in the Universe. He is the universe himself." The materialist, who like the Swami lays stress on physical causation, believes that the substance of the universe undergoes change. The entity, underlying all phenomena, which

is matter, is that which undergoes evolutionary modifications. If we may be allowed to know anything by the strict Vedanta theory, then we know this at least that the universe, as it appears to the human mind, is full of diversity and change. And applying to the manifold of phenomena, whose substrate is Brahman, the causal idea, "that all the potentialities of the effect are present in the cause," we are driven to this conclusion, that the conditions of diversity exist in Brahman itself and that Brahman is not only not homogeneous but also undergoing modifications. By one unhappy stroke of thought Swami Vivekananda has swept poor Brahman from where he sat, secure above the flood, into the stream and whirlpool of phenomena. How disastrous to the Vedantin whose ideal is the immutable absolute! There is one passage in another lecture, in which for a few moments the Swami leaves his vague declamations and endeavours to meet the difficulty with something of the seriousness of a metaphysician. He brushes aside the dualistic theory, that a Personal God created the world out of nothing, for something coming out of nothing is repugnant to the principle of causation.

"Nothing can be which is causeless and we have seen that the effect is not different from the cause—the effect is the cause in another form. . . . So we have to avoid these two difficulties of having a universe without a cause which cannot be, and secondly that the universe is the cause,—in which case we are bound to admit that God has become the universe. . . . So the only way that is left us is to admit that this unchangeable and free God of the universe creates the universe out of his own substance." (B. vol. ii. 225.)

The notion then of causality drives the Swami to recognise Brahman as the material cause of this universe in agreement with that text in the Upanishads, which says that as the spider's web is evolved from the body of the

spider, so is this world produced from Brahman. We note in passing that the former difficulty yet remains; for this Brahman is himself *uncaused*, because he is the final cause. The principle of physical causation is like a persistent child, that will have the 'why' of every 'why.' It pursues remote and yet remoter causes in an infinite regression, and if at any point in the series an ultimate cause is posited beyond which further inquiry is forbidden, it is petulant and dissatisfied. But while this decision has not delivered us from one peril, it has set us right down in the jaws of another.

"How is it possible for the unchangeable to change? Supposing God has become the universe, then God is here and has changed. . . . A changeable God would be no God. To avoid this difficulty, which is generally known by the name of Pantheism, there is a very bold theory of the Vedanta and the theory is that *this universe as we know it and think it does not exist.*" (B. vol. ii. 225.)

Truly a very bold theory. It is as though a physician to relieve the pain of tooth-ache should cut off the sufferer's head. The insistent notion of causality causes the Swami some mental disquiet and he proposes to ease himself of his trouble by amputating the whole intellectual apparatus of mankind, which in its varied faculties testifies with one voice to a reality in the world as we know and think it. It is true that we are perplexed on reflection how to reconcile the process of the universe in time with the eternity and unchangeableness of the Godhead, how to relate becoming and being, the real and the phenomenal, but always and everywhere in the court and assembly of mankind the verdict has been that this world of human thought is not all vain show and that our conduct in it and towards it is fraught with solemn issues, and though some fantastic verbalist should declare that the universe, known to men,

has neither value nor existence, they will not depart from their settled way of thinking. Absurdity can go no further than this argument of the Swami's. In order to gratify the causal idea he starts with the proposition that all is Brahman,—this stone, this crawling reptile, this admirable philosopher. "Then," say the Causal Idea, "Brahman is modified and becomes different things such as the stone, the reptile and the philosopher." "No," replies the Swami, shocked at the indignity to Brahman. "Let us say that there is no stone and no reptile and no philosopher." What then is left? The one truly Existent Brahman, unmodified and changeless. But it is very obvious that the idea of causation, with which we started, is wholly inapplicable to that in which there is no temporal process, no change, no evolution of substance from one form to another. In sacrificing the testimony of all the senses, reason and conscience, to the idea of causation, which is itself thereby rendered nugatory, Swami Vivekananda himself seems to become conscious that his statements require amending, and he struggles to extricate himself only to sink deeper in the mire. He qualifies his bold denial of the universe in its manifoldness with the explanation,

"We see God as the universe, because we have to look through time, space and causation. It is time, space and causation that make this differentiation apparently but not really." (B. vol. ii. 225.)

It is a strange proceeding for a philosopher, who teaches that the idea of causation is itself one of the hindrances to true vision and right knowing of the absolute, to use that idea to rule out rival theories of the absolute and determine its nature, as has just been done, and further to declare that the absolute itself may be comprehended under that idea. We must raise the question here also, what are the two entities distinct from Brahman, "we"

and "space, time and causation," that are mentioned in this passage. The new ground taken up is that there is no change in the absolute, but only a semblance of change, cast upon it by our mental constitution.

"The sum-total of this whole universe is God himself. Is God then matter? No, certainly not, for matter is that God perceived by the five senses, mind that God as perceived through the intellect, and when the spirit sees he is seen as spirit. He is not matter but whatever is real in matter is He. Whatever is real in this chair is He, for the chair requires two things to make it. Something was outside which my senses brought to me and to which my mind contributed something else and the combination of these is the chair. That, which existed eternally independent of the senses and of the intellect, was the Lord himself. Upon him the senses are painting chairs and tables and rooms and worlds and moons and suns and stars and all these things." (B. vol. ii. 275.)

The senses and intellect then, the forms of thought, our individual selves, are the miscreants, who, heedless of the Vedantic notice, "Stick no bills here," plaster the mute and unresisting Brahman with the flaming patchwork of phenomenal placards, until he shows no better than a common hoarding. But what are these senses and the intellect, that they can thus obscure the light of supreme intelligence? "Change," says the Swami, "is produced by something exterior to a thing or within itself, which is more powerful than the surrounding." Do they exist within Brahman? That hypothesis we have already tried and it leads to confusion and shame-facedness. Are they without Brahman and existent? Then there were a duality—Brahman and *Maya*? Are they non-existent? But of the reality of their effects, there can be no doubt. That a non-existent cause should produce an existent effect, the obscuration of Brahman, is not better than to say with weak-minded dualists, that the world was created out of nothing.

There is yet one more possibility. May they, with all their progeny, be both existent and non-existent, "the brood of folly, without father bred"?

"What form does the statement of the existence of this world take then? 'This world has no existence' *Jagannaihya*. What is meant thereby? That it has no existence absolute. It exists only as relative to my mind, to yours and to the minds of everybody else. We see this world with the five senses. If we had another sense we would see in it something else. If we had still another sense, it would appear as something yet different. So on we go. It has therefore no existence; that unchangeable, immovable, infinite existence it has not. Nor can it be called non-existence seeing that it exists and we have to work in and through it. It is a mixture of this existence and non-existence." (B. vol. ii. 241.)

But to say of a thing that it both exists and does not exist is to confess its utter unintelligibility. It is an admission that the problem of the universe, of unity and difference, of being and becoming, is yet unsolved. If more is meant than this, then the canon of consistency is violated, which is the presupposition of all logic, and Unreason usurps the place of Reason. We cannot do better than repeat the words of the sturdy old Dwaita Kapila:—

"Not from ignorance too (does the soul's bondage, as the Vedantists hold, arise), because that which is not a reality is not adapted to binding. If it (Ignorance) be (asserted by you to be) a reality, then there is an abandonment of the Vedantic tenet. And (if you assume Ignorance to be a reality, then,) there would be a duality through (there being) something of a different kind (from soul which you asserters of non-duality cannot contemplate allowing). If (the Vedantin alleges, regarding Ignorance, that) it is in the shape of both these opposites, (we say) no, because no such thing is known, (as is at once real and unreal). There is no acceptance of the inconsistent else we come to the level of children, madmen and the like." (Quoted by Jacob. Vedantasara, p. 45.)

In his lectures on the Raja Yoga Swami Vivekananda invited his hearers to exercise their Reason, for there is no

mystery in what he preaches, and all in religion which opposes Reason must be rejected. "Instinct develops into Reason and Reason into Transcendental Consciousness; therefore one never contradicts the other." These words doubtless would be agreeable to the taste of a New York audience, but they have no lawful place in the system of the Vedanta, which proclaims a mystery and the gulf between Reason and Transcendental Consciousness. As a sop to an American Cerberus they were admirable, but practical import they have none. They have been introduced from an alien mode of thought and show like a patch of new cloth on an old garment. The attempts to exhibit Brahman as general concept and under the causal Idea have ended in disastrous failure. That a man should make the attempt shows that he does not understand the meaning of the terms employed or the drift of his own philosophy. The intellectual honesty of Swami Vivekananda can only be saved at the expense of his competence.

VI.—*Maya* in Theory.

THE doctrine of *Maya*, as Swami Vivekananda asserts, forms one of the pillars of the Vedanta, and the word has entered so frequently into our argument up to this point that it now becomes our duty to enquire what is meant by it. Swami Vivekananda demurs to the common rendering of *Maya* as Illusion. He says :—

"Most of you are by this time perfectly acquainted with the idea of *Maya* and know that it is sometimes very erroneously explained as illusion, so that when this universe is said to be *Maya*, that also would have to be explained as being illusion. The translation of the word is neither happy nor correct. *Maya* is not a theory, it is simply a statement of facts about the universe as it exists." (B. vol. ii. 211.)

We are quite at a loss to know why the translation, *Illusion*, is condemned, for the Swami suggests no other term as a more exact equivalent. He himself in other places uses the objectionable phrase without hesitation and speaks freely of the universe as an illusion. It may be that he felt a Western audience would resent any teaching which imputed a merely false or unreal existence to the world, but the term *Illusion* cannot greatly misrepresent the view of the material universe, held by a man who likens it to a mirage of the desert and the Creator to a juggler, deceiving the circle of onlookers by false shows. There are schools of Hindu philosophy, which furnish other interpretations of *Maya*, as for example the Visishtadwaita, but these hold to the reality of personal distinctions. When one believes, as Swami Vivekananda elsewhere professes to do, in the unreality of personal distinctions as indeed of all differences whatsoever, no injustice is done to his doctrine of the universe by describing it as a theory of *Illusion*. Swami Vivekananda habitually seeks to explain the character of phenomena by the aid of the classical illustrations, the illusions of the rope mistaken for the snake and the mother-of-pearl falsely imagined to be silver.

The term *Maya*, we are further told, stands not for a theory but for a statement of facts, it is a generalisation from human experience. It denotes in a word the transience of the things of sense, their insufficiency to the human heart,—all the cruel ironies of life. It is *Maya*, says the Swami, when kingdoms rise and fall purposeless, when great cities are reared with infinite pains and crumble to the dust, when all creatures must inevitably die, yet cling to life, when the mother rears with loving care the child who may afterwards behave worse than a brute towards her, when progress and reform in one direction are

necessarily accompanied by retrogression and corruption in another. By *Maya* we mean to express the fact that the world is full of disappointments to love, of mystery and contradiction to reason, and of moral evil to conscience. But if this were all, there would be many who would subscribe to the doctrine of *Maya*, without incurring any suspicion of Vedantism. The Christian philosopher not less than the Vedantin is alive to the evil existing in the world, and because *Maya* is much more than a statement of facts, because it is an attempted explanation of human misery and indicates a way of escape from that misery, it divides the Christian from the Vedantin. We must reply further that, if this be what Swami Vivekananda understands by the term, then his conception differs widely from the Vedantic, in which *Maya* so far from being a mere generalisation about evil, denotes the origin and cause of evil; nay, is the cosmological principle itself, that by the operation of its two-fold powers of envelopment (*avarana*) and projection (*vikshepa*) brings the whole universe of phenomena into being. As we have seen previously, Swami Vivekananda so speaks of this principle in other passages, and the statement above is only another example of the inaccuracy and want of restraint which characterises his utterances.

The first objection, which may be brought against this doctrine is that its exponents have never been able to state it consistently with other parts of the system professed by them, nor do the modern advocates of the Vedanta succeed any better than their predecessors. In speaking of *Maya* it has not yet been found possible to avoid that duality of existence, which is contrary to the fundamental proposition that all, which is, is one. The objection is venerable, but so long as old arguments remain unanswered, there is no

alternative to their repetition. It is said that *Sat*, *Asat*, and *Mithya*, the existent, the non-existent and the illusorily-existent are three all-embracing categories. To the first belongs Brahman, to the second such impossibilities as the horns of a hare, and to the third the phenomenal universe or *Maya*. But what is meant by saying that the products of *Maya* are illusorily-existent? It may be said that their existence is transient and not eternal, it is fleeting and not permanent, it is inconstantly changeful and not abidingly one. Swami Vivekananda is fond of alluding to the modern theory of the physical universe as a vast congeries of atoms, ever changing in the manner of their grouping and the rate of their vibrations, so that material objects are never the same for two moments together. While however we may admit that the individual manifestations have thus only an illusory existence, in the sense that they are one moment and yet are not the next, so that they both are, and are not, the principle which is the occasion of them all—*Maya*—is itself eternal. From the time of Sankara—to go no further back—Adwaitis have held that the phenomenal world is an eternal process. Regarded therefore “sub specie æternitatis,” *Maya* is an entity co-ordinate with Brahman.

This brings us face to face with another difficulty concerning the possibility of final release. There is no stopping, we are told, in the eternal wheel of the universe. The evolution of phenomenal forms reaches a point of perfected complexity and then commences an involutionary return to a primal equilibrium, in which again are all the forces of another out-going. But if Brahman is thus eternally associated with *Maya* and the projection and retraction of the universe goes on in cycles of infinite number without beginning and without end, where comes in the possibility

of final escape from the coil of *samsara*? Vedantins have preached, that for him who reaches the knowledge of the absolute there is no return to this changeful scene. He remains, as it were, eternally apart from *Maya*, yet *Maya* continues to operate and to cover and limit Brahman. Are we to imagine that a part only of Brahman, which is perpetually reinforced by the new portions of pure Being brought under the power of Illusion, comes under the obscuration of *Maya*, and that another part, which is being constantly augmented by the number of the released souls, lies out beyond the shadow in the sunshine of an eternal self-illumination? Here at once we fall into the error of dividing Brahman, who is *ex-hypothesi* indivisible, of making distinctions in the indiscrete, and of finding parts in the unextended. To speak, as some text-books of the Vedanta do, of that *portion* of Brahman which is associated with *Maya* in contradistinction to a *portion* not so associated, is a mode of thought and expression, which however necessary, is illegitimate to the strict Vedantin.

The truth is that this cyclical theory of the universe is inconsistent with any hope of final salvation. Swami Vivekananda uses language now and again, which implies the universal deliverance of all created things from the bondage of phenomenal existence. True, he says, some are nearer the goal than others, but there is no cause for us to distress ourselves about the welfare of any, for all will ultimately arrive at the eternal peace, whether by longer or shorter routes.

"How do I know that we shall all attain to that freedom in the long run? Because if it were not so, we should not have entered this current, which we call creation. The theory is that at stated periods the whole mass of this energy, which we call the universe, becomes nearly quiescent and then after a period it is projected, that is the exact Sanskrit

word for creation—the whole mass as it were, is hurled from a centre a long way off and then begins creation, not when it is projected out, but when it returns again. So the very fact that we have been created shows that we are struggling to get to the centre, we have thrown ourselves into that tremendous current which is dragging us towards the centre, and the manifestation of this dragging towards the centre is what we call love." (B. ii. 226.)

It needs but little perspicuity to discover that if on this theory we shall assuredly get back to the centre, we shall also assuredly be again 'hurled a long way off' from the centre, as soon as we get there. We shall only reach the bank to be thrown out again into the current. Salvation can mean no more than deliverance for this æon. If the phenomenon, which is myself, has most inexplicably come into existence in this æon, what reason can be alleged why it should not recur in the next? The theory of cycles reduced to a logical proposition may be stated in the form, "that which now becomes, must become again."

It may be replied that this is so, and that no release can be anything more than release for an æon, but that there is not the misery of a continued conscious existence because at every successive æon, the thread of continuity is broken. It is true that the *ego*, which now constitutes me, has existed an infinite number of times before and will exist an infinite number of times again in the unbeginning and unending cycles of the universe; yet I do not know this, because the unity of the self is destroyed at every completed cycle. Then how idle becomes the promise of final release. The doctrine of transmigration affords the same consolation and the only difference is that it deals with more limited periods of time. The man has no consciousness of existence as an ox, nor the ox of life as a reptile. The thread of memory is broken with every successive birth, but that yields small comfort to the Hindu. What he wants is release from

the whole chain of animal births. This Vedanta doctrine logically developed ends in the declaration, that there is an endlessly revolving chain of the births and deaths of universes, from which, in the very nature of things, it is impossible for man to finally escape.

The statement, that all will ultimately reach deliverance, can mean nothing else than that every individual soul will escape from the limitations of *Maya* and become one with the unconditioned Brahman. On this view *Maya* may continue to exist, but apart from Brahman; in which case we arrive at the Sankhya duality of Prakriti and Purusha, two eternal entities, the one of which having revealed itself fully for the benefit of the other withdraws from its presence and both continue to exist in solitude. Or as this conclusion will be unpalatable to the Vedantin, it may be said that *Maya* will dissolve and be no more for ever; in which case we abandon the tenet of the eternity of the phenomenal process. But neither on this view do we escape the difficulty, that has met us before. "The beginninglessness of the world commends itself to reason," says Sankara, "For if it had a beginning, it would follow that the world springing into existence without a cause, the released souls also would again enter into the circle of transmigratory existence." (Vedanta Sutas II. 1. 36.)

If it be true that Brahman once existed sole and unassociated with *Maya*, when as yet *Maya* was not, and afterwards, by some mode inexplicable to reason, *Maya* came into being and conditioned Brahman, then when the released soul goes back to the first pure state of unconditioned Brahman, there is no security against the occurrence of a second like untoward event. So that, whether we suppose the phenomenal to be with or without beginning, the possibility of final release does not appear.

The system of the Vedanta is riddled with inconsistencies, and though by many ingenious shifts and evasions it has been sought to turn the forces of logical arguments, there is no coherence in the whole. No general view of the entire system can be given, which does not exhibit what is contradictory and paradoxical. Jacob in his translation of the *Vedantasara* alludes to a Hindu writer, who describes *Maya* as "the inscrutable principle, regulating the universe of phenomena or rather the world itself as ultimately inconceivable . . . the mystery, by which the absolute Brahma brings himself into relation to the universe." We may parallel this confession by quoting a remark from the articles on the Adwaita Philosophy contributed to the *Brahmavadin* by Mr. N. Vaithianatha Iyer: "We do not know how this ignorance came into existence and acquired such power for evil and why the Brahman permitted himself to be conditioned by *Avidya* and entered upon the work of creation." (B. vol. i. 19.)

Thus the Adwaitin ultimately resorts to faith in a mystery; but unless this doctrine can find other supports in the emotional or moral side of human nature, we cannot ignore these contradictions in Reason or believe that at a higher point of view all difficulties will dissolve. We have seen that in its intellectual aspects it is unsatisfying; we have further to examine its practical bearing on life and conduct.

VII.—*Maya* in Practice.

SOME writers among modern Hindus complain, that the doctrine of *Maya* has been misunderstood by Western students of the Vedanta. These latter have spoken of it as if it were equivalent to a theory of nihilism, of the non-

existence of the material universe; and it is pointed out that Sankara does not deny to the world a quasi-existence, though he cannot allow to it the absolute existence which belongs to Brahman alone. Thus there is a tendency in Neo-Hinduism, in face of Western protests against a doctrine of the total falsity and nothingness of the universe, to lay stress on the existence of a kind, which the Vedanta does attribute to the world, and to emphasize such elements of objectivity and worth as *Maya* permits to the things of sense. An attempt is made to mollify the harsher features of the view of nature, which is contained in the doctrine, and to recognise again in the material universe some of the beauty and order which make it a worthy object of human thought and enquiry. Whether Western students have failed to grasp this side of the doctrine of *Maya* is doubtful. As, for example, what statement can be more explicit and accurate than this of Gough:—" *Maya* is said to be 'neither entity nor non-entity, nor both in one, inexplicable by entity and by non-entity, fictitious and without beginning.' It is not a mere nothing, but a *nescio quid*"? The real import however of *Maya* may be gathered better from the habitual conduct and the characteristic modes of thought of those, who hold the tenet, than from any single verbal proposition. If we look at the religious life of India for centuries past, we shall discover that the material world or nature has been regarded as the enemy of the soul. All thought, using the materials of sense, has been condemned as necessarily inferior and evil; and salvation has been said to consist in a deliverance from all contact with the course of nature and from every imagination conversant with the objects of sense. It is no caricature of the doctrine of *Maya* to say that it has practically taught, that the world is in essence evil, it is a

misfortune that we have been born into it and the highest good is a happy and final release from it. While from one point of view we recognise that *Maya* embodies a truly religious and spiritual protest against the materialism, professing to find in the sensuous that satisfaction which the soul can discover in God alone, regarded in its entirety, this doctrine has been productive of more evil than good. It has lain like a malignant blight on the thought and on the art of India, depriving the one of its progressive tendency and estranging the other from the ideal of pure beauty. Materialism is a corruption of man, for it would have him rest in the sensuous without putting it to higher uses and discovering the divine therein; the so-called spiritual philosophy of the Vedanta is not less a corruption because it would have us rest in a something unrelated to sense and denies that the sensuous can be put to higher uses.

To the Christian the material universe is not something, which is designed to conceal God and make the way of deliverance hard and long; it is intended as a revelation of God and has a spiritual significance. As long as we are men we are compelled to think in the symbols, which sense furnishes. All our speculations, however seemingly abstract or remote from sense perceptions, are ultimately based upon what was given in sense. Therefore, says the Vedantin, all human thought is invalid and God is unknowable to Reason; Religion is agnosticism. While on the other hand the Christian, recognising the imperfection of the sensuous understanding and its inadequacy to fully comprehend the divine, declares that it is true as far as it goes, and that our present partial knowledge will, if men are diligent and lovers of truth, give place to fuller and clearer vision. We may illustrate the difference between the two positions by

taking a passage from a modern theological work. Illingworth, referring to primitive conceptions of God, writes "Man is always educated by illusions. . . . But illusion of this kind is utterly distinct from delusion. An illusion is an inadequate conception; a delusion is a false one."

The Vedantin may say, "Is not this identical with the method of instruction, followed by the teacher of Brahman, who first speaks of things divine after the mode of illusory attribution (*adhyāropa*) and subsequently denies what has been thus falsely imputed (*apavāda*)?"

We reply that this method of illusory attribution and denial is really a process of exhausting all the terms, known to human thought, until the mind has been disciplined into predicating nothing of Brahman and says "not this, not this." It is the systematic repression of thought so as to arrive at thoughtlessness. Seeing that Brahman is not *Maya* and that all our imaginings and ratiocinations are in *Maya*, there can be no approach to Brahman through imagination or reason. It matters nothing in the Inferno of Illusion whether we occupy the lowest depths or stand nearest the heaven and light of Brahman, for betwixt the two a great gulf is fixed, across which no soul is carried save on conditions which are as inconceivable as the bliss awaiting the released. On the other hand we hold that the way of life is not in the restraint and ultimate annihilation of thought, but rather in its active exercise and development. Human knowledge is illusory only in the sense that it is not final; it conveys a true notion of God though not a full comprehension of him. Man does not tread a staircase of air when he seeks to approach God through reason, and although the frail medium give beneath his weight, he rises while he sinks.

We once heard a gentleman, who enjoyed a reputation

for philosophy, draw a comparison between the idealism of Berkeley and *Maya*. He explained that *Maya* implied nothing more than that the material universe had an ideal existence. We have seen that one mode of stating the doctrine of *Maya* is that all sensuous objects are creations of the individual soul, conditioned by the power of Illusion, and these fictions are imposed upon Brahman. But such a statement is only partial, for it is evident, from another aspect, *Maya* has an objectivity relative to the individual soul. The *jiva* is only one particular product among the effects of *Maya* and has a temporary existence, while the principle of Illusion itself is eternal and continues to produce new forms when the earlier pass away. There is a deplorable readiness to-day among Hindus who have acquired a smattering of western philosophy to strike out superficial analogies between the speculations of the East and West. No one would have been more indignant than Berkeley at the insinuation that his idealism impeached the reality and worth of the phenomenal universe. The man who in his youth had a controversy with the Archbishop of Dublin and wrote—"I do not see how it is possible to demonstrate even the being of a God on the principle of the Archbishop—that strictly goodness and understanding can no more be assumed of God than that he has feet and hands; there being no argument that I know of for God's existence which does not prove him at the same time to be an understanding, wise and benevolent Being in the strict, literal and proper meaning of these words"—can hardly be ranked with those who deny the applicability of any attributes whatsoever to Brahman. Berkeley was so far from being in sympathy with the gloomy views of the material universe, associated with the term *Maya*, that to him even bodily vision constituted a

"universal language of the author of nature," "setting forth and testifying the immediate operation of a spirit or thinking Being." Professor Campbell Fraser, than whom none is more qualified to speak with authority on Berkeley's 'life-long philosophic thought' says of it, "That thought becomes, when we pursue it further than he did, a sublime intuition of the phenomenal realities of sense, inorganic and organic, as established media for the intellectual education of finite spirits by means of physical sciences; for intercourse between individual moral agents; and for a revelation of the Eternal Spirit, in whom merely things of sense and moral agents too have their being." Thus to Berkeley the physical universe was no deadly pall thrown over the True and Real, no imprisonment of the soul to be escaped from at the first opportunity. Nature to him was God's witness to be waited upon with a joyous and devout attention that her Gospel to the soul might not fall on heedless ears.

It is in harmony with this line of thought that we speak of an analogy between things human and divine, and find natural laws in the spiritual world. The beauty and force of these reflections of Trench upon the significance of Christ's teaching by parables must be our apology for a lengthy quotation. "The lover of a truth which shall be loftier than himself will not be moved from his faith that the same Lord who sits upon his throne in heaven, does with the skirts of his train fill his temple upon earth—that these characters of nature which everywhere meet the eye are not a common but a sacred writing—that they are hieroglyphics of God: and he counts this his blessedness, that having these round about him, he is therefore never without admonishment and teaching. For such is in truth the condition of man. Around him is a sensuous world, yet

one which need not bring him into bondage to his senses, being so framed as, if he will use it aright, continually to lift him above itself—a visible world to make known the invisible things of God, a ladder leading him up to the contemplation of heavenly truth. And this truth he shall encounter and make his own, not in fleeing from his fellows and their works and their ways, but in the mart, on the wayside, in the field—not by stripping himself bare of all relations, but rather by the recognizing of these as instruments by which he is to be educated into the knowledge of higher mysteries; and therefore dealing with them in reverence, seeking by faithfulness to them in their lower forms to enter into their yet deeper significance. This entire moral and visible world from first to last, with its kings and its subjects, its parents and its children, its sun and its moon, its sowing and its harvest, its light and its darkness, its sleeping and its waking, its birth and its death, is from beginning to end a mighty parable, a great teaching of supersensuous truth, a help at once to our faith and to our understanding.”

By a curious inconsistency in no philosophy is the analogical argument employed more frequently than in the Vedanta, and indeed it is characteristic of all the schools of Hindu thought. When Sankara is met with the objection, “How may the non-self be superimposed on the interior self, which is never an object of perception?” the fact that a blue colour is superimposed by men upon the ether which is never an object of sensuous perception, helps him out of the difficulty. And when the Sankhya is called upon to explain how non-intelligent *prakriti* can work for the good of *purusha*, he appeals to the milk which is formed and flows unconscious in the cow for the benefit of the calf. There is no mode of reasoning, which lends itself so readily

to fallacy as the analogical, and the view of nature as symbolical of higher realities needs always to be supplemented by the thought, that the analogies must be laid in the foundation of things and possess a universal character. To a Western logician the distinction between proof and illustration seems to be perpetually confounded by Hindu thought, and the weakness survives to the present day. It is a noteworthy incongruity, however, that a system, which includes the doctrine of *Maya*, should resort thus frequently to sense symbols not merely in illustration of abstract principles, but in proof of them. In many instances it will be found that Sankara imagines himself to have refuted an opponent's argument, when he has exhibited the inadequacy of the sense symbol under which it is presented, and to have established his own position by the use of an apt simile.

But the objection will be raised that if the physical universe is significant of the divine, as is implied by the quotations above, we should expect to find in it nothing which contradicted our sense of God's wisdom or goodness. This however is not the case. Nature has her cruel and repulsive aspects. There is an untold sum of natural evil in the world. And for an indictment of nature we do not need to come to the East. No arraignment can be more terrible than the catalogue of what appear to be nature's crimes, furnished by modern science. The heart sinks in the contemplation of them. We cannot deny the existence of much which appears to us unlovely or wantonly cruel in physical processes, neither does the Christian profess to have found a satisfactory solution of natural evil. It remains like the origin of moral evil a mystery to the understanding, though there are considerations which alleviate in a degree the weight of the burden. There is that pregnant hint of Paul's, "The earnest expectation of the creature

waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Here the Apostle seems to indicate that the irrational creation—the "creature" of which he speaks—has been involved in the moral fall of mankind, and presents to reflection the appearance of something "which does not reach its end," but disappoints us of that perfection hinted at, yet nowhere realised. And like as the life of the Christian believer is one of moral struggle, illumined by the hope of attaining at length the ideal of moral perfection, so the material universe, as it were, suffers in sympathy with man and anticipates eagerly "with outstretched neck" the consummation of all things, when her own face shall be renewed in a beauty without blemish.

Yet though the earth be seamed with suffering and death, is not nature more normal in her gracious moods than in those which repel and perplex? Is there no glad light upon hill and dale at dawn? Does not the Creator's praise still flame from the forehead of the morning sky? Have the flowers of the field forgot their power to stir the thoughts, which lie too deep for tears? Have we lost the

"Sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns?"

Do the star-set spaces of the heavens no longer call forth the adoration and worship of man? Is not the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator still clearly seen, being

understood by the things that are made? The mind rejects with a wholesome scorn the teaching of the man, who could write:—

“The stories about God creating this world for some end or other, that we imagine, are good as stories, but not otherwise. It is all really in sport; the universe is his play going on. The whole universe must after all be a big piece of fun to Him. If you are poor enjoy that as a fun; if you are rich enjoy the fun of being rich; if dangers come it is also good fun; if happiness comes there is more good fun. The world is just a playground, and we are here having good fun, having a game, and God is with us playing all the while and we are with Him playing. The play is finished, the cycle comes to an end. There is rest for a long time, again all come out and play. As soon as you give up the serious idea of reality as the characteristic of the changing incidents of this three minutes of life and know it to be but a stage on which we are playing, helping Him to play, at once misery ceases for us. He plays in every atom; He is playing when he is building up earths and suns and moons; He is playing with the human heart, with animals, with plants. We are his chessmen; He puts the chessmen on the board and shakes them up. He arranges us first in one way and then in another and we are consciously or unconsciously helping in his play. And oh bliss! We are his playmates!” (B. vol. i. 251.)

It is fortunate that the pure bathos of the Swami's concluding exclamation mitigates the contempt which this utterance inspires. *Maya* more often shows as a joyless pessimism, here it is simple puerility. We had rather the tyrant God of Prometheus than this playmate of the Swami. In rebellion at least there is room for manhood. However offensive this view of the universe will seem—as we believe it must to the men of India, it is not to be forgotten that it is only an expansion of Sankara's resembling the creative act to the sport of a Rajah. To Swami Vivekananda this world “at best is the hell of Tantalus and nothing else,” “a mud-puddle.” Human Society is a “scramble for a few golden balls.” If we could believe in the sincerity of these declar-

ations, we should lament that any man should suffer from so jaundiced a vision. While courage and truth and love remain, life among men is worth the living. God is still in his world, making it worthy of the life-long and earnest study of the physical scientist. The love of nature is a constituent of the highest spirituality, for her beauty is the reflex of the divine. It was a hypochondriac Hamlet, to whom 'this goodly frame the earth' seemed a 'sterile promontory,' 'this most excellent canopy, the air, this brave overhanging firmament, this majestical roof, fretted with golden fire,' nothing better than 'a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours,' and man for all his greatness a 'quintessence of dust.' We hear the cadences of a healthier voice—and truer because healthier—in the old words:—

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. . . . O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches."

VIII.—Bhakti—The Love of God.

WE have seen that according to the Vedānta the supreme God is the impersonal and unqualified Brahman, and that salvation is secured only when the individual soul has intuited its identity with the absolute. But this way of knowledge has always been felt to be too hard for the feet of the wayfaring man. He breathes with difficulty in the dry altitudes of philosophic thought and needs an easier path to final bliss. In the Bhakti Yoga, it is professed, that want is met, and along this pleasant route to *Mukti* are conducted by gentle stages those, who would falter

and fail upon the high path of knowledge. Instead of a severe intellectual discipline, by which at last the absolute Brahman, seeming so remote and cold to human imagination, is cognised, an approach is offered through the emotions. For Bhakti Yoga is said to be more feasible to mankind, because it exacts from them less of mental effort and accommodates itself to human infirmities.

"It is always to be understood that the personal God worshipped by the Bhakta is nothing separate or different from Brahman. All is Brahman, the one without a second. Only the Brahman, as unity or absolute, is too much of an abstraction to be loved and worshipped. So the Bhakta chooses the relative aspect of Brahman, that is Iswara the supreme Ruler [B. vol. i. 166]."

The Bhakta however does not simply worship Iswara, the Demiurge and the first creation of *Maya*; he may take any other object or person, more congenial to his nature, and serve that with love as his *Ishta-Devata*, always provided that it be regarded as the representative of the supreme. A reading of the Bhagavat Gita raises the doubt, whether the way of personal devotion is a whit easier than the way of devotion to knowledge. Swami Vivekananda only confirms us in the suspicion. He warns all except the young and healthy against entering upon this path. A prerequisite is a constant passion for God, and a total renunciation of personal ends. It is true that he says this renunciation is made easy, for the Bhakta is taught that all his affections are right, all that is needed being the exercise of control over them and their direction from lower to higher objects of desire. But surely the problem of life is itself how to control our affections. It does not materially help the restless school boy to be told that his proclivities for play are right, only they need to be indulged in season. To take a concrete instance, how does the

Bhakti Yoga assist the miser to a better life by saying, "Your love of money is innocent. Do but govern it and direct it upwards?" On Swami Vivekananda's own showing the Bhakti Yoga presupposes an emotional endowment not less rare than the intellect indispensable for the Gnana Yoga. The initial impulse and the power of control must be in existence first. It does not create the impulse or furnish the power of control, but to those, who like the miser lack both, it falls back on the doctrine of *karma* and declares, "For such as you salvation is not yet."

The teaching in Swami Vivekananda's lectures upon the Bhakti Yoga recalls forcibly to memory certain remarks of his in the introduction to the *Raja Yoga*. From this latter source we learn that the great truth men need to know is that there is no God outside of themselves. We must put aside all childish notions about prayer and help from a being "beyond the clouds." The system of religion, in which the ideas of a personal God and of man as his dependent creature prevail, "degenerates into a horrible belief in the natural weakness of man." Now the Bhakti Yoga does above all things inculcate the necessity of the soul's entire submission to and reliance upon God. It speaks of one, "who"—to use the quaint language of the old scholiast, Madhavacharya,—“is gracious towards those living beings who are burned in the charcoal of mundane existence.” And the words are put into Krishna's mouth, "For them, whose thought is fixed on me, I become ere long the saviour out of the ocean of the mortal world." The Bhakta therefore conceives of God as a personal being, on whom he depends and by whose grace alone he reaches the desired salvation. How then can a habit of thought which is opposed in aim and spirit to what the strict Vedanta teaches be made to conduct to the same goal?

How can that which Swami Vivekananda in dealing with the Raja Yoga has denounced as a deadly enemy to the soul's welfare—the very cast of mind which must be destroyed before the shape of truth can be taken—be extolled in the Bhakti Yoga as an alternative means to salvation?

An attempt is made to solve this contradiction by introducing a theory of representative worship.

“One thing however has to be carefully borne in mind. If as it may happen in some cases the highly philosophic ideal, the supreme Brahman, is himself dragged down by *Pratika* worship to the level of the *Pratika* and the *Pratika* itself is taken to be the Atman of the worshipper or his Antaryamin, the worshipper gets entirely misled, as no *Pratika* can really be the Atman of the worshipper. But where Brahman himself is the object of worship and the *Pratika* stands only as a substitute or a suggestion, that is to say, where through the *Pratika* the omnipresent Brahman is worshipped, the *Pratika* itself being idealised into its cause, the Brahman—the worship is perfectly beneficial.” (B. vol. i. 192.)

Stated succinctly, the meaning of this paragraph is, that in the worship of Iswara or other personal deities the notion of the supreme and unqualified Brahman and of the soul's identity with it must ever be retained in mind. If that be once let go and the deity be worshipped as existing in himself, the worship enslaves instead of liberating the mind. But we ask, if a man is capable of forming the “highly philosophic ideal” of the supreme Brahman, what necessity is there for a resort to the lower mode of thought and worship. On the other hand, how is the whole-hearted devotion, which is called Bhakti, compatible with the consciousness that the object of worship has no more than an illusory existence and only *seems to be* by a self-made fiction. Religion is the very search for the real and the repose in it. It is impossible to serve and love a God,

whom we know not to be true and existent in the very highest sense. Will the cask hold the precious wine of devotion, when the bottom of reality has been knocked out? If one has the "philosophic ideal," one cannot have the Bhakti; if one has the Bhakti, one cannot have the philosophic ideal. The mental attitude, here depicted by the Swami, is a psychological impossibility.

It is said that God will appear to each man according to his ideal. Thus to the philosopher and the wise man he is the Immutable Brahman, to the worldly he is the bestower of the good gifts of this life, and to the cruel and sanguinary he is a terrible and malignant power to be propitiated with sacrifices of blood. It follows therefore that to the Bhakta, the man who loves God, God is love. "To him God exists entirely as love," says Swami Vivekananda, who adds that his own message to men is concerning a God of love, the great Hari, the centre of all attraction, of whose benevolence this whole universe in all the diversity of its forms is but a manifestation. Yet every Vedantin knows that such language is permissible only in a state of imperfect apprehension. Love is no attribute of the supreme Brahman and never can be. We see therefore that Bhakti fosters an erroneous idea as to the nature of the Supreme. It superimposes upon Brahma an attribute which does not rightly belong to it. And this it does from an inner necessity. We cannot conceive of perfect love save as a reciprocal relation. One-sided affection is life-long pain. If the Bhakta devote himself to his God with all the strength of his affection, can he be satisfied unless he finds a love in God answering to his own? It is only reasonable to believe that the unreserved love which is the highest excellence of the devotee finds more than its counterpart in God. We cannot think that man is

better than his maker. Swami Vivekananda however writes :—

“Wherever there is any seeking for something in return, there can be no real love ; it becomes a mere matter of shop-keeping. . . . The Bhakta loves the Lord because he is loveable. . . . When you see a beautiful scenery and fall in love with it, you do not demand anything in the way of favour from the scenery.” (B. vol. i. 239).

Let us take the Swami on his own words. God is loved, because he is loveable. How is he loveable, except he be love ? The illustration is an example of childish word-play. We do not fall in love with scenery in the real sense of the term and for that reason we do not expect from scenery what we have not given to it. Love is essentially a relation between *persons* and we cannot bestow it upon inanimate things such as the landscape before us, however beautiful it may be. Love involves a distinction of persons ; it cannot exist apart from the consciousness of “I” and “Thou,” —a consciousness, however, in which there is no sense of painful separation. There is no desire for fusion of personalities ; a life of conscious harmony among distinct persons is the ideal of love. The Swami indicates this, when he says :—

“When this highest ideal of love is reached, philosophy is thrown away. Freedom, salvation, nirvana, all are thrown away. Who cares to become free while in the enjoyment of divine love ? . . . Who will then desire to become free and one with God ? I know that I am He, yet will I take myself away from him and become different, so that I may enjoy the Beloved.” (B. vol. i. p. 253.)

If Bhakti thus of its own nature compels the mind to cast the shadow of a false attribute upon Brahman and further creates a state in which the soul is content to rest without proceeding further, how can it be said that Bhakti conducts direct to the loveless *Moksha* of the Vedantin ?

The Swami enumerates various stages of his Bhakti. It begins in the placid devotion of *Shanta*, and rises through stages in which God is successively regarded as master, as child—for “there should be no awe in love.” “Let more of reverence in us dwell” is, in the Swami’s view, a prayer appropriate to a low order of thought—as playmate or friend, but highest of all is *Madhura*, where love runs to madness.

“Aye the true spiritual lover does not rest even there, even love of husband and wife is not mad enough for him. The Bhaktas take up even the idea of illegitimate love because it is so strong.” (B. vol. i. 252.)

We forbear to comment on a passage which is representative of what is most corrupt in Bhakti literature and will be repudiated by many Hindus and notice only that with Swami Vivekananda Bhakti culminates in a “burning madness.” By what magical touch is this transformed in a moment into the eternal calm of Moksha? How does it agree with the other definitions of Bhakti, associated with great names, in which supreme Bhakti is spoken of as a calm and constant contemplation of God like the smooth and gentle flow of a descending stream of oil? Here is our Bhakta wrought up to a pitch of excessive madness—in a state, removed as far as possible from the evenness of mind in which alone the vision of the absolute is granted; nay further, without any desire that absorption in the one Divine essence shall ensue,—and we are to suppose that by some strange process this tumult of passionate feeling passes into the still selflessness of the supreme Brahman. We wish to know on what principles, psychological or spiritual, natural or supernatural, a change of this kind is effected. All that we are able to glean in the way of illustration or proof is that the “blessed gopis” in their

ecstasies of longing for the absent Krishna sometimes identified themselves with him.

From what has gone before, it has become abundantly manifest that Bhakti Yoga, as interpreted by Swami Vivekananda, so far from leading towards the goal of the Vedanta philosophy leads in an opposite direction. But are all the absurdities, which we meet here, chargeable to the Hindu Schools? We think not. Sankara repudiated in express terms the doctrine that Bhakti may be an alternative to Gnana. With him Bhakti Yoga is no more than a method, appointed for minds of an inferior order, through which may be gained the preliminary mental purity (*Sattwa Suddhi*) necessary for the *Gnana Nishta*. It is by this latter alone, so he contended, that there is final release. Now however we may rebel against the inadequacy of this treatment of Bhakti, we cannot refuse to Sankara a certain admiration for consistency. If God be, as he says, an impersonal principle, unqualified and inactive, and creation be what he declares, an illusion, a product of ignorance, then there is some reason in the conclusion that only by the removal of ignorance through "devotion to knowledge" can salvation be won. On the other hand, where to Bhakti is assigned a higher function, as among the followers of Ramanuja, we find another set of philosophic tenets. Ramanuja denied the distinction between the *Nirguna* and the *Saguna* Brahman, the *Para* and the *Apara vidya*. He denied further the complete identity of the soul with the supreme, for an eternal distinction exists between them. In the Visishtadwaita system, a commanding influence may be legitimately ascribed to Bhakti, for God is a personal ruler, whose attribute of sovereignty is never communicated to the individual soul. Every auspicious and good quality can be truly predicated of him. The gift of salvation may

be within the power of such a deity to bestow, and that, upon the condition of devotion to himself. It is Swami Vivekananda's distinction that he takes Ramanuja's coat and would stretch it to fit Sankara's back. He has so little appreciation of the differences underlying these two rival philosophies, that he hopes to arrive by Ramanuja's track at Sankara's goal. Not only so, he seems to us to have confounded the earlier and nobler doctrines of Bhakti, such as are to be found in the Gita, with the degraded literature of later times, unworthy of reproduction in this present age. While we profess no satisfaction in the artificial expedients by which love is robbed of its eternal reality and given a purely temporal value, we turn with shame and indignation from symbols, which are a crime against the purity and sanctity of love in human relationships and much less worthy to be employed of that which binds us to God.

IX.—Love to Man.

It is becoming one of the commonplaces among modern English-speaking Hindus, that the Vedanta is not merely consonant with the generous belief, denoted by the phrase *The Brotherhood of Man*, but that it supplies the only satisfactory philosophic basis for that belief. Whatever may be our differences of opinion as to the source from which this altruistic sentiment has been derived and the support on which it must be sustained, it is a matter of common rejoicing that its sway is being extended in the hearts of men. We cannot but believe, that the use of this phrase marks the beginning of a new epoch in Indian civilisation and that, from the admission of a common humanity, will spring a new and fairer social order than

that, which to-day binds the masses of India together. While, as lovers of mankind, we cannot have any quarrel with those, the sincerity of whose professions is attested by a life of beneficent activity and neighbourliness, it is our plain duty—and no breach of charity—to enquire whether the Adwaita philosophy was ever intended to bear or can ever bear the weight of this doctrine of the brotherhood of man. Each of the two significant words in this phrase deserves to be considered apart. *Brotherhood* is an idea taken from the sphere of family life. Mankind is thought of as forming one great family, in which there is a plurality of members, for every family necessitates a distinction of persons. One brother is never confounded with another, nor is the personality of one the same as the personality of another. We are told that the Vedanta teaches that the human race composes one great family, because one of its leading tenets is that the soul within all men is the same. But let it be noticed that individual souls are not said to be the same in kind or substance merely; they are identical and only appear to be different and separate, because illusorily conditioned. When, however, I speak of another as my brother, I do not mean that he is myself or that myself is he. Yet this is the declaration of the Vedanta. From the standpoint of one, who has realised the last truth of this philosophy—that all, that *is*, is one—this phrase, *The Brotherhood of Man*, is misleading and false, because it belongs to the lower phase of thought in which personal distinctions exist. We say therefore that what the Vedanta affirms is not the brotherhood but the *Identity of Man*.

Taking the second word *man*—we notice that it implies a limitation. By its use human beings, as it were, are shut off from the rest of created things in the universe and are regarded as a class, within which relations of peculiar

intimacy among the several members obtain, such as, are not found outside the class. Now according to the Vedanta it is not simply true that the soul in all men is the same, but the soul in all things whatsoever is one and the same. Brahman is the universal substrate. It is the *real* in everything. If then I and my fellowman are brothers, because the soul within him is my soul,—the only differentiation between us being of illusory or unreal conditions—the reptile and the stone are equally my brothers, for all that separates them from me is similarly illusory and unreal. The Vedanta therefore cannot recognise any such arbitrary limitation as is implied in the term, *Man*. If there be any brotherhood at all, it is not of human beings merely, but of all creatures, animate and inanimate. Consistently with the Adwaita philosophy we have to interpret or explain away *The Brotherhood of Man* into *The Identity of All Things*.

Now it must be admitted that the expression *The Brotherhood of Man*, if not the idea connoted by it, has been borrowed by modern Hinduism from an alien language and another system of religious thought. It fits in harmoniously with the Christian terminology of the "Fatherhood of God" and the "Elder Brotherhood of Christ," in reference to which both the language and the ideas are strange to the Vedanta. The supreme Brahman cannot be regarded as the father of men, unless we can justify the paradox that a man is his own father. And in history it will be found that this idea of universal Brotherhood has been most operative, where it has meant "my brother, for whom Christ died." Neither the English nation nor the greater West of which it is a part is taking any credit to itself, when it declares that for the idea of human brotherhood we are debtors to Christ, who belongs neither to East

not West but is the glory and hope of our common humanity. Max Müller says that it was due to the influences of Christianity that the word *barbarian* was struck out of the dictionary of mankind and replaced by *brother*. "The idea of mankind as one family, as the children of one God, is an idea of Christian growth."

We have a right to expect that when a term is borrowed, due regard shall be had to its past history and associations, or if a new connotation is to be given, that the speaker, by carefully indicating the sense in which he now employs the term, shall guard his hearers against any confounding of the new and the old. This is precisely what the majority of modern Hindus neglect to do. They borrow the phrase *The Brotherhood of Man* because it has an excellent sound and stirs an emotional chord in generous hearts, but they omit to explain that the phrase has been first emptied of its natural meaning and then charged with an import at variance with the original.

But there is another method by which we may determine whether the ideas of the *Vedantic Unity* and the *Brotherhood of Man* are the same—that is, by their practical issues or the conduct which is shaped upon them. It seems to us that Swami Vivekananda makes a fatal admission, when he says that, while India is the birth-place of the idea of human brotherhood, in no country has that idea been so inoperative as in the land of its birth. We should naturally look for the fruit where the seed was sown, but according to Swami Vivekananda the tree of the Vedanta has remained barren for centuries. Now at last, a thousand years after Sankara, we are beginning to discover the true social import of his teaching. The tree is now to begin to bear its fruits in the abolition of all caste distinctions and privileges. The man, who pours his contempt upon the social Reformers,

because after one hundred years of agitation they have not succeeded in renewing the face of Hindu society, calling them "Boys, moustachioed babies, who never went out of Madras," is hardly consistent in bringing forward as his own social remedy a philosophy, which has been impotent for more than a decade of centuries.

If the question be raised, whether in India those effects can be discovered which follow naturally from the doctrine of universal brotherhood, those from whom this term has been borrowed and who are therefore best qualified to determine its meaning, will emphatically answer in the negative. The caste system is hopelessly opposed to what is meant by the *Brotherhood of Man*. We observe that the *Brahmaradin* repudiates the responsibility of the Vedanta for caste. If by this we are to understand that the Vedanta did not originate caste, no one will be prepared to deny the statement; but if it is implied that the Vedanta neither countenances nor supports caste, the facts are all the other way. It is true that caste existed before the Vedanta, but, when that philosophy arose, it did not set itself to overthrow or even modify the existing social order; rather it provided a pseudo-philosophic justification and it has continued to this day not only in an unprotesting alliance with caste but often exerting itself actively in defence of caste. By a multitude of references it might be shown that, while Sankara teaches that the perfected man attains to a point where caste distinctions are seen to be vain and illusory, this knowledge is for him alone. For the masses caste is a sacred institution and woe be to him, who transgresses its fixed boundaries. Nor must it be supposed that the wise man will proclaim the unreality of caste-distinctions. So far from making public his true convictions, he will be careful to conform himself to popular usage and by his conduct

lend support to institutions, which have been established by an imperishable ordinance of scripture for the general good. Caste is thus made binding on all, except the handful who reach the perfect knowledge, and even they outwardly conform to its requirements.

On the other hand, we find that wherever Christianity has gone, some of the legitimate consequences of the doctrine of human brotherhood have ensued. Such are general franchise and public education, even-handed justice for rich and poor, the abolition of slavery and philanthropy in a thousand forms uplifting the distressed and fallen. These are outward and visible monuments, but the truest witness of all is the fellowship, which Christian believers enjoy within the Church. While we do not imply that the ideal of human brotherhood has been realised anywhere on the face of the earth, we hold that an impartial survey of mankind will discover that among Christian nations the nearest approaches have been made to the ideal and that in their midst to-day are great and powerful influences, which are making untiringly for a nobler and united humanity. There is this incontrovertible fact relating to India, that in fifty years of Christian government more has been attempted and accomplished for the amelioration of the depressed classes than in one thousand years of the Vedanta. There is to our thinking but one explanation—that, while the doctrine of the *Brotherhood of Man* can only be attached to the Vedanta by artificial bonds and ties, it is connected by a vital union with or contained in the essential doctrines of Christianity.

The *Brotherhood of Man* must not be interpreted to mean a weak sentimentality, displayed towards all irrespective of goodness or badness. Swami Vivekananda notes that the Brahman, who has just given his assent to the fact of a

common brotherhood, leaps out of the way to avoid contact with the first Pariah. This is *Maya*, says he, pure *Maya*, and the same phenomenon is exhibited in the Western philanthropist, who after discoursing on human brotherhood roundly denounces the mass of mankind for fools and blockheads. We do not hesitate to say that the Western may be quite right. There is room in our doctrine of brotherhood for healthy wrath and denunciation. Though men may compose a family, it does not follow that all the brothers are of one degree of worth. There may be fools and knaves among the number, who stand in need of a sound brotherly castigation, which they will recall with gratitude when they come to their right minds. Has the Swami never heard of the saying of one, who has been described as one of the greatest moral teachers of the age? He denounced vehemently what he considered a superficial benevolence towards "scoundrels" with the cry, "Yes. They are my brethren! hence this rage and sorrow."

There is another great English word—*unselfishness*, which we find much in use to-day among the advocates of Hinduism. It is common to say that the Vedanta inculcates the most perfect unselfishness, because it prescribes the total renunciation of the fruits of all works and the severance of every tie, which binds the soul to this world. So far as Gnana or Bhakti Yoga embody a protest against those forms of religion in which there is a constant and exclusive regard of the good accruing to self from right action, we are in hearty sympathy with them. Duty is to be done for duty's sake. On the Christian view each man is responsible for his own salvation primarily and he is driven to seek for some means of attaining it by an egoistic impulse. That this is the case, is not less recognised by the Vedanta. "What shall I do to be saved?" "How may I be released

from the misery of Samsara?" is "the first cry of the two religions. In either case the initial impulse is necessarily and, we may add, innocently selfish. The Christian reply to the seeking soul is in effect, that by putting itself in right personal relationship with God and man, involving repentance, faith and love, salvation may be attained. Thus it is that the original selfish impulse is transmuted into a nobler and extra-regarding or unselfish affection.

"And one of the scribes came and asked him, which is the first commandment of all. And Jesus answered him, The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here the three only possible affections for men are co-ordinated with each other. Self-love is made perfect by going out of itself into God-love and man-love. But in the man, who loves God and his neighbour as he ought, self-consciousness does not cease. He is not less a distinct personal agent after the realisation of that love than before. Now what the Vedanta aims at is not unselfishness, but selflessness or the unconsciousness of self. Unselfishness is not a mere negative idea; it does not connote the absence of the idea of self, but rather the presence of the idea of other selves. The unselfish man is not he who ceases to exist as an ego, but he in whom love for other than self and activity for the benefit of other than self becomes dominant. Using the word in the true sense, the Sannyasi's course is selfish in the extreme. It begins—as all religion—in a selfish impulse; it continues in suppression of the consciousness of self for the sole benefit of self and is perfected in a total disregard of or indifference

to other selves. When we ask why the Sannyasi or Bhakta must renounce the fruits of work, we are told that if he does not do so, he will miss the great fruit Moksha. We must shut our eyes to the benefits which will ensue to us from a certain course of action, because, if we do not, the supreme benefit will not follow. This is to reduce the practice of religion to hypocrisy and to make selfishness the sanction of unselfishness—if indeed we can call that unselfishness, which is only the ignoring of immediate benefits. The perfect Sannyasi is he, who is even-minded to all, who sees the same in a Brahman, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste, who is “unattached, without affection for son, wife, home and the rest,” “who has no thought of another.” But unselfishness means none of these things, in the absence of *another* it is an impossibility. It denotes an intense *attachment* to *others*, the most constant solicitude for their welfare. It is conformable with the belief, that these human relationships of ours, of parent and child, of husband and wife, of friend and friend, are but shadows of the heavenly, which shall be sublimed in the nobler services of another life.

We protest against these slovenly identifications of Neo-Hinduism not less in the interests of truth, for no real service is rendered either to Hindu or Christian thought by ignoring vital differences, than from a love of those words, which come to us charged with sacred import, of which we cannot willingly see them emptied and turned to baser uses.

X.—Conscience and Religion.

WE wish to consider in this chapter the philosophic basis upon which Christianity rests. In the earlier articles on the teaching of Swami Vivekananda, it has been shown, how the Vedanta in its final development ends in a system of total agnosticism and that a number of texts point clearly in this direction. Such a conclusion follows of necessity from the doctrine of *Maya* which invalidates the whole of human knowledge. The Vedantic philosopher saws off the treeward end of the bough on which he sits. If his doctrine of *Maya* be true, then the philosophy, evolved by his human understanding and expressed in terms of human speech, falls to the ground. But there are few—not even among the great teachers of the past—who consistently recognise this fact, and the belief is almost universal among English-speaking Hindus to-day that to the claims of Christianity Hinduism can successfully oppose a philosophy, which is the absolute or final explanation of the universe. Though the Vedanta itself supplies a refutation of this belief, we propose to consider this position briefly, for in so doing we shall be able to state the positive Christian argument.

In defining the Christian conception of the relation between philosophy and religion we must lay down as fundamental, that religion is primarily concerned with the moral and secondarily with the intellectual. The pre-eminently religious faculty in man is conscience and it is with the problems, raised in the human mind by conscience, that religion is chiefly concerned. For the Christian sin is the source of the world's misery and moral purity and perfection is the mark at which he aims. But the ancient Hindu philosophers, Dwaita and Adwaita alike, are agreed

in this one particular, that ignorance is the origin of human wretchedness and knowledge will provide a way of release. Thus Kapila, the reputed founder of the Sankhya dualistic system, in commencing his exposition declares, that Vedic ritual cannot avail to deliver the soul from this universe of pain, but "a contrary method is better, and this consists in a discriminative knowledge of the Manifested, the Unmanifested and the Knowing (soul)." And Sankaracharya in the preface to his commentary on the Vedanta Sutras observes, "With a view to freeing one-self from that wrong notion, which is the cause of all evil and ascertaining thereby the knowledge of the absolute unity of the self, the study of the Vedanta texts is begun." The prayer of the philosopher may be voiced in the words:—"What is that, knowing which all is known?" But the cry rising from the heart of the man, who lies beneath the power and rebuke of conscience is, "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." That says Illingworth is "the universal cry of all true religion." This tremendous sense of sin, this remorse for wrong-doing, this earnest aspiration after righteousness is the first fact in the Christian's experience, even as the Christian preacher lays stress upon it as the first requisite to salvation.

What then the religious man requires is a power of the will, enabling him to regulate the motions of his mind in accordance with the moral Law revealed in conscience. And this moral law is thought of as the expression of God's will. Behind the Law stands its Giver and Maker and therefore transgression of the Law is no offence against an abstract idea of right—existing one knows not how. It is the grieving of a person, the alienation of ourselves from the Father of all spirits. The man, convicted of sin, seeks no reconciliation in reason of contradictory

propositions; the pain and loss which afflict him cannot be described as an intellectual distraction. Because the soul has been estranged from him, who is the rightful object of all its love and reverence, what it needs is a reconciliation of persons, in which lost relationships are restored and the nature is renewed in filial obedience and love. Thus the moral sense cannot find rest, until it reaches a personal Saviour mediating between man and a personal God; and no purely intellectual vision, however far-reaching, can satisfy a heart which thus cries out for the Living God.

It follows further in agreement with this view of religion, that the faculty, through which men are brought continually nearer God, is not Reason but the Moral Sense. Spiritual illumination will not necessarily ensue upon a progressive development of the mind in metaphysical acuteness, until it reaches a point, where the absolute or God may be known; for no philosophical exercises will yield any results in this direction, save as accompanied and directed by conscience. How fraught with profound meaning are the words of Christ: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This purity of heart is quite another thing from the purity of mind, spoken of by the Vedantin. By purity of mind the Vedantin means a state, which is to be reached by the resolute suppressing of every mental modification, so that at last the mind-stuff, as it were, stands clear and free from all disturbance like the still pellucid water of a lake, and through its pure motionless medium the brightness of the self, shining in its own light, may appear. The purity of heart, enjoined by Christ, is consistent with a multitude of thronging thoughts. It cannot be won by withdrawal from the world of sense, as the tortoise contains its limbs beneath its shell. For they may

realise it, who while busy with the things of time and sense, yet govern all their affairs in obedience to the dictates of that conscience, which links them to the higher world of things, not seen or heard.

Now the question arises, which of these two contrasted views is the truer interpretation of the facts of human life. Whether is it more correct to say, that the disabilities under which men suffer are due to ignorance and removable by an intellectual illumination, so that in the last resort religion becomes an absolute philosophy ; or to say that in the religious consciousness guilt is an essential element and that the end of religion can only be secured by a rectification of the will, bringing it into line with the ideal of righteousness, continually unfolded by God to the moral sense? We reply in favour of the Christian conception, because Christianity gives to conscience its rightful place of supremacy.

What is the characteristic of the Moral Sense? Is it not its imperiousness, its natural and instinctive assumption of sovereignty in the human mind? Its imperatives are categorical and brook no denial. If it decrees that I ought to do a thing, then, though the heavens fall, I must obey or be conscious that I have been untrue to what was highest in me. You cannot explain it away. Professor Sidgwick calls the sense of *ought* "a unique and unanalyzable element" in consciousness. But what has the Vedanta to say about the moral Idea? It assigns to it only a temporal value. The distinctions of right and wrong cannot be carried up into eternity. You must not say of the supreme Brahman that he is moral, neither that he is immoral, for he is unmoral. Swami Vivekananda in support of this view appeals in his *Karma-Yoga* to the fact, that human judgments about right and wrong are variable.

The ancient patriarchs, for example, approved of polygamy, which is hideous to the Christian conscience. How, he asks, can any trust be reposed in a faculty so uncertain in its verdicts? This is to ignore a distinction, which is often expressed by saying that the *contents* of the moral sense may vary and do vary with time and place, but its *form* is always and everywhere the same. That is, conscience can only discriminate among the ideas, which are brought into the mind; it cannot of itself create new ideas or bring them into mind. But as culture and civilisation have increased, the intellect has submitted new and larger ideas to the moral judgment, so that it has taken a more intense penetrativeness and a wider sweep of vision. No one can venture to say, that the hold of the moral sense upon the world now is less than in ancient times. Nor is it true, that the men of to-day disavow the obligations of morality, because the judgments of their forefathers concerning right and wrong were different from their own. There never was an age, when the moral sense so powerfully swayed private and public opinion. We are now able to speak of and appeal to a national conscience as never before. Christianity sides with Ramanuja against Sankara in affirming, that whatever attributes are good and auspicious may be truly predicated of God, and that what is evil and base belongs not to Him. Or, in other words, it affirms the eternity of moral distinctions.

This further point needs to be considered that the ethics of the Vedanta are purely objective. The spirituality of the teaching of Christ brought into prominence the subjective element in morality, that is Conscience,—the individual's sense of right and wrong;—and started a new epoch in the ethical enquiries of the West. We know of nothing anywhere in Hindu philosophy which covers the same

ground as Christian Ethics. The absence of this department of enquiry indicates, that the phenomena of moral consciousness have not received the attention due to their importance. Probably nowhere can a more elaborate discussion of *dharma* or duty be found than in the Purva Mimansa. "*Duty is a purpose inculcated by a command.*" "*Duty is a meaning deduced from injunction.*" And when we ask what is the authority (*pramana*) in a command, which makes it obligatory, we find that revelation, tradition, usage are brought forward as the sources of that authority. Here the treatment is purely objective and the subjective side of morality is ignored. There must be an objective or absolute standard of morality and that to the Christian is the mind of God. There must also be a subjective standard, appointed by the individual's conscience, and even though this latter may be in error, it is only by faithfulness to his personal sense of right, that a man's moral judgment is brought more nearly into agreement with the divine and inerrant standard.

Just as the place of Conscience is largely ignored in Hindu philosophy, so also it receives inadequate recognition in popular religion. Swami Vivekananda tells us, that in India the greatest latitude is allowed in matters of belief, while the observance of social institutions is rigidly enforced. It is a very false interpretation, which sees in this state of affairs a proof that India is the land of religious toleration. It is more true to say that religion has been divorced from conscience. * It does not matter whether a man believes or not in the ancestral gods, so long as he bows down before their images and performs the accustomed worship. It matters not whether he holds the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, provided that he keeps he rules of caste. The voice of conscience, proclaiming

that as men believe, so they ought to act, falls on heedless ears. The people have forgotten that a man is responsible first and foremost—not to his family or his caste—but to the representative of God within him. Whenever one is found courageous enough to exercise the right of private judgment and by outward act give effect to his inward conviction, the bitterest and the most cruel persecutions arise. The moral sense may be weakened; it may be obscured. Men may so sin against conscience, that it seems to be as one dead. Yet in most, if not all, it is but dormant and will wake again at the touch of goodness. It is not the monopoly of a few, like the speculative aptitude of the philosopher. Right and wrong are terms current in every land and among all peoples. The moral sense is the psychical bond which makes the race one. How can we regard as philosophically sound a system, which does not give full value to what is a part of our common human nature, and the most authoritative element in universal experience?

XI.—Reason and Religion.

THE doctrine of conscience, contained in the preceding chapter, needs to be supplemented by a doctrine concerning Reason.

According to the Christian conception Reason is subordinate and finite. No philosophy, formulated by men, can be absolute or rendered so perfect in all its parts that no residue of contradiction or mystery shall remain. Human knowledge is of a progressive order. Our state is neither one of total nescience nor of perfected science, but intermediate between the two. Though every generation has seemed to the eager spirit of the Christian world to lift a little more

of the cloud fringe of ignorance, the dawning of the perfect day is yet infinitely removed. League after league has been traversed in the long way of science and one region of darkness after another has yielded up its secrets to the intrepid explorer, yet the treasures of wisdom show no sign of exhaustion, and what remains to know is immeasurable to thought.

"Yet all experience is an arch where thro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move."

In speaking of the subordination of Reason we only mean to declare that religion must be founded on the whole of our nature and not on a part merely. The religious faith, to which the moral faculty and the emotions prompt, cannot be fully expressed in the forms employed by the sensuous understanding. Kant brought in a new era for Theology by demonstrating the insufficiency of the so-called proofs in Theoretical Reason for the existence of God. But he was no sceptic, for in his doctrine of Practical Reason he lays afresh in Will the foundation of that idea of God, which he had destroyed in the Critique of Pure Reason. "The true or real principle of the world is not knowing Reason but Will." In the volitional or moral consciousness of man are given the ideas of freedom, of God and of Immortality, and these ideas are true. The "Primacy of Practical Reason"—the validity and transcendent authority of those notions, which are involved in the sense of our moral personality, is one of Kant's memorable phrases. Because there is this primacy in the moral sense and because intellect represents only one side of the whole man, we refuse to allow Reason to deny what Conscience affirms or to chill the warm aspirations of the heart after a God of Love. We demand that Religion

shall be founded on the larger Reason or the whole man, and that it shall include an element of trust or faith in things only imperfectly understood. Let us quote the noble words of Professor Campbell Fraser of Edinburgh.

"It may be found that such faith cannot be held in its spiritual integrity in the purely intellectual way, inso-much as the whole man, emotional and moral as well as intellectual, may be required to sustain what human understanding can only in part comprehend or realise in terms of sense and sensuous imagination. . . . This is what I mean, when I speak of human attempts to determine the final meaning of the universe as being necessarily in their last and highest form, what may more properly be called reasonable faith or trust than absolutely complete science. The result must be the outcome of what is characteristic in man in his whole spiritual personality, not the outcome of man merely in his sensuous understanding, which is incapable of grasping and elaborating what is needed for the whole divine or infinite problem. Man, as Goethe says, is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out where the problem begins. May it not be said that the otherwise impassable gulf between the Divine Omniscience and our necessarily incomplete scientific understanding of the universe is practically crossed—sufficiently for human purposes—by our spiritual nature in the fulness of its rationally authoritative needs, by the larger reason, if one chooses so to call it—by reason as authoritative, as distinguished from the purely logical understanding?"

Christianity thus ends in a faith which rests upon Conscience, Reason and Love, and where conflict arises between these, then to Conscience must be allowed the authority which belongs to it by nature. The Vedanta, rightly under-

stood, likewise culminates in a faith, but it is a faith which negates Conscience, which negates Reason and which negates Love—a faith of total agnosticism, (if the paradox be tolerated), that nothing can be known till the constitution of man is destroyed. We are not, however, here dealing with this, the logical terminus of the Vedanta, but with those who speak of it as an absolute philosophy, containing in terms of human speech a perfect explanation of the universe for the human reason. To such we say with Professor Campbell Fraser, “The final philosophy is practically found in a life of trustful enquiry, right feeling and righteous will or purpose—not in complete vision.”

The notion of the necessary finitude of the intellect has obtained such currency in the West, that the very phrase “Orthodox Philosophy,” which has been used to denote the Vedanta as expounded by Sankara, seems to be a self-contradiction. How can any philosophy be so free from the heterodoxy of error or imperfect knowledge that it shall merit the title of orthodoxy. The history of European philosophy shows how, generation after generation, great thinkers have arisen to make one more heroic attempt to solve the problem of existence. And not in vain, for though they have failed of perfect realisation, the human mind has been advanced another step onward. It was Hegel who said that the shores of time were strewn with the wrecks of philosophies. And now it would seem that his own colossal vessel, wrought though it was with the skill of a master-builder, has suffered the fate of the rest. It lies upon the bank, magnificent in its proportions and a mark for the eye of every navigator in those perilous seas, and the shores already resound with the noise of workshops where new expeditions are being fitted out for an enterprise in which failure brings

no disgrace and insuperable difficulty no despair. Of Hegelianism as a final philosophy Professor Seth writes:—
 “Is the future to be an absolute monotony, bringing us no new lessons and yielding us no deeper insight? Not for a moment can we entertain such an idea We feel instinctively with Lessing that the search for truth is a nobler thing than the truth here offered for our acceptance. It might be otherwise, if *the* truth were really ours, but that we may well believe is for God alone Let us be honest with ourselves, and let us be shy of demonstrations which prove too much. We are men and not gods; the ultimate synthesis is not ours. The universe is not plain to us save by a supreme effort of faith—of faith in reason and faith in goodness. But if this faith be reduced to system and put forward as a demonstration, it saps the springs both of speculative interest and of moral endeavour.”

Now whatever may be our expectations for the future, the attitude defined in these words is true to the present. No philosophy—and the Vedanta among others—is free from contradictions in reason. That our knowledge is finite is a fact so well established that we cannot quarrel with it. It is true that Hinduism contains the legends of seers, who transcended the limits of ordinary thought and attained to perfect vision. But the historical evidence for the existence of such is no better than for the wonders of the Puranas. Swami Vivekananda, who preaches the possibility of the experience, makes no profession of enjoying it himself.

The words of Paul, “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known,” imply for the hereafter a higher mode of cognising than is ours now. It may be

that in the future life these forms of time, space and causation will be superseded. Enough for us to know that the fuller vision will only follow upon a faithful and diligent use of our present powers. The true Christian will anticipate that next life in the nearer presence of his Lord with perfect confidence, for "though it doth not appear what we shall be: we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Will it not be objected that this view of Reason is repressive of intellectual activity? Far from it. If religion is founded on the whole nature of man, there cannot be the suppression of any part in that nature without the corruption of religion. In believing that the Moral Sense is supreme and that what God requires of man is that he shall *do right* and not that he shall *know all*, it is not implied that religion is consistent with knowing nothing and with a placid acquiescence in ignorance. Christianity comes with a rousing call to the intellect of India which is slumbering not less than her conscience. The hackneyed lines of Matthew Arnold concerning that East, "which plunged in thought again," have been commonly interpreted to mean, that India is as actively engaged in metaphysical enquiry as the countries of the West in industrial arts and natural sciences. Is this a true view of the situation? To take only the last two centuries—contrast the stagnancy of Hindu speculation with the movement recalled by the names, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel? Or look again at the output of philosophic literature in Europe and America and place it by the side of India's publications. Perhaps the comparison is unfair to a country in which the printing press is yet in its infancy. Let us choose rather the interest taken by

the educated classes in questions of philosophy and religion. It is not Indian pundits, who have taken the Hindu philosophical systems to Europe, but English and German *savants* who have come hither and spite of all difficulties possessed themselves of Eastern lore. Because the students of the West are eager for knowledge, from whatever source it may come, they apply themselves to the study of alien philosophies and religions. The Hindus are no longer a nation of philosophers, lovers of and seekers after truth, even if we allow them to be philosophizers. Philosophy has come to mean the mechanical repetition of ancient formulas. It is not the *sattwa guna* which presides over the meditateness of modern India but *tamas*, indolence and indifference. Her *samadhi* is torpor. Philosophy, which arose as a protest against the burdensomeness of an elaborate ritual of sacrifice, has become so false to her name and nature as herself to lay the fetters on thought and bind it inactive. That, which Seth prophesies of Hegelianism accepted as an absolute system, "has come to pass in this land. The Vedanta 'has sapped both the springs of moral endeavour and of speculative interest.' It has issued in an immoral religion and a contented ignorance. The truth is that the West has imported the same energy into its speculations as appears in its conquest over the physical forces, and because its dialectic is interfused with the moral sense, it has become as much superior in discipline and precision to the modes of reasoning, still in vogue in India, as a modern army to the picturesque rabble of some old-time Raja.

But with all this we fully admit that the Vedanta stands out as one of the monumental achievements of the human intellect, though when put forward as a final explanation of the universe, "We feel instinctively with Lessing that the search for truth is a nobler

thing than the truth here offered for our acceptance." The Vedanta with the Christian philosopher and theologian must find a conspicuous place in the history of thought, and we anticipate for it an increasing amount of attention and study in the West. For it is profoundly suggestive—suggestive in that it raises problems, not that it has found their solutions. It is instructive, as every system of error is instructive, in showing the inadequacy of certain given premises and observed methods; and it possesses notable elements of truth, of which no great system can be destitute. The Vedanta raises afresh a number of questions which cluster round personality, divine and human, and the relation of the absolute to the phenomenal. As is coming to be more clearly recognised the Indian church of the future will contribute its characteristic note to the harmony of truth and may possibly render good service in the sphere of thought now indicated. But whether the impact of the moral earnestness of the West upon the metaphysical propensity of the East vivify the intellect of India and send it forth upon a new and more glorious career or whether that intellect, thus aroused, react upon the Western conscience and inform it with a fuller understanding, there is no room for pride and national heart-burnings. In Christ is neither East nor West, any more than Jew or Greek. What European missionaries have to bring to India is not theirs, acquired by might or wisdom, but the gift of God to them in Christ. If Jesus of Nazareth speaks from the West to India, he speaks from the East to Europe. The land, made holy by the reconciling God-man, is set midway in the Earth, so that he stands mediating between two types of mind and stretches forth appealing hands on either side. If He be lifted up, we believe He will draw all men unto Him, for in that One who was "in

all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" and "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Conscience discovers the perfection of the moral ideal and Reason the eternal Word of God. To Him be the glory for ever.

THE END.

