"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XIII

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INDEX TO VOLUME XIII

A Consecrated Life. Poem. Marion F. Gilmore 65
A Man of Tranquil Wisdom. Mahabharata 180
Abundant Life. Swami Paramananda 3
All Things are One. Heraclitus 106
Ananda-Ashrama 46, 94
Ashrama Cloister. Sister Daya 235
Balancing Rod of Life. Poem. Swami Paramananda 179
Be Constant and Cheerful. Miguel de Molinos 41
Benefit of Prayer. St. Theresa 227
Children of Light. Poem. Swami Paramananda 61
Chorus of the Morning Stars. Poem. Julia P. Dabney 85
Christmas Reflection. Swami Paramananda 217
Christmastide at Ananda-Ashrama 17
Conscience. Zend-Avesta 43
Creative Power of Silence. Book Review 239
Divine Inspiration. Swami Paramananda 121
Divine Love. Jacopone da Todi 139
Easter Hymn. Poem. Swami Paramananda 73
Egoism and Realization. Swami Turiyananda 181
Faith and Love. Pere Caussade 225
Fire of Truth. Poem. Swami Paramananda 133
Four Paths of Yoga. Swami Vivekananda 134
Give All. Poem. Swami Paramananda 223
God Everywhere. Swami Ramakrishnananda 224
Healing and Preventive Methods. Swami Paramananda 97
High and Low. Philostratus 67
Hymn to Usha. Vedic Hymn 12
Impressions of Ananda-Ashrama. Marion F. Gilmore 140
Intrinsic Value of the Vedas. Max Muller 16
Introspection and Spiritual Vision. Swami Paramananda 193
Journey of the Soul. Hermes Trismegistus 92
Knowledge of the True Self. Aitareya-Upanishad 201

Life's Eternal Song. Poem. Swami Paramananda.....179
Life's Perpetual Spring. Poem. Swami Paramananda.....110
Light. Poem. Swami Paramananda.....203
Love. Poem. Swami Paramananda..... 25
Loving Service of God. Fenelon.....116
Maker of the Beautiful. Poem. Swami Paramananda.....145
Mirror of Eternity. Stunden der Andacht..... 83
New Year Reflection. Swami Paramananda..... 1
Night and Dawn. Rig-Veda.....219
Path of Duty. Mencius.....153
Poise and Personality. Swami Paramananda.....169
Prayer. St. John of the Cross..... 62
Quest of Beauty. Sister Daya.....155
Realization. Swami Turiyananda..... 13
Reception at Vedanta Centre..... 19
Relaxation and Receptivity. Swami Paramananda..... 32
Revelations. Mother Juliana..... 59
Rules for Daily Living. St. Francis de Sales.....137
Self-Knowledge. Swami Paramananda..... 49
Spirit of Meekness and Long-Suffering. James Naylor.....162
Spiritual Ascension. Swami Paramananda..... 76
Struggle for Expansion. Swami Vivekananda..... 26
Surrender. Poem. Marion F. Gilmore.....182
Swami Paramananda and His Work. Sister Devamata..164, 183, 206, 228
The Clouds of Egoism. Sri. Ramakrishna..... 29
The Dream of the Ashrama..... 68
The Kingdom Within. Hans Denck.....131
The Mystery of Justice. A. E. Gibson.....110
The Passing of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Ramakrishnananda..... 63
The Path of Spiritual Progress. Mahabharata..... 60
The Revolving Wheel. Chuang Tzu.....203
The Vigil. Book Reviews.....44, 71, 96
Three Necessary Qualifications. Mahatma Gandhi..... 65
Trust in God. Rabbi Bacchye..... 14
Unfoldment from Within. Swami Paramananda.....148
Universal Message.....2, 30, 57, 74, 108, 130, 146, 178, 202, 221
Veil of the Heart. Hafiz.....205
Vessels of Gold and Clay. Indo-Aryan Wisdom.....117
Via Crucis. Sister Daya..... 86
Wake, Awake. Poem. Swami Paramananda.....223
Why the Bodhisattva is Ill. Vimalakirti-Nirdesa.....107
Reports.....23, 48, 118, 143, 168, 190, 215

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FEBRUARY, 1924.

Relaxation and Receptivity

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CONTENTS

Love. Poem	Swami Paramananda
Struggle for Expansion. (New)	Swami Vivekananda
Clouds of Egoism	Sri Ramakrishna
Universal Message	Various Sources
Relaxation and Receptivity	Swami Paramananda
Be Constant and Cheerful	Miguel de Molinos
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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East"
Ezekiel.
'Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall

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LOVE

By Swami Paramananda

LOVE! Great immensity!
Unfathomed mystery!
Sacred current of life!
Vibrant, resplendent flame that burneth eternally,
Consuming all our imperfections,
Healing all our wounds,
And bestowing peace upon our turbulent heart!
Hail to Thee, Thou holy Spirit!
Hail to Thee again and evermore,
Thou Giver of pure sight!
Let me lie in Thy protecting arms
And sleep in the warmth of Thy bosom,
And in waking behold Thy beneficent face
That never changeth its tender mercy.
To Thee I turn my face
And on Thee I fix my eager gaze
Now and let it be through eternity.

Ananda-Ashrama December 29, 1923.

STRUGGLE FOR EXPANSION

Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was one of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message." The other articles will appear in subsequent numbers.)

The old dilemma whether the tree precedes the seed or the seed the tree, runs through all our forms of knowledge. Whether intelligence is first in the order of being, or matter; whether the ideal is first or the external manifestation; whether freedom is our true nature or bondage of law; whether thought creates matter or matter thought; whether the incessant change in nature precedes the idea of rest or the idea of rest precedes the idea of change; all these are questions of the same insoluble nature. Like the rise and fall of a series of waves, they follow one another in an invariable succession, and men take this side or that according to their tastes or education or peculiarity of temperaments.

For instance, if it be said that seeing the adjustment of nature of different parts, it is clear that it is the effect of intelligent work; on the other hand it may be argued that intelligence itself being created by matter and force in the course of evolution could not have been before this world. If it be said that the production of every form must be preceded by an ideal in the mind, it can be urged with equal force, that the ideal was itself created by various external experiences. On the one hand the appeal is to our ever present idea of freedom; on the other, to the fact that nothing in the universe being causeless, everything both mental and physical is rigidly bound by the law of causation. If it be affirmed that, seeing the changes of the body induced by volition, it is evident that thought is the creator of this body, it is equally clear that as change in the body induces a change in the thought, the body must

have produced the mind. If it be argued that the universal change must be the outcome of a preceding rest, equally logical argument can be adduced to show that the idea of unchangeability is only an illusory relative notion, brought about by the comparative differences in motion.

Thus in the ultimate analysis all knowledge resolves itself into this vicious circle, the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for this basis upon the selfsame vicious circles. It is clear, therefore that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called *Maya*. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.

Acting on the external world *Maya* manifests itself as the two powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its manifestations are desire and non-desire (*pravritti* and *nivritti*). The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is trying to go beyond control. Again each particle is checked by another force, the centripetal, and drawn towards the centre, so in the thought world the controlling power is checking all these outgoing desires.

Desires of materialization, that is, the being dragged down more and more to the plane of mechanical action belong to the animal man. It is only when the desire to prevent all such bond-

age to the senses arises that religion dawns in the heart of man. Thus we see that the whole scope of religion is to prevent man from falling into bondage of the senses and to help him to assert his freedom. The first effort of this power of *Nivritti* towards that end, is called morality. The scope of all morality is to prevent this degradation and break this bondage. All morality can be divided into the positive and the negative elements; either it says, "Do this," or "Do not do this." When it says "Do not," it is evident that it is a check to a certain desire which would make a man a slave. When it says "do", its scope is to show the way to freedom and to the breaking down of a certain degradation which has already seized the human heart.

Now this morality is only possible if there be a liberty to be attained by man. Apart from the question of the chances of attaining perfect liberty, it is clear that the whole universe is a case of struggle to expand, or in other words to attain liberty. This infinite space is not sufficient for even one atom. The struggle for expansion must go on eternally until perfect liberty is attained. It cannot be said that this struggle to gain freedom is to avoid pain or to attain pleasure. The lowest grade of beings, who can have no such feeling, also are struggling for expansion and according to many, man himself is the expansion of these very beings.

The contemplative man may not be idle. If he be weary and temptation rise in his prayers he may labor with his hands some honest and profitable work either for himself if he have need, or for others. If the contemplative man have not sufficient to live withal but through his labor, then may he make the shorter prayers for his necessary labor and that labor be the perfection and increasing of his prayer.—*St. Bridget of Sweden.*

THE CLOUDS OF EGOISM

By Sri Ramakrishna

The sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but he can do nothing when the clouds are in the sky and shut out his rays. Similarly so long as the cloud of egoism is in the soul, the light of God does not shine upon it. Egoism is a cloud that keeps God hidden from our sight.

If I hold up this cloth before me, you cannot see me though I shall be as near you. So also God is nearer to you than anything else, yet because of the screen of egoism you cannot see Him.

Egoism shuts the light out. When "I" will die, all trouble will cease. When through the grace of God the idea of "I am the non-doer" is firmly settled in the heart, a man becomes free even in this life and there is no more fear for him.

Those who seek for fame are under delusion. They forget that everything is ordained by the disposer of all things—the Supreme Being—and that all is due to the Lord and no one else. It is the wise who say always, "It is Thou, it is Thou, O Lord," but the ignorant and the deluded say, "It is I, it is I".

How can the idea of egohood be destroyed? It requires constant practice to do it. If you find that you cannot make this "I" go, then let it remain as the "servant I." There is not much danger in the "I" which knows itself as "I am the servant of God; I am His devotee."

If one ponders over the "I" and tries to find out what it is, one sees it is only a word which denotes egoism. It is extremely difficult to shake off. Then one says, "You wicked 'I', if you will not go by any means, remain as the servant of God." This is called the "ripe I".

If you feel proud, feel so in the thought that you are the servant of God, the son of God. Great men have the nature

of children. They are always children before God, so they have no egoism. All their strength is of God, belonging to and coming from Him. They feel they are nothing of themselves.

If we acquire the conviction that everything is done by God's will, that we are only the tool in the hands of God, then are we free even in this life.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Righteousness can be practised only when we have freed our mind from passions of egotism. Perfect peace can dwell only where all vanity has disappeared. Blessed is he who has understood the Dharma. Blessed is he who does no harm to his fellow-beings. Blessed is he who overcomes wrong and is free from passion. To the highest bliss has he attained who has conquered all selfishness and vanity.—*Buddha.*

The difficulty of reconciling the happiness which I connect with good actions and the persecutions which are suffered by virtue is overcome if we restrict our conception of happiness to perfect peace of mind. This peace of mind depends upon the approval of our own conscience. I repeat, there is no other happiness than peace of mind or soul; wherefore our own advantage must bring us to seek such a precious possession, and from the same motive to subdue the passions which disturb it.—*Frederick the Great.*

To bear with those who revile us even as the earth bears up those who dig it is the first of virtues. Bear with reproach even when you can retaliate; but to forget it will be still better. Let a man by patience overcome those who through pride commit excesses. Those who endure abstinence from food are great, next to those who endure the uncourteous speech of others.—*Tiruvalluvar.*

Do not think of your faults; still less of others' faults; look for what is good and strong; and try to imitate it; your faults will drop off like dead leaves when their time comes.

—*Ruskin*

Don't waste your life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation tor the hours or ages to follow.—*Benjamin Franklin.*

In the book of songs it is said: "In your secret chamber even you are judged; see you do nothing to blush for, though but the ceiling looks down upon you." Therefore the moral man, even when he is not doing anything, is serious, and even when he does not speak, is truthful.—*Confucius.*

He who looks carefully into the perfect Law, the Law of Freedom, and continues to do so, not listening to it and then forgetting it, but putting it into practice—that man will be blessed in what he does. Therefore speak and act as men who are to be judged by the Law of Freedom.—*Epistle of James.*

Good actions are a guard against the blows of adversity.—

Abu Bekr.

Use your body as a musician uses his lyre. When it is worn out, you can still sing without accompaniment.—*Plotinus.*

Abandoning without reserve all the desires born of mental fancies, and restraining completely by the mind the entire group of the senses from all directions, with understanding held by firmness, and mind established in the Self, let him thus by degrees attain tranquillity . . . . He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with Brahman, being freed from all impurities, to such a devotee comes supreme bliss.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

RELAXATION AND RECEPTIVITY

Class Lecture By Swami Paramananda

Whenever a wire is stretched beyond its capacity it is bound to break, especially if this is done abruptly. Similarly our physical and mental faculties suffer if we place upon them any undue pressure. Our nervous system can easily be compared with an electric wiring system, only it is much more subtle, and a great deal of our unseen life is dependent on it for its unfoldment. Therefore if we are looking for physical help and mental poise, we must pay utmost heed to keeping the nervous system under proper control and in perfect rhythm. Nothing is more efficacious towards this end than the practice of relaxation. Whenever any tense feeling comes upon us if we can relax immediately, we save ourselves from an actual breakdown. Physical relaxation however is impossible when the mind is wrought up through any excessive emotion. If for instance the mind is agitated with fear, the body will invariably grow tense and hard, causing automatic muscular contraction. Also this is equally true that with a properly relaxed and poised attitude of mind we may go through even a painful operation and be scarcely conscious of physical discomfort.

Perfect relaxation comes from the mental state. If we have the right thought, the right attitude, in spite of ourselves we shall find the body and nervous system relaxing and we shall soon be conscious of a feeling of upliftment. There are certain schools of physical culture at present which teach relaxation through postures. It is true that one posture will enable us to relax more readily than another, but we must not forget that the fundamental idea back of all this is the thought. If a person's mind is restless and tense with emotion, sitting in one position or another will make little difference. Poise is a great gift and proves a most helpful

blessing at every turn of our life, especially in trying circumstances.

The practice of relaxing the body and mind at certain intervals during the accustomed daily round, and of forming regular habits of silent communion with our inward Self, opens a new vista for our self-preservation both physical and mental. How restful it is to come in contact with one who is poised, who has the gift of relaxation. Every one of us can acquire poise and inward power if we are willing to work for it. First of all we must be ready to renounce all impatience with ourselves as well as with others. To maintain poise when some one treats us harshly or accuses us unjustly requires great endurance and patience. Many of us imagine that unless we are endowed with these virtues from birth, it is useless for us even to try for them; but this is not true. Both our body and mind can exhibit far greater endurance than we possess at the present time. We must always be careful, however, not to lose our sense of proportion and put upon ourselves any abnormal strain. What we are incapable of doing to-day, owing to our lack, we may accomplish in due season if we are willing to wait patiently and work temperately. Moderation is another potent factor in giving us poise. It really means cultivating a true sense of value and just proportion, and we cannot cultivate these without benefitting ourselves both in body and mind.

Relaxation not only prevents unnecessary wear and tear in the body and nervous system, but at the same time it produces poise and unites us with the hidden resources of our soul. It is impossible to imagine any true greatness with a scattered and turbulent mind. Poise and power are synonymous. When our mind and heart are calm and collected then alone do we find our access to the inherent potentialities of our soul.

We must be careful not to confound the idea of receptivity with passivity. Passivity does not by any means give us the sterling qualities. For instance, a man does not save his energy through mere inaction and continued lethargy, but rather by learning how to direct his energies through proper channels. What does it mean to make ourselves receptive? It means that if we come in contact with something beautiful, if we go to a concert or a religious service with openness of heart, we feel its beauty. It satisfies us. But if we go with a mind that is already filled with other thoughts we shall have no room for anything else. This mind of ours can be filled with only one substance at a time. You can see how true this is and how simple. Receptivity means opening the mind with a harmonious spirit. If we keep the mind blocked, no matter what the line of thought is, we shall be unable to receive any new inspiration. This is true not only in the spiritual life, but in all departments of life.

There are those who have so ordered their mind and heart that their whole being has become naturally rhythmic and receptive. If they come in contact with great practical ideals, they retain them. There are others upon whom these self-same ideals make no impression, because their mind is already full to the brim. It is like a man absorbed in deep study; you may call him, but he will not hear you; you may tell him wonderful news and repeat it, and still he will not hear. It was from this fact that the Yogis of India,—those who taught practical wisdom,—evolved the simple system of concentration. You may say that it is not simple at all, that it is a very difficult subject. It is simple and difficult at the same time. Sometimes we approach it with a complex mind. The mind is capable of following one line of thought. It is capable of following a thought so subtle, of making itself so one-pointed, that it can penetrate to the very depths where

all mystery will unfold. Also this very mind can become so involved and distracted that we have to spend all our time trying to gather it together.

The majority of people study life from the exterior. They direct their efforts wholly to outside conditions, believing that their fortune is dependent on what is without, but our real life is controlled from within. Those who are spiritually practical, first adjust their inner life. Mind is the vehicle. One thought makes us feel tense, turbulent, feverish, unhappy and restless, while another thought quiets us, gives us a sense of peace and rest. Both have their place in the mind. That is the reason why it is so important for us first to cleanse our own house before we have any quarrel with the outside world. It is wise to solve our own problems before we try to adjust the lives or solve the problems of others. People who are always talking about doing for others will think that this is selfish. But we have a wise ancient saying that one blind man cannot lead another. He may be full of sympathy, he may have great love for his brother, but first of all he has to gain his own sight. Spiritually we have to be awakened, equipped, revived, before we can help another. It is not a difficult task. Our greatest misfortune is when we regard the spiritual life as something entirely apart from our every-day life. It is in our daily living that we find its fulfillment and not in mere theory or in pretence of religion.

The very first sign of spiritual growth is that we become stronger, we have greater understanding, greater endurance, greater power to meet not only our own problems but the problems of others. These qualities unfold and we ourselves know whether we are making any progress or not. As we go on we complain less and less, we are more and more contented, no matter what happens; outside conditions do not bother us, not because we become dull or lack in a sense of

sympathy, but because we have the power of endurance to overcome them. Now, is this not practical? Is it not a help to us in our every day life? We work certain hours and then we must stop to replenish our energies. Gaining this sense of proportion and balance is a great asset. Business men need it; home-workers need it; thinkers and writers need it. Anywhere and everywhere we need this sense of right proportion. It adjusts our whole life.

Poise is the outcome of a certain evolution within. How to gain it is a subject which should interest every one. There cannot be any artificial poise. A person may pretend poise, but unless it is fundamental he is easily overthrown. We must touch a deeper cord in our life, and when we touch it, it will bring out certain special qualities. Then when some one accuses us unjustly, instead of flashing in anger with the thought that we are perfectly justified, a more profound feeling will come upon us and we shall feel that it does not touch us in the least. All that energy will be conserved and we shall find that not only have we kept our nervous balance and grown stronger physically, but another sphere of inner understanding has opened for us.

Things do not happen accidentally. Whenever something goes wrong we are responsible for it in one way or another. Also we have the power to counteract it. Remember that. It will help you always. It is not a question of fate, of a calamity befalling us from outside and causing our ruin. It is not so. We can gradually so adjust ourselves that we overcome misfortune, evil and all these turbulent aspects. It is not that they do not come upon us, but no matter how often they may come and how unexpectedly, we know how to meet them. That is one of the things we all need to learn. Without it we are not safe, nor can we have any poise. There are those who believe in praying for prosperity and the fulfillment of all

their desires. It is all right to do this so long as they crave for these things; but there is something else more needful and that is to be able to meet all difficulties and conditions with perfect evenness of mind and tranquillity.

The Bhagavad-Gita gives a very tremendous thought, not only for the few, but for all: even-mindedness in all circumstances. It is one of the fundamental themes of the Gita. We are not told that all is going to be made smooth for us, but we are told to rise above all things. As we come in contact with external life, we experience heat and cold, pleasure and pain. When we lack discrimination we take these seriously, as though they were going to be lasting. We magnify them; sometimes we think that they are going to ruin our life and we settle down to brooding unhappiness. So Sri Krishna, the Lord of Wisdom, tells those who are disciples of Truth; "The feelings of heat, cold, pleasure, pain, are produced from the contact of the senses with sense-objects; they are with beginning and end, transitory. Therefore, endure them bravely." To-day something strikes us with tremendous force and to-morrow it may not leave even a trace behind. Good fortune and ill fortune come. If we take either seriously, we must take both. In this dual world the only escape from life's tragic experiences is to have an even mind. If we allow ourselves to be carried away by one experience, we are bound to fall under the sway of another. That is why people break. They suffer extremes.

Poise means gaining tranquillity. Evenness of mind is a greater asset than all wealth or material power and it is unconditioned. Any one can acquire it. You may think that you are not equipped, that you did not start early enough. There is no time limit. It is a question of unfoldment. If you see it in the right light; if you make a point of contact with it, it is yours. There is no one who has any monopoly over it.

No one can either buy it or sell it. Deep down from within we unfold it; and when it is once unfolded, it is a power that we carry with us wherever we go. If we are thrown in the midst of trouble we have it as our companion, our guide, our safe-keeper. If we are thrown in the midst of a great crowd, we know how to maintain ourselves. It is individuals who give the living quality to these things. Individuals become great or they become helpless through their power of assimilation or their lack of it.

"With the heart serene and fearless, with a mind controlled and ever thinking of Me, let him sit steadfastly absorbed in thoughts of Me, regarding Me as his supreme goal." Serene-hearted and fearless—those are very beautiful thoughts that Sri Krishna gives us in the Bhagavad-Gita. Fearlessness is a quality of mind. So also is serenity. A person may seem calm and serene when everything goes according to plan, but his test comes when things happen contrary to his expectation. You may say, how can we help but feel it when things go wrong? But who has ever gained anything through anxiety or emotional excitement? Never a calamity befalls a person which is beyond his power of endurance. I do not give this merely as a consoling thought, but as an absolute conviction. Sometimes great tests come, but as soon as we take our stand and face them, our inward power increases. That is the reason why wise men sometimes think that obstacles are created to increase our strength and wisdom. Otherwise when we sit on the soft cushion of life very frequently we go to sleep. We even forget to think, we feel so comfortable and free from worry. By all means pray for comfort and prosperity if you so desire, but at the same time pray that you may have your inward resource open before you so that you may never become a burden to yourself or to another. More than that, pray that you may be able to aid others, for there is no

limit to our inward strength. Sometimes it is a very great misfortune when we have too much done for us in the outside world. As we become dependent on the material, we seek less and less from the spiritual and nothing can be more impoverishing to the individual than this.

We should always try to keep our inner eye open, because it is this which gives us a sense of freedom and power,—power that is not destructive, power that is not aggressive, power which makes us fearless and calm in all circumstances,—in storm, in danger, in calamity,—power which rises from the vivid realization that we are partakers of Divinity. This consciousness of spiritual presence that was in the heart of Christ, in the heart of Buddha, in the heart of St. Francis and other great Teachers, that same consciousness is also latent in us. Our daily task, in our waking, in our work and play, is to watch that we do not fill our mind and heart with alien thoughts. Thus we see how the theme of receptivity is expanded. We make ourselves receptive when we approach our ideal with openness of heart, with harmony of spirit, with a mind not already occupied. It is not every one who can receive. Many can hear, but few only receive. Our receptivity is wholly determined by our own mental attitude.

Steadfastness is a great virtue of mind. Without it we never can reach our ultimate goal. We need steadfastness not only in our spiritual pursuits, but in everything. Some people are staunch and loyal and they succeed. But nothing is ever altogether a misfortune. Even failure is a great teacher, just as great as success. Success and failure play equal parts in our unfoldment. This idea may shock some. But if we are open-hearted we learn even from adversity and bless those things which teach us and show us the way. Failure is a great antidote for ego. The ego always wants to take the place of the Lord. When we are really open to higher ideals we

find that nothing is altogether an evil. Forming the habit of relaxation at regular intervals during the day is not only efficacious spiritually, but we obtain marked physcial benefit through it. Periodical relaxation of the muscles saves our body and nervous system from unnecessary wear and tear and prevents premature ageing. Practice of relaxation of mind restores our tranquillity and gives us clear inner perception. Even when tense feelings and emotional agitations prevail in us, we can gain our balance and poise through this habit of relaxation.

Our whole life becomes transformed by the light of understanding, and the light of understanding can only come when we have evolved certain pure qualities within. Serenity of heart is such a quality. Can we imagine any one becoming spiritual who is full of inner turbulence? We cannot conceive of his gaining any real power or higher vision. It is not possible. Nor can he be a success in the material world because all is related. In order to become successful, efficient and helpful in material life, we need spiritual qualities. Material world and spiritual world,—these are fictitious creations of mind. In a higher sense there is nothing material and nothing spiritual. It is all one life with unbounded blessings. If we learn from every lesson of life, step by step, we ascend until we reach the ultimate goal for which we are all striving. When we do this consciously, we advance more quickly and find greater joy. No one wants to walk blindly. We like to feel and see the step we take. Doing this consciously and intelligently is the way to higher life.

It is difficult to conceive any one expressing high ideals through his life and thought whose mind is full of unrest. An unquiet heart can easily be compared with a stormy and cloudy sky, ever obscuring the face of the sun of Truth, filling our life with gloom. Under a fit of anger and emotional agi-

tation we can make ourselves susceptible to evil influences, but never can we receive spiritual blessings. Also we must bear in mind that merely remaining in a negative and passive state does not make us receptive for higher inspiration. It is only when our heart is free from all impurity, mind tranquil, and thoughts full of aspiration, that we are truly receptive. With receptive mind, tranquil body and undepressed heart, we become fit instruments to impart through our thoughts, words and deeds the unbounded blessings of life.

BE CONSTANT AND CHEERFUL

By Miguel de Molinos

(Spanish Mystic, 17th Century)

Thou art to know that thy soul is the centre, habitation and kingdom of God. That therefore, to the end the Sovereign King may rest on that throne of thy soul, thou oughtest to take pains to keep it clean, quiet, void and peaceable; clean from guilt and defects; quiet from fears; void of affections, desires and thoughts; and peaceable in temptations and tribulations.

Thou oughtest always then to keep thine heart in peace, that thou mayest keep pure that temple of God; and with a pure and right intention thou art to work, pray, obey and suffer, without being in the least moved, whatever it pleases the Lord to send unto thee. Because it is certain that for the good of the soul and for thy spiritual profit he will suffer the envious enemy to trouble that city of rest and throne of peace with temptations, suggestions and tribulations, and by the means of creatures with painful troubles and grievous persecutions.

Be constant and cheer up thine heart in whatsoever disquiet these tribulations may cause to thee. Enter within it, that thou mayest overcome it, for therein is the divine fortress which

defends, protects and fights for thee. If a man hath a safe fortress, he is not disquieted, though his enemies pursue him, because by retreating within, these are disappointed and overcome. The strong castle that will make thee triumph over all thine enemies, visible and invisible, and over all the snares and tribulations, is within thine own soul, because in it resides the divine aid and sovereign succor. Retreat within it, and all will be quiet, secure, peaceable and calm.

It ought to be thy chief and continual exercise to pacify that throne of thy heart, that the Supreme King may rest therein. The way to pacify it will be to enter into thyself by means of internal recollection; all thy protection is to be prayer and loving recollection of the divine Presence. When thou seest thyself more sharply assaulted, retreat into that region of peace, where thou wilt find the fortress. When thou art more faint-hearted, betake thyself to this refuge of prayer, the only armour for overcoming the enemy and mitigating tribulation. Thou oughtest not to be at a distance from it in a storm, to the end thou mayest, as another Noah, experience tranquillity, security and serenity; and to the end thy will may be resigned, devoted, peaceful and courageous.

Finally, be not afflicted nor discouraged to see thyself faint-hearted; He returns to quiet thee, that still He may stir thee, because this Divine Lord will be alone with thee to rest in thy soul and form therein a rich throne of peace; that within thine own heart, by means of internal recollection and with His heavenly grace, thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigor in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.

A man contains all that is needful to his government within himself.—*Emerson.*

CONSCIENCE

From the Zend-Avesta

The soul is met after death at the Chinvat or Judge's Bridge by a figure of a woman, noble and in the flower of youth.

Soul: "What maiden art thou who art the most beautiful of maidens that ever I have seen?"

Maiden: "I am verily, O youth, thy conscience, thy good thoughts, and words, and deeds, thy very own."

Soul: "Who hath desired thee hither with his love, coming with thy majesty, thy goodness and thy beauty, triumphant and an enemy of grief?"

Maiden: "Thou hast loved me and desired me hither, O youth, even thy good thoughts, and words and deeds. Chanting the Gathas and sacrificing to the good waters and to Ahura Mazda's fire, contenting the righteous saint who came to thee from near and afar: it is thus that thou hast made me who am lovely, still more lovely, and me who am beautiful hast thou made still more beautiful, and thou hast made me who am beatified still more beatified . . . .through thy good thoughts, and words, and deeds."

The soul then passes on and comes before the golden throne where the good mind is seated.

Good Mind: "When didst thou come hither from that perishable world to this imperishable world?"

The Saints: "How long was thy salvation?"

Ahura Mazda: "Ask him not what thou askest of that cruel way which is the dividing of the soul and body."

Three steps then the soul advances into the threefold heaven. The first step brings him to the entrance of the heaven, the good thought; the second step leads him to the good word and the third step, to the good deed. Then the soul passes on content to the souls of the saints, to the golden throne of Ahura Mazda, to the golden throne of the bountiful immortals and to the abode of sublimity.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

(Instead of publishing a special review of "The Vigil" in the "Message" we believe it will interest our readers more to read some of the reviews by certain eminent critics which have appeared elsewhere. We are giving two below and others will follow later.)

"The Vigil" a little volume of poems, by Swami Paramananda, is an interesting collection of verse into which a classic beauty and chasteness of thought have been so interwoven that they strike a high spiritual note and lift one out of the ordinary plane of material things.

Mysticism in its truest form finds expression here, and a burning ardor for a more intimate knowledge of the Divine, and the soul yearning to see the face of the Mighty One, envelops its pages. These poems are said to fulfill the mystical ideals of both East and West, and this young Hindu poet has struck fire in even the smallest fragment of verse with his limpid honesty of mind. The opening poem, "The Vigil," from which the book takes its title, is particularly beautiful in its simplicity and serenity of style:

> "In the glow of my sacred lamp
> I caught a glimpse of Thy countenance
> Which hath roused in me an all-
> consuming longing to see Thee again.
> I keep vigil—
> My altar light burns day and night
> with the hope of Thy coming.
> I know in my inmost depth that no
> mortal light can reveal Thy immortal face,
> Thou art seen only in Thine own effulgence,
> Yet with yearning hope in my heart,
> I keep my little altar lamp
> Day and night, burning—burning."

Those ambitious but somewhat misguided souls, who leap into verse writing with utmost abandon, would do well to study the technique and severe simplicity of this gifted new poet of India.—*Buffalo Courier, Buffalo, N. Y.*

That high note which Swami Paramananda reached in the poems contained in "Soul's Secret Door" is unfalteringly maintained in his latest collection of adulant verse, "The Vigil," which is an outpouring of the soul to its Maker, an acknowledgment of the Voice of the Infinite that has penetrated to the innermost recesses of the poet's being. Adoration is dominant in this spiritual efflorescence in which beauty of expression vies with reverential thought. There is no studied mysticism in these poems of worship; simple and direct, they flow from the heart of the utterer, evidencing his complete blending of self with the source of all joy. After much travail, this groper for peace has found his goal and in a passion of gratitude he prostrates himself at the feet of the Master. From the vigils he has kept has come a realization of the benign Presence. The poet confesses:

"I sailed on the wing of thought, crossing
many deep streams where my feet would
have sunk in weight,
But the wing of thought carried me to the
unwonted shores of life, where I found Thee,
And in Thee I found my rest.
Soul in search is never at rest.
Soul in slumber knoweth not the precious peace.
Soul in wakeful communion is at rest and
hath found its peace."

There is no striving after effect in this little volume; the songs are as sincere as they are spontaneous and inspirational. They are luminous with the great luster of divine love and reflect the flame of faith whose transcendent glow has permeated the poet's life. Only an understanding soul that has been relieved of all impurities could have voiced this intense love of the Divine, this merging of the finite will in that of the Infinite.—*Sam. T. Clover, in Los Angeles "Saturday Night," January* 26, 1924.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Included in every Ashrama report for a long time to come will be the statement: The development work at the Ashrama goes steadily on. Only those who know the place and its magnitude can realize what that means,—the heavy brush that has to be cleared away, the stone walls that must be built, the vegetable and flower gardens waiting to be planned and planted, the pruning, the irrigation, the building, and always what has been done is as nothing compared to what lies ahead to do.

When over a hundred people were present at the Christmas Sunday Service, the first Service after Swami Paramananda's return from Boston, it seemed doubtful that that attendance would be maintained. The Ashrama seems so remote, although it is not really so, and it is so young and does so little advertising; but not only has the Sunday congregation held to the hundred mark, it has almost doubled it, each Sunday showing an increase. The motors begin to climb the hill by two o'clock and from then till nearly four there is a stream of cars. Many people come by street car or stage and are met by the Ashrama motors, and sometimes real pilgrims come on foot. Before the Service starts, they all walk through the gardens and up the trails or else stand enchanted on the edge of the natural platform gazing out over the misty valley. In spite of an almost unparalleled drought, the wild flowers are beginning to come out, the golden acacia is in full bloom and the flowering peach with its deep pink blossoms stands out against the blue sky like a Japanese flower arrangement. Again and again is heard the exclamation by some new-comer from the east: This is the most beautiful spot I have seen in California! In this mountain retreat friends from Boston or New York are almost as commonly met with as friends from Los Angeles. One old member from Boston is spending the winter at La Crescenta hotel in order to be close to the Ashrama. Other

newer members from the west are planning or actually building homes in or near La Crescenta with the same purpose . It is hoped that sometime at the Ashrama there will be a guest-house where people with earnest, yearning spirit can stay for a few weeks or months, but at present there is barely provision for the large group of consecrated workers.

On the second Sunday of February, the weather was so propitious that the Swami conducted the Service out of doors the first time this season. His subject was "Spiritual Healing" and healing seemed to be conveyed not only by his words but by the hills, the soft wind and the perfume of the flowers. One of the congregation remarked that the Service was like a benediction. Whenever the weather permits, Service will be out of doors.

For the past month the Swami has been holding a class on Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. It was originally intended more for the household than for outside members, as many people do not care to drive up into the hills at night; but this class also has been well attended and those who come find moonlight at the Ashrama even more enchanting than sunlight.

The newspapers have been universally kind in their comments. One church editor of a big Los Angeles paper writes: "Ananda-Ashrama or Blissful Peace Retreat, is the name of this Centre, situated well up in the Sierra Madre mountains. Swami Paramananda, a devout Hindu teacher, philosopher and poet, is its founder and leader. Not only from Los Angeles but from many beach cities motors find their way to this natural altar in the hills where the peace of nature seems to mingle with that of the Swami's teachings. Perhaps the universality of these teachings may be best expressed by the benediction which he chanted first in Sanskrit and then in English at the close of yesterday's Service: 'May He who is Father in Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohamme-

dans, Jehovah of the Jews, Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, Buddha of the Buddhists, Divine Mother and Infinite, all-abiding Spirit of the Indo-Aryans, grant unto us all His divine peace and blessing. May His peace and blessings be with us now and forevermore."

REPORT

During the month of January Swami Paramananda gave a course of lectures under the auspices of the Metaphysical Library of Los Angeles every Wednesday afternoon. His subject was Practical and Constructive Concentration. Week after week the lecture hall was crowded to its capacity, sometimes overflowing into the ante-rooms. Many people heard the Swami for the first time and are now coming faithfully to the Ashrama.

* * *

On the evening of January 27th the Swami addressed the Pasadena Lodge of the Theosophical Society on the subject of "Civilization and Spiritualization." In spite of the rain storm an unusually large number gathered to hear him. Many expressed their keen desire to have the Swami give regular lectures and classes in Pasadena. It is probable that this will take place in the near future.

* * *

Activities at The Vedanta Centre of Boston have been unfailingly maintained during Swami Paramananda's absence in the west by Miss Katharine Sherwood, who conducts Services every Sunday morning. Other devoted members help to keep the flame of faith and fervour burning. The first social evening on January 31st was given over to Mrs. Joseph Mahoney who entertained those who came with colored lantern slides of California, thus helping to dispel the sense of physical distance between the Swami's work in the east and in the west.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MARCH, 1924

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

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CONTENTS

Self-Knowledge	Swami Paramananda
Universal Message	Various Sources
Revelations	Mother Juliana
The Path of Spiritual Progress	Mahabharata
Children of Light (Poem)	Swami Paramananda
Prayer	St. John of the Cross
The Passing of Sri Ramakrishna	Swami Ramakrishnananda
A Consecrated Life (Poem)	Marion Forster Gilmore
Three Necessary Qualifications	Mahatma Gandhi
High and Low	Philostratus
The Dream of the Ashrama	Sister Daya
The Vigil	Reviews

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ananda-Ashrama (Peace Retreat) is an extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, established by Swami Paramananda in January, 1909. It is located in La Crescenta in the arms of the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains at an altitude of 2,000 to 2,800 feet, only a short distance from the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena and Glendale. This was procured by the Swami Paramananda at the outset of 1923 and on the last Sunday in April of the same year it was formally opened by the Swami "for the good of many and for the happiness of many".

The aim of the work is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism. During the short time since its inception a great deal of development work has been accomplished and a great deal more will be done during the coming months. Plans are being made now for the chapel, auditorium, reading room, library, guest house, living quarters, landscape gardening, and out-of-door amphitheatre. In the meantime public services are held every Sunday afternoon at 3:30, and the Swami holds a study class for the earnest seekers after Truth every Thursday evening at eight o'clock. The Ashrama is open to visitors every day between 2 and 5 o'clock.

For further information please write to the secretary,
ANANDA-ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."—Tyndall.

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE

By Swami Paramananda

THERE is no real difference between God-knowledge and Self-knowledge, although apparently these two ideas seem to be at great variance. The familiar axiom of the Greek philosophers, "Know thyself"; the echo of the Vedic Upanishads, "Thou art That"; and the Christian injunction, "First seek the Kingdom of God"; all in their final analysis but lead us to the self-same goal of indivisible wholeness of life. The expression of the monist and the expression of the dualist are different, but the difference is not as radical and fundamental as we usually imagine it to be. At first glance the theme of Self-knowledge appears abstract, abstruse and merely a form of rationalistic speculation especially suited to the intellectual temperament of the philosopher. It is impossible, however, for us to inquire into the true entity of our being without making our contact with a supreme Source, whom the dualist calls the Godhead, Creator, his Master, the one who becomes his sole object of worship.

We are all connected innately with this great Source; but through strange distortion of world mirage we find ourselves separated from it, and the endeavour of the individual to re-relate himself takes two distinct methods. One

is to discover our true entity, travelling through the haze of material unrealities and non-essentials, exerting our high sense of discrimination and logic till through the process of elimination we once more connect ourselves with our origin and thus declare our true entity. This is what the sages call the knowledge of Self. The other method is when we realize our own helplessness and inability to face the overwhelming perplexities of life and turn to that supreme Source with whole-souled humility and yearning devotion, seeking His aid to deliver us from our bondage of iniquity. Whether this final goal is reached through selfless devotion and prayer, or through rationalistic discrimination and meditation, in both cases the lower self of man is superseded. As long as we are under the domination of our lower nature, it is impossible for us to grasp the magnitude of God-knowledge or Self-knowledge; because in both cases the selfish man must die, and after the death of the material man the real man ascends with all his spiritual grandeur.

No man can possess true knowledge of Self without knowing his relationship with Godhead, and again man cannot possess knowledge of God without knowing his own inherent worth. First of all, however, we must realize that Self-knowledge does not leave any room for egotism or aggressiveness. There are many who feel drawn to the monistic aspect of the spiritual teaching because it lays emphasis on the supremacy of Self; but it should not be confused at any time with the lower nature of man, which leads to smallness, pettiness and unworthy selfish feelings. Self-knowledge can never be used for any personal gratification. Otherwise it would prove to be a very dangerous doctrine. He who succeeds in rising to a sphere where the spirit of man breathes freely, where he realizes the great magni-

tude of universal life, not as Mr. or Mrs. So and So haunted by self-will and petty desires, but as a soul that has severed himself from all small boundary lines of self-limitation; such a man can never at any time stoop to personal gratification. Such a man then begins to radiate what every soul must radiate—the power of God, unbounded life. We are all born here with this great divine heritage to sustain us, to guide us, but we deliberately break ourselves from this beneficent Source and create our boundary lines, saying "This is my property and that is yours, and you must not trespass on mine." If a man tries to partition off the infinite sky, we say immediately that he has lost his reason, he is insane; yet that same insanity enters into our own soul through greed, selfishness and lower appetites. Through madness of passion and self-gratification we attach importance to that which is non-essential and lose sight of our great inward life. What part of us is real? What part of us is descended from the infinite Source? This is the cry of every true seeker and every true philosophy, and every man must be fully possessed of this knowledge.

As soon as we become aware of the fact, that we are no other than parts of the Infinite, that we are all descended from one Source, one Father, one Mother, then do we learn to take our place in this great universe worthily. We are not able to fulfill even our smaller duties until we realize this. We deprive ourselves more than others when we remain unillumined. Whenever we deliberately cheat some one, rob some one, or take undue advantage of some one, for our personal satisfaction, who is the loser? We ourselves. No intelligent being should take a chance with his spiritual evolution. We may imagine that it does not matter in the least whether or not we think of the higher

things now, so long as we pay heed to our immediate material needs, but we do not sustain the body by merely dwelling on our bodily interests. We may try to reverse the order, but we cannot reverse the results. The thing which is first must be given first place in life and no man has ever been able to prove to the contrary. Whenever we try to reverse the order and seek the kingdom of Truth last and to do all other things first, we go contrary to all true teaching, whether it be Christian, Hindu, Greek or Chinese. All truth-seers of the world and all true thinkers and lovers proclaim unanimously, "Know thyself first". A man cannot have knowledge of Self without having knowledge of God and humanity. These three principles work together. We cannot improve ourselves without improving the world. You may say, "I am not interested in humanity. I am primarily interested in my own welfare." Even from that view-point we need something other than mere thoughts of the material. It is not by thinking on matter that man becomes successful or healthy. In order to find our true expression even in the material world, we need light, light from the higher realm. For instance, we are interested in being healthy and happy; but wherefrom comes healthfulness and happiness, real strength and wisdom? Merely wanting these does not mean that we obtain them. We must earn them, and we cannot work for one thing and obtain another. We cannot plant on the soil of our life noxious seeds and obtain beautiful blossoms and sweet fruits. That is impossible.

Every man is capable of doing infinite good if he only turns his mind through the right channel. We are here to work in harmony, not to become rebels, but to make ourselves so absolutely in tune that our hands and feet, heart and mind and brain and all our faculties may work in co-

operation with the great universal force. Do we not carry that spark of life that has descended from the great infinite Source? But alas, some of us carry it quite unconsciously. In the great classics of India a parable is given of the donkey. Although he may carry a load of sandalwood on his back, he is only aware of the weight and not the merit of the sandalwood. Similarly there are many who carry a great load of learning, but their labor is indeed like that of the donkey—they are not conscious of the essence of their learning. We can all acquire book knowledge to a certain extent. We can become acquainted with science, art and philosophy; we can quote glibly from all the Bibles of the world; but if we have not assimilated their spirit, if we have not found our true expression through them and their expression through us, then we are indeed like the donkey. We carry a great load of life with us and it becomes a very arduous task.

No matter how we may seek, or what may be our immediate point of interest, none of us can be satisfied to stop at small ends. There is no one who wants to be a petty gainer. Our great thirst is for happiness and plenitude, but this thirst can never be quenched until we connect ourselves with the very Source of life. Every human being is reminded by his religion and also by his higher instinct that he is born of Divinity, yet how often we do not dare think of it. A strange dilemma takes possession of our mind, we are afraid to open our hearts before the great Light which heals and uplifts and restores. What can be the fear? Should a child ever fear to go to his mother even if he has done wrong? You do not want your child to tremble before you. The same is true with the infinite Father and infinite Mother. That all-loving Spirit would not have us tremble and hide our face from him in fear.

We hold ourselves aloof through our own calculation. Suppose through wrong calculation we have done something we should not have done. Can anything ever destroy the light of the sun? On the contrary the sun dispels all darkness. When the light of wisdom is kindled within us it is like a great fire. It utterly consumes all our ignorance and imperfection. This is why in India Self-knowledge is regarded as the highest possession of man. A man may have all other things, but if he lacks this, he lacks all. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Let us consider what Self-knowledge really means. Does the Self consist of our hands and feet, our brain and heart and muscles? Do these constitute that which the sages proclaim to be the undying principle in man? There is something besides these which makes the complete man, but unfortunately we do not try to see beyond the shackle of the gross part of our life. It is easy for us to recognize what is immediate and visible. The subtle principle very often goes unnoticed; and without the knowledge of this we must ever remain in ignorance, incomplete, and out of tune with the great cosmic principle. A story is told in the Upanishads that once two seekers went to a great teacher to be instructed and illumined. One of them was naturally full of lower instincts,—love of power, haughtiness, arrogance and selfishness; the other was of refined and spiritual nature. After a time of discipline the teacher proclaimed before both of them, "Thou art That". They both went home. The one with material instincts was greatly pleased to think that there was no one higher than himself, that he himself was the object of worship, and his philosophy became "myself first". The other was not satis-

fied. As he pondered and reflected within himself he knew that the words of the teacher were not to be taken literally; he felt that it was not his physical self that his teacher meant by saying, "Thou art That". So he went again and questioned the teacher, and again his teacher told him, "Thou art That, find That out for thyself".

You may wonder why it is that when some one comes with the desire to know the Truth he is told, "Find out for thyself". But can we ever give knowledge to another until he is ready for it? Suppose you have an invention a little bit out of the ordinary and you try to convince your friends of its worth, they will only laugh at you. If this is true in the material world, how much more true is it in the spiritual world. All that the great masters and teachers can do is to give us stimulus, to hold before us a picture. But we must paint our own picture. No one can ever force another in religion or in any form of wisdom. What the teacher did was to stimulate the mind of the disciple. Again he went away and reflected on the nature of the Self. It was not the body, neither could it be the restless mind. Thus he reasoned, discarding that which was only material, reaching gradually into the subtler and subtler realms of life, until there dawned in his soul realization of That within him which is boundless, diseaseless and deathless.

Man is like two entities, like a double being. There is the "eating, drinking, sleeping man", as Emerson calls him, aware of his appetites, aware of his limitations and needs, and there is the man that is beyond all these. So long as we remain absolutely confined to the lower aspect of our life, we have no opportunity for self-expression. We feel like slaves; but every one has the privilege of transcending this condition; and we transcend it, not by belonging to a creed or professing a dogma, but through the higher ex-

pression of life. If we are convinced that there is a soul, then we must have some knowledge of it, and not merely indulge ourselves in bodily realities.

We are all conscious of our physical existence. Some are too conscious of it. When our soul becomes of foremost importance, when we give it first place in our life, then do we find co-operation between matter and spirit, between body and soul. The combination of these two makes a perfect man. It enables us to bring richer blessings first upon ourselves and then upon others. For no man can be truly conscious of his higher life without contributing some tangible benefit to his fellow-beings. Knowledge of the soul is like a brilliant light, not only does it reveal our own course, not only does it remove our own perplexities, but it illumines the path of others. That is the reason why the great teachers have said, "Let your light shine". We cannot possess the light without letting it throw its glow.

It is strength that overcomes weakness; it is light that overcomes darkness; it is wisdom that overcomes ignorance. That is the eternal law. Whenever you are downcast make an effort to connect yourself with that eternal light. The nature of light is to dispel all gloom. Instead of brooding over your misfortunes, strive to make this contact with your higher resources. Whenever you see some one who has fallen down with broken spirit, try to throw your light upon his path, seek to inspire him with your love. If you can once rekindle in his soul his lost faith, if you can restore unto him his knowledge, he will no longer find his life intolerable. We cannot help but do this to our fellow-beings naturally, if we have Self-knowledge. When a man becomes possessed of his higher Self, not possessed by egotism, not possessed by selfishness or weakness, not possessed by the vanities of this world, but possessed of the

true Light, he becomes incapable of doing anything ignoble or selfish. The man who carries the light may not be aware that he is doing any service to others, but he does nevertheless shed light upon their path. His very existence becomes a blessing. We cannot be full of light without throwing it upon the path of other men and women. We cannot be happy without making others happy.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

God is in all men but all men are not in God: that is the reason why they suffer.

Unshod and with bare feet who will venture to walk upon thorns and sharp stones? Shod with divine wisdom what thorn or sharp stone can harm you?

If you first smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit, the sticky milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to the hands. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the universal Self and then live in the midst of the world, it will not affect you in any way.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Discern form from substance, O son, as lion from desert. When thou seest the waves of speech, know that there is an ocean beneath them. Every moment the world and we are renewed. Life is like a stream renewed and ever renewed. —*Jalal-u-din-Rumi.*

It is not the knowledge of a thing, but the doing of it that is difficult. Be studious, of humble intentions and try to maintain timely effort.—*Yueh in Shu King.*

Of light my buckler I did make
And for lance the darkness take:
In balanced quiet my mind abode,
And then upon my way I rode.

Jacopone da Todi.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.—*Revelation.*

From inwardness is born a sensible love which penetrates the heart of man and the highest faculties of the soul. This love and delight none can experience who has not inwardness. Sensible love is the desire and appetite for God as for an eternal good in which all is contained. Sensible love renounces all the creatures. Interior love feels itself touched from above by the eternal love which it must practise eternally. Interior love willingly renounces and despises everything in order to obtain that which it loves.

From this sensible love is born devotion to God and His glory. For none can have a hungry devotion in his heart unless he possesses the sensible love of God. Devotion exacts and stimulates a man internally and externally to the service of God. It makes the body and soul abound in glory and merit in the eye of God and men. God exacts devotion in all that we do. It purges the body and soul from all that might hold us back: it shows us the true path to blessedness.—*Ruysbroek.*

The wise, who by means of the highest meditation on the Self knows the Ancient One, difficult to perceive, seated in the innermost recess, hidden in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the depth of inner being, (he who knows that One) as God, is liberated from the fetters of joy and sorrow.

The Self is subtler than the subtle, greater than the great; It dwells in the heart of each living being. He who is free from desire and free from grief, with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman.*

The wise who know the Self, bodiless, seated within perishable bodies, great and all-pervading, grieve not.—*Katha Upanishad.*

REVELATIONS

Of Mother Juliana, Anchoress of Norwich—14th Century

It is ready to us, and more easy, to come to the knowing of God, than to know our own soul. For our soul is so deep grounded in God and so endlessly treasured, that we may not come to the knowing thereof, till we have first knowing of God; which is the Maker to whom it is oned. God is more nearer to us than our own soul; for he is ground in whom our soul standeth: for our soul sitteth in God in very rest, and our soul standeth in God in sure strength: and our soul is kindly rooted in God in endless love. And therefore if we will have knowing of our soul, and commoning, and daliance therewith, it behooveth to seek into our Lord God, in whom it is inclosed. And surely I saw, that into this high deepness our good Lord himself leadeth us in the same love that he made us. . . .

And so hath all thing its being through the love of God. In each little thing I saw three parts: the first is that God made it; the second is that He loves it; the third is that God keeps it.

But what is that to me? Truly that He is the Maker, the Lover, the Keeper; for till I am substantially oned to Him, I may never have love, rest, nor true bliss; that is to say, that I be so fastened to Him that there be right nought that is made betwixt my God and me. And who shall do this deed? Truly He Himself by His mercy and His grace, for He has made me thereto, and blissfully restored me. And therefore I pray you all for God's sake, and counsel you for your own profit, that ye leave the beholding of the wretched, worldly, sinful creature—and that ye mightily, wisely, lovingly and meekly, behold God, that of His courteous love and of His endless goodness, would show to all alike this vision to comfort us all.

THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

From the Mahabharata

(The Mahabharata or "Great India" is one of the two great Sacred Epics of India, and is supposed to have been composed about 1400 B. C. It contains 220 thousand lines.)

Truth constitutes the essence of the Vedas, control over passions constitutes the essence of Truth, and self-denial forms the essence of self-control. These attributes are always present in a spiritual character. The subjugation of the senses is the highest means of obtaining spiritual advancement. By indulging them, a person contracts vices; and by bringing them under control, he attains freedom.

There should be no wrong over wrong, rather one should deal honestly. The sinful person who desires to commit a crime is slain by himself. One should do away with falsehood. One should render good to all unasked. One should never forsake virtue out of lust, anger or malice. Those who are virtuous, who practise self-denial, speak the truth, and follow the instructions of their spiritual teachers, obtain the highest wisdom.

These three are reckoned to constitute the highest way of the virtuous, namely, a man must not offend any one, he must be charitable, and he must speak the truth always. Those who are kind on all occasions and who are filled with compassion, obtain the greatest contentment and ascend the highest path of virtue, and their acquisition of virtue is most certain.

The wise man delights in virtue and lives by virtue. Such a man with the wealth of virtue which he thus acquires, waters the root of the plant (righteousness) in which he finds most virtue. The virtuous man thus acts and his mind becomes serene. Those who are freed from sin, who are wise, forbearing and self-controlled, enjoy continual bliss in this world and in the next world.

CHILDREN OF LIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

Children of Light, walk in the light;
Let all darkness vanish from your path!
Children of Light, let your face shine
with love and joy!
Dark night of the soul is an illusion of mind.
Doubt of your divine right will melt
before the sun of Truth that will
dawn in your heart.
Children of Light, dwell in the light!
Think of the light and live with the light!
Let your life be a perpetual light:
Your words will scatter sparks of wisdom;
Your glance of love will penetrate
desolate hearts;
Your song of bliss will rouse all down-
cast spirits.
In hour of meditation your thoughts will
shine like the bright stars,
Illumining the firmament of the spiritual
world.
Children of Light, walk in the light!
Let all darkness vanish from your path!

If a man is unhappy, remember that his unhappiness is his own fault, for God made all men to be happy.—*Epictetus.*

He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper: but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances.—*Hume.*

PRAYER

By St. John of the Cross—16th Century

O Lord God, my Love, who can free himself from base and mean ways, if Thou, O my God, wilt not lift him up to Thee in pure love? Thou hastenest joyfully and lovingly, O Lord, to raise up him who has offended Thee, but I make no haste to honour and raise him up who has offended me. How shall a man raise himself up to Thee, for he is born and bred in misery, if Thou wilt not lift him up with the hand that made him? O Lord Almighty, if the shadow of the power of Thy justice in earthly sovereigns who govern and rule the nations can do so much, what cannot Thy almighty justice do, dealing with the just man and the sinner?

O Lord my God, Thou art not estranged from him who does not estrange himself from Thee. How is it that men say Thou art absent? O Lord my God, who is there that seeks Thee in pure and true love, who does not find Thee to be the joy of His will? It is Thou who art the first to show Thyself, going forth to meet those who desire to meet Thee. Thou wilt not take away from me, O my God, what Thou hast once given me in Thy only begotten Son Jesus Christ, in Whom Thou hast given me what I desire. I will therefore rejoice, Thou wilt not tarry if I wait for Thee. Wait in hope then, O my soul, for from henceforth thou mayest love God in thy heart.

O sweetest love of God, too little known; he who has found Thee is at rest; let everything change, O my God, that we may rest in Thee. Everywhere with Thee, O my God, everywhere all things with Thee as I wish. O my Love, all for Thee, nothing for me: nothing for Thee, everything for me. All sweetness and delight for Thee, none for me: all bitterness and trouble for me, none for Thee. O my God,

how sweet to me Thy presence, who art the sovereign Good. I will draw near to Thee in silence, and will uncover Thy Feet, that it may please Thee to unite me to Thyself, making my soul Thy bride: I will rejoice in nothing till I am in Thine arms. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not for a moment, because I know not the value of my soul.

THE PASSING OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Told by His disciple Swami Ramakrishnananda

When Sri Ramakrishna gave up His body did He feel any pain? On the contrary I think that was the most blissful moment of His life, for there was horripilation all over His body. I myself saw it. Every hair stood up on end. He never really felt much pain. He never lost His cheerfulness. He used to say that He was all well and happy, only there was a little something here (pointing to the throat).

On that last night He was talking with us to the very last. For supper He had drunk a whole half glass of *paysam* (gruel) and seemed to relish it. There was no doubt a little heat in the body, so He asked us to fan Him and some ten of us were all fanning at once. He was sitting up against some five or six pillows which were supported by my body and at the same time I too was fanning. This made a slight motion in the body and twice He asked me: "Why are you shaking?" As if His mind were so fixed and steady that He could perceive the least motion. Swamiji Vivekananda took His feet and began to rub them and Sri Ramakrishna was talking to him, telling what he must do. "Take care of these boys", He repeated again and again, as if He were putting them in his charge. Then He asked to lie down. Suddenly at one o'clock He fell towards one side, there was a hoarse sound in the throat and I saw all the hairs stand on end. Swamiji quickly laid His feet on a

quilt and ran downstairs as if he could not bear it. A doctor, who was a great devotee and who was feeling His pulse, saw that it had stopped and began to weep aloud. "What are you doing, you fool?" I asked, meaning that he was acting as if Sri Ramakrishna had really left us. We all believed that it was only *Samadhi*, so Swamiji came back, and we all sat down, some twenty of us, and began repeating, "Hari Om! Hari Om!" all together. So we waited until between one or two the next day. Still the body had some heat in it, especially about the back, but the doctor insisted that the soul had left the body and about five it had grown cold, so we placed it on a very beautifully decorated cot and carried it to the cremation ground.

I remember every incident of that last day. He seemed very well and cheerful. In the afternoon He talked for fully two hours to a gentleman who had come to put Him some questions about Yoga. A little later I ran some seven miles to bring the doctor. When I reached his house, he was not there, but I was told that he was at a certain house. So I ran another mile and I met him on the way. He did not want to come but I dragged him away just the same. He gave Sri Ramakrishna some medicine saying: "I am sure this will cure you", and Sri Ramakrishna scolded His Mother a little saying, "How long shall I have to take this Ushistam?"

We all thought He was very well because He ate so much more supper than usual, and He said nothing of going. In the afternoon He had asked Yogin to look in the almanac and see whether it was an auspicious day and Yogin said that it was a very auspicious day. Also He had been telling us for some time that the vessel which was floating in the ocean was already two-thirds full of water, soon the rest would fill up and it would plunge into the ocean. But we did not believe that He was really going.

A CONSECRATED LIFE

By Marion Forster Gilmore

Your soul has been to me an altar flame
Since the first hour it shone upon my life.
Its starry light still gleams upon my way
And makes it clearer; distance cannot dim
Nor time obscure so pure a radiance.
And when I think of you I always see
Your fervent spirit as a lucent fire,
Upward aspiring, steadfast, beautiful,
Burning upon that altar you have raised,
The altar of your consecrated life.

THREE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

By Mahatma Gandhi

Just as it is necessary for the labourers to develop their minds by receiving education and to educate their children, so it is necessary to develop the moral faculty in them. Development of the moral faculty means that of the religious sense. The world does not quarrel with those who have a true faith in God and who understand the true nature of religion. And if it does, such men turn away the wrath of their adversaries by their gentleness. Religion here does not mean merely offering one's *namaz* (prayers) or going to the temple. But it means knowledge of one's self and knowledge of God, and just as a person does not become a weaver unless he knows the art of weaving, so does he fail to know himself unless he complies with certain rules. Chief amongst these are three that are of universal observance. The first is observance of Truth. He who does not know what it is to speak the truth is like a false coin, valueless. The second is not to injure others. He who injures others, is jealous of others, is not fit to live

in the world. For the world is at war with him, and he has to live in perpetual fear of the world. We all are bound by the tie of love. There is in everything a centripetal force without which nothing could have existed. Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist, and even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so much must there be in all things animate and the name for that cohesive force among animate beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is love there is life; hatred leads to destruction. . . . The third rule is that we have to conquer our passions. It is called *Brahmacharya* in Sanskrit. I do not use it here merely in its accepted narrow sense. He is not a *Brahmachari*, who, although he may be a celibate or may be living a chaste life as a married man, otherwise gives himself up to a variety of indulgences. He alone is capable of knowing himself who brings under complete subjection all his passions. He who exercises self-restraint in its widest sense is also a *Brahmachari*—a man of faith, a true Hindu or a true Mahommedan.

It is a breach of *Bramacharya* to hear questionable languages or obscene songs. It is licentiousness of the tongue to utter foul abuse instead of reciting the name of God, and so with the other senses. He alone can be considered the true man who having subjected his passions becomes perfectly self-restrained. We are like a rider who cannot keep his horse under control and is quickly brought down. But one who drawing in the reins keeps the animal under subjection stands a fair chance of reaching his destination.

Even so does a man who can control his passions make for the goal. He alone is fit for *swarajya*. He alone is a seeker after truth. He alone becomes capable of knowing God. It is my earnest wish that you will not reject these remarks as if they were copybook maxims. I ask you to believe that we shall never go forward until we have learnt the value of observing these truths. What I have told you is a fragment of my own experiences. My service of you is due simply to my love for you and I partake of your sorrows, because I hope thereby to justify myself before my Maker. (From "Young India.")

HIGH AND LOW

By Philostratus

(From the Life of Apollonius of Tyana.—First century B. C.)

When they were crossing the great mountains into India a conversation is said to have taken place between Apollonius and Damis. The question was concerning the "below" and "above".

"Yesterday", said Damis, "we were 'below' in the valley; to-day we are 'above', high on the mountains, not far distant from heaven."

"So this is what you mean by 'below' and 'above'," said Apollonius gently.

"Why, of couse," impatiently retorted Damis. "If I am in my right mind, what need of such useless questions?"

"And have you acquired a greater knowledge of the divine nature by being nearer heaven on the tops of the mountains?" continued his master. "Do you think that those who observe the heavens from the mountain heights are any nearer the understanding of things?"

"Truth to tell," replied Damis, somewhat crestfallen, "I did think I should come down wiser, for I've been up a

higher mountain than any of them, but I fear I know no more than before I ascended it."

"Nor do other men," replied Apollonius; "such observations make them see the heavens more blue, the stars more large, and the sun rise from the nights, things known to those who tend the sheep and goats; but how God doth take thought for human kind, and how He doth find pleasure in their service, and what is virtue, righteousness, and common sense, that neither Athos will reveal to those who scale his summit, nor yet Olympus who stirs the poet's wonder, unless it be the soul perceive them; for should the soul when pure and unalloyed essay such heights, I swear to thee, she wings her flight far, far beyond this lofty Caucasus."

THE DREAM OF THE ASHRAMA

One year ago this March in the late afternoon when hill and valley lay under the spell of the evening shadows, Swami Paramananda stood for the first time upon the platform of Ananda-Ashrama and knew that his long trip across the continent had not been in vain. Led by an inner urge, he had come to find a Peace Retreat in the mountains of California, and here on this spot enfolded by mountains, with the valley of the world at his feet, he had found it.

That was the beginning. In the months that have followed there have been all the effort and struggle incident to the bringing of a great vision into actual, physical being. There have been hours of discouragement when the workers were few and the task almost overpowering. But the fire of consecration ultimately burns up all obstacles and that fire is burning at the heart of Ananda-Ashrama. Development has sometimes seemed slow to those who have watched day by day, but to others who saw the place at the beginning and who see it now, a miracle seems to have been accom-

plished. One year ago Ananda-Ashrama was a dream in Swami Paramananda's mind; to-day it is still a dream, but a dream that hundreds are sharing. One year ago the Fusenot place with its canyons lay quiet and unknown under the sun and the stars; to-day it is a Peace Retreat towards which countless hearts are turning,—a place of pilgrimage that is drawing men and women from all over the land.

It is well at an anniversary to review one's ideal, to focus one's inner gaze anew upon one's goal. A lady to whom the Swami had shown the Ashrama, was asked her impression of it. "It was most beautiful", she replied, "but more beautiful to me was the Swami's vision of it". What is the Swami's vision of the Ashrama? Right at the beginning he stated that it was to be "for the good of many and the happiness of many"; and only the other day as he sat before the open fire in the big living-room, he enlarged upon his vision. He spoke of the tendency of all religious movements to crystallize around some great figure, to become exclusive, narrow and egotistic. Ananda-Ashrama, he prayed with his whole heart, would never shrink into a sect, but would be for men of all creeds a spiritual centre, based upon a realization of the one supreme Spirit which lies back of all, which binds all, which unites all and which is the goal of all paths and all faiths. This inclusiveness and universality,—not merely talked about but lived,—was the very essence of Sri Ramakrishna's message. It was a flaming ideal in the heart of Swami Vivekananda, who abhorred all that was restricted or creed-bound. There was no better way, the Swami felt, to repay the infinite debt he owed to these and to other mighty souls, than to help to bring about a fulfillment of this ideal at the Ashrama. On Friday, March 6th, the members of the Ashrama conse-

crated themselves anew to this spirit of universal love and tolerance at a special Service held in honor of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna who exemplified in his life, the ideals of every great religion; who was looked upon by men of every denomination as a perfect example of their particular faith.

It is a tremendous work that lies ahead of the Swami and his associates. Only those who understand what it means both to develop a large property and to unite many lives in harmony can appreciate what has been undertaken. No one in the worldly life would think of attempting it without a large endowment. A large endowment the Swami has, but not as the world understands it, not of material riches, it is as he has told us, an endowment of faith, of spiritual strength, of inner sustenance. This has never failed him; it will yet bring about the realization of his dream. "With many arms dost Thou shield me; with many hearts dost Thou love me; with many minds dost Thou guide me to the road of safety". These are lines from one of the Swami's recent poems. With many arms, with many hearts, with many minds is the one eternal Mother shielding, loving and guiding the work of the Ashrama. The past year has broken the ground and planted the seed; the coming year will see the first green of the harvest.—*Daya.*

On Wednesday, March 12th, the La Crescenta Woman's Club had the Swami as its honored guest. He spoke on "The Great Culture of India". Many friends were present as well as residents in the valley who had never been to the Ashrama or heard the Swami. There was nothing but warm appreciation and enthusiasm expressed, more than one comparing the Swami's message to a fresh breeze, blowing away with its pure strong breath all prejudice and misunderstanding.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

I am Thy soil,
Thou art my seed.
I am Thy body,
Thou art my soul.

By such all embracing devotion to the Deity is "The Vigil" of this devout Hindu inspired. When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door", was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition.

It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it.

What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient; another surety that God is God, no matter what men of different races call him or in what language prayers ascend! How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done:

Fear not, my heart, even the darkest night must end at dawn!
Clouds and mist may come and go,
But they cannot rob sun's radiant glow,
Look up, mine eyes, keep steady watch,
For never must ye lose your guiding star.
Hold fast! Hold fast!
Faith and courage are His tender blessings;
He will not hold these from thee when he sees thy yearning, struggling soul.
Rest will come when thy toil is done.

John Wellington La Rue, Enquirer, Cincinnati, O.

"The Vigil", poems by Swami Paramananda.—This

present volume is dedicated to the same class of inspiring spiritual poetry as the collection of poems published by the same author under the title "Soul's Secret Door". It is the same in its simplicity, written in attractive and powerful language, presenting the same wealth of beautiful pictures and images, but above all that chaste poetry which commands the respect even of the scoffer. "The Vigil" forms, in a measure, a continuation of "Soul's Secret Door", exhaling the same genuine poetical fragrance. The poems which appear under this title testify not only to the profound poetical talent, but above all to the deeply religious spirit of the author, revealing also a thorough understanding of human failings. The Swami has intimate knowledge of the wisdom and philosophy of Occident and Orient and writes a classical English.—*Translation—Westliche Post, St. Louis, Mo.*

Until a volume of this kind falls into the hands of the poetry lover, he does not realize the extent of warm reality which most of to-day's verse has reached. Along that highway which is full of the stir and crash of Kipling, the splendid, brutal quality of Masefield, and myriad, poignant, careless colors of Noyes, this reposeful, white gleam is at least amazing. Here is no contact with the physical, in any sense of the word. Its strain is purely spiritual with no suggestion of that quality as glimpsed in man, but only as it is felt in a soul that has become sensitive to the real in unrealities.

"The Vigil" is not a didactic book. It is simply the ecstasy of spiritual love, without reproof or cynicism for a world which has so little of it. The book should be recommended to Americans because it will open up to them a philosophy of repose that is entirely foreign to this land.—*Evening Outlook, Santa Monica (Calif.)*

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

APRIL, 1924

SPIRITUAL ASCENSION

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ANANDA-ASHRAMA
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CONTENTS

Easter Hymn (Poem)	Swami Paramananda
Universal Message	Various Sources
Spiritual Ascension	Swami Paramananda
Mirror of Eternity	Stunden der Andacht
Chorus of the Morning Stars (Poem)	Julia P. Dabney
Via Crucis	Sister Daya
Journey of the Soul	Hermes Trismegistus
Ananda-Ashrama	
The Vigil	Book Reviews

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Ananda-Ashrama (Peace Retreat) is an extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, established by Swami Paramananda in January, 1909. It is located in La Crescenta in the arms of the beautiful Sierra Madre Mountains at an altitude of 2,000 to 2,800 feet, only a short distance from the cities of Los Angeles, Pasadena and Glendale. This was procured by the Swami Paramananda at the outset of 1923 and on the last Sunday in April of the same year it was formally opened by the Swami "for the good of many and for the happiness of many".

The aim of the work is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism. During the short time since its inception a great deal of development work has been accomplished and a great deal more will be done during the coming months. Plans are being made now for the chapel, auditorium, reading room, library, guest house, living quarters, landscape gardening, and out-of-door amphitheatre. In the meantime public services are held every Sunday afternoon at 3:30, and the Swami holds a study class for the earnest seekers after Truth every Thursday evening at eight o'clock. The Ashrama is open to visitors every day between 2 and 5 o'clock.

For further information please write to the secretary,
ANANDA-ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.
Published monthly except in August and September

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EASTER HYMN

By Swami Paramananda

LET all souls awake within
their house of clay
With new life emanating
warmth of love and
might of peace.
Let all mortals rise to-day and
tune their hearts to sing
immortal song.
Let all souls ascend to the
deathless plane.
Behold the saving light dis-
pelling darkness!
Let all mortals rise to-day and
inherit their immortal state.
Let all mortals, forsaking sleep
of doubt, ascend with the
glory of dawn.
What is claimed by death will
never rise
And thy soul ascended now will
never die.

(Written especially for Easter at Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Calif.)

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

There is One Unknown Being, prior to all beings, and exalted above all. He is the Author of all things, even of the ethereal sphere, and of all things below it. He is Life, Counsel and Light,—which three names all signify one Power; the same that drew all things, visible and invisible, out of nothing. We will sing that eternal, wise, all-perfect love, which brought order out of chaos.—*Orpheus.*

As the sun is the cause of the eyesight of every being, yet is not made defective by the defect in any eye, even so the divine Self of all is not affected by the miseries of the body or by any misery that is round about.—*Upanishads.*

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.—*Psalms.*

In water there exists air, and in air water; yet are these elements distinct. Meditate therefore on the mysterious affinity between God and the soul.

Even as you see your countenance reflected in a mirror or your shadow in the still water, so behold the Lord in your minds because He is with all.

He that formed the mind, made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in; for God liveth in the mind and nothing but God.—*Dadu.*

The longer one travels towards the city he seeks, the nearer and nearer he comes to the goal of his journey; exactly so is it with the soul that is seeking God. If he will travel away from himself and away from the world and seek only God as the precious pearl of his soul, he will come steadily nearer to God until he becomes one spirit with God the Spirit; but let him not be afraid of mountains

and valleys on the way, and let him not give up because he is tired and weary, for he who seeks finds. Man must seek, find and know God through an interrelation—he must find God in himself and himself in God.—*Sebastian Franck, German spiritual reformer, 16th century.*

How that presence is felt may better be known by experience than by any writing, for it is the life and the love, the might and the light, the joy and the rest of a chosen soul. And therefore he that hath once truly felt it cannot forbear it without pain, neither can he choose but desire it, it is so good in itself and so comfortable. . . . He cometh secretly sometimes when thou art least aware of Him, but thou shalt know Him full well ere He go; for He wonderfully stirreth and mightily turneth thy heart into the beholding of His goodness, and then doth thy heart melt delectably as wax against the fire into softness of His love.—*Walter Hilton.*

Riches without God are the greatest poverty and misery.—*Ali.*

The nobler kind of man is anxious to see clearly, to hear distinctly, to be kindly in his looks, respectful in his demeanor, conscientious in speech, earnest in his affairs; when in doubt he is careful to enquire, when in anger, he thinks of the consequences; when offered an opportunity for gain, he thinks only of his duty.—*Confucius.*

He who has made the pilgrimage of his own spirit, a pilgrimage in which there is no concern respecting situation, place or time, which is everywhere; in which neither cold nor heat is experienced, which bestows perpetual happiness and freedom from sorrow; he is without action, knows all things, pervades all things and obtains eternal beatitude.—*Atmana Bodha.*

SPIRITUAL ASCENSION

By Swami Paramananda

(Easter address delivered at the Vedanta Centre of Boston)

"Sword cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it. It cannot be pierced, nor burned, nor wet, nor dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, unchangeable, immovable, everlasting. It is never destroyed even when the body is destroyed." This song of the soul at first falls upon our ears strange and unfamiliar, as if from another world; and because of this we doubt its reality. We cannot help but doubt since it seems directly to contradict the evidence of our senses. Do we not witness disease, death and devastation every hour before our very eyes? How then can we help but doubt when some one comes with a contrary message saying the spirit of man is deathless? That was the message which Christ brought to the world, and because it was so unfamiliar, people did not listen to Him. Not only did they not listen to Him, they thought that this man was an impostor, an inventor of lies; therefore the only thing to do was to get rid of Him. But the world cannot get rid of Truth. Thousands of times Truth may be crucified and condemned, yet always it springs forth again. It rises up and always must it rise up, because it is self-existent.

Ascension means spiritual ascension. It means that now, before we depart from the body, we rise from the burial ground of matter. There are many who try to console us with the materialistic notion that after we are dead and gone there will come a day of judgment, when we shall all rise in the flesh with the same hands, the same feet, the same eyes. But perhaps we may not want the same things. The body wears out. Spirit is never worn out. In fact Spirit unfolds itself. All that it wants is a larger atmos-

phere and greater opportunities to bring forth its inherent power.

What religion we pretend to profess makes little difference if we are bound hand and foot by matter. Religion is not a question of pretence. It means a great deal more than that; it means more than subscribing to a faith or a creed. Religion means convincing ourselves in regard to the reality of Spirit. No one else can convince us. Even Christ cannot convince us. In spite of His ascension, in spite of His deathlessness, the truth of immortality will have no meaning for the individual unless it has already dawned in his own soul. He will only be able to give a material interpretation of it. We do not enrich our life by clinging to material things, but when we have a higher concept which is a vivid, glowing fact in our life, we are able to utilize every part of our material blessings. It is not a question of condemning the world. A man disgusted with bodily life is not going to inherit immortality by committing suicide. That will not bring it to him. If he is bound here, he will be bound still, even after casting off the shackle of the body. It is now that we must free ourselves. If we go out with a free spirit, we shall be free. Because we are free now, we shall be free then.

Ascension is a very symbolic expression of life. Nature constantly shows us that we must redeem ourselves. Look at the spring! Does it not redeem winter's devastation? Does it not revive the trees? Does it not bring new life everywhere? This Feast of Easter is symbolic of the ascension of life, of the reviving of all living things. We need to remind ourselves of this, not only on Easter day but on all days; because it is only as we rise up with the Spirit that we begin to live. When we fill ourselves with the spirit of life we always counteract that which is the oppo-

site of life. You may think that these things are not practical. What is practical? Man from his viewpoint of utility, thinks the only practical things are those which bring him physical plenitude—food and clothes for his body, and the fulfillment of a few desires. Perhaps these things are practical; if they are, let us make them more practical, more lasting. Let us make their influence more far-reaching by adding to them one element which is tremendously lacking in our life: that is, spiritual consciousness.

Whether we belong to Christianity or to any other faith makes no difference. The heart of religion is one and the same; and when that heart-beat is felt in our own heart, then do we realize its living and vivid quality. Without this realization whatever we profess is a blank. It is just here that we fail; but if we have the feeling that we possess a soul, then we can go out into the world, into any department of it, and meet whatever difficulties may confront us,—opposition, adversities, dangers just as Christ did. We can face death even with unwavering faith. Faith in what? Faith in the fundamental part of life. We cannot live, we can only pretend living, unless we have that faith. When it is born within us, then our life takes on a new tone. That is the awakening of a new life; that is the real ascension.

We breathe unconsciously; and these things which we call unpractical, we find are as easy to live and as simple as breathing. The thoughts which I am giving you may seem but mere fancies of the poet, dreams of the philosopher; but they are real. They are just as real in the spiritual realm as are the things we see here before us. Anything we can see, we do not doubt. When you sit before me, I know you are sitting there; no one can make me doubt that. You do not doubt my existence when I am speaking to you. In the same way we contact higher things directly

and definitely. When we make this direct contact there is no room left for doubt and delusion. This is the vitally important thing in our life. This is what gives us upliftment, the power to rise and to stand above the burial-ground of matter. Ascension means that to me. Ascension in the spiritual sense means that we rise above bondage, above the clouds which hide our vision. The small storms of delusion vanish; the sun has dispelled them, the sun of wisdom.

When we doubt spiritual realities, even for a moment, we are depressed. We feel doubt in regard to ourself, doubt in regard to others, and doubt in regard to the very foundation of life,—Truth and God. What is the remedy for this doubt? How may we dispel this darkness? There is only one remedy for all darkness and doubt,—spiritual light. Anything that will add to our spiritual strength; anything, no matter how small, that will sustain us; we should work for that, we should grasp that, so that we may rise up and remain erect in our spiritual vision.

The celebration of Easter is a beautiful, helpful custom. It is springtime—nature is renewed, so we come out in a new dress, new everything. But a Feast is never complete without the understanding of its spiritual significance. We cannot enter into the spirit of Easter merely by adorning ourselves with new garments. We must be spiritually renewed; we must have a fresh sense of life . How can we have it? We have it when we realize the invincible quality of the soul. Often we hear people say that the greatest testimony for Christ as a Saviour was His ascension. True! It is the testimony given by all great souls, all Saviours and spiritual Redeemers. When we overcome death by knowledge, when we ascend from the burial-ground of matter, that is the real testimony of Truth. Through it we testify to the indestructibility of the soul.

Some one once asked a great mystic sage in India how it was possible for Christ to endure so much pain on the cross. In a flash the sage gave this parable. He said: You have seen how in the dried cocoanut the outer shell and the kernel are separate. If you shake it you hear it move inside. The soul of Christ was just like this, separated from the shell of the body. But in the green cocoanut, the shell, the kernel and the fibre are all connected, so if you pierce it the whole thing is pierced. Thus the ordinary mortal feels the pain, feels the deception, feels the impotence of this body; and whatever crushes the body seems to crush the soul. To him there is no difference between the body and the soul, between matter and spirit. But one who has ascended from the burial-ground of matter, he knows that these two are separate and apart. Because of that knowledge he is able to withstand the onslaughts of material life. You may ask, why then does he not resist evil? He realizes the futility of resistance; he knows that his soul is invincible; he rises to a higher plane. This is the sum and substance of all religions and philosophies.

Many are the means by which we realize our true identity. There are those who know the great, all-abiding and unbounded Spirit as their own soul. They say, "I know not whether Thou art in me or I am in Thee." It is all one and the same Spirit—how can we separate it? Through that Spirit we live, move and have our being; and it is a great calamity when we are not conscious of it. You may ask, if the soul is immortal what difference does it make whether we are conscious of it or not? It is true that the soul can never be killed or destroyed, but ignorance can cause hallucination and suffering. A philosopher may tell us that we are deathless, diseaseless, immortal, that nothing can afflict us; but when we feel separated from our Source, we

suffer pain, we fear, we shudder. Imaginations do not help us. We must have definite knowledge, and it is to bring us this knowledge that great souls incarnate. Christ's ascension was to make certain spiritual truths vivid. He proved before the world that That which is everlasting, nothing can destroy.

If we are armed, if we are fortified with spiritual understanding, it will enrich our life. We need not fear that it will take us away from the practical and make us visionary. Not at all. We shall go out into the world and face the things that we have to face in practical life and yet maintain our equilibrium and tranquillity. Who needs this understanding? Every man needs it. In our business life especially we need a wider viewpoint. We go to pieces when we take this material world just as it appears. Who can resist a powerful machine? No intelligent man ever tries to do it. If he has the knowledge he can utilize it, he can make it work for his own advantage. The same is true of our life. We cannot fight matter, but we can utilize it. Matter may be death, but it can be infused with Spirit. It can be used by the spirit of man. When we know how to do this in the right rhythm, with the right consciousness, not only do we benefit by it ourselves, we bring benefit to our fellow-beings. But if we take it as dead matter, it will fall upon us and crush us for the time being.

If we enter this world's conflict without true realization of life, not knowing its real value, not knowing how to lift up our head through a higher consciousness, we shall feel oppressed, no matter what may be our creed, our doctrine or our dogma. These cannot save us. The saving grace is within us; it is within every living soul. When a man allows himself to be surrounded by despondency and despair, when he doubts himself, when he does not believe

that the light of the soul is within him, then there is no one who can save him.

The greatest blessing an incarnate Spirit brings to this world is to awaken in each heart fresh hope and faith. He shows the invincible quality of the soul; how absolutely related we all are to the cosmic reservoir of life. When we follow in the footsteps of such a One, then we find that there is no death. We are already risen, and in that spiritual ascension we discover the fullness of existence and we glorify that Being from Whom we have descended.

We should be working constantly towards something better and higher. When we work towards lower ends we only carry a weight in our hand. It is better to have a free mind, a free heart and free hands, so that when the supreme Deity extends His hand to us, we may not say, "My hands are full; I cannot take Thy hand and follow Thee." Leave hand and heart free so that when the hour comes, you may with perfect trust give your hand and be lifted from the mire of worldly life in true spiritual ascension.

The dispositions, affections, inclinations of the soul, which shall issue hereafter in perfection, must be trained and nurtured in us throughout the whole course of this earthly life. When shall we bear in mind this plain truth, that the future perfection of the saints is not a translation from one state or disposition of soul into another, diverse from the former; but the carrying out, and, as it were, the blossom and the fruitage of one and the same principle of spiritual life, which, through their whole career on earth, has been growing with an even strength, putting itself forth in the beginnings and promise of perfection, reaching upward with steadfast aspirations after perfect holiness?—*H. E. Manning.*

MIRROR OF ETERNITY

From Stunden der Andacht

(An early 19th Century devotional work generally ascribed to the German mystic, Zschokke)

The world to me is a darkened mirror of eternity. That which I experience in detached fragments in this life, betrays to me what I shall one day experience in a more perfect life. For in the divine creation all is unbroken unity; all things are connected; there is no interruption of continuity. In the chain of the infinite universe there are no missing links. The here and the hereafter, life and eternity, are but one, they form but one whole without interruption. Were my eyesight sufficiently strong, I should discover in the minute seed, which a single blade of grass suffices to conceal, the gigantic tree which at the end of a hundred years will overshadow a whole valley.

All are one. Therefore are all things so closely linked together that the single links are often indistinguishable. In the eternal universe there is no yesterday and to-day; these only exist for us mortals who inhabit the little planet called the earth, which by revolving round the sun causes a fleeting alternation of light and shade, cold and heat, which we call days and seasons. In the eternal universe there is no beginning and no ending, but only a constant play of relations, and this is what we call life; but eternal as the things themselves, as all God's works, are also their varying relations to each other. Consequently there is an uninterrupted reticulation of life. The particular relations of certain parts may cease, but the substance or forces themselves can never cease to be; and as little can the constant variations of relations, i. e., life itself, cease to be. . . .

In this boundless ocean of the universe, wherein nothing

is ever annihilated, I also dwell. Like all that belongs to it, I can never cease to exist in it. I also am an inhabitant of the divine edifice, and the all-holy One on whose breath hang myriads of suns, I may call Father! My Father! Here as there I am within the bounds of eternity! There is no difference, for all is one. The hours, the years which pass over my head on this earth, are parts of eternity, drops in its ocean, in no way separate from it. . . . That which seems to us as a beginning and an ending, as a blooming and fading, as morning and evening; that which we call birth and death, old and young, is only the varying play of the relations of things in the universe, or the life of creation. That which we call death is therefore in itself a confirmation of life, an act of life, and life itself.

Time and eternity are the same to God. But they are likewise so to me. Why make this distinction? There is but one Eternal. After death I shall be in eternity, but I am already in it. After death I shall be with God; but here below already I live and move and have my being in God.

Men ask concerning the immortality of the soul, the employments of heaven. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their *patois*. To truth, justice, love,—the attributes of the soul,—the idea of immutableness is essentially associated. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility, there is no question of continuance. No inspired man ever asks this question, or condescends to these evidences. For the soul is true to itself, and the man in whom it is shed abroad cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which would be finite.—*Emerson.*

CHORUS OF THE MORNING STARS

By Julia P. Dabney

"When the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy."
Job xxxviii: 7.

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise be unto Him!
Unto Him, the Holy One,
Unto Him, the Only One,
Unto Him, the Living Sun!
Elohim!
Praise to Him!
The illimitable Light!
All the depth and all the height;
Glory infinite!
Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise Him all ye Seraphim,
Praise Him all ye Cherubim,
Praise Him shining firmament,
In a ceaseless sacrament;
Love Omnipotent!
Light and Love, Love and Light,
Love, the depth, and Love the height,
Love, the Mystery Infinite!
Elohim! Elohim!
Praise be unto Him!
Alleluia!

This Eternal Being that can never be proved, is to be perceived in one way only; it is spotless, beyond the ether, the unborn Self, great and eternal. Let a wise Brahmana, after he has discovered Him, practise wisdom. Let him not seek after many words, for that is mere weariness of the tongue.—*Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.*

VIA CRUCIS

By Sister Daya

Where did the cross as an emblem of worship originate? How did it gain holy significance? Under what skies and in what circumstances did those two transverse lines take on a dignity and a meaning as immense as the figure itself is simple? Do not assume that the answer is Calvary. The way of the cross stretches farther than from the Praetorium to Golgotha. It reaches from the dim beginnings of human existence down to the present day. One cannot touch upon the history of this symbol without becoming involved in the religious history of the human race. Humanity is one. Past, present and future are one; and one is religion. It flows in an unbroken stream through the ages, fed by a thousand rivers, refreshed by countless pure springs, but always flowing, flowing from the infinite, original Source. Grasp the scope of this, so implicit in Christianity, and the passion of Christ will take on a meaning and a majesty which His human personality assumed when He declared: "Before Abraham was, I am." Has He not been likened in His crucifixion to "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world"?

In the Rig Veda, probably the oldest Aryan Scripture extant, it is written: "The first-born being, before the beginning of material phenomena, became a victim of sacrifice. The devas, gods and angels who came later, took the first-born being for the animal of sacrifice, fastened him to a sacrificial post, sanctified him, stretching his limbs in eternal space. From that sacrifice arose all that exists on the earth and in the heavens." These ancient sacrificial posts were always in the form of a cross, as is well known to students of Vedic literature. Thus it is seen that the primeval Vedic revelation associated the first-born Son of

God with sacrifice on a cross. Hindu paintings of great age, place it in the hands of the Avataras or divine manifestations and in the hands of the different aspects of Deity. Vishnu, the Second Person in the Hindu Trinity, is often shown as holding in his hand a cross. He represents the sustaining principle, the love aspect, and His followers, the Vaishnavites, whose worship is peculiarly devotional, are marked on the forehead with the Y shaped cross which is to them a sacred symbol. Sri Krishna, the Avatara of Vishnu, is sometimes pictured as standing in the centre of the world as its sustaining principle, with six arms, three of which hold the cross. It is found in the most ancient temples of India, some being cruciform in shape. In the cave-temple of Elephanta which dates back to pre-Buddhistic times, there is a figure of the Hindu Trinity holding a huge cross in one of its hands.

Perhaps the most universal form of the cross is the swastika, known sometimes as the Buddhistic cross or the Wheel of the Law. It is really the Greek cross with its ends bent at right angles and turned either to the right or to the left. This is the most usual form of the cross in India. The word swastika signifies well-being. Even sitting with crossed legs, or crossing the arms upon the breast were swastika postures, indicating safety and protection. In ancient Brahmanical literature the word "to swastika oneself" meant what now we would call crossing oneself. In Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia," Asita, the old Rishi, recognizes the infant Buddha by the foot-sole marks, "the soft-curled tendrils of the swastika". It went with Buddhist missionaries into the Far East; but according to Fa Hsien and Hsuang Tsang, the swastika was found in Thibet and China centuries before Gautama Buddha preached the Law.

In Norse mythology, the swastika is found in the hand of the Thunderer and is known as the Hammer of Thor. The ancient Norsemen made this sign over their food to consecrate it. We read in the Heimskringla Saga: "Now when the first full goblet was filled, Earl Sigurd spoke some words over it, and blessed it in Odin's name, and drank to the king out of the horn; and the king then took it and made the sign of the cross over it. Then said Kaare of Greyting, 'What does the king mean by doing so? Will he not sacrifice?' But Earl Sigurd replied, 'The king is doing what all of you do who trust in your power and strength; for he is blessing the full goblet in the name of Thor, by making the sign of his hammer over it before he drinks it'." The original Vedic concept of the Deity sacrificing Himself to Himself finds an echo in the Elder Edda where the sacrifice of Odin, the All-Father, on the tree of the world is described: "I knew that I hung in the wind-rocked tree nine whole nights, wounded with a spear and to Odin offered Myself to Myself, on that tree of which no one knows from what root it springs."

The swastika cross together with the Egyptian key of life, the *crux ansata*, was used by the first Christians as the symbol of the new faith. It is found in many of the early Christian tombs in the catacombs at Rome, whereas the Christian cross as it is known to-day, does not appear in the catacombs until the end of the fourth century, and nowhere in the catacombs is it depicted as an instrument of martyrdom with the Crucified. A map on the distribution of the swastika, shows that it has been found practically wherever anthropologists have searched both in the old world and the new: "On monuments of the most ancient date, on pottery of the Neolithic and bronze ages, on prehistoric terra-cotta figures, on altars, on coins, on shields,

on weapons and on amulets of various descriptions." Its use has almost always been identified with some form of worship.

The swastika does not seem to have been known in Egypt. There, however, we find another form of cross, the Tau cross, so-called because it resembles the Greek letter T. There are other Egyptian symbols representing various forms of crosses, but the Tau seems to have had a peculiarly religious significance. It is frequently shown as growing out of a human heart. Crowned with a ring or circle it becomes the *crux ansata* or handle cross. This is almost always associated with the Egyptian deities, being held by the loop in the right hand of the god. It is known as the key of life and denotes immortality. When Osiris is pictured as holding the *crux ansata* towards a mortal, the death of that mortal and the survival of his soul is indicated. This has even deeper significance when we remember that the legend of Osiris is a story of resurrection.

It is impossible to do more than touch upon the history of the cross. It is shown repeatedly in the hands of the Phoenician goddess Astarte, as well as in the hand of Ishtar, the Assyrian goddess. The most ancient tombs found in Europe, tombs of a people about whom history is mute, were decorated with the cross. It was evidently for them a symbol of hope and immortality. M. de Mortillet who investigated these ancient sepulchres writes: "The examination of the tombs of Golasecca proves in a most convincing, positive and precise manner—that above a thousand years before Christ, the cross was already a religious emblem of frequent employment".

When the Spanish conquerors came to Central America, they were amazed to find the cross in the ancient native temples where it was worshipped as a symbol of a deity at

once terrible and beneficent. Moreover it was looked upon as emblematic of a fabled hero, Quetzalcoalt who according to tradition, was white and bearded and came from the east. Apparently the religious rites of Mexico and Central America were marked by very great cruelty; but involved in this we find again the sacrifice of the god to the god. The sacrificial victim was generally a slave or a captive. For forty days before the sacrifice took place, divine honors were paid him and he was worshipped as the impersonator of the god,—the supreme solar deity. When the final day came, he was sacrificed before the image of the god and afterwards his body constituted a sacred meal. Horrible as this may seem, perverted as it may be, it shows a connection between the bloody ritual of Central America and a tradition ancient as the human race.

Why is the cross associated always with a sacrificial deity? Why is it through the ages a symbol of resurrection and immortality? Why did the ancient peoples of Europe lay them down in the dust under its protection? Why was it the emblem wherewith Thor smote the head of the serpent and gave life to the slain? Why did savage mothers place their babes beneath its shadow for safekeeping? A thousand explanations have been advanced, chiefly along the line of nature and sun worship. These explanations are no doubt partially correct; but may it not be that the solar myth and the worship of the elements are only the outer and crude expressions of some tremendous cosmic fact which nature constantly symbolizes?

In the Bhagavad-Gita it is said: "O best of the Kurus, not even this world is for the non-performer of sacrifice, how much less is the other world". Sacrifice is that cosmic fact. We must die to live. Sacrifice gives power. Even the savage mind could grasp certain crude aspects of this

truth. As for the cross, the universal symbol of sacrifice, one can only surmise concerning it. So much we know: the human body is a cross and the human heart is an eternal Golgotha. Thus man in himself exemplifies both crucifixion and the cross; in his early development, the crucifixion of spirit upon the cross of matter; in his later growth, the crucifixion of matter upon the cross of spirit. Whether or not the symbolism of the cross is cosmic, brought down to us in some primal revelation; whether or not it gained its meaning through the original sacrifice of some god-man, or came as a slow evolution from the primitive placing of one stick across another, its relationship with human life is evident. It could not have persisted as a symbol through all the ages were this not so. Again and again its light has been darkened for men, but never wholly obscured. Always there has been the divine Voice crying, "He that loseth his life shall find it". But so dense are our hearts that it took the actual physical death on Calvary to stir us from our sleep.

Every great saint and saviour enacts in his life the passion of Christ. The way of illumination is the way of the cross; a way as yet but little understood by humanity. We associate the symbol of life with death and agony; but the shadow which the cross seems to cast upon our lives is but the shadow from our own selfish hearts. It is light that shines from the cross. When we cease to block that light, then shall we know the true meaning of the cross; then shall we enter into the glory of sacrifice.

Nothing can work me damage except myself. The harm that I sustain, I carry about with me, and I never am a real sufferer but by my own fault.—*St. Bernard.*

JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

From Hermes Trismegistus

Tat. Now in the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide. Further, when I became thy suppliant, in wending up the Mount, after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the Sermon on rebirth (for this beyond all other things is just the thing I know not), thou saidst, that thou wouldst give it me—"when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world." Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion.

Now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way. I know not, O Thrice-greatest One, from out what matter and what womb man comes to birth, or of what seed.

Hermes. Wisdom that understands in silence, such is the matter and the womb from out which man is born, and the True Good the seed.

Tat. Who is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss.

Hermes. It is the will of God, my son.

Tat. And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in me, which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another one from God, God's Son?

Hermes. All in all, out of all powers composed.

Tat. Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son.

Hermes. This race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God.

Tat. Thou sayest things impossible, O father, things that are forced. Hence answers would I have direct unto these things. Am I a son strange to my father's race? Keep it not, father, back from me. I am a true-born son; explain to me the manner of rebirth.

Hermes. What may I say, my son? I can but tell thee *this*. Whene'er I see within myself the simple vision brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a body that can never die. And now I am not what I was before; but I am born in Mind. The way to do this is not taught, and it cannot be seen by the compounded element by means of which thou seest.

Yea, I have had my former composed form dismembered for me. I am no longer touched; I have dimension too; yet I am a stranger to them now. Thou seest me with eyes, my son; but what I am thou dost not understand even with fullest strain of body and of sight.

Tat. Into fierce frenzy and mind-fury hast thou plunged me, father, for now no longer do I see myself.

Hermes. I would, my son, that thou hadst e'en passed right through thyself, as they who dream in sleep yet sleepless.

Tat. Tell me this too: Who is the author of rebirth?

Hermes. The Son of God, the one man, by God's will.

Tat. Now hast thou brought me, father, unto pure stupefaction. . . .

Hermes. Even in this thou art untrue; the mortal form doth change with every day. 'Tis turned by time to growth and waning, as being an untrue thing.

Tat. What then is true, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes. That which is never troubled, son, which cannot be defined; that which no colour hath, nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth

light; that which is comprehensible unto itself alone, which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.

Tat. In very truth I lose my reason, father. Just when I thought to be made wise by thee, I find the senses of this mind of mine blocked up.

Hermes. Thus it is, son: That which is upward borne like fire, yet is borne down like earth; that which is moist like water, yet blows like air; how shalt thou *this* perceive with sense—that which is not solid nor yet moist, which naught can bind or loose, of which in power and energy alone can man have any notion,—and even then it wants a man who can perceive the way of birth in God?

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

During the month of March the blessing of rain came to California, ending a long and devastating drought. Almost over night the hills turned from brown to emerald, while hosts of wild flowers flew their banners of purple, rose and gold. Stormy Sundays have failed to check the Sunday congregation. In spite of showers and slippery roads, large numbers have come from Los Angeles, Pasadena and nearby towns. One friend, a young woman, was not turned back even by a river of mud, but ventured through it with her car, so eager was she to hear the Swami. It is this spirit of eager interest and determination that is helping to build up the Ashrama.

The Swami of late has organized his resident workers into a little brush-clearing band and has on several occasions worked with them, clearing out undergrowth from small side canyons and cutting trails, thus making accessible certain charming portions of the property. This has resulted in enthusiastic offers of service from outside members who have been happy to spend an afternoon cultivating the

chapel garden or doing more strenuous work. True devotion does not need to be told how to serve. Some faithful friends, seeing the need of added seating accommodation for the large Sunday congregation, made the Ashrama a gift of seventy-three folding chairs of the best type. These they delivered themselves, making many trips in their car all the way from a beach town thirty miles away.

The "Message of the East", after some vicissitudes, has been fortunate in finding an excellent printer in the neighbouring town of Tujunga, only fifteen minutes by motor from the Ashrama. This should facilitate the publication of the "Message", until the Swami's plan is carried out and the Ashrama possesses a fully equipped publication house of its own with printing press and bindery.

Not infrequently Swami Paramananda gives permission to a friend in a far-away land to translate one of his books. This permission often slips his mind so that when his "Path of Devotion", his "Way of Peace and Blessedness" or some other of his works arrives in a new dress and in a new tongue, it comes as a pleasant surprise. Only lately this has occurred with his "Upanishads" which a student in Sweden has translated into Swedish and brought out with excellent taste in booklet form. Germany has several of the Swami's works in translation, while in French "La Voie de la Devotion" has a charm and tenderness peculiarly its own. In India the Swami's writings have found their way into many of the native tongues,—Bengali, Hindustani, Tamil, Urdu and are being read by thousands.

* * *

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has held steady during the Swami's long absence in California. Miss Katharine Sherwood has faithfully conducted the Sunday Services and with

the household members still there, has formed a nucleus round which have gathered all the faithful friends of the work.

THE VIGIL

Book Reviews

The Swami Paramananda, author of "The Soul's Secret Door", and the teacher whose following gathers at the Vedanta Centre, 1 Queensberry Street, published another book of poems, "The Vigil". It is a companion volume to "The Soul's Secret Door", and its verse has the same high spiritual quality. Though the author's mysticism is something that few of us can readily grasp, it is not at all difficult to feel the vitality an dthe fine idealism that pervades these little poems. The Swami himself is passing the winter in the Sierra Madre mountains of Southern California at the Peace Retreat established by him as an extension of the Vedanta Centre of this city.—*Boston Herald, Boston, Mass.*

"Our thoughts lift us up to vision's
lofty heights,"

says Swami Paramananda in one of his poems in his latest collection of verse, "The Vigil." The line voices and describes the spirit of all the poems in the book. Here is complete devotion to the Spirit of Life and Love, the compassionate Master of Fate. These songs are the chants of child-like faith, clothed in all the austerity and beauty that mark the holy scriptures themselves. Much of the verse is high lyrical, as in the "Song of Dawn:"

"It is dawn; it is dawn!
Behold the glory of morn!
Stay thou no more slumbering,
The dark of night is gone.
It is dawn; it is dawn!"

—*Times-Star, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

MAY, 1924

HEALING AND PREVENTIVE METHODS

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CONTENTS

Healing and Preventive Methods	Swami Paramananda
All Things are One	Heraclitus
Why the Bodhisattva is Ill	Vimalkirti-Nirdesa
Universal Message	Various Sources
Life's Perpetual Spring. Poem	Swami Paramananda
The Mystery of Justice	A. E. Gibson
Loving Service of God	Fenelon
Vessels of Gold and Clay. Poem.	Indo-Aryan Wisdom

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When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door," was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition. It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it. What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient. How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done.—*Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

VOL. XIII MAY, 1924 No. 5

HEALING AND PREVENTIVE METHODS

By Swami Paramananda

THE question of healing is neither modern nor ancient. So long as there is sickness there will be search for health. No matter how far back we go in history we find instances of healing, for the simple reason that the human soul always seeks relief from suffering. This relief comes in many ways; there have been many methods of healing. Some seek aid through material means and not till those means fail does the soul turn to higher resources. The healing which results from this turning of the soul to its Source is what men call a miracle. A life is given up by the best physicians; all hope is abandoned; yet without any apparent cause the patient lives and recovers. Those who have no inward vision regard it as miraculous, but those who are open to the inward light look upon it as the natural fulfillment of the law of life. It is the fulfillment of this law. Wherever there is life there is absence of death, of anything pertaining to death. Wherever there is light, there is no access for darkness. Now the question is, how may we bring in the light? Instead of leaving our house in darkness and crying that we cannot see, what means may we employ to keep it always lighted?

At the present time all men are discussing the question of healing. It is one of the most absorbing themes of the day. Practically every modern religious movement, whether it is based upon New Thought, Psychology or Metaphysics, has its department for healing. Christian Science is well known for its healing work. Some have wondered why a movement such as the Vedanta should apparently lay so little stress upon it. Spiritual history teaches us that true divine healing is something not to be spoken of or discussed. It cannot be practised professionally. It is a power which comes from the unseen realm; and only those who call upon it with that deeper feeling, giving it no name, seeking to use it with no ulterior motive or sense of self, they alone are capable of using it for the benefit of their fellowmen. Therefore it is best to approach it with a hush of silence. Nature always performs her work in silence. A seed is planted in the womb of mother earth. Silently, quietly, Nature nourishes it. Then when the soul of it is expanded, it bursts forth into blossom. Silence has done the work. Silence always does the work. The greatest powers work silently. This does not mean that we should cease to look for healing. Not in the least! But there are certain fundamental principles in life which we can follow only when we unite our forces with the higher laws. We cannot draw a lofty principle down from a higher plane and utilize it for our material purposes. If we would benefit by it, we must lift ourselves to that height. Only in this way do we find fulfillment.

"Prevention is better than cure." Whoever first conceived this wise axiom gave to the world of thought a most vital formula for constructive living. If it is true that prevention is better than cure, then we shall be interested not only in the cure of illness, but in its prevention. This

means we must look for the cause of sickness before we can find the remedy. Even in medical science this method is applied. A physician makes a thorough examination of the case before he gives his opinion or prescribes the remedy. Sometimes he finds the cause in exposure, sometimes in over-eating or in wrong diet or in nervous strain. But whatever the cause, always it is directly connected with the life of the individual; and if the cause is found in the life and habits of the individual, then the remedy must also be there. As a rule we are more interested in the phenomena of healing than in removing the possibility of disease. If, however, we carry in our mind thoughts of cure, invariably we dwell on sickness; one connects us with the other. If a man sets out upon the water in a damaged boat, he may carry with him a dozen life-savers, but that does not prevent his boat from sinking. Similarly, though we carry with us many remedies for our ills, they do not prevent our having illness. How much better it is to learn to live in such absolute harmony with Nature that we avoid it.

Are there no miracles of healing? Even miracles do not take place without a just cause. Miracles are only performed where there is fitness of condition. There is a miracle of love. You can perform this miracle of love. You can perform the miracle of faith; but if you try to look to some superior being to do your work, and become wholly dependent on him, you will be much mistaken. No great soul ever wants to make any one dependent. The great souls come to awaken within us the faculty of seeing, of feeling and of doing. When do we learn to see things in a clear light? When we walk in the light. When do we feel most strong? When we are not at all conscious of having a physical body. And what makes us free from bodily consciousness? The spirit of love. When a

man is inspired by love what can he not do! He will jump into the fire; he overcomes even Nature through sheer force of selfless love. A miracle is always performed in unusual circumstances and these we ourselves create.

The higher realms of life are not for the idle curiosity-seeker; they are for those who are willing to think for themselves. More needful than all the methods invented for healing is to teach people how to live in a normal way, depending on their own resources, adjusting themselves to circumstances as they may arise. No set of rules can be made out:—to eat this or to eat that; to think these thoughts and not those. Circumstances are always changing. We must learn how to control them by our inward power. You may ask, where shall we find that power? It is already within us; but we must awaken it, we must utilize it. It is a vital duty. When any one accomplishes this, he benefits not only his community or his country; his influence reaches the whole human race.

At first this may seem to be only an abstract ideal. All great ideals are abstract. We make them concrete, we make them living, by our own life. Love, for instance, is an abstract ideal. A man may talk in a loud voice about love and universality, but he will never convey its true picture to us until we see him doing something loving. When we find the fulfillment of love in a life, it is inspiring; when we find it in our own life, then we are able to counteract evil. To be disturbed physically, mentally or morally is to deplete our whole system. If we would be well, we must guard ourselves against mental and moral agitation and depression. The consequences may not be felt at once, but we shall feel them later. That is the reason the wise always tell us we must order our inner being.

Merely bringing relief to the physical body does not re-

move the real cause of suffering. Anger poisons. Whether it arises from a just or an unjust cause makes no difference. Whenever we allow ourselves to be angry, we exhaust our nerve force. We are unstrung. Our body is in terrible upheaval; our mind in a chaotic condition. In this way we make ourselves susceptible to ills of all kinds. We often think that a trap is set for us by some evil spirit; but it is we ourselves who set the trap. When we are angry, anger becomes the trap. If we commit a crime, that crime becomes the trap. For those who believe in a personal devil, these are his temptations; but these temptations do not need to come near us. They can have no access to our life when we fortify ourselves with noble thoughts and feelings. If we begin each day fortified in this way, shall we not be protected both physically and mentally?

There are certain great laws. If we understand them and apply them in our life, we shall become strong and invincible. Evil is overcome by good; hatred is overcome by love; anger is overcome by gentleness. These opposing forces are constantly working. You may say, "I was perfectly justified in being upset." Yes; but you are also perfectly justified in reaping the consequences. You cannot avoid them. If we permit our mind to be disturbed, no matter what the occasion, we shall suffer for it. We shall weaken ourselves and disease will find us an easy prey. Even though some one may cure us or we ourselves may find a remedy, it often takes months to recover from the effects of an illness. How much better to adjust our life in such a way as to avoid all this unnecessary depression. We can avoid it by higher and more normal living. If we can keep our whole being in right rhythm, unconsciously we shall strengthen ourselves. It is not merely by mental calculation that we escape tragedies and misfortunes; it is

rather when we do not think or plan, but fill our heart with such deep and pure feeling that we are naturally protected by higher powers. This is what every man must learn to do.

There is no such thing as accident. Physical science is proving it. Spirituality has always proved it. Divine law governs our destiny. We must learn to work in harmony with that law. The Supreme Being is ever seeking our co-operation; it is we who withhold it. We become rebellious and egotistic. It may be from ignorance; but that does not save us. If we put our hand in the fire ignorantly, it will be burned just the same; and even if it is afterwards healed, the scar remains. By avoiding ignorance, we avoid suffering; we avoid its ill effect upon both body and mind.

Who protected you before your body's birth? Who protected you in your childhood? The fairy stories that we hear of a guardian angel watching over little ones are more true than we know. That guardian angel is always seeking an opportunity to watch over and protect us; but we create such a material barricade that we give no access to it. We take the responsibility in our own hands. We calculate; we scheme; we shut our door on the very power which could guard and save us. Let us learn to open the door,—the door of our heart, of our inner being, so that the light of Truth may shine through freely and constantly, keeping us fresh and free from darkness, that we may not blunder. We do not blunder consciously; no one would. Sometimes out of greed or selfishness we do something which brings a reaction. The reaction is not accidental. We made it possible for greed to over-rule our higher instinct, or we allowed the impulse of anger to rise in us. That is the reason we should seek to enter into the rhythm of life; to direct our forces through higher channels by means of contemplation, so as to create a constant flow of

power from the reservoir of life. Life overcomes death. Life overcomes disease; and those who keep themselves well supplied with the power of light prevent all forms of illness.

But suppose we have been overtaken by physical ills or other misfortunes? How shall we conduct ourselves then? How shall we keep from becoming unbalanced? Here is the difference between the ignorant man and the man of wisdom. The person who permits himself to be unnerved by circumstances only makes his difficulties worse. He magnifies and multiplies them, while he who takes everything calmly and bravely, with tranquillity of body, mind and heart, meets and conquers his present troubles; and often through his balance and intelligence avoids possible future ills. If we do not possess these qualities, we may possess all the treasures of earth, but they will profit us nothing. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The great Roman philosopher Epictetus tells us that it is better for the soul to be cured than the body. That is, the inner man must be adjusted, must be full of health and power. Unless the inner man is sound, there can be no real health. We have heard this often, but sometimes we fail to take in the depth of its meaning. If our inner life controls our outer life and our destiny, then we cannot afford to neglect it. It is through the power of the Spirit man liveth. That is why we should always keep the power of the Spirit before us, behind us, all about us. In one of the Vedic Upanishads there is a wonderful passage: In that which is finite there is no happiness. It is the finite which gives us trouble. Let no one depend upon the finite. That which is unbounded, eternal and infinite, therein lies the happiness of man; therein lies his fulfillment.

When man has united himself with that Infinite, that Vast, does he not transcend all the ills of life? We rise above all our troubles, not by thinking of them, not by focusing our mind upon our headaches or our heartaches, but by taking our mind entirely off of them. We think too much of the body. That is our difficulty. So long as we think of the body, so long as we think of sickness, there will be sickness. It is better to think of things of the Spirit. The body is only one part of our life. If we saturate our consciousness with thoughts of the body and bodily feelings, we cannot escape illness. You may say, we cannot change our whole mode of life and thought and cease to think of the body. That is true; but let us think of the body in conjunction with That which sustains it. This is the natural, logical way, the balancing point in our life.

Nobody is asking us to hate the body; that would be wrong. No one is asking us to neglect the body. To do so would be to impair our welfare. But let this body of ours be sustained by higher powers. That is, let us live with the consciousness of the soul in the body. When body and soul work together in harmony, then do we find the fulfillment of life. We see this in the lives of great men. They live in the world and yet they are not overwhelmed by the influence of the world. When we have learned to adjust our life in this way, we shall without striving counteract evil; and we shall soar higher and higher as we go. Everything that we do with our hands and feet in our every day life will contribute towards our spiritual redemption. That is the thought I want you to carry in your mind; not merely finding a remedy when you have sickness; but avoiding that sickness by keeping yourself in such good tune, in such absolute harmony, that at all hours of the day and night the power of the Infinite may flow through you, and through you find its access into other hearts.

We do not begin to fulfill our life and its duties until we can do something for others. This doing for others does not merely mean charity, giving food and clothes and relieving suffering temporarily. It means awakening the inner faculties in our brother, and this we cannot do so long as they are asleep within us. First they must be awakened within our own heart and then they will have their influence upon the hearts of others. People are constantly crying out for help, but we are not always giving them the right kind of help. The right help can only come from within and it makes no difference whether the stimulus is from one religion or another. There is but one cosmic Spirit, permeating all, sustaining all. When we approach the threshold of that Spirit, when we become filled with something divine and holy, then no longer do we see these distinctions. Can a man partition off the infinite sky? No more is he able to divide that infinite Power. It is One, only One,—One without a second. When we realize our unity with that One, then do we give a death blow to all ills and ignorance; then do we enjoy perpetual healthfulness and our spirit transcends and proves its mastery over the flesh and the material world.

St. Bernard has said: "Man, if thou desirest a noble and holy life, and unceasingly prayest to God for it, if thou continue constant in this thy desire, it will be granted unto thee without fail. . . ." Therefore do not relinquish your desire, though it be not fulfilled immediately, or though ye may swerve from your aspirations, or even forget them for a time. . . . The love and aspiration which once really existed live forever before God, and in Him ye shall find the fruit thereof; that is, to all eternity it shall be better for you than if you had never felt them.—*John Tauler, 13th Century.*

ALL THINGS ARE ONE

By Heraclitus. 6th Century B. C.

(Heraclitus was born at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, about 15 years later than Buddha in India.)

Listening, not to me, but to the Word, it is wise for me to confess that all things are one.

Though the Word always speaks, yet men are born without understanding for it, both before they hear it, and at first after they have heard it. For though all things are produced according to this Word, men seem to be unaware of it, making attempts at such words and deeds as I explain by separating them according to their nature, and telling them as they are. But other men fail as completely to recognize what they do while they are awake as they forget what they do when asleep.

Having ears and understanding not, they are like deaf men. To them the proverb applies: "While they're here they're yonder."

For many men have no wisdom regarding those things with which they come in contact, nor do they learn by experience. They are opinions even to themselves.

Of all the men whose words I have heard, no one hath gone far enough to recognize that the wise is separate from all things.

For the wise is one—to know the principle whereby all things are steered through all.

This world, which is the same for all, neither any god nor any man made; but it was always, is, and ever shall be, an ever-living fire, kindling by measure and dying out of measure.

An invisible harmony is better than a visible.

Let us make no random guesses about the greatest things.

The upward and the downward way are one and the same. Beginning and end are identical.

The bounds of the soul thou shalt not find, though thou travel every way.

Common to all is wisdom. They who speak with reason must take their stand upon that which is common to all, as firmly as a State does upon its law, and much more firmly. For all human laws are fed by the one divine law; it prevaileth as far as it listeth, and sufficeth for all, and surviveth all.

Though the Word is universal, most men live as if each had a wisdom of his own.

Even they that sleep are laborers and co-workers in all that is done in the world.

A foolish man bears the same relation to a divinity as a child to a man.

WHY THE BODHISATTVA IS ILL

From the Vimalakirti-Nirdesa

Manjusri asked, "My friend, whence is your illness? Long you have been unwell. How should you be cured?"

Vimalakirti replied: "Because of ignorance there is desire, and thence comes my illness. Because all things are ill, I am ill. When their illness disappears, my illness will also disappear. Why? It was for the sake of all beings that the Bodhisattva has long been on the path of birth and death, and since he has thus suffered himself to be there, he shows illness. When beings are rid of their illness, the Bodhisattva will also be rid of his illness. He is like unto the parents of an only child in a good family. When the child is sick, its parents are sick, when it is recovered, they are also recovered. So with the Bodhisattva; he loves all beings as an only child; when they are ill he is ill, and when they are well he is also well . . . His illness is caused by his great loving heart."

Reprinted from "The Eastern Buddhist."

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

In the beginning Brahman (the Supreme) was all this. He was one and infinite. . . . Thus it is said: He who is in the fire, and he who is in the heart, and he who is in the sun, they are one and the same. He who knows this becomes one with the One.—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad.*

The devout soul is always safe in every state, if it makes everything an occasion either of rising up, or falling down into the hands of God, and exercising faith and trust and resignation to Him. The pious soul, that eyes only God, that means nothing but being His alone, can have no stop put to its progress; light and darkness equally assist him: in the light he looks up to God, in the darkness he lays hold on God, and so they both do him the same good.—*Wm. Law.*

If the hand, foot, and body become unclean, being washed with water, the dirt is removed. If soiled be the cloth, with soap it may be washed. If the heart is defiled with wrong doing, it is washed in the dye of the Name of God.—*Adi-Granth.*

For man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories, whereas to be vanquished by himself is the basest and most shameful of all things. For such expressions show that there is a war in each of us against ourselves. Sin is disease, deformity and weakness.—*Plato.*

We are not content with the life we have in ourselves and in our own being; we wish to live an imaginary life in the idea of others, and to this end we strive to make a show. We labor incessantly to embellish and preserve this imagi-

nary being, and we neglect the true. And if we have either calmness, generosity, or fidelity, we hasten to let it be known, that we may attach these virtues to that imaginary being; we would even part with them for this end and gladly become cowards for the reputation of valor.—*Pascal.*

In all your actions place God before your eye.—*Sextus the Pythagorean.*

Are not all things vain which come not from God?—*Lebid.*

Do not dare to live without some clear intention toward which your living shall be bent. Mean to be something with all your might.—*Phillips Brooks.*

Let your dwelling be with the fearless and conduct yourself toward the light of God. For there neither sword nor poison have power to destroy and sin cannot enter. Ye will live even as God liveth, and the fire of death will be guarded, as it were, with water. He that meditateth will naturally be happy because he is wise and suffereth not the passions to spread over his soul. He loveth but one God.—*Dadu.*

Fearless minds climb soonest unto crowns.—*Shakespeare.*

Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted. . . . But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.—*Isaiah.*

Let pain and body look to themselves, but thou, my mind, remain happy.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

LIFE'S PERPETUAL SPRING

By Swami Paramananda

When life's perpetual spring is unsealed
Your stains will be washed,
Your thirst will be quenched,
And your parched spirit healed by its
living waters.
In its miracle your barren heart will
blossom with love, hope and joy.
These three flowers of fruitful life
Scatter their precious perfume with wings
of angels.
Their unseen power transforms world's
ugliness to beatific vision,
Storms of anger to gentle peace,
And brute passion to divine affection.

THE MYSTERY OF JUSTICE

By A. E. Gibson

Truth is the signature of life. The individual is a prism for the divine life. If he keeps his mind pure, he will find himself a prism of living light, a dispenser of truth. But he who in word or deed gives expression to something which he knows to be untrue is a false prism, distorting truth and adding a new weight to the burden of human falsehood. Yet in itself truth is imperishable and cannot be lost; its distortion into falsehood is merely temporary and it is destined to re-emerge, restored to its pure untainted essence. Ever remaining in sympathetic touch with the false mind, which gave it birth, the falsehood, whenever its initiatory impulse is spent, returns to its parent-source to be redeemed and restored to truth. This gives the dynamic side to slander and calumny. If people real-

ized that the ignominy and ill-fame of which they consider themselves innocent victims are their own progeny returning to be redeemed, they would take the bitter administrations without protest or lamentation. *Karma*, or the law of cause and effect, is unsleeping and sure, and every insult, be it ever so seemingly undeserved, is an opportunity given the sufferer to redeem Karmic pledges; to divert truth from the guise of falsehood he once gave to it, and to restore his disturbed inner relations with humanity.

If law and order are recognized as fashioners of evolution, then man who is a part of evolution must ever be found in a position and amid environments where the vital currents of his entire past are focalized. Though in the hands of an invincible and implacable law, his case, however desperate, is nevertheless not hopeless. His redemption lies in resignation to the past and receptivity to the future. "And what is divine law to man? To hold fast that which is his own and to claim nothing that is another's; to use what is given him and not to covet what is not given; to yield up easily and willingly what is taken away, giving thanks for the time he has had it at his service." Whatever we have sown, we must reap. But far more telling than the event itself (good or bad) is the manner in which we accept it. Ninety per cent. of threatening misfortunes are dissolved into airy nothings when met by courage and fortitude. Not infrequently when looking back upon the past, do we find that much which we once looked upon with fear and anguish, in the course of later events, became a means of turning our life into higher and nobler channels.

Once generated, the Karmic forces cannot be stayed in their work of adjustment. The arm of retributive justice is sure at some time or another to reach the offender. But man is a dual being; one part, of earth, earthy; the other

part of heaven, heavenly. Oscillating between these like the charged needle between its two poles, the mystic unit of consciousness—the human soul—is ever moving, sometimes uniting itself with the one, sometimes with the other. Sin ensues when the soul identifies itself with its lower companion and uses the animal force of the latter for the realization of egoistic ends. Following the vital threads connecting a cause with its effect, as the electric spark follows the conducting wire, the stored up Karmic energy seeks in this lower pole of consciousness (the scene of the transgression) a forum for its adjustments. Hence it follows that the soul is actually made to suffer only to the extent to which it is in touch with the conduits of the Karmic discharges. Rising on wings of intense aspirations to unite with its spiritual self, the soul may disconnect itself from the field where the law operates; as in the case of the martyr who is found singing songs of rapture and exaltation while the flames of the faggots are consuming his mortal frame. The same is often experienced by the hero on the battle field, who through the exaltation of patriotism rises momentarily above the plane of physical suffering.

A thing or an event can hurt us only through the attitude we take towards it. A misfortune receives its character from the character of the person subjected to it. A financial loss sustained by two persons in similar economic circumstances may stimulate the one and paralyze the other. "Anytus and Miletus are able to kill me indeed," said Socrates, "but to harm me, never." When subjected to malicious attacks the individual should try to realize that the ultimate cause must always be found within himself; and that his adversaries, personal or impersonal, are merely agents by and through which he is vitally linked to the effects of his past transgressions. As to the "instruments",

their relation to the Karmic adjustment will depend upon the motive by which they have been moved. If impersonal, they have involved no responsibility; if personal, their turn for adjustment will come when the time is due.

Our social positions are not items of chance, but of destiny. Man is a blossom on the tree of his own evolution. Environment is powerful, but its power in order to be useful must be subjugated and controlled. But Nature can be controlled only by those who understand her. Man is rising in the scale of universal evolution to the extent to which he discerns and self-consciously adjusts his relations to Nature. Thus man is ever in a place where he is best needed and needs best to be, though his occupation may serve either as a punishment or as a lesson, according to what he makes of it. Only when he learns the inner, the moral lesson of an occupation, will he find the means for further advancement. No power in the two worlds of mind and matter can hold a man to a position which he has outgrown, nor remove him from a condition where he has still something to learn. Nature needs man for the success of her evolutionary efforts. A street cleaner or scavenger has his evolutionary office, and Nature cannot do without him. The realization of this truth and the dutiful living up to it render the simplest menial laborer Nature's nobleman. To him who cheerfully performs his duties Nature reveals her secrets. Duty is the trade-wind of evolution and to follow it means sure and peaceful progress.

No transgression of the moral law is more fatal to the happiness and peace of man than falsehood. All that is tainted with falsehood belongs to the night side of Nature —destructive and deadly. It is not the lack of mental acuteness that degenerates the race and the individual, but the lack of truth. The rise and fall of empires have not been

brought about through inequality in arms and numbers, but through inequality in truth. Whatever be the action, if it proceeds in harmony with the laws of life it stands for truth. If a man thinks one thing and says or does another, he causes disruption in the chain of his vital relations and introduces into his system disorder and disease.

Indirectly every sin is a sin against love, for at the bottom of all sin lies selfishness, and that means the absence of love. Selfishness is the giant weed through which so many gardens of the heart have been overgrown and stifled. It is through selfishness or love for self that we become slaves of habit and appetites. Every indulgence is weakness. As there are no "small enemies", so there are no "innocent indulgences". Life to its minutest details is divided between ends and means. Eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, dressing, rest and activity can all be employed either as means or as ends. To eat to live is to subordinate the means to the end; to live to eat, the reverse; and so all along the whole line of bodily and mental activities. The selfish individual gradually becomes isolated and inaccessible to the world-flow of love and sympathy. If not made to turn from that path, the selfish soul will become devitalized and perish in its self-created solitude.

A most pregnant cause for selfish indulgence lies in man's mistake in regarding his body as personal property, while the truth is that the body is given to us as an instrument for the attainment of universal and humanitarian ends. To use this costly agency in the service of personal habits and appetites, often contrary to the true welfare of man, is an unholy act and a violation of the most sacred principle of trust. No man upon due reflection will regard as personal property the body with which he has been trusted. For ownership involves either purchase or self-production,

and by none of these means has the body come into our possession. In fact we are almost entire strangers to our bodies, and the most vital and important of our bodily operations proceed without our knowledge.

The body has been given to us in trust. Not the owner of the body, but its mere steward, man shall have to render account for every expenditure of its energy. Habits of personal indulgences involve bodily expenditures for which the universe has received no equivalents in service. The removal of personal habits must therefore be of the greatest consequences for him who seeks freedom from Karmic bondage for himself and others. Only a few people become conquerors in the noble and truly heroic warfare against passions and desires. To fight is not the most important feature in successful warfare. Often has inaction wrought deeper consequences than action, and some of the greatest of the world's victories have been won not so much by doing as by refusing to do. To fight a habit is useless, as the violent concentration of thought which the struggle involves in place of weakening the habit, adds to its tenacity and strength. The safer method must therefore consist in refusing to engage. Realizing that the habit depends entirely on our thoughts for its support, we have in our power to starve it into submission.

Purity of thought is the panacea for all diseases of the soul, the lever by which the individual may lift himself out of the region of Karmic adjustment into the sphere of eternal, untainted, unruffled being. Like a spider which climbs up and down the threads spun by himself, so the soul speeding onward through time and space weaves the fabric of his own destiny and builds the bridge which is to connect time with eternity. Knowledge is the main spring of evolution; yet not knowledge for its own sake,

which is sterile and profitless, but knowledge for humanity's sake. The soul is full of knowledge, but it is a knowledge in cipher, the key to which lies in self-forgetting service to man.

LOVING SERVICE OF GOD

By Fenelon. 17th Century

The more you do for God, the more He will do for you; and every step you advance in the right road will fill your heart with fresh peace and consolation. That very perfection of which people are so much afraid, for fear it should be an irksome restraint, is only perfection in so far as it increases the will to do right. And in proportion as our work increases, weariness and tedium disappear; for one is never wearied of doing that which one likes to do. When one does an irksome thing out of strong love, that love softens the hardship and makes one willing to suffer. One would not be relieved by any shortcoming of that love; it is rather a pleasure to sacrifice one's self to the beloved object. And so the nearer we approach to perfection, the more we are satisfied to follow that which we love.

What more would you ask than to be always satisfied and never to bear any cross save one which is more acceptable than the contrary pleasures? But you will never find such satisfaction while yielding to your passions, nor will it ever fail you when you are earnestly seeking God. It is true that this satisfaction is not always a sensible and lively one, such as we experience in worldly pleasures; but nevertheless it is very real, and far superior to any the world can give; and that because sinners always crave that which they have not, while those who are moved by the love of God desire merely that which they have. Their peace may sometimes be dry, and even tinged with bitterness, but yet

it is more grateful to the soul than the excitement of passion.

You cannot do better than so arrange your time as to read a short time every day, with some brief meditation, reviewing your weak points, considering your duties, seeking God, and acquiring the habit of familiar intercourse with Him. Happy will you be if you learn what it is to find love an occupation. It is no use to ask what those who love God do with Him. There is no difficulty in spending our time with a friend we love: our heart is always ready to open to Him; we do not study what we shall say to Him, but it comes forth without premeditation; we can keep nothing back; even if we have nothing special to say, we like to be with Him.

VESSELS OF GOLD AND CLAY

Indo-Aryan Wisdom

Gold vessels, broken, still as gold
we prize,
And wise men in adversity are wise;
But worthless men, when ruined, what
are they?
Vessels of clay when broken, are but
clay.

When the tank's water to the rice-field
flows,
It feeds the grass which by its channel
grows;
Thus for the sake of one good man, on
all
In this old world, the gracious rain-
drops fall.

The cobra, conscious of its poison,
hides:
Abroad the water-snake unfearing glides;
Thus they whose hearts hide guile, ex-
posure fear,
But secrecy befits not the sincere.

Esteem not witless, nor with ease o'er-
come,
That man whose lips with wise reserve
are dumb;
At the sluice-head the stork, while fish
play by,
All lifeless seems—till the right fish
comes nigh.

REPORT

Answering to the call of Boston, Swami Paramananda left Ananda-Ashrama for his Boston Centre on April 7th, stopping at several cities on the way. The day of April 10th he spent in Chicago, speaking in the afternoon at a small informal gathering of friends old and new, who urged him to give more time on his return trip so that a large public meeting could be planned. From Chicago the Swami went to Louisville, where his students had arranged two lectures and a morning class. "The three meetings were good," writes one of these friends, "but Saturday morning was best, 'so intimate' as Swami said. His short talk on 'Silence' after reading the poem, was beautiful. I never enjoyed anything more."

The Swami's last stopping place was Cincinnati. Cincinnati has a special hold on his heart because of the ex-

ceedingly devoted group who live there. These faithful students meet once a week unfailingly, and by their eager efforts on the Swami's behalf, help to make his sojourn in their city happy and successful. Several letters have come to the Ashrama from these members, giving glowing accounts of his recent visit. "It was estimated," runs one of the letters, "that Swami reached approximately twelve hundred people. I feel that no words can paint an adequate or true picture of the tremendous success of these meetings. Swami's message of hope, peace and love brought cheer and abiding consolation to many." Leaders of the Psychological movement in southern Ohio drove with friends all the way from Dayton to hear the Swami. Another member writes: "Of the many times that Swami has been with us, this has been by far the most successful in every respect. Every one who came in contact with him was thrilled with the outpouring of spirit through his message. I feel it was a great blessing to have had his presence in our midst. As I told a friend, now I know the true meaning of Christ's saying, 'My peace I leave with you.' "

The Swami reached Boston a few days before Easter and held his first public Service on Good Friday. At the Easter Service, lovely flowers and happy hearts gave him welcome to that Centre which was the first home of his work and for this reason must always have a unique place in his heart. Now that he is touching more lives in a wider field Boston, having made this extended work possible, cannot fail to share in the blessings which will flow from it. The Tuesday Class following Easter Sunday was almost like a second Easter, the flowers being still fresh and beautiful and the attendance unusually large. On April 29th, the Swami held a reception at the Centre for the purpose of telling his Boston friends of his work in California.

It was expected that during the Swami's absence the usual public Services and Classes would be continued at Ananda-Ashrama. Fate decreed otherwise. Owing to the disease prevalent among live stock in California, the Federal Government declared a strict quarantine on all the National Forest Reserve in Los Angeles County in order to protect the wild game. As a result Ananda-Ashrama, which was originally a part of the Reserve and which still comes under its regulations, was completely shut off from the public and is still, so to speak, in retirement. While the seclusion has been no hardship on the resident members, they have missed seeing their friends and have deeply regretted the interruption to the work.

On Easter Sunday in the early morning the members of the Ashrama met together out under the sky and held a special Service. The little altar beneath the trees, the fragrant flowers, the joyous song of innumerable birds, created an atmosphere of resurrection and new life which they wished many could have enjoyed. Not only Easter, but every Sunday, they come together for a Service at the regular hour. The public work of the Ashrama may be interrupted, but always the life of the Ashrama flows on, and the active work of development continues. The largest undertaking at present is the tunnelling for water. Already the mountain has been penetrated nearly 100 feet and all indications are that a large water supply will be forthcoming, sufficient for all the needs of the Ashrama now and in the future. Swami Paramananda expects to arrive at the Ashrama on May 21st. The quarantine will be lifted by that time and all the public activities will be resumed. The Swami will hold his first public Service on Sunday, the 25th, and the Services will continue without interruption throughout the summer. It is expected that the building of the chapel, auditorium and library will be begun very soon after the Swami's return.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

JUNE, 1924

DIVINE INSPIRATION

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CONTENTS

Divine Inspiration	Swami Paramananda
Universal Message	Various Sources
The Kingdom Within	Hans Denck
Fire of Truth. Poem	Swami Paramananda
Four Paths of Yoga	Swami Vivekananda
Rules for Daily Living	St. Francis de Sales
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Report	

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel.*

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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DIVINE INSPIRATION

By Swami Paramananda

DIVINE inspiration comes quietly, so quietly that the individual is scarcely aware of its presence. It comes without any ostentation, yet the benediction it brings is unspeakably rich. Do not think even for a moment that it is only poets, artists, musicians and spiritual teachers who need inspiration and that the average man has nothing to do with it. In the entire humanity there is not one who can make his life a true contribution either to himself or to his fellow-beings without proper inspiration. When we lack it, life falls upon us as a heavy load. There are many in this world of ours who work, who fulfill their duties, but they feel the weight of them. They do them with a sense of drudgery; but we can perform our daily tasks with a very different feeling,—with love, with inspiration. We cannot undertake anything with love, exuberance and selfless devotion without its unfolding for us. We learn from that task every step of the way. We can never escape from the dead weight of life until we have this awakening.

Inspiration! It is a divine guidance; it is the greatest heritage of man. It fills all our drudgery full of love, beauty and upliftment. Unfortunately we often regard spiritual themes as something apart from our every-day life. In our

daily activities we may not find the same possibilities for inspiration as we find in the lives of the master-spirits of the world. But why are they master-spirits? How have they become so great? Is their destiny specially mapped out for them; or have they made it possible for the great divine Power to flow through them? You know how it is if you neglect a mirror for days, weeks or perhaps months. Although the mirror still has the quality of reflecting, it does not reflect clearly and often even it distorts. Likewise when the surface of water is calm, clear and not agitated by wind, we see the clear reflection of our own image, or of trees, clouds, birds, of whatever comes near it. Are these not good illustrations of the human mind and heart? We long to accomplish great things in life; but in our haste and ambition, we altogether overlook the fact that unless our mind is serene, our heart fit for reflecting the Divine, we shut ourselves off from higher inspiration. Although we may work with our hands and our feet, if our mind is over-active and feverish with anxiety, nothing is accomplished. Often we bring about just the opposite result to that which we have set our heart upon.

These things do not happen by accident. It is not that a man achieves success through chance. He does not find poetry pouring out of his soul by chance, he does not become beatified through chance. It is all, directly or indirectly, the sum total of what we are. We can make ourselves so susceptible to higher influences that no matter what comes before us we draw inspiration from it, as we see in the soul of a poet or mystic. A poet comes in contact with a tree or a rock, a river, a brook, a bird or a beast and it speaks to him. Everything speaks to him. Because he has a living soul, all Nature becomes living. But the man who is unconscious of this living soul within and

whose thoughts and aspirations are not in harmony with that living soul, blocks the way to its expression. There is a great difference between one individual and another. It does not necessarily follow that when we are full of keen calculation, when we are very shrewd, that we are going to have inspiration. On the contrary, we sometimes hinder its manifestation through our calculation. When there is too much self-assertion, especially if the selfish aspect of our life is dominant, then that pure light cannot shine through us.

We individuals have a great deal to do with our life's unfoldment, with its success or failure. One who consciously or perhaps unconsciously, holds unkind, uncharitable thoughts, do you suppose his prayers will make him holy? Or that just because he professes an exalted creed he is going to gain true inspiration? No, a man may go on living quietly, humbly, without ostentation, without recognition; but if his heart is pure, if his soul is cleansed of all its selfish aspect, he will kindle the divine spark within him.

This brings a strange dilemma to our mind. If every man possesses the divine spark within, if every man has descended from that universal, cosmic Spirit, what difference can it make whether he knows it or not? There is a great difference between consciously possessing that great spiritual force and being unaware of it. No one can rob us of our immortality, no one can deprive us of our divine heritage; and yet we are deprived of it. A man may have inherited a fortune, yet if he is not aware of it or has no conscious control over it, it will do him no good. He will suffer just as though he did not possess it; he will worry and fret and sometimes even go through the agony of poverty. Same way is it with our life. We may have read in the Bible or in some holy code that we are all descendants

of one great Spirit, one infinite Being; but it avails us nothing unless we know it for ourselves; and without inspiration who can know about divine things? Going to church or professing a creed does not make us religious, not even though we are willing to fight for our creed, as many fanatics do in this world. Without inspiration every step of our way is fraught with danger. Our working life becomes very arduous. In our office, for instance, work hangs heavy over us; we feel the burden of it; we carry it like a great cross. Sometimes we curse our destiny, curse humanity and make life hideous. But one who knows how to carry that cross, glorifies it, just as we see in the example of Christ and in the example of all great saints, mystics and men of genius.

Often we come across people who are forever finding fault. They find fault with themselves, with their friends, with every one. Because their experience in this world has been full of evil, they trust no one. Full of suspicion, full of doubt, failure falls upon them at every step. In spite of all the religion they profess, they have no faith and their life becomes a mockery. Then again we come in contact with one who beautifies all things; whatever he touches breathes life and seems to give forth fragrance. This is not through chance. We all have the power to make ourselves channels for the divine Light, and also we can block the light in such measure that not only do we live in agony and despondency ourselves, but we throw that weight upon others. Some people make us feel that the only way out of life's unhappiness is through suicide. Others again fill us with enthusiasm, inspire us. Even in the midst of despair they give us the feeling that we can overcome all obstacles. Moments come when we have great difficulties; life presents a gruesome aspect; everything seems to go

wrong and we face discouragement and failure. Should we settle down and accept defeat as a final thing?

There are two ways of looking at life. Some look at it as a material creation. They recognize its changing aspects and take only the facts which come through sense-evidence. When there is a stormy day with hours that are dark and threatening, they feel that the sun is never going to shine again. People of this nature magnify their troubles by brooding over them. But there are those who, no matter what troubles confront them, pierce through the veil of darkness and find their way beyond the clouds. Such is the nature of inspiration. It is like a divine spark. It is not something which comes to us with noise. That is why many of us miss it entirely. We are used to noise, used to hearing only that which is given with loud clamour. But there are things given subtly, which we do not perceive. That is why the individual should cultivate his finer perception, his subtler sense of hearing and sight. We can so train our mind and heart that we can hear the voice of the Unseen and are able to contact that which our physical senses cannot discern.

In one of the great Hindu classics there is an illustration of the coming of inspiration. One day as the sage and immortal poet Valmiki was going with his disciple to bathe in the river, he saw two birds playing happily together. He was rejoiced at their happiness when suddenly a hunter shot the male bird, causing the female bird to cry out in agony of soul. This shot not only pierced the heart of the little bird, it went to the heart of the sage, so that he broke forth in unaccustomed utterance: "O thou cruel hunter, success will never be thine, for thou hast caused the destruction of an innocent, love-intoxicated bird." Astounded at the beauty, the music and the power of his

words, he turned to his disciple and asked, "What is this, my son? Have you ever before heard me speak in such lines?" "No Sire," replied the disciple. Again another Sanskrit verse came flowing through him, without any conscious seeking on his part for grandeur of language, rhythm or beauty. Then a voice told him the Spirit of the universe had bestowed upon him the gift of inspiration and he was appointed to write the life of great Rama, the ideal of manhood; and this book would not live just for a time and then be forgotten. "As long as the mountains shall exist," declared the voice, "as long as sun and moon shall shine and the rivers flow upon the earth, so long will people derive inspiration from thy gift"; and it was true. Indian history has proved it. In India children are brought up under the inspiration of the sage Valmiki. It was like a clarified stream flowing through him.

There is a great difference between what we do through force of circumstance and that which comes spontaneously, flowing from within. We all know this. We may not always be able to do everything spontaneously, but why should we kill our spontaneity? That is one of the greatest tragedies of our modern life. We are always trying to crush down what is innate, what is pure, what is lovely, what is subtle; and we are forever running after that which is full of noise, glamour and ostentation. In this way we are deprived of the more beautiful aspect of our life. What we need is balance. It is not that we should all become visionary and sit with folded hands, waiting until we have inspiration. It does not come to us that way, but only as we make ourselves harmonious through our thought, our aspiration and our actions.

It is the divine right of every one of us to tune ourselves in such a way that we can draw from the divine Source.

Are we not all children of the One? If we are not conscious of that, it makes no difference what religion we profess. It may have a big sounding name. We may be able to quote from the Bible, from the sacred classics, from all the loftiest sentiments of the world, but are we those things? Have we united ourselves with those feelings? Are we able to express them through our actions, our words and our silent thoughts? If at present we are unable to do this, it does not mean that we are incapable of it. We must always make a start, no matter where we stand, and we must not start with a negative feeling. There is a very great difference in this respect between the Indo-Aryan message and the Semitic teachings. This difference rests in the emphasis laid upon the two aspects of life. The Indian sages tried to inspire their followers not so much by emphasizing the existence of sin and iniquity, but rather by bringing out that which is the opposite of sin. "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss!" There is something very majestic in that call.

It does not require any great genius to find fault with others; we can all of us do that. We can convince them that they are worthless, immersed in sin and sorrow. But this does not save a soul. When a man becomes conscious of his worthlessness, he sinks deeper and deeper; but when he becomes conscious that he has a saving grace within him, that he has a soul which is part of Divinity, and that not to rise with it is a disgrace, then he is redeemed. This does not require any creed-bound faith; rather it requires the consciousness of that great Principle within and the desire to know that Principle. When we know it, we become incapable of harming or condemning any one. We find unity with our brethren and love for all human beings. Not only that, our love extends to all things living and

unliving. We become more tender towards animals, more conscious of beauty in natural scenery and in surrounding objects. They become living, they bring us rest.

A man bereft of inspiration, a man wholly dependent on material surroundings for his recreation, feels lost if he is left alone. He is wholly dependent on outer things. That one, however, who has found his access within, when he is left alone not only does he not feel lonely, he rejoices. The hours of solitude become rich for him. No matter where we are placed or how we are placed, if we are possessed of that inner awakening, we are never lonely and our life is never unfruitful. It is something we must try to develop and we do this by cultivating the sense of divine Presence. When we deal with material cold facts, we bring a living quality of lightness and inspiration into them. This we must do for ourselves; it cannot be mapped out for us by others. It is our own attitude of mind which either gives us access to these higher things, these subtler provinces, or blocks our way. Let us perform our task with cheerfulness, light-heartedness and exuberance of spirit; then perform the same task with depressed feeling, with a morose and melancholy attitude; and compare the results. The work performed with the light of understanding and cheerful aspect, is invariably the better done. Whenever we undertake anything with a sense of weight, doubt and despondency, we might as well not undertake it because it cannot be successful. If we carry life as though it were a dead weight, with unbelief and suspicion, the results will be negative; but if we undertake our tasks, our obligations and spiritual duties with faith, with divine inspiration, then not only shall we do our duties well, we shall draw constantly a fresh supply of life, a fresh supply of strength. What depletes man in his living is not so much

over-work as lack of the sustaining Power. Excessive work may exhaust our energy and nervous force; but it is working without inspiration that breaks us. That is the real cause. It breaks the machine of our life. Our life's machine runs smoothly and successfully only when we oil it with love and inspiration. Let us remember this every hour that we live. If we carry with us this subtle sense of a higher Presence, not only when we are reading the Bible or praying before our altar, but at all times, and if we can open ourselves so that that great Power can flow through us, we shall never lack for anything. This is what the mystics call inspiration. By wiping out all selfishness, egotism and calculation from our hearts, we can make of ourselves open channels through which the divine Power can flow, just as it flowed through Valmiki. He did not know he was writing poetry, he had no desire to become an immortal personage, and because of that he became immortal.

Let us do our tasks without thought of self. Let us quiet our ambition. Ambition is a great drawback to true inspiration. Too much of it creates fever in the soul. When that fever of self-love and selfishness, that eager desire to be somebody, surges within us, it defeats our life and its purpose. Let us be silent like the flower, waiting patiently. Then inspiration will fall like the dewdrop, all unaware, and we shall see the fruition. The bud will come to blossoming, full of fragrance, full of beauty. And this is our life. If we have a task to perform, let us do it tranquilly. Whether the world notices us or not should not be our concern. Our consideration should be first and foremost what we are able to give, how fully we can give and how completely we can put ourselves aside. Out of this richness of gift we shall never fail to receive richness of inspiration and blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

THE wind of God's grace is incessantly blowing. Lazy sailors on this sea of life do not take advantage of it. But the active and the able always keep their minds unfurled to catch the friendly breeze, and they reach their destination very soon.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Higher vision is the life of blessed gods and of godlike men, a renunciation of earthly joy, a deliverance from earthly sorrow, a flight of the self to the One.—*Plotinus.*

Whate'er we leave to God, God does,
And blesses us;
The work we choose should be our own,
God leaves alone.

—*Thoreau.*

Whether we are directors or guides, still do we want to be guided on account of the infancy of our steps. We are but solitary drops from the ocean of existence however much we possess of divine revelation and proof. I am far from the great reservoir of drops, convey me, O God, to the boundless ocean of light.—*Sahifah al Auliya.*

It must be that when God speaketh, He should communicate not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with His voice, should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives divine wisdom, then old things pass away—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and present into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one thing as much as another.—*Emerson.*

There are souls in this world which have the gift of finding joy everywhere and of leaving it behind them when they go.—*Faber.*

Fixt in an honorable purpose still, the brave preserve the same unconquered will; indifferent to fortune, good or ill. —*Theognis, 6th century B. C.*

Others shall take patience, courage to their heart and hand from thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer; and God's grace fructify through thee to all.—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

My heart is filled with devotion to Thee, O Sovereign Lord. Do Thou grant me such understanding that I may be able to offer at Thy Feet my humble praise. Thou abidest in all, Thou art all, Thou assumest all forms; all are from Thee, hence Thou art all, the Soul of all. Glory unto Thee, the Lord of all beings.—*Srimad-Bhagavata.*

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

By Hans Denck

(German Mystic. 16th century.)

God forces no one, for love cannot compel, and God's service is therefore a thing of complete freedom.

To hear the Word of God means life; to hear it not means death.

The thing which hinders and has always hindered is that our wills are different from God's Will. God never seeks Himself and His willing, we do. There is no other way to blessedness than to lose one's self-will.

The kingdom of God is in you and he who searches for it outside himself will never find it; for apart from God no one can either seek or find God, for he who seeks God, already in truth has Him.

Oh, who will give me a voice that I may cry aloud to the whole world that God, the All-Highest, is in the deepest abyss within us and is waiting for us to return to Him. Oh, my God, how does it happen in this poor old world, that Thou art so great and yet nobody finds Thee; that Thou callest so loudly and nobody hears Thee; that Thou art so near and nobody feels Thee; that Thou givest Thyself to everybody and nobody knows Thy name! Men flee from Thee and say they cannot find Thee; they turn their backs and say they cannot see Thee; they stop their ears and say they cannot hear Thee.

The Word of God is with thee before thou seekest; He gives before thou hast asked; He opens to thee before thou hast knocked.

It is not enough that God is in thee; thou must also be in God; that is, partake of the life of God. It does not help to have God, if thou dost not honour Him. It is no avail to call thyself His child, if thou dost not behave thyself like a child.

All externals must yield to love, for they are for the sake of love, and not love for their sake.

The holy Scriptures I consider above every human treasure, but not so high as the Word of God which is living, powerful and eternal; for it is God Himself, spirit and no letter, written without pen or paper so that it can never be destroyed. For that reason, salvation is not bound up with the Scriptures, however necessary and good they may be for their purpose; because it is impossible for the Scriptures to make good a bad heart, even though it may be a learned one. A good heart, however, with a divine spark in it is improved by everything, and to such the Scriptures will bring blessedness and goodness.

FIRE OF TRUTH

By Swami Paramananda

Master:

When the Fire of Truth burns in the heart,
it purifies the heart.
When its spark comes out of tongue,
it is vibrant with light.
Lo, it falls upon the ear that is not closed
to the subtle, spiritual sound,
like far-distant music,
Rousing the soul to a new world.
Fire of Truth—when it burns in the heart,
it purifies the heart.
When it burns in the mouth, it purifies
the mouth,
It purifies mind, body and glorifies the soul.

Disciple:

Compassionate Sire, what nature is this Fire?
Teach me how to kindle it.

Master:

It is flame without smoke;
It burns without fuel, save what is not visible
to the eyes.
It burns in the mouth of the wise.
It dwells in the heart of love.
It is the perpetual altar fire where saints
pour their oblation of worship.
It is eternal life.
It dwells in thee, though thou knowest it not;
dormant, hidden at thy inmost recess.
When thy uncovered heart will catch the spark
that comes out from the mouth that
speaks the Fire of Truth,
Then will be lighted in thee this smokeless,
eternal Flame.

FOUR PATHS OF YOGA

Hitherto unpublished article by Swami Vivekananda

(The following article was the second of three written by Swami Vivekananda with his own hand during his first visit in America to answer questions put by a Western disciple. This disciple kept them for his private use until recently when he passed them over for publication in the "Message". The first appeared in the February number.)

Our main problem is to be free. It is evident then that until we realize ourselves as the Absolute, we cannot attain to deliverance. Yet there are various ways of attaining to this realization. These methods have the generic name of Yoga (to join), to join ourselves to our reality. These Yogas, though divided into various methods, can principally be classed as four; and as each is only a method leading indirectly to the realization of the Absolute, they are suited to different temperaments. Now it must be remembered that it is not that the assumed man becomes the real man or Absolute. There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect; but the ignorance that has covered its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the *Atman* to restore its own nature. The chief helps in this liberation are *Abhyasa* and *Vairagyam*. *Vairagyam* is non-attachment to life, because it is the will to enjoy that brings all this bondage in its train; and *Abhyasa* is constant practice of any one of the Yogas.

1. *Karma-Yoga*. This Karma is purifying the mind by means of work. Now if any work is done, good or bad, it must produce as a result a good or bad effect; no power can stay it, once the cause is present. Therefore good action producing good Karma, and bad action, bad Karma, the soul will go on in eternal bondage without ever hoping for deliverance. Now Karma belongs only to the body or

the mind, never to the *Atman;* only it can cast a veil before the *Atman.* The veil cast by bad Karma is ignorance. Good Karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers and thus creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad Karma and thereby purifies the mind. But if the work is done with an intention of enjoyment, it can only produce that very enjoyment and does not purify the mind or *chitta.* Therefore all work should be done without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. All fear and all desire to enjoy here or hereafter must be banished forever by the Karma-Yogi. Moreover this Karma without desire of return will destroy the selfishness which is the root of all bondage. The watchword of the Karma-Yogi is "not I, but Thou", and no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without any desire to go to heaven, or to gain name or fame or any other benefit in this world. Although the explanation and rationale of this unselfish work is only in Gnana-Yoga; yet the natural divinity of man makes him love all sacrifice, simply for the good of others, without any ulterior motive, whatever his creed or opinion. Again with many the bondage of wealth is very great; and Karma-Yoga is absolutely necessary for them as breaking the crystallization that has gathered round this love of money.

Next is *Bhakti-Yoga.* Bhakti or worship or love in some form or other is the easiest, pleasantest and most natural way of man. The natural state of this universe is attraction and that is surely followed by an ultimate disunion. Even so, love is the natural impetus of union in the human heart; and though itself a great cause of misery, properly directed towards the proper object, it brings deliverance. The object of Bhakti is God. Love cannot be without a subject and an object. The object of love again must be a

being at first who can reciprocate our love. Therefore the God of love must be in some sense a human God. He must be a God of love. Aside from the question whether such a God exists or not, it is the truth that to those who have love in their heart this Absolute appears as a God of love, as personal.

The lower forms of worship, which embody the idea of God as a judge or punisher or some one to be obeyed through fear, do not deserve to be called love, although they are forms of worship gradually expanding into higher forms. We pass on to the consideration of love itself. We will illustrate love by a triangle, of which the first angle at the base is fearlessness. So long as there is fear, it is not love. Love banishes all fear. A mother with her baby will face a tiger to save her child. The second angle is love that never asks, never begs. The third or the apex is love that loves for the sake of love itself. Even the idea of object vanishes. Love is the only form in which love is loved. This is the highest abstraction and the same as the Absolute.

Next is *Raja-Yoga*. This Yoga fits in with every one of these Yogas. It fits inquirers of all classes, with or without any belief, and it is the real instrument of religious inquiry. As each science has its particular method of investigation, so is this Raja-Yoga the method of religion. This science also is variously applied according to various constitutions. The chief parts are the *Pranayamas*, concentration and meditation. For those who believe in God, a symbolical name, received from a Guru, will be very helpful, such as *Om* or other sacred words. *Om* is the greatest, meaning the Absolute. Meditating on the meaning of these holy names and repeating them is the chief practice.

Next is *Gnana-Yoga*. This is divided into three parts.

First: hearing—that the *Atman* is the only reality, everything else is *Maya* (relativity). Second: reasoning upon this philosophy from all points of view. Third: giving up all farther argumentation and realizing the truth. This realization consists in first being certain that Brahman is real and everything else unreal; second, giving up all desire of enjoyment; third, controlling the mind; fourth, intense desire to be free. Meditating on this reality always and reminding the soul of its real nature are the only ways in this Yoga. It is the highest, but the most difficult. Many persons get an intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain realization.

RULES FOR DAILY LIVING

By St. Francis de Sales

(Bishop of Geneva. 17th century.)

Do not be eager to find out whether you are in the path of perfection or not, and that for two reasons. First, because, if we were quite perfect, we should not know or believe it, but regard ourselves as most imperfect; there is no need to examine as to whether we are imperfect; how can we doubt it? Nor should we be astonished or disheartened at our own imperfection, but rather humbled; for thus we shall learn to correct our faults and improve gradually, which is one main use of imperfections; nor are they to be dealt with as sins. Again, all such eager research, if made with anxiety and perplexity, is pure waste of time; just as though soldiers, while awaiting a battle, were to weary themselves by sham fights with one another; or musicians were to practise till they were too hoarse to sing; a perpetual self-inspection wearies the mind, and renders it incapable of action when really necessary. This is the first rule I would give you.

The second is in our Saviour's words, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Simplify your judgment, do not indulge in so many questionings and replies; but go on quietly and in confidence. Let there be nought to you in this world save God and yourself; all else should not be able to touch you, except as He may command. I intreat you not to look so much hither and thither; keep your eye fixed on God and yourself, and you will never see aught save goodness in Him, unworthiness in yourself; but you will also see His goodness mindful of your unworthiness, and your worthless self the object of His goodness and mercy. Therefore keep your eyes firmly, resolutely fixed thereon; and let the rest go by with a passing glance. Moreover, do not dwell overmuch on what others do, or how they advance; look upon them with a single, kindly, loving eye; do not expect perfection in them any more than in yourself, and do not be surprised at the various forms of imperfection which you meet; imperfections are not more imperfect because they are unwonted. Imitate the bee, which gathers honey from all manner of flowers.

My third rule is, that you strive to be as a little child, who, while its mother holds it, goes on fearlessly, and is not disturbed because it stumbles and trips in its weakness. So long as God holds you up by the will and determination to serve Him, with which He inspires you, go on boldly and do not be frightened at your little checks and falls, so long as you can throw yourself into His arms in trusting love. Go there with an open, joyful heart as often as possible; if not always joyful, at least with a brave and faithful heart. God would have us serve Him by loving Him above all. This is enough; it must be done in simple faith.

DIVINE LOVE

Jacopone da Todi

Love, Thou didst enter very softly in
To hold this heart of mine.
No sound, no stir, no sign!
How couldst Thou cross my threshold all unseen?

O Love adorable, with sweetness fraught,
O Love delectable,
Love inconceivable,
Outstripping knowledge and surpassing thought!

O Love Thou fire divine, of laughter spun;
Love that art smile and jest,
Thou giv'st us of Thy best,
Thy wealth unmeasured that is never done.

O sweet and gentle Love, Thou art the key
Of heaven's city and fort;
Steer Thou my ship to port,
And from the tempest's fury shelter me.

O Love, how stainless and how pure Thou art!
How jocund and how wise,
How high, how deep Thy guise,
To him who gives Thee gladly all his heart!

Love, it was Thou Thyself that didst inspire
My heart to love Thee first;
An-hungered and athirst,
Thy lover longed, with very great desire.

IMPRESSIONS OF ANANDA-ASHRAMA

By Marion Forster Gilmore

It nestles in the arms of the Sierra Madre Range like a smiling child held close to its mother's breast. The winds are its playmates and they sing it strange wild songs of the mountains and the sea; the sapphire sky of California smiles down upon it and the bright valley of La Crescenta lies dreaming at its feet.

At the time of my visits there, in February and early March, the rains had not begun. Each day was a dream of radiant skies and golden light. The wild flowers, delayed by the long drought, had not made their appearance, but the gardens were aglow with roses, marigolds, pansies and geraniums, and vines and shrubs were bowers of brilliant bloom. The trip from Los Angeles to the little town of La Crescenta, where the Ashrama motors meet the Tujunga stage, always seemed to me like an exquisite prelude to the culminating glory of the Retreat. It is an eighteen mile drive through wide, sun-flooded lands, past veritable Gardens of Hesperides, shining with golden fruit, between brown foothills, into the majestic sanctuary of the "Mother Mountains", as the name "Sierra Madre" tenderly signifies. How strange, yet how profoundly fitting, that they should now cradle in their arms a Peace Retreat where the mother aspect of the Infinite One receives especial veneration!

From a great distance along the road that winds through the lovely valley, the red-tiled roof of the Ashrama dwelling house is visible, a splash of burning color against the mountain slope. On the edge of the natural platform on which the building stands, five hundred feet above the valley, are two acacia trees. When in blossom, they shine like celestial beacons, kindled to guide Ashrama pilgrims to their goal. The nearer one approaches, the more marvel-

lous the splendor of their living gold appears. Their ethereal effect is enhanced by the fairylike delicacy of their leaves and blossoms.

I enjoyed the privilege of spending a day and a night at Ananda-Ashrama, in addition to the Services I attended. My experience revealed to me something of the blessed meaning of a Peace Retreat. Spontaneous co-operation and joyfully consecrated activity are actual forces, not mere theories, in the daily life of the household. It is at once a wholesome, mutually helpful community and a family, bound by spiritual ties. In its outward aspect alone, the Ashrama blesses all who come within its boundaries with the legacy of a lovely memory. But the soul of its influence lies in the power and inspiration of the Swami's teachings and the atmosphere of love and service which pervades the consecrated place. Its visible glories are symbolical of the unseen Spirit working out its holy purpose there.

The Ashrama embraces one hundred and forty acres of mountain grandeur and rich fertility. Sage brush, oaks and pines cover the rugged slopes of the Sierra Madre Range and the Verdugo Hills across the valley. But the somewhat grim, though picturesque, effect of those wild growths is softened by the beauty of flowering fruit trees and shrubs, which lie, as it were, in the lap of the majestic Mother, for the delight of her young child.

Many of the shrubs and trees are exotics. The Australian eucalyptus is completely naturalized, but there are some that strike a foreign, yet in no sense a discordant note in the landscape's harmony. There are deodars whose dark boughs whisper of the far Himalayas as they stir in the mountain wind. And there are purple heather and yellow broom, suggestive of the Scotch and English moors and the fields of sunny France. The very vegetation is expressive

of the world-embracing spirit which prevails in this Retreat where East and West clasp hands.

The heather grows beside the front steps of the dwelling house. When I first saw it, it was a mass of stately purple flowers, swaying in the breeze. As I watched it, I imagined that each wee trembling bell was sending forth silvery tones too fine for any but an elfin ear. It is easy to put faith in innocent poetic fancies at Ananda-Ashrama. For its founder, Swami Paramananda, is a poet and its workers reverence Nature as the visible expression of the Master Poet.

· Although the heather chimes are inaudible, there is a bell at the Retreat with a tongue of potent sweetness. Before every Service, Sister Devamata rings the antique Benares bell suspended in the porch. Richly, solemnly, with exquisite rhythm, its tones vibrate, calling the seekers of universal Truth to prayer and meditation.

At no great distance from the main building, there is a canyon which Swami Paramananda has chosen as the site for the outdoor auditorium. The sunlight slants through the dusky foliage of the oaks and the forest stillness falls like a benediction on the soul. It is a spot of primitive beauty and unforgettable wild solitude; of lovely flitting lights and shadows and healing silences. An ideal place for those impressive Services to the "God of the Open Air", which form so vital a part of the Swami's glorious vision.

In the meanwhile Services are held out of doors whenever the weather permits. Sublimely simple, they are deeply, utterly impressive. I shall never forget the one at which the Swami talked on "Spiritual Healing." As always his discourse was clear and practical and, so it seemed to me, even more than usually inspiring. On every hand, as if in confirmation of his words, Nature was offering the testi-

mony of her splendid life which with instinctive trust she draws from the one unfailing Source. Behind the Swami a radiant mass of acacia was banked. Overhead the eucalyptus boughs glowed with their soft crimson flowers. A majestic background was formed by the mountain, looming in rude grandeur against the cloudless sky.

From that benignant height a reservoir sends down its waters, gathered from perpetual mountain springs. Farther down the slope two dams conserve the priceless treasure, thus insuring an adequate supply of water even in times of severe drought. And so, as the superb architectural plans materialize, we may count with confidence on steadily increasing beauty and abundance in the orange, lemon and walnut groves, the orchards of pears, apricots and peaches, and the flower gardens. Already the dwelling house and cabins overlook a prospect of amazing charm and fruitfulness.

But it is only a suggestion of the glorious setting in which before long the Temple, Auditorium, and other buildings of Ananda-Ashrama will be enshrined.

Louisville, Ky. May, 1924.

REPORT

Fragments of time in Chicago between trains were well utilized on Swami Paramananda's recent journey to and from Boston. Eastward bound, he arrived in Chicago Thursday, April 10th, towards noon. Rev. Jane Priest, pastor of Third Illinois Church, had with the co-operation of Mrs. Nellie McCollum of Unity arranged an informal afternoon gathering at the Unity rooms in the Capitol building. The Swami's message proved deeply inspiring to those present. In the evening, he was able to greet early arrivals at Miss Priest's class before going to the train. Three meetings were arranged for the return visit on Sun-

day, May 18. In the morning Swami Paramananda spoke at Unity, giving a noble address on the essentials of the spiritual life. In the afternoon, a large congregation at Third Church in Warwick Masonic Temple enjoyed his lecture on "The Glory of Vision." It was noted that the discourse was marked by true illumination. A reception at the twilight hour followed at Bookfellow Lodge, the center for the Order of Bookfellows, Mr. and Mrs. George S. Seymour being the hosts. Here the Swami read from "The Vigil" and "Soul's Secret Door," and answered carefully and with sympathy many searching and eager questions.

(Extract from letter written from Chicago.)

* * * * *

On Wednesday, May 21st, almost coincident with the lifting of the quarantine, Swami Paramananda returned to California from Boston. The following Sunday he conducted the public Service at Ananda-Ashrama, speaking on "Constructive Thinking and Living." Almost immediately after the Swami's arrival, the final plans for the "Sisters' House" were brought to him for approval and steps were taken for the commencement of the actual building. Auditorium plans were also worked over and the site cleared of undergrowth. Thus this summer will be a time of construction. The rose garden, which three months ago was a bit of wild hillslope, now yields daily roses that are miracles of perfection, exquisite in contour and colour. The Chapel Garden, also recently redeemed from the wild is now a blaze of luxuriant growth, looking as though jewels had been sown there instead of seed. Thus improvements which at first were lost in the immensity of the Ashrama are now becoming evident, to the delight of all who come. The Sunday service at 3:30 P. M. and the Thursday evening class at 8 will continue uninterruptedly at the Ashrama throughout the summer.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

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JULY, 1924

UNFOLDMENT FROM WITHIN

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CONTENTS

Maker of the Beautiful. Poem	Swami Paramananda
Universal Message	Various Sources
Unfoldment From Within	Swami Paramananda
Path of Duty	Mencius
The Quest of Beauty	Sister Daya
Spirit of Meekness	James Naylor
Swami Paramananda and His Work	Sister Devamata
Report	

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Along that highway which is full of the stir and crash of Kipling, the splendid, brutal quality of Masefield, and myriad, poignant, careless colors of Noyes, this reposeful, white gleam is at least amazing. Here is no contact with the physical, in any sense of the word. Its strain is purely spiritual with no suggestion of that quality as glimpsed in man, but only as it is felt in a soul that has become sensitive to the real in unrealities.

The book should be recommended to Americans because it will open up to them a philosophy of repose that is entirely foreign to this land.—*Evening Outlook, Santa Monica (Calif.)*

These songs are the chants of child-like faith, clothed in all the austerity and beauty that mark the Holy Scriptures themselves.—*Times-Star, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door," was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition. It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it. What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient. How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done.—*Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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MAKER OF THE BEAUTIFUL

By Swami Paramananda

IT is beauty I love.
Though like the foolish moth
Oft I burn my limbs in the flame;
Yet evermore my soul craves
its attainment.
Beauty in the rose draws my heart;
Beauty of dawn exalts my soul;
Stillness of the night fills me
with wonder;
Beauty of face and beauty of sight
Awaken in my soul love and ever
greater love.
In love and with love
I seek the Maker of the Beautiful.

(This poem was written on the train during the Swami's journey from Boston to Ananda-Ashrama in May, 1924.)

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

If you build upon anything or have confidence in anything which stands in time and is on this side Eternity and the Being of beings, your foundation will be swept away, and night will come upon you, and all your gathered-in things and taken-on and initiated will fail you—why gad you abroad? Why turn you yourselves with the saints' words, when you are ignorant of the life? Return, return to Him that is the first love, and the first born of every creature, who is the light of the world.—*Francis Howgill.* (*Leader of Westmoreland Seekers in England, 17th Century.*)

It has always been the persuasion of wise men that the moral law was not devised by men, nor introduced by them, but is an eternal law, to which the whole world must conform. Its ultimate basis is God, who commands and forbids.—*Cicero.*

What is God? Length, breadth, height and depth—God is designated One to suit our comprehension, not to describe His character. His character is capable of division, He Himself is not. The words are different, the paths are many, but one thing is signified; the paths lead to one Person.—*St. Bernard.*

There is one supreme Intelligence, Who acts with order, proportion and design; the Source of all that is good and just. He is the eternal living Being; the most noble of all beings, Who understands everything and gives motion to all things, continuing Himself immovable.—*Aristotle.*

O friend to virtue! that supreme Spirit which thou believest one and the same with thyself, resides in thy bosom

perpetually and is an all-knowing inspector of thy goodness or of thy wickedness.—*Manu.* (*Law-giver of ancient India.*)

Religion is a growth. Each one must experience it himself. The Christians believe that Jesus Christ died to save man. With you it is a belief in a doctrine, and this belief constitutes your salvation. With us doctrine has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Each one may believe in whatever doctrine he likes; or in no doctrine. What difference does it make to you whether Jesus Christ lived at a certain time or not? What has it to do with you that Moses saw God in the burning bush? The fact that Moses saw God in the burning bush does not constitute your seeing Him, does it? If it does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to stop eating. One is just as sensible as the other. Records of great spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except that they urge us onward to do the same, to experience religion ourselves.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?—*Thoreau.*

Do that which you judge to be beautiful and honest, though you should acquire no glory from the performance, for the vulgar is a depraved judge of beautiful deeds.—*Demophilus.*

A sacred burden is this life ye bear.
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly;
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin;
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

—*Frances A. Kemble.*

UNFOLDMENT FROM WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda

(Prayers and Talk given at Sunday Evening Service at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.)

Let us try to feel the All-abiding Presence within us. Let us open our hearts to the Supreme Spirit, that He may fill our hearts. Let us make our thoughts uplifted, tranquil and full of love. Let us send our loving thoughts and prayers to all our fellow-beings.

O Thou Supreme Spirit, Thou art eternally abiding; Thou art ever present in our hearts; Thou art the Source of our existence, the Root of our being. Make our hearts pure and free from all blemishes that we may feel Thy divine Presence in our hearts; that we may learn to love and forgive and rejoice in all Thy blessings in whatever form they come. O Thou All-Compassionate Spirit, grant unto us Thy loving and abiding protection and keep us ever in peace.

We often ask for a definite sign, that by seeing it we may believe and know; but what sign can really make us realize the Divine unless we have the understanding spirit, the unfoldment from within? How often people say, if we could see, we would believe. We can see only from our own level of vision; whether it is high or low depends on where we stand. The things pertaining to the spiritual plane we can see only when we are willing to lift ourselves from the material plane. Not only can we see them, we can retain the vision, its power and blessing; but we are not always willing to let go our hold on the material. We like to reap blessings, to have a sense of security. To some people religion provides that security, and it is for that reason they want to have some connection with it. But it gives much more than security. The spirit of religion is not merely to force people through fear into seeking for

some shelter or refuge. It is fundamentally the spirit of love. We love the beautiful, we love life, we love what is living and what makes for happiness. These are the things we seek, but in our seeking some of us go by round-about ways. We seek them in the material. We make the material the standard of life. This is where comes the stumbling block. We can never measure spiritual blessings from the material point of view; but we can enrich our material life by finding the fullness of spiritual blessing. It is not a question, however, of following a dogma or a creed. It cannot be accomplished by artificial means. It must come from within.

We can never pretend devotion to God. If we have it, we know we have it. Not only we know that we have it, we feel its blessing; it finds its expression even through our outer life, we do not need some one to tell us. This is something we must cultivate silently. As Christ often said: Pray in the closet, or as the Yogis in India teach their disciples: When you pray, let no one see you. When the whole world is asleep, wise men take that opportunity for prayer and meditation. Why? They do this not to mystify, but because they want direct access to the Divine, with no diversion, no distraction, no self-consciousness. Every human being has access to it. Our greatest misfortune comes when we begin to feel doubt of self, doubt of our ability to lift our heart in a direct line and see the face of Divinity. Why do we doubt? Are we not His children? What sign, what proof do we need to convince us of that? Nothing from outside can convince us of it unless we are convinced from within. The whole problem of the spiritual life is really cleansing from within, getting rid of the non-essential. All things must be made fresh. The greatest freshness we find comes through understanding. Great

souls remain unsoiled by the world. They are not contaminated, although they live in the world. They do not seem to lose their freshness. You may say they have not perhaps the same amount of worldly cares as we have. It is not that. They may have even more; as a rule they do have more than the average individual. Other people bring to them their troubles and their problems, but they know the secret of eternal freshness which is found in the Spirit.

As we come in contact with the spiritual Source, we are made fresh. We have eternal life. Once we taste that unbounded life which death cannot overcome, which no material condition can bury, we know life eternal. Christ's resurrection is the symbol of this. Every one of us has to rise; but we must not wait until we are nearly dead and have lost all power over the flesh. On the contrary, we should make use of every opportunity that is given into our hands to rise now. Every mortal must learn to rise through the power of the Spirit and dominate over the flesh, for flesh is the burial ground. Some people are so immersed in it, so overwhelmed by it, that life here is a burden for them; it even becomes a tragedy. We make it a tragedy by looking in the wrong direction. By turning our eyes in the right direction we find it is a source of unbounded blessing.

Life is ever giving us its blessing. As we keep our gaze fixed on the eternal light which is descending from God, as we unite ourselves with that, can we have any more doubt or fear of calamity? These come only when we allow ourselves to be twisted. Who does this? Have we really any enemy outside who plans to make us unhappy and to deprive us of this beautiful vision? No. Even if we did have such an enemy, he could not reach us. It is we ourselves who do it. Our egotism, our false ideas, our false identification, these are the enemies. We lay great importance on physical

life, we think that we truly live by the flesh; so naturally we have to go through the experience which belongs to the flesh. It is crushed; it dies; it is unstable; but the Spirit is ever living. If you have found the Spirit, then your very countenance will shine; your power will radiate even though you may not go out as a preacher. A burning lamp, wherever it is carried, gives its glow; it destroys the darkness; it throws light on the path. The same way it is with our life. The world is safe and also it is unsafe. It all depends on the individual. One who moves with the sense of safety and security, he knows through God-knowledge that he is ever safe. Not only is he safe, he is able to give safety to others. But one who enters into the world blindfolded, not in the literal sense, but with material ambition, with the sense of life as it is limited to the flesh, he knows no safety.

It is the soul which wears this body; and as long as we keep our spiritual line clear, open, vibrant, there is nothing that can thwart our course. The teaching of the Saviours, the great master-spirits of the world, is to revive us; to enable us to destroy all our fictitious notions that we are mortals, that we are weak, that we have to be sinful, and that we have not the power to rise above these conditions. We have the power. This is the call of the master-spirit: "Arise, awake and know that thou art part of the Infinite". "Be perfect as your Father which is in Heaven." That is resurrection. When we find our ascendancy, then we gain victory—victory over ourselves, victory over all that is ignoble and material, all that makes for contention and suffering. Some, even though they are living within this body, are already risen; and some are dead spiritually, although they may be living physically.

Let us be living. It is for the sake of the living that life

is to be enjoyed; not living in a morbid sense, but living with the glowing sense of the Spirit—that we are of God, that He lives with us, that He sustains us. We could not exist without Him. It is not true humility when we feel that we have no access to Godhead. On the contrary, we must always feel that we have access. Even though we may do something wrong, something ignoble, should we be afraid to show our face before that One who gives us life? When our moral fibre has become weakened by our distorted spirit of understanding, that is the greatest calamity. Until we can rise out of that, no amount of science can convince us that there is reality in spiritual existence. It is we who create our strength of vision; it is we who create our miseries, and it is we who have the power to rise above them and stay above them.

O Thou Infinite Spirit, Thou art ever near us.

It is through our lack of true vision that we are unable to see Thy face of beneficence.

Thou art ever speaking in our hearts, but our ears are so filled with the noise of the world that we are unable to hear Thy voice.

Thou art ever guiding us; through our egotism we fail to receive it and we shut our hearts to Thy divine blessing.

O Thou compassionate Spirit through Thy Grace all things are possible.

May we through Thy will find our access to Thy divine Being, that our hearts may be full of love and tolerance, a love that knows no hatred.

Give us such all-embracing love and make us one with Thy divine Spirit.

Thou art the embodiment of all blessedness.

Surround us with Thy protecting love and keep us ever in peace.

PATH OF DUTY

By Mencius. 4th Century B. C.

(Mencius or Mang-tsze was an eminent and ardent follower of Confucius, although he lived nearly 200 years later than his master. He was teaching in China when Aristotle was teaching in Greece.)

Man's natural tendency to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards.

The path of duty lies in what is near, and men seek for it in what is remote. The work of duty lies in what is easy, and men seek for it in what is difficult.

Words which are simple, while their meaning is far-reaching, are good words. Principles which are held as compendious, while their application is extensive, are good principles. The words of the superior man are not necessarily high-sounding, but great principles are contained in them.

What future misery have they and ought they to endure who talk of what is not good in others?

Benevolence is man's mind and righteousness is man's path.

How lamentable is it to neglect the path and not pursue it, to lose the mind and not know to seek it again.

Men must be decided on what they will not do, then they are able to act with vigor in what they ought to do.

To nourish the heart there is nothing better than to make the desires few.

When Heaven is about to confer a great office on any man, it first exercises his mind with suffering and his sinews and bones with toil. It exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty. It confounds his undertakings. By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature, and supplies his incompetencies.

As to what the superior man would feel to be a calamity,

for him there is no such thing. He does nothing which is not according to propriety. If there should befall him one morning's calamity, the superior man does not account it a calamity.

The superior man has two things in which he delights and to be ruler over the empire is not one of them.

That his father and mother are both alive, and that the condition of his brothers affords no cause for anxiety: this is one delight. Then when looking up he has no occasion for shame before heaven, and below he has no occasion to blush before men: this is a second delight.

Beware. What proceeds from you will return to you again.

He who stops short where stopping short is not allowable, will stop short in everything. He who behaves shabbily to those whom he ought to treat well, will behave shabbily to all.

Heaven's plan in the production of mankind is this: that they who are first informed should instruct those who are later in being informed, and they who first apprehend principles should instruct those who are slower to do so. I am one of Heaven's people who first apprehended. I will take these principles and instruct this people in them.

He who works for Me, has Me for his highest goal, is devoted to Me, is free from attachment and bears enmity towards no creature, he enters into oneness with Me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

God is veiled from the heart of the man who sees his own actions; God is veiled even from him who seeks recompense; and from him, who occupied with considering the benefit, turns his eyes from the Benefactor.—*Joneid.*

THE QUEST OF BEAUTY

By Sister Daya

This is the quest of beauty: to attempt to mirror in its perfection the one Reality. We may seem to be creators but all the time it is God creating through us. "O Arjuna, Ishwara, (the Lord) dwells in the heart of all beings, causing all beings to revolve, as if mounted on a wheel. O Bharata, take refuge in Him with all thy heart; through His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the eternal abode." The Lord, Ishwara, is the Poet; the Lord, Ishwara, is the Artist; the Lord, Ishwara, is the Creator. He it is that worketh in us; beyond Him there is nothing.

Once, so runs the legend, the Great God who bears the crescent moon in His hair, sat with Uma His divine Consort, on the snowy peak of Kailas. He was trying to cajole her from a jealous mood by telling her a story. She had just settled down to listen when they saw a tiny black form moving up the icy slopes of the mountain, like an ant amid blocks of salt. "Who are you, and what do you want?" thundered the Great God. The man, for so it was, fell trembling on his face. "Have mercy!" he cried, "I am only a poor *kathaka* (story-teller) to a great Raja. For years I have told him a new tale every night; but finally I positively could think of nothing new and in his displeasure he threatens me and all my family with death if I do not produce a perfectly new story within a given time. In my despair I have come seeking the Great God who alone is the Author of all the stories that have ever been told or ever will be told."

"Now this is most fortunate," said the Great God. "You have arrived precisely at the right moment for I was just going to begin a tale, so listen attentively and all your troubles will be over." At that he picked the mortal up

and set him in His hair. Then He began His story. The details of it do not matter. A prince robbed of his throne cursed all the gods but Lakshmi,—the Goddess of Love, Beauty and Fortune,—for she alone so he held, possessed real power. From that moment he fell under her favor and under the disfavor of the other gods. She sought to protect him and they swore to destroy him. Again and again they laid snares for him but always Lakshmi, armed with her weapon of beauty, came out victorious and mocked them.

Finally in a rage they sought out her Lord, the adorable Hari, determined to discipline her for her wilfulness. They found Hari dreamily sitting on a lotus leaf in the midst of the infinite ocean of space. He listened to their complaints and then whispered Lakshmi's name. Though it was but a whisper it vibrated through all the three worlds. At that call the Lotus-eyed rose from the sea, standing poised on the back of a tortoise, all tender grace and beauty, her slender, incomparable body wrapped in her dripping hair. As she stood there ineffably lovely, Hari turned to the Gods, but not one was left. How could they or any one accuse such a beauty of anything whatsoever, much less demand her punishment. With a smile Hari summoned her to Him and sinking down beside Him in that endless expanse, she gently rubbed His feet with the lotus of her hand.

"Now," said the Great God, taking the man from His hair, "There is your story; go and tell it to the king." But the man fell at His feet. "Great God, have mercy!" he cried, "Grant me one more boon, I implore Thee! Make it possible for me to look, if only for a moment, on that Beauty of beauties." "Is not that just like mortals?" said Ishwara, "Never satisfied! It were far better for this wretched man not to have this boon but nevertheless I shall grant it. Uma,

summon Lakshmi!" Then that Great God directed the man to look fixedly on the white peaks just where they cut the deep blue of the sky and as he gazed into that immense profundity suddenly there flashed before him a vision of loveliness that severed his soul from his body and he dropped dead even as he gazed into the unfathomable eyes of Beauty. The Great God, picking up the body with His purifying hand, sent it whistling down through space to the plains below, but the man was reborn almost immediately and became a poet, who wandered ceaselessly, searching for a beauty he had once seen but could never find.

We have all had glimpses of that immortal beauty and we are all seeking to realize it in its fullness. But there are those who have gained either a more complete vision of it or else have retained the vision more vividly. Some seek it in form, some in love, some in goodness, some in religion; but all who have ever felt the drawing power of an ideal are lured on by the wonder in the eyes of the Lotus of the World. What ineffable comfort in our quest to know that only as we contain beauty within, may we see it without! We are what we feel and what we sense we shall become. Nature is a cup into which we pour our own beauty. When we appreciate an artist's work, we share his dream; when we thrill to nature or to a great ideal, we share God's dream. It is the divine promise. When we worship we are worshipping only that which essentially we are and consciously shall become. Humanity has not the power to long for a God that is separated from the human heart. Is not the cry of love always a cry for union? If we feel beauty and respond to it, then know for a certainty that the supreme Artist is hidden within us and we seek in outer things only the reflection of His face.

Is beauty then, but a state of consciousness? Has it noth-

ing to do with the external, with line and color and form? From the ultimate point of view there is no external or internal, there is only One; but from the relative view-point the inner and the outer both exist and react upon each other. The God without, in whatever guise, knocks at the door of our heart and awakens a response from the God within. Without that knock the inner God would have remained slumbering; without the inner God the knock would have been meaningless. The beauty around us beats upon our finer sensibilities and awakens them. Thus is mankind interlinked and the dream of one, expressed in terms of beauty, rouses the dreamer in another to appreciation and action.

The Lord resides equally in all hearts, it is true, but all hearts do not manifest Him equally. It is a question of unfoldment. Environment can either help or hinder us in this unfoldment, can draw forth either our baser or our better qualities. And as environment reacts upon the individual, so does the individual react upon his environment, thus influencing other individuals for weal or woe. None stands alone. Man affects man; nation affects nation; humanity works upon itself, just as a flower unfolds its petals.

Every facet of creation is capable of reflecting God, and beauty is that reflection. It is not a thing of calculation because its source is the Spirit, not the mind of man. It has nothing to do with the self-conscious. The merely moral may be barren of it, but it flows from the Holy. Beauty and holiness are inseparable. All the Christs of all the ages have been transcendent artists,—their lives are poems. We cannot think of them other than in terms of beauty. You and I may talk of beauty and may analyze it; they radiate it. The artist in matter is but the fraction of an artist. His mind is turbid and passion-tossed and thus reflects only

broken bits of the Divine; but the artist in life has become like a clear and placid lake, flashing forth the glory of the sun on every side.

The one Master has already painted the complete picture of the universe in flame and wind, in earth and wave, in emotion and thought, in matter and spirit. We are part of that picture, each one of us. Is our life drab or dull? Possibly it is done in that low key so that the high light next to us may shine and the supreme Artist be glorified. As we see the great picture clearly, we are able to discriminate; to place things in their right proportion in accordance with the plan. But when the vision becomes obscured for us we have a distorted view; we take too much of this, too little of that and accent wrongly. The ugliness of emotional and mental distortions is sometimes the beginning of morality. Where the opinion of others has little effect, where ordinary ethical considerations do not hold, Beauty steps in and challenges: Can you do this ugly thing? And what convention could not accomplish, Beauty achieves. This is true morality since we refrain because it is right and beautiful to refrain and not just that we ourselves may be kept clean.

If only we could each day see freshly as if for the first time! If we could but get rid of name and form and tradition; if just for one moment we could gain an unsullied impression of things as they are and not as men have said that they are,—could see them in themselves and not through the medium of men's minds,—the world for us would be reborn in glory. How may we gain this pristine vision? How may our senses, dulled by repeated impacts, recover their lost sensitiveness? There is One within Who makes all things new. When we find Him we find unchanging freshness, a beauty that is never dulled. Beauty of earth

has its opposite; but heavenly beauty is all-inclusive and transforms everything into its own likeness. The great artists touch this. They pass beyond mere prettiness. Beauty is not prettiness. It is death as well as life; it is majesty; it is grace; it is the tender and it is the terrible. That is why in India the Supreme is sometimes depicted with a necklace of skulls, blessing with one hand and slaying with the other.

In truth, beauty is *Maya*,—that veil of illusion by means of which the Divine plays hide and seek with His universe. Do we not find the Goddess of Beauty rising from the foam of the sea, the symbol of illusion? It is the lure which wrongly understood, entices us ever deeper into the ocean of incarnations and of death, and rightfully understood, liberates.

The Infinite is shining back at us from every point of space so that on all sides and always man may be confronted with ultimate perfection and not utterly forget. At night when we stand silent and aspiring under the blue-black arch of the sky, gazing at the steady brilliancy of the stars they signal to us,—"remember!" The banners of the sunset flung over the misty valley while the first jewels of the city shine forth are a pledge of eternal beauty to us. Man is a creator with the material ready to his hand,—whole worlds lie ready for his making; but his attempts will be bungling till he can say from the depths of his soul: "Not I, but God worketh in me!" He creates in his own image. As he is in his consciousness so will his product be,—ugliness from ego, beauty from the Divine.

All work can and should be an offering to God. In this way drudgery is transcended. But that offering is incomplete and man's joy is incomplete until he is free to pour into his gift the beauty content of his soul. The nation

however poor, which provides its people with the means for artistic creation, will be infinitely happier than that nation which enriches itself at the expense of the art sense of its members. Handicrafts are the only means by which the people at large can express this yearning for artistic expression. Think how they are starved to-day and what the result is in our civilization! Art is now a luxury. It should be united with necessity. Practically everything that the ancients touched in daily life had a message of beauty which stimulated the higher side of their nature. Their commonest utensils were graceful and lovely. Hand-made civilizations such as theirs, carry with them into the future the fragrance of the soul. The things we make with our hands are extensions of ourselves, but machine-made articles become an extension of the machine.

This is not the age of the artist because the people themselves are not artists—they have no chance to be. It is not an age when men unite to raise a church or temple with their own hands to the glory of God; but the beautiful has never left us. Man can still bring it into his world, if he will, can give it proper consideration, instead of leaving it standing outside till all the other guests have been provided for. Beauty is the Ambassador of God and should be our first and most-honored guest. Even the earth-bound materialist is moved by it, while the cleverest scientist cannot dissect it. It gives the feeling of completion; it fills the interstices of the soul. Who can think of love without beauty; of true religion without beauty? And these are the great incentives to physical and spiritual life.

Say what you will, call it what you will, it is beauty that leads all creation in its mad dance. The mating instinct is said to be the motive force in life, but even there beauty is the lure, drawing us on and on to union with the Divine. It

is the creation, preservation and final destruction of the universe. Creation is beauty seeking expression; preservation, beauty maintaining that expression through an endless round of desire; destruction, beauty the reflection leading to Beauty the Reality. As we behold it around us it is illusion's self, inviting the soul but never satisfying; the intangible, the retreating, the never-to-be-attained; the tearful beckoning of the earth in spring, the sudden flush of flowers, sunset and snow; the maddening glamour of the emotional world, the lofty beauty of the mental world! Illusion, all illusion! We pursue it because we must. But there comes a time when it is not enough to behold beauty, to seek to possess it,—we must become it. From the depths of our being arises the poignant cry for finality, we suddenly realize that we are looking not at the sky but at the pool and breathless with hope, slowly we turn our eyes upward and behold Reality.

THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS AND LONG-SUFFERING

By James Naylor

(Eminent Quaker Mystic. 17th Century.)

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end. Its hope is to outlive all wrath and contention, and to weary out all exaltation and cruelty, or whatever is of a nature contrary to itself. It sees to the end of all temptations. As it bears no evil in itself, so it conceives none in thoughts to any other. If it be betrayed, it bears it, for its ground and spring is the mercies and forgiveness of God. Its crown is meekness, its life is everlasting and unfeigned; it takes its kingdom with entreaty and not with contention, and keeps it by lowliness of mind.

In God alone it can rejoice, though none else regard it, or can own its life. It is conceived in sorrow and brought forth without any to pity it, nor doth it murmur at grief and oppression. It never rejoiceth but through sufferings: for with the world's joy it is murdered. . . . I found it alone. Being forsaken I have fellowship therein with them who lived in dens and desolate places in the earth, who through death obtained this resurrection and eternal holy life. . . .

Press into the heavenly spirit with its power to overcome the earthly spirit with its powers. Strive earnestly in the meek spirit to obtain a measure of faith and patience larger than the temptation and that will endure to the end of it, a meekness and love to cover all strife and wrath, a long-suffering to famish all haste and that which seeks its own ease. . . . which is done by sinking down into the heavenly feeling, contrary to the will of the exalted life, whereby you will be overshadowed from above to overcome things below. . . .

Dear hearts, you make your own troubles by being unwilling and disobedient to that which would lead you safe. There is no way but to go hand in hand with Him in all things, running after Him without fear or considering, leaving the whole work only to Him. If He seem to smile, follow Him in fear and love, and if He seem to frown, follow Him and fall into His Will, and you shall see His in yours still,—for He will prove His own.

For what is more agreeable than wisdom itself, when thou thinkest of the security and the happiness of all things which depend on the faculty of understanding and knowledge.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in October, it will be my privilege to present in the pages of the "Message" for ten or twelve numbers an account of the life and work of Swami Paramananda. A sojourn of some length in India, a collection of letters rich in lofty thought, and close association with the Swami from the first hour of his landing in America, have provided me with rare material for my task. The suggestion for it came to me through urgent requests from India to send all the facts available about the Swami and his achievement in this country, for publication there. In gathering the data together, the suggestion came to me with irresistible insistence to transform the dry enumeration of incidents into a narrative for Occidental readers.

It seemed to me also that the time was ripe for such a narrative, since it is not a question of drawing from the shadow of obscurity an unknown life. For eighteen years the Swami has lived in the full glow of public work, carried on with a tireless zeal and exalted consecration that have won for him the loyal devotion of hundreds and thousands of striving hearts. His printed works have reached thousands more, and numerous are the letters from grateful souls who have been lifted out of pain or despair by the power of his written word. When we consider that on one short lecture tour of eleven days eighteen hundred of his books and pamphlets were sold, and that publishers count at least five readers to a book, we see that in that brief interval nine thousand hearts were touched. Add to these the hundreds who heard him during the twenty-two lectures given in those eleven days; multiply this number by constantly repeated lecture tours from coast to coast and one will have

some conception of the countless numbers who have come within the range of the Swami's spiritual influence.

Here and there in this extended field of loving labor have grown up more concentrated centres of activity. A faithful group at Geneva, Switzerland, a large and exceptionally ardent group in Cincinnati, a Centre for some years in Washington, a nucleus of devoted students in Louisville, a growing number of friends in Chicago and elsewhere, mark points of deeper contact which the Swami has made as he has journeyed about teaching. From 1907 to 1923 he gave the best of himself to Boston; and as the fruit of his zealous effort he has there to-day a firmly rooted work, which ranks among the established churches of the city. It was in the beginning a patient, silent battle against conservatism and prejudice. The real and enduring nature of the victory won is evidenced by the imposing home of its own which the Centre has occupied in the Fenway since 1914, and even more by the large numbers which gather in the Centre's Chapel at the Services and Classes when the Swami is in Boston.

Ananda-Ashrama, founded by the Swami over a year ago in the foothills of the Sierra Madre range in Southern California, stands as the culmination of eighteen years' rich achievement. That the crowning work should take the form of a Peace Retreat on the fragrant slopes of these Mother Mountains seems the natural flowering of his own life and heart; for his steadfast aim has been and is to create unity and harmony wherever he touches the world. Uplifted serenity characterizes his attitude of mind invariably. In all his warfare for Truth his sole weapons have been tolerance, non-resistance, gentleness and love. The Ashrama was established to embody these principles in vivid living form. It began literally as an extension of

The Vedanta Centre of Boston, for it took up the average of attendance and the keenness of public interest just at the point to which the Boston Centre had carried them after sixteen years of activity. The Ashrama, however, has gone forward so rapidly and attained such magnitude that it seems now rather to be an extension of itself. It possesses already, much more sharply defined than the parent work, the spirit of cosmopolitanism; and people, not merely from all parts of the country, but from all over the world meet on its hill-tops in loving unity and understanding.

It seems peculiarly fitting that I should break my long silence by telling of a life to which I owe my own life. During my serious illness, which began in March, 1922, when all hope was abandoned, the Swami established a vigil; and for three days and three nights of unbroken intercession the Shrine was kept open, a sacred light burned before the altar, and the Swami with the household watched by turns in prayer and fasting. The vigil was continued for nine more days throughout the waking hours. One of the first three days fell on Thursday; and when the Class met for its usual lesson, the Swami came from the Shrine, told why the household was in prayer and called on all present to join them. For one hour nearly two score of earnest hearts bowed and interceded for my life.

When the vigil was started I knew nothing of it, but during the first night I suddenly felt a heavy burden drop from me so completely that I expected to rise in the morning fully restored. I even rose from my bed and walked to a chair on the other side of the large room. The nurse entering the room at dawn found me sitting there and declared that if she had not seen it, she would not have believed it possible. The following morning nurses and doctors were amazed at the marvellous change in my condition

and appearance, and even the most skeptical frankly acknowledged that it must be the work of a higher Power. One of the doctors said to a fellow physician later that they could take no credit for my miraculous recovery, it was wholly due to the Swami and to the remarkable atmosphere and influence of the Centre.

When they told me of the vigil, I understood. After that I rested wholly on it. I recall one night when I refused the ministrations of the nurse, sent her to the adjoining room, and all through the pain-weighted hours of darkness I kept my closed eyes fixed on that vigil flame before the altar, with the Swami's prayer-wrapt figure seated near it. The power and blessing which came so lifted me that I seemed to float above the pain. Often afterwards I had to cease my prayer, because when I united myself with that centre of spiritual force in the Shrine below, the waves of power which swept through my weakened body were more than my depleted strength could bear.

The Swami did not leave me on the threshold of living, he led me gently back to life—through his prayers, through a brief daily reading of some sacred book, through holy words of encouragement and counsel, and above all through his poems. They came like shining rifts in a leaden sky; and as the sun's rays, piercing storm clouds, seem to draw up moisture from the earth, so these glowing rhythmic lines drew my vital energies from the depths back to the surface of my being. Whenever he wrote a new poem, he brought it to my bedside to read to me; and so vivid was the impression made by it that often I could repeat it word for word after one hearing. These frequent poems became the substance of my prayers and meditations. It is, however, a slow and arduous labor to bring a weakened body back to usefulness and vigor. Even when I began the present nar-

rative three weeks ago, I felt physically unequal to it; but thought-contact with an exalted, God-given life has infused me with new strength, and I go forward with full hope and trust in that higher Source which never fails.

The joy and privilege of my task have carried me far beyond the boundary lines fixed at the outset; but I am confident that every one who has come within the influence of the Swami's peace-bestowing personality or felt the benediction of his writings, will be grateful to know all that can be told of this life which has brought inspiration, blessing and joy to so many other lives.

(To be continued)

REPORT

On June 9th Swami Paramananda unexpectedly left California for Boston. Although the season was late and many people had already gone away for the summer, the attendance increased steadily during the three Sundays he was there. On June 19th he gave his fourteenth annual dinner. In spite of its being arranged hurriedly there were about eighty guests present. On his return trip west, the Swami spent two nights in Cincinnati. On July 5th he spoke under the auspices of the Psychology Club of Cincinnati and the following afternoon and evening he gave two public addresses at the Unity Auditorium before large and appreciative audiences. The Cincinnati group is a very ardent body of workers who seek to express their devotion and enthusiasm through action. The moment news reaches them of the Swami's approaching visit, announcement cards are printed as if by magic, hundreds of people are notified and lectures are arranged almost over night so that no matter how short the time given them, when the Swami arrives his audiences are awaiting him and he is free to give out his great message, unhampered by petty details. This time, for instance, people came from neighboring cities,—Louisville, Indianapolis, Dayton, etc.,—in order to be in Cincinnati during his visit. The Swami is now again at Ananda-Ashrama, where he hopes to remain for the rest of the summer.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

OCTOBER 1924

POISE AND PERSONALITY

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CONTENTS

Poise and Personality	Swami Paramananada
Universal Message	Various Sources
Balancing Rod of Life—Poem	Swami Paramananda
Life's Eternal Song—Poem	Swami Paramananda
A Man of Tranquil Wisdom	Mahabharata
Egoism and Realization	Swami Turiyananda
Surrender—Poem	Marion F. Gilmore
Swami Paramananda and His Work	Sister Devamata
Report	

NEW BOOK OF POEMS JUST OUT

THE VIGIL

By SWAMI PARAMANANDA

That high note which Swami Paramananda reached in the poems contained in "Soul's Secret Door" is unfalteringly maintained in his latest collection of adulant verse, "The Vigil," which is an outpouring of the soul to its Maker, an acknowledgment of the Voice of the Infinite that has penetrated to the innermost recesses of the poet's being. Adoration is dominant in this spiritual efflorescence in which beauty of expression vies with reverential thought.

There is no striving after effect in this little volume; the songs are as sincere as they are spontaneous and inspirational. They are luminous with the great lustre of divine love and reflect the flame of faith whose transcendent glow has permeated the poet's life. Only an understanding soul that has been relieved of all impurities could have voiced this intense love of the Divine, this merging of the finite will in that of the Infinite.—*Sam T. Clover, in Los Angeles "Saturday Night."*

When Swami Paramananda's earlier volume, "Soul's Secret Door," was published, no one who read it failed to recognize its sincerity, its beauty, its surpassing calm. The present book, it seems to me, is even a higher accomplishment. It has carried the splendid growth of the earlier verse to a more splendid fruition. It is amazing what this Oriental writer can do with vers libre. Would that our own professional writers of free verse could come within miles of him; but, perhaps, that is too much to expect, for Swami Paramananda has a message! We are better for listening to it. What a great Christian he is, in spite of the fact that his religion is of the Orient. How good a thing it would be for America if all our professed ministers of Christ could write simply and sincerely, as this servant of God has done.—*Enquirer, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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POISE AND PERSONALITY

By Swami Paramananda

POISE makes the foundation for a greater personality. We never find one whom we revere, one who is worthy of our respect and admiration, who is fretful and lacking in balance; because these qualities do not go with true greatness of character. We know without any great exertion on our part that it is not the nervous, excitable, nor even the most active type of human being, who accomplishes the most; but rather the one whose forces are well-organized, whose speech is well-controlled and whose body and bodily faculties are under command. Such a man, whatever he undertakes, not only undertakes it with masterful attitude, he accomplishes it.

In order to find the utmost expression of life we must make our mind like a lake of still water. What does still water do? It reflects. Not only it reflects, but it reflects accurately. Whenever our mind is ruffled, no matter what the reason, it can no longer reflect the true image. One can always give a reason for agitation or a disturbed attitude. Whenever we are vexed, whenever we strike another by our thought, our physical force or our words, we have plenty of reasons to offer. We say: "This man offended me, robbed me, harmed me"; but in spite of all these ex-

cuses we find that we injure ourselves more than any one else can injure us.

In every department of life, from the smallest undertaking to the greatest, we need tranquillity and poise. And what is poise? It means balance, and we all must have balance. If we do not have balance, our vision is not correct; our forces, even our physical forces, are not well-organized; and naturally we meet with failure. The greatest failure that man can meet with is spiritual failure. If we do not have a grasp on our inner life, our physical life can endure very little. A strong man with physical vigor, with a good, even a brilliant mind, eventually breaks down if he does not have poise. Indian philosophical and spiritual study lays great emphasis upon the state of balance. It leads not merely to intellectual speculation, but to meditation. There are people in the active world who will say: "What have we to do with meditation? We cannot waste our time sitting and reflecting on something which is indefinite."

The question of what we call indefinite and what we call definite is relative. One person finds subtle things very indefinite; his vision is narrow and limited; he does not see the subtle principles of life. Another person, whose vision is unfolded, finds a definite connection with higher forces; not only he finds a definite connection with them, he benefits by them. They enter into his life, they unfold in his actions. Even his words carry a certain magnitude and measure of what he has found in his spiritual life. We are all double beings. There is not one who can say he is lacking physically. There is not one who can say he is lacking spiritually. The very fact of his existence proves he has the two parts.

Whenever we are in union with ourselves, then only can we surmount our difficulties. It is not by fighting, it is not

by physical force or mental calculation, that we surmount them; it is by clear vision, by a poised mind. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, success and failure, victory and defeat: these are constantly revolving. To maintain our balance under all the varying conditions of life is one of the greatest points in philosophy. A man who lacks poise is forever fluctuating,—rising and falling, rising and falling. Think of the nervous energy that is expended by one who has no control over himself. Whenever he comes upon something pleasing, he is excited, over-wrought; he may be so elated that he wears himself out through elation. Then again, in spite of all his calculation, in spite of all his theories, something goes wrong and he feels equally the strain of sorrow. We can never expect to advance even in our physical life until we have a sense of poise. It is not only needful for the philosopher, the mystic and the poet, every man needs it.

We always think that our upset conditions, whether physical or mental, come from our outer surroundings. Outer surroundings are merely the apparent causes. For instance, one person is agitated by a harsh word; another person is not. It is the same word, perhaps exactly the same situation; but one takes it so lightly that the blow falls upon him equally lightly. It does not seem to touch him. The other takes it so rigidly, it falls upon him with such tremendous force, it almost breaks him. These are simple facts of life, but they are invariable.

It is not in the big moments of our life, when we see every one watching us and we pretend many beautiful things, that we prove our greatest worth. It is when we are taken unaware, when no one is watching or giving us credit for what we are doing; then our inherent nature, our innate love of nobility, the tendency in us to express the

highest, leads us onward and inspires us to do the right thing. This we cannot do if we live too much on the surface. Our modern life, in spite of all its glamour and apparent advancement, has brought us to a very superficial condition. We are always taking things from the surface, and what we need is to go deep down. Not only in philosophy and religion, but even in our every day life we must have a deeper sense.

Our vision can be made clearer; our mind can be made to grasp a great deal more than it is capable of grasping at the present time. It is not that some great power is barring our way, or that some great mystery is holding things from us. We bar our own road. So much of our force is scattered and because of this we feel the strain of life, we have not the power of resistance. But we can increase our resisting power; the power of resistance of our body can be increased, the power of resistance of the mind can be increased. A man can become like a rock; also he can become so fragile that at any little word he goes to pieces.

A man becomes strong because he has trained himself to be strong. Do not think for a moment that if we merely pray to be saved from trouble and succeed in keeping ourselves out of unpleasant situations, this will bring us the greatest amount of blessing. We need all the ordeals and all the experiences of life in order to become what we ought to be. It is not the one-sided life that makes us perfect. I do not mean that we should sit down and pray for troubles, although there are great souls who welcome them. Whenever any difficult situation arises in their life, instead of shrinking from it, they welcome it with a smile. Why? Because it is a test, and whenever we surmount a difficulty, we prove to ourselves that there is something better and

more profound within us than we are capable of grasping in our ordinary moments. We make a definite connection with our inner being. But this we cannot do if we live too much on the surface.

The real and the apparent are constantly passing before us. What we see on the surface is not absolutely unreal; it has its value; but there is something we do not see which has a greater value. To sum up the philosophy of life: there must be a definite relationship between the physical and the spiritual; the body and the soul must co-operate. As we grow more and more still, more and more in harmony with ourselves, more in tune, we find this point of contact. Sometimes when we forget ourselves altogether, we are restored and revived from fatigue and strain. Whenever we give ourselves a chance, we find that even in the midst of confusion we can have a glimpse of true vision. The more agitated we allow ourselves to become, the less opportunity there is for clear perception. Whenever we are worried over our own fate or over any one else's, that is not the moment for us to have clear vision. Remember this always!

Poise means literally, simply and logically that we are one with ourselves,—no friction, no agitation, no disturbing elements, no rage, no storm. Storm does not always come from outside. Often we find there is a greater storm raging within our own soul and we create it. Also we have the power to uncreate it. We do not obtain this point of equilibrium if we live carelessly. We may think that if we appear before others as ladies and gentlemen, that will suffice; that when we are living in our own homes, where no one is watching us, it does not make any difference whether we live in the right way or not. This is a great mistake. Whatever our ideal is, it must be expressed through and

through our life. Above all we must be in tune with ourselves. It is not public opinion that makes a man great, it is his own endorsement of himself. Therefore one must form the habit of entering within one's own sanctuary.

You may laugh at this. You may say: "This idea is from the Orient; the Swami is an Oriental. The vision of an Oriental is different from ours of the Occident." The fundamental principle of life is one. We are all striving for freedom; we are all striving for self-expression. The greatest self-expression does not come through one who is scattered, who is unbalanced. This does not mean necessarily one who has been in an insane asylum, but rather one who is not in equilibrium, not normal in the highest sense. Very few people are. But everybody can be normal. Whenever we say to ourselves: "Oh, I am not capable of doing this, I cannot hold my mind still, I have no control over my body, I cannot control my temper," this implies that we are not normal. If we are normal human beings we do not say such things either to ourselves or to others. A normal being is so in tune that his life becomes like music and even his words fall in rhythm.

There is no such thing as accident. What we generally call accident is really the result of long deliberation. It represents the sum total of our thoughts and feelings through days and months. This is true of high inspiration as well as of ignoble action; neither happens by chance. We must give our thoughts to that which is vital if we wish to make our life fruitful. The greatest men in this world, no matter in what line we find them, whether they be men of genius or spiritual prophets, are not produced suddenly. They are the product of profound deliberation; they are the fairest fruit of spiritual evolution. If any one thinks that by chance he may have happiness, by chance he may

become great, he is very much mistaken. Suppose he is lauded to the sky, suppose he is put suddenly on a very high pedestal, can he retain that place unless he has innate greatness unfolded within him? Suppose a man taken from a crude form of life is put in the place of the President, do you suppose he can handle the position, or that he will enjoy it?

We have infinite power within our own self. Theoretically we may all know this; we may read in books that every man is potentially divine, that every one is pure and perfect; but we must know it in our life. A man's life must coincide with all that he claims he is; if not, very soon his own action will betray him. What we need is to start from where we stand. Every man can start from where he is. Our failures are but lessons, our mistakes should bring us fresh determination.

In India there is a very splendid attitude taken by the philosophers and wise men. They teach us that we should never condemn any one. "Have we not all descended from that infinite Source?" they say. "Are we not all innately divine, children of immortal bliss; and as such can we not redeem ourselves?" The only way we can redeem ourselves is to connect ourselves with that Source. In order to do so, it is not sufficient merely to belong to a creed or profess a dogma or take up anything superficially. It means the unfolding of our life, and this we can only accomplish through our every-day living. It does not mean that we must abandon what we are doing with our hands and feet, that we must neglect our worldly duties; but rather that all we do, we must do with a different attitude. Our life of activity, our vision, our actions all must flow from within and lead to the infinite Source. Things become material when we look upon them with a material eye; the same things be-

come spiritual when we interpret them according to high ideals.

This world is neither good nor bad. Some people say it is full of evil, because evil is emanating from them. Mystics and sages find it full of power and inspiration because they have these qualities within themselves. There is a very ancient saying which comes down to us from the Upanishads, the great Indo-Aryan books of wisdom, that whatever exists in this universe is filled with the one divine Principle; know this and never be sad. What a tremendous, what a definite, what a consoling statement! Even should we be apparently confused and full of blankness, all is filled with one great divine Principle and we are part of That; or as a great Christian mystic in his ecstasy once exclaimed: "This whole world is full of God." A man in his materiality may say this is nonsense, the world is not full of God. He sees nothing but evil, his dealings with people are unpleasant. Sometimes we draw out evil from other people by the attitude we take towards them, by the words we utter. We inspire them towards evil and then again we have the privilege to inspire them towards the highest.

We must have faith—not a shallow faith, not something we pretend; but absolute faith in the divine nature of man, so that no matter what he may do to us we shall not give up our ideal. That is what we need and not mere theories. A man may pick up theories from Scriptures and books, but they do not stand the test of life. Let us have that which we can make part of our own being. All the great ideas and ideals that are born in the Scriptures are but the experiences of souls divinely inspired, and because of that they are helpful to us. Until we become in tune with these ideals, we find life full of lack, full of emptiness. There-

fore in the midst of all our activities, in our daily round, we must not forget to look up to That which is the highest, the truest, the deepest part of our nature. These hands and feet cannot work unless they are sustained by a Supreme Power. They can only be led to perform that action which we are capable of conceiving. According to his concept, man becomes either great or small. If he is imbued with the highest, the noblest, the loftiest inspiration, it will be impossible for him not to give expression to that in his outer life.

Within this house of clay there is another dwelling, a rampart which no hostile enemy can enter. In our moments of silence, in our moments of perfect tranquillity and balance, when we shut all materiality out from our soul, we find access to the sanctuary within the inmost recesses of our being. This divine sanctuary is the common property of the whole human race. There is none so sinful, so depraved that he can be eternally barred from it. No one can bar our path to it; no one can keep us away from it. It is our divine birthright. We always possess it, but we must become conscious of it; we must learn how to enter there. We must grow calm and so full of poise that even in the midst of storm and turmoil we shall know we have a refuge within, which nothing can molest.

When we gain poise, it is not only that we make our life invulnerable and safe from outer afflictions, but it gives us access to higher wisdom, as the great Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu declares in his graphic description: "When water is still it is like a mirror. It gives the accuracy of the water level and the philosopher makes it his model. If water derives lucidity from stillness, how much more the faculties of the mind! The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the universe, the speculum of all creation."

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

When the sun rises it sings the Sacred Name for the sake of all creatures. When it rises it destroys the fear of darkness. He who knows this is able to destroy the fear of darkness (ignorance).—*Chandogya Upanishad.*

He is happy whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances.—*Hume.*

If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee but keeping thy divine part pure as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately; if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And there is no man who is able to prevent this.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

Give us, oh, give us, the man who sings at his work. Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any of those who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He does more in the same time, he will do it better, he will persevere longer.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

The happy man is he who is cheerful with moderate means; the unhappy, he who is discontented in the midst of plenty.—*Democritus.*

God would have us serve Him by loving Him above all, and our neighbor as ourselves. This is enough; it must be done in simple faith, without any subtle refinements for the present, as we must do all things in this world, where perfection is not to be found, waiting for the day when it may be done after a heavenly and eternal fashion. But eagerness and agitation are not good. Your wish to do

right is good, but let it be free from excitement. I would forbid any such excitement as the source of all imperfection.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

It is an admirable proof of infinite wisdom, that what is noble and benevolent beautifies the human countenance; what is base and hateful imprints upon it a revolting expression.—*Schiller.*

BALANCING ROD OF LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

Covet not pleasure;
Shrink not from pain;
Stand firm on the balancing rod of life.
He who seeks pleasure must surely take
pain;
For they are coupled—the inseparable twins.
Let thy soul live in tranquil harmony
amid pleasure and amid pain.

LIFE'S ETERNAL SONG

By Swami Paramananda

Sing when joy fills thy mind!
Sing when sadness crowds thy heart!
Sing when life's stream runs its
fullest mark.
Sing when death brings its darkest gloom.
Sing that song which will never change
with time or tide of life.
Light and shadow, joy and pain,
Fame, infamy, loss and gain,
These are all set hours for our life's
eternal song.

A MAN OF TRANQUIL WISDOM

From the Mahabharata

Moved by the knowledge of what is true in life, one should never grieve for either the past or the future. Be thou of such a frame of mind, O prince of Kosala, in respect of every affair that may engage thy attention! Desiring only to obtain that which is obtainable and not that which is unobtainable, do thou enjoy thy present possessions and never grieve for that which is absent.

Endure the prosperity of others although thou art thyself divested of prosperity. They that learn to adapt themselves readily to outer conditions succeed in enjoying the prosperity which comes to others. Prosperity leaves the person that hates others.

Sometimes man renounces wealth, and sometimes wealth renounces man. What man possessed of knowledge is there that would feel grieved at the loss of wealth? As no one can form an adequate idea of the past nor can foresee the future there being many intervals of time and place, a person like thee, who is possessed of such wisdom and such strength, never indulges in grief for loss or gain, for good or evil.

Do thou repair to the great forest and lead a life of happiness there, all alone and subsisting upon fruits and roots, restraining speech and mind, and filled with compassion for all creatures. He that cheerfully leads such a life in the forest, with large-tusked elephants for companions, with no human being by his side and contented with the produce of the wilderness, is said to act after the manner of the wise.

A large lake, when it becomes turbid, resumes its tranquillity of itself. Similarly a man of wisdom, when disturbed in such matters, becomes tranquil of himself.

EGOISM AND REALIZATION

Extract from Letters of Swami Turiyananda

At first one has to apprehend Truth through discrimination (*Vichara*); and afterwards, when the discrimination is firm and free from doubt, realization forthwith takes place. Whenever there is a cessation of doubt, misgiving and contrary notions with regard to Truth, the mind gets a steady hold on reality; and this is called the realization of Truth. Through the grace of the Lord one attains this in himself in due course.

One does not get rid of egoism simply by desisting from work. The way to do this lies through work. For the crude oil to get boiled it must be put on the fire. To refine sugar one has to remove a lot of scum by boiling it. Then it becomes pure. In like manner, to purify the mind one has to carry it through the path of work, until it gradually becomes unselfish and hence pure. It is useless merely to give up work mechanically. The idea that I will not work because it produces egoism comes of intense selfishness. It bespeaks a dreadfully *Tamasika* (inert) temperament. One must convert it into *Rajas* (activity) through work, and then by gradually attaining to *Sattva* (balance), one is really freed from egoism. "One who has egoism in his heart may not work, but is full of egoism withal;" while he who is free from egoism and well-balanced, is really free from the bondage of work, even though he does everything.

There is nothing that is not He. Everything is He, the Lord. It is only because we do not see Him that we see other things; otherwise all is He! Name and form proceed from Him and rest in Him. The wave, the foam and the bubble are nothing but water. Hence Sri Ramakrishna says: "It is He who has become all this. There is nothing besides Him." This is the truth. One who has realized

this truth will not be able to deny it. It is a state "beyond the senses and mind." But That which is beyond the theory of apparent evolution and everything, is the One, the *Advaita;* nothing else exists.

He alone is true. The *Jiva* (individual soul) and the universe that spring from Him are also true unless He is lost sight of. They become unreal when we lose sight of Him and look at the names and forms. Why? Because then they cannot exist. But if we remember Him, we can understand that the central stalk of a banana tree has sheaths around it and the sheaths again enclose the stalk. Such ideas as "In Me all this is strung as pearls on a thread" then stand explained.

The thing is, we must realize Him. When He is realized, nothing else exists. Everything then becomes saturated with His Presence. All troubles last only so long as we do not realize Him. All trouble is at an end when we know Him. Only He exists. He is the one absolute Truth and all doctrines centre round Him. Once you realize Him, it is peace everywhere. Realizing Him one may follow any system of doctrines to one's liking, it will not do any harm.

SURRENDER

By Marion Forster Gilmore

Oh! God, I would not be a rebel longer
  Against Thy will as I have been thus far!
Take me and use me, heal me of my blindness;
  And in these depths I may behold a star
Divinely mirrored; in this songless striving
  My soul may learn to sing such melody
As it has never voiced; and, O my Father,
  More truly serve because more trustfully!

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(FOREWORD. Reiterated requests for facts concerning Swami Paramananda's life and work, to be published in India, have reached us recently. In preparing the data desired, the impression has come to me strongly that there are as many in America as in India who would be eager to know these facts. I have woven them, therefore, into a narrative for western readers, which will appear in the next ten or twelve months of the "Message". The Introduction was published in the July number.)

I.

INCEPTION OF WORK IN AMERICA

Swami Paramananda landed in New York two days before Christmas, 1906. He seemed to come as the spirit of the Christmastide itself; and I recall writing to one of the Swamis in India at the time that it was as if a Christ-child had been born in the house. As he moved through the halls there was always a murmur of song on his lips, and an unvarying brightness in his mood and bearing which filled the house with joyousness. This quality of joyousness had evidently belonged to him from the outset; for soon after he joined the religious Order of Sri Ramakrishna, its President, Swami Brahmananda, gave him the name Basanta (Spring), the name by which he is still known among the older Swamis. Sometimes he called him Basanta Kokhile (Spring-bird) because of the keen pleasure he derived from his singing. When the President himself told me of the name, he added in explanation: "You know Sankara's saying: 'A saint is like the Spring; wherever he goes he carries the song of birds and the fragrance of flowers'." Swami Vivekananda coupled name and Sanskrit saying so closely that he rarely spoke the one without repeating the other.

The Swami's own face and heart were always shining and he could not bear to have the least cloud shadow any other face or heart. I remember one day of festival at the Vedanta Society when all through the early hours of the

celebration he was restless and weighted. In the afternoon he came to my door, his face glowing, and exclaimed: "I have found out what was the matter. Mr. G. was sitting in his room grieving over some bad news, but I have cheered him up and he is all right now." At another time one of the closer members of the Society had met with a serious accident. Her sister was alone with her and was wondering how she could reach the Swami, when the bell rang and he stood before her with the quiet words: "Do you need me? What has happened?" It has always been characteristic of him that he hears the silent call of the heart as clearly as the spoken call of the lips and never fails to respond.

The ship on which the Swami crossed from England was to dock on Sunday morning just at the hour of the regular Service at the Vedanta Society; so only three of us went from the Society to meet him. When the steamer came alongside the pier, he was nowhere to be seen. We were busy with the luggage when he took his place silently among us. This noiseless, unobtrusive manner of approach is peculiar to him. His footstep is always soundless and possesses a lightness and spring which give the impression of moving above the ground rather than on it. He was calm and perfectly at ease; and he maintained the same quietness and simplicity when an hour later he faced a large portion of the congregation, who had lingered at the Society after the Service in the hope of seeing the arriving travellers. There was no sign that he was a stranger in strange clothes, surrounded by a strange people. He spoke English with perfect fluency and gave no hint of constraint. Afterwards that picture of the tall, slender, serene figure rose before me when an older Swami told me that Swami Ramakrishnananda had introduced Swami Paramananda

to him with the words: "Here is a boy who is absolutely fearless." Too often we forget that our self-consciousness, embarrassment and sensitiveness to opinion are minor forms of fear, which impede our spiritual progress. Only one who is untouched by the world and in conscious touch with a protecting Source can be without fear. The Upanishads tell us that the knower of the Supreme is called the fearless one.

A sudden shift of circumstances soon after the Swami's arrival forced him to take a Sunday Service. He conducted it with the greatest ease and composure. His rare gift of language was apparent even then when for the first time in his life he faced a large gathering. After that he spoke frequently at meetings and the Saturday morning Class was put in his charge. It was in April just four months after his landing that he made his first contact with Boston through a visit to Mrs. Ole Bull. Mrs. Bull, meeting him for the first time, was strongly impressed with his deeply spiritual nature and many gifts, and in letters to friends in India she compared him to Sukadeva. Sukadeva was the son of a Brahmin in ancient India. Having received his early training from his father, he was sent to the court of a wise king to be taught of him. The king, to test him, gave instruction to his guards to let the boy's coming pass unnoticed; and Sukadeva sat for three days at the palace gate, scorched by the heat of noon, chilled by the cold air of night, without food or drink. Such treatment to a high-caste Brahmin was an ignominious affront, but the lad sat silent and unconcerned.

Then courtiers came with silken cloths, jewels and sweet perfumes. His body was bathed in scented water, laid on a soft couch to rest, and savory dishes were brought to break his long fast; but the boy remained equally unmoved. When

he was led to the audience chamber, the king gave him a goblet full to the brim to carry about the great hall. Sukadeva, with dancing girls, courtiers, and gay music all about him, went three times around the hall without spilling a drop. The king then said to him, "Go home, I have nothing to teach you." It was the same enduring calm, the same youthful wisdom and spiritual vision which Mrs. Bull saw in the Swami, and which led her to predict frankly that he had a great work to do in the West. Even then she urged him to establish a Centre in Boston.

His visit lasted three weeks; and not long after his return to New York he left again for a sojourn of some length at a Vedanta Retreat, established a short time before in the Connecticut hills as a branch of the New York Society. More than one of those who were living there at the time have told me what a vital quickening the life of the Retreat received at his coming. He set apart hours for morning and evening meditation and all the day he was teaching informally, sitting under a nearby tree with a sacred book in his hand or walking with a happy group up some hillside talking of holy things. The greatest lesson he taught was by a sixteen days' silence, during which no word passed his lips. The power gathered through constant higher communion and complete conservation of strength made an impression on the lives of those who watched him which will never be effaced.

There was nothing abnormal or strained in his mode of living. He wandered through the woods, sat for his evening meditation on a flat rock under an isolated tree, and gave himself up fully to the enjoyment of Nature. He also mingled with those about him, but did not speak. A passage from a letter written me at this time shows the childlike simplicity of his mental attitude. He writes: "I stay

out of doors and walk alone in the woods, lie down on the rocks and sometimes think, think deeply; all harmless and innocent thoughts cross my mind. Sometimes I think as if I am a baby lion, maybe motherless, still must not be afraid of other animals." Then follow the ringing words now in "The Path of Devotion:" "My own experience tells me that strength only is religion, strength is truth. Anything that makes us weak is sinful. With all our power we must avoid that."

"I sing," he writes again: "I sing very loudly because there is no mortal to listen. I sing to myself. I sing for the satisfaction of my inner self. Mostly I sing this song: 'O Mother everything is Thy will, Thou doest Thy work. People say, I am doing, I am doing. Whatever Thou wishest Thou canst do. Not I, not I.' This is the true wisdom. One becomes free after realizing this." Another letter reads: "I am after all only a little boy, but an innocent boy. What Mother wants me to do I do not understand, but I know I am Her child. I am sure She will guide me and protect me. That is all I want. Let the whole world stand against me, I do not care. I am a soldier, a faithful, true soldier, but it is a very hard battle; but no great work was ever performed without the supreme sacrifice."

September found Swami Paramananda in charge of the Vedanta Society in New York and for fifteen months he conducted practically all the Services and Classes. He brought a fresh spirit of devotion and fervor into the New York work, and those who gleaned help and blessing from it expressed their gratitude by frequent offerings of fruit or flowers. Most of the flowers came from a florist by the name of Brown, who had a shop round the corner from the Society. All the winter the offerings kept coming; and the florist grew to know the lithe, graceful figure of the Hindu

teacher and to look for the friendly word from him which he often spoke in passing. Upon the arrival of Easter Eve the Swami, returning from a walk, found a miniature forest of blooming plants and cut flowers before his door with Mr. Brown's own card, on which was written: "I have sent them so often for others, now I wish to send some for myself. Please accept my warm wishes for a happy Easter."

Every one felt the subtle power of the spiritual atmosphere which enveloped the Swami and which still surrounds him. His freshness and buoyancy, his tender concern for the happiness and welfare of those who sought his help, could not fail to make irresistible appeal to all hearts. The joy of his presence, one letter declares, could have "no other reaction but an accentuated joy", and another: "Your presence in the room, without a word, would be an inspiration and a help to live the spiritual life." A lady who had had the pleasure of entertaining the Swami in her beautiful home on the Hudson sent him these words of warm gratitude for his visit: "My home seems even more radiant since you have honored it with your presence. We are truly blessed in knowing you, and I feel that a man of God has been in our midst."

"I cannot feel that I should remain silent and not try to express that gratitude which I have felt in my heart towards you since hearing you speak", another lady writes after meeting and hearing the Swami at the house of a friend. "What you said seemed to illuminate for me what had been a great darkness, and because of that I cannot adequately express my gratitude. It was a great pleasure to my husband also to have met you and we earnestly hope that another meeting may not be far distant. I think we both feel that the message of Truth which you carry is an unmeasured blessing and benefit."

The Swami had and has now an undaunted way of facing difficulties, which carries people through their troubles with a courage amazing to themselves. He does it by changing their attitude of mind rather than the outer condition. He makes the heart superior to its struggles. "I owe my very life and reason to your teaching", writes one who had been lifted out of great trial and distress, "for things have happened since then that I could not have gone through without the knowledge taught in your lectures. Everything is so changed and I owe it all to you. I have learned to be the same in pleasure and pain, and to realize that I am nothing of myself, but that Divine Mother can help us to do the impossible thing. I depend on Her for everything and She never fails me. I am more than grateful to you, dear Swami, and bless the day that brought you to me, as I was perfectly indifferent to spiritual things and very well satisfied with life as it was. Now what a difference, for I can think of very little else than spiritual things, and it brings such wonderful joy and peace that I wish I might give it to all the world."

I could multiply such passages indefinitely, for letters of recognition and deepest thankfulness came constantly and continue to come; but the two which follow will suffice, since they seem to voice the spirit of them all: "Much sunshine and joy have come to me as I have watched you live the teaching; and as I have watched and listened, I have felt strengthen in me the aspiration to attain and to live the only life worth living—life in the Spirit. So you see how much I have to thank you for, which I do most heartily." "If I can only reflect upon others a little of the light that shines upon me from you, then and then only can I hope to repay your love and devotion to us all."

(Chap. II, "Salient Characteristics," and Chap. III, "First Book," will appear in November.)

REPORT

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

August and September have seen the hills of Ananda-Ashrama turn burnt orange under the sun of summer. They have seen the countryside parching for water even while at the Ashrama a tunnel was being pierced deeper and deeper into the heart of the mountains, seeking ever for the underground source of water that feeds the springs of the Sierra Madre range. They have seen the water come in a glad stream, flowing into the almost emptied reservoirs in time to save many rare plants and trees. How much water is yet uncertain as the tunnelling is not completed, but a sufficient amount to ensure blessed moisture even in times of severe drought. More than this have August and September witnessed. With the passing of their days the addition to the main building, which is to be the living quarters for the consecrated workers, has come into being with extraordinary rapidity and will be ready for occupancy by the middle of October.

On September first Swami Paramananda went east once more, answering the call of devoted hearts in Cincinnati and Boston. St. Louis, a new field for the Swami, was his first stopping place. A wire received from there tells of two lectures and three classes in thirty-six hours. Warm interest was manifested and eager hope expressed that the Swami would always include St. Louis in his itinerary. The report from Cincinnati and from Dayton has not yet reached the Ashrama, but it will be contained in the November issue of the "Message of the East." It was not easy for the Swami to leave California at this time when so many important developments at the Ashrama are nearing completion. Likewise the ordinarily dull season of the late summer has shown scarcely any falling off in attendance at

Services and Classes. Even on very warm Sundays, the whirr of motors sound on the road to the Ashrama, from the purr of the Packard to the chug, chug of the little Fords. In themselves the motors tell the story, for to Ananda-Ashrama come rich and poor, the intellectual and the simple-hearted, drawn upward to the still retreat in the hills by a common spiritual hunger. And always those who come exclaim on reaching the tree-encircled plateau where the house stands and where the Services are held: How fresh and cool it is here after the heat of the valley, and what peace there is—more than the peace of the hills.

Not long ago two came who had been connected with the purchase of the property over a year ago. They had known the place well as it used to be. When they saw the new building nearly completed, with its grey walls of unchiselled stone, simple and enduring, like some Old World monastery; when they saw the chapel garden which was but lately redeemed from the wilderness; when they saw the rose garden planted only last April and already yielding roses of hot-house perfection which are gathered daily for Services in the little Shrine; when they saw all this and much more, they were amazed and delighted.

Aside from the Sunday congregation and casual visitors, the Ashrama has had guests for a longer period. Swami Prabhavananda, assistant to Swami Prakashananda, head of the San Francisco Vedanta Society, came to the Ashrama for a ten days' rest. Swami Paramananda gave him warm welcome and took him for many walks over the property and drives into the surrounding country. Swami Prabhavananda has only lately come from India, but he said that at the Ashrama he felt at home again. A member of the Cincinnati group came at this same time and in a few days made himself a vital part of the Ashrama community.

The Swami is expected back early in October for the dedication of the new building. During his absence services and classes are being conducted as usual by one of his assistants.

THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

The Vedanta Centre of Boston has carried on its work for the past year with fine spirit in spite of many handicaps. Its working force has been greatly diminished by the call of most of its resident members to the Ashrama. Thus the responsibility for the work there rests upon a very few brave hearts and faithful shoulders. But spirit is mighty and its light has shone unfailingly.

The two Services on Sunday have continued uninterruptedly but the Tuesday night Class was suspended, being replaced by the Tuesday Supper Club which met for many months till summer heat made it seem best to discontinue it. This was not a purely social gathering as the name might imply. In Jerusalem Jesus with His disciples over nineteen centuries ago sanctified the breaking of bread, and in all ages the consecrated have transformed the simple meal into a spiritual feast. The Tuesday nights at the Vedanta Centre were carried on in this spirit, the supper which all helped to prepare, being only incidental to music, poetry and uplifted thought along all lines. Many have written of the stimulation they have received from this vital personal contact with the work. There is a great blessing gained in the time of faithful waiting and those who have held together with loyalty and devotion during the Swami's many absences in California have surely gained this blessing.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

NOVEMBER 1924

INTROSPECTION AND SPIRITUAL VISION

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Established 1909)

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CONTENTS

Introspection and Spiritual Vision	Swami Paramananda
Knowledge of the True Self	Aitareya-Upanishad
Universal Message	Various Sources
Light. Poem	Swami Paramananda
The Revolving Wheel	Chuang Tzu
Veil of the Heart. Sufi Poem	Hafiz
Swami Paramananda and His Work	Sister Devamata
Report	

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Est. 1909)
La Crescenta, California

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Of India, Founder and Head

SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

ASHRAMA CLOISTER

Sunday, 3:30 P. M.

Nov. 2—Dedication Service
Nov. 9—Co-ordinated Life
Nov. 16—Spiritual Rebirth
Nov. 23—Even-mindedness
Nov. 30—Life's Fulfillment

The aim of the Ashrama is to provide a truly non-sectarian place of worship and to create an atmosphere and inspiration conducive to practical idealism.

CLASS LECTURES

Tuesday, 3 P. M. Thursday, 8 P. M.

In these classes the Swami will give lessons in practical spiritual unfoldment.

Reading Room and Library Open Every Afternoon from 2 to 5 P. M.

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

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INTROSPECTION AND SPIRITUAL VISION

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

WHAT has "Introspection and Spiritual Vision" to do with our normal, physical life? It has to do with it from every angle. It is the physical life of man, when properly tuned, that exalts him and lifts him to a higher vision; and it is through spiritual vision that we find a working hypothesis for our life. The great Roman philosopher Epictetus tells us: "You are a distinct portion of the essence of God and contain a certain part of Him in yourself. Why then are you so ignorant of your noble birth? You carry a god about with you, wretch, and know nothing of it. Do you suppose I mean some god without you, of gold or silver? It is within yourself you carry Him and profane Him without being sensible of it, by impure thoughts and unclean actions . . . and when God Himself is within you, are you not ashamed to think and act thus, insensible of your own nature and hateful to God? If God had committed some orphan to your charge, would you have been thus careless of him? He hath delivered yourself to your care and says: 'I had no one fitter to be trusted than you; preserve this person for Me such as he is by nature,—modest, faithful, sublime, fearless, dispassionate, tranquil'." What a beautiful picture this draws,

but how alien it is to our own consciousness. How seldom do we think of ourselves in this light!

Man must prove things for himself, he can never live on hearsay. This is true throughout life, not merely in spiritual things. If some one comes and tells you that you are a millionaire, your first impulse is to find out if it is true. You will go a long distance to discover whether there is even a possibility of your having become rich; yet when you are told by great seers of your spiritual heritage, you turn a deaf ear. In the same way, if some one tells you, you are invincible, that you carry within an immortal soul, you say: "No, I see men dying, suffering from disease, frail and faltering. How can I be invincible?" This conflict is being waged constantly from some angle, but we cannot meet it with mere theory. Only the man of vision, the man who has found something real, he alone can withstand the onslaught of life. Too often we make a caricature of life, of the Ideal, and of what we call religion. It is not the fault of the Ideal that we do this. We should never try to challenge any ideal on the ground that it has failed. It is we who have failed to raise ourselves to the level of the Ideal.

If a man works with his hands and feet, his mind and brain, without any objective, without any goal before him, he may kill himself; because life is not organized in that way. It is not those who overwork, not the most strenuous and energetic who accomplish the greatest amount. It is the man with far-seeing wisdom. You may say that only very rarely do we find one who has this far-seeing nature, who is endowed with divine attributes. How can you or I expect to possess such vision; how can we hope for such wisdom to guide us in our material and in our spiritual life? That is where we blunder. These eyes of ours are capable of seeing both good and evil. There are people who have

become incapable of seeing evil. You may think: "They are fools. It requires no great shrewdness to see that people are evil, that the world is full of evil. I should not trust any one. I should be full of suspicion." Another, instead of suspicion, instead of chaos and disorder, finds power and divine order. He establishes something unshakable. Which is the greater?

Do we gain anything when we see life from a lower angle? It is very easy for us to be doubting and suspicious; it is very easy for us to see only things which are on the surface; but as long as we dwell on the surface we cannot find any peace for ourselves and certainly we cannot give peace to any one else. When we see from the surface, our mind, our brain, our heart, all our faculties, are constantly distorted. Until we have found an underlying principle which is not only elevating to us, but which inspires us and is sufficing both for our material and physical life, we have no foundation either for our spiritual life or for our material life. Do not think for a moment that when a great mystic, philosopher or poet bursts forth with lofty vision that he has come upon it suddenly, and that you too may suddenly come upon it. It comes through order, through the law of perception. It comes as the result of living and the result of thought. The man who is constantly indulging himself in hatred, jealousy, anger and all the lower propensities, will never be inspired. He has no material to be inspired with. One who is always looking down to the lower conditions of life is not going to see the beauty of the sky. He has turned his eyes away from the sky.

Higher vision means that we have to cultivate finer instincts. We possess these finer instincts. Even a little child possesses them. We do not have to wait until we are grown up to unfold them. Little children, when they first

hurt an insect, feel pain; they feel that they have done something wrong; their conscience troubles them. But what happens? They repeat the experience; they begin to ignore their subtler instincts; they deaden their finer feelings. Sometimes older people encourage them. As a result, to-day in all this glamour of civilization, in spite of all our advancement, we lack one thing and that is the finer instinct. Parents are bringing their children up with the thought of weapons, with the idea of killing if necessary in order to exhibit superiority. It is the brute instinct. We should leave these things behind. If we teach them to hate some one whom we regard as an enemy, some one who is alien to us, we are planting the seed of discord in their hearts; and the very instinct of hatred we are awakening in them will turn itself against us. It is the law.

We cannot sow in the soil of life something ignoble and expect to reap something beautiful. That is the reason why the life of religion is fruitless unless there is the living quality behind it. Religion is not something that can be put on the shelf. Live it! The man who makes a show of life is not the one who reaps the fruit of life; it is the man who lives inwardly, whose finer instincts have blossomed forth. No one is without these finer instincts. We all have love in our hearts, we all have kindly impulses. Some of us encourage these, and they unfold and come to fruition. It is like the opening of a flower. If we have cared for a flower, if we have watched over it, one day we find that it has come to blossoming and the whole place is filled with fragrance. We do not think it suffices merely to put it in the soil. We do not neglect it; we nurture it and in time it comes to full blossoming.

So is it with life. Many times we conceive great ideals, lofty thoughts, noble impulses; they thrill us, they give us

the feeling that we have found something lasting; but that is not the end, that is only the beginning. These feelings require nurturing. When we have planted these noble instincts in our heart we must care for them. It does not matter wherefrom they come; the whole universe is filled with them. Do not think for a moment that any one Bible, cult or religion has the monopoly over them. They are in the cosmic universe. We all have these finer, living forces within us, but we are not all willing to be aided by them.

If our thoughts are pure, free, vibrant, full of productive qualities, if our mind is active, if mind and heart are in tune with our higher instincts, we cannot help but be productive. Do you suppose that if a man has great vision, great aspiration, that he can remain idle, that he can sit in a corner and do nothing? He must give expression to his ideals. When we possess lofty vision, we have to express it. By vision I do not mean something abnormal and morbid. I mean clear sight. These eyes of ours can be so clarified that they cease to see things confused and mixed; they see clearly, directly. It is possible for us to have unerring vision. Some people have such keen insight that they seldom make a mistake; they foresee what is going to happen. One does not have to be a prophet to foresee. Even a limited amount of intellectual power gives one that far-seeing nature; but when we touch the spiritual province through introspection how much more vision do we have, how much greater possibility to bring about our own betterment and to give something better to humanity! Therefore we should cultivate a certain intuitive feeling,—that which we call introspection.

The average person as a rule looks without. Whenever he has any trouble he always looks outside for the cause. "Someone has spoken harshly to me, someone has hurt me,

someone has robbed me", he says. Always he finds his excuse in the outside world. But the wise man does not try to find his excuse outside; he makes his adjustment from within. If there is any disorder he knows that he has the counteracting influence within himself, that by controlling his inner nature he controls the whole universe. This is one of the vital points in life. If we are able to find that inner passage which leads into the inmost recess of our being, then even though we are in the midst of chaos, even though we are tired and worn by the hard conditions of life, if we can retire to that hidden sanctuary, be it only for a few minutes, we are refreshed and restored. The business man needs this. Life is not designed in such a way that man should give all his time to business. What is he going to gain from his business if he has not found something more enduring, some constructive basis for his life?

Life does not become productive through accident; it does not become unproductive through accident. We have definite lessons we must learn, and these lessons are constantly being given us. Our thoughts and feelings we are constantly planting on the field of life and out of these springs our destiny. Our life is continually producing either good or evil. For this reason wise men seek first of all to know their objective. Is not that one of the greatest teachings of the Bible? "First seek ye the Kingdom of Truth and all other things shall be added unto you." What are we trying to do in the material world by our great advancement, as we call it? We are trying to reverse the order. The worldly wise say: "Never mind the Kingdom of Truth, do everything else first; then if you have any time left, you may take a little for religion." What is the result? We obtain nothing. We are defeated at both ends, because we cannot suddenly reverse the order of life and find its fulfillment.

The Kingdom of Truth does not mean something alien to our present life. Our present life is part of that Kingdom of Truth; our present body, mind, intellect and spiritual nature are all parts of that great Kingdom. Therefore when we have gained clearer vision, we condemn neither the material nor the spiritual world. We find a basis of unity, of harmony,—a balancing rod. That is what we all need and in order to find it we must give ourselves the proper opportunities.

Every man requires a certain amount of recreation. If we overlook it, we break our instrument; our bodily life is impaired if we do nothing but work. We must care for our bodily life and that means work, play, worship. These three principles must go together, and yet we violate this law continually. We do not feel the need of spiritual expression. After we have done our daily duties, we think we have done well; but in order that we may do these duties efficiently, we need spiritual instinct, we need higher vision, clearer insight. When these are manifested through us, then we may legitimately expect to express great things through our life. If we have something exalted within us, then also we can give to others something exalted.

Whenever we stand on a lower plane we see all the little differences; we see the difference between one man and another, between one face and another, and every little defect; but when we stand on a higher level, these differences vanish and we see all things as one. From the mountain top, as we look down into the valley, we see all the green things in one great blending harmony. Similarly with life: When we are dwelling in the small world of petty differences, we find nothing but conflict, we have no sense of rest or harmony, no chance for love or forgiveness. When, however, we raise our life to the higher level of the spiritual, then we see the

great fulfillment of ideals, and the light of the Spirit becomes a reality. We no longer feel separated from any one or anything, for we see our life as part of the great cosmic Principle. This is wholesome vision. It does not make us abnormal. These eyes of ours have infinite capacity for seeing. We can increase their power of seeing good and constructive things; they can be spiritualized; and when they are spiritualized, shall we not have greater possibilities for expression and achievement?

Suppose it does not appeal to you, this idea of working for humanity, for the great universe. Never mind the universe. You want happiness, you want better conditions in your own life; and in order to bring those better conditions you must be a better person. More and more you want peace; but you have to earn peace and this means that you must have peaceful thoughts. In order to have happiness you must have the qualities that produce happiness. Thus every man and every woman is responsible for the world condition. If we see evil, then there is something wrong with our own eyes. There are people who do not see evil even where we see it. Life becomes transformed when by spiritual sight we bring ourselves face to face with higher realities. In India we have a parable that even a piece of base metal, when it is brought in contact with the philosopher's stone, is transformed, is turned into gold. A sword, once it has touched that stone, may retain its shape, but it can no longer harm. Similarly our base, ignoble and selfish nature, when brought in contact with the Divine through introspection and higher vision, is purified and transformed, and this transformation is the aim of all philosophy and religion. Nothing less can bring us the realization of our highest Ideal.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE SELF

From the Aitareya-Upanishad

Who is He whom we meditate on as the Self? Which is the Self?

That by which we see form; that by which we hear sound; that by which we perceive smells; that by which we utter speech; that by which we distinguish sweet and not sweet; and that which comes from the heart and the mind, namely, perception, command, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, seeing, holding, thinking, considering, readiness or suffering, remembering, conceiving, willing, breathing, loving, desiring?

No, all these are various names of knowledge of the true Self. And that Self, consisting of knowledge is Brahman. All the Devas; these five great elements, earth, air, ether, water, fire, these and those which are, as it were, small and mixed; and seeds of this kind and that kind, born from eggs, born from the womb, born from heat, born from germs; horses, cows, men, elephants, and whatsoever breathes, whether walking or flying, and what is immoveable—all that is produced by knowledge of the (inner) Self.

It rests on knowledge of the Self. The world is produced by knowledge of the Self. Knowledge is its cause.

Knowledge is Brahman.

He (Vamadeva), having by this conscious Self stepped forth from this world, and having obtained all desires in that heavenly world, became immortal, yea, he became immortal. Thus it is. Om.

The ultimate end of all knowledge and wisdom is man's inner purification and the performance of good and noble deeds.—*Talmud.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

God is not external to any one, but is present with all things, though they are ignorant that He is so.—*Plotinus.*

The man cannot see God, but the Divine in man sees God. —*"The Perfect Way."*

With these eyes of thine thou canst not see Me; therefore I give thee Divine sight.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

God sends upon you at certain times breathings of His grace; be prepared for them.—*Saying of Mohammed.*

Every man has an open gate to God in his soul, he is in that temple where he can worship God in spirit and truth. —*William Law.*

Is it possible to seek paradise outside of God, or God outside the soul? Happiness, peace, paradise and God are within thee. To live with Nature and be with God are one and the same thing.—*Skovoroda, 17th century.*

How can one hide from that which never sinks to rest?— *Herakleitos, early 5th century B. C.*

Love must bloom and the spirit of man must follow the will of God written in his heart.—*Bunderlin, German mystic, 16th century.*

When a man, having freed his mind from sloth, distraction and vacillation, becomes as it were delivered of his mind, that is the highest point.—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad.*

One hour's meditation is preferable to seventy years of exterior worship.—*The Dabistan.*

LIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

O Light! Thou art my Life!
My strength, my inspiration and action,
my vigor and joy
All are contained in Thee.
Shine forth! Shine forth!
Shed Thy beneficence.
Let Thy healing radiance warm
my ebbing life.
Enter Thou my inmost being;
Leave nothing in dark.
Fill my heart, my soul, and all my soul's
hiddenmost parts,
Unknown to my mortal mind.
Come Thou! I invoke Thee
with my soul's yearning voice.

THE REVOLVING WHEEL

Teachings of Chuang Tzu

Great knowledge embraces the whole; small knowledge, a part only. Great speech is universal; small speech is particular: For whether when the mind is locked in sleep or whether when in waking hours the body is released, we are subject to daily mental perturbations,—indecision, want of penetration, concealment, fretting fear, and trembling terror. Now like a javelin the mind flies forth, the arbiter of right and wrong. Now like a solemn covenanter it remains firm, the guardian of rights secured.

Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, caution and remorse, come upon us by turns, with ever-changing mood. They come like music from hollowness, like mushrooms from damp. Daily and nightly they alternate within us, but we

cannot tell whence they spring. Can we then hope in a moment to lay our finger upon their very cause?

But for these emotions I should not be. But for me, they would have no scope. So far we can go; but we do not know what it is that brings them into play. 'Twould seem to be a soul; but the clue to its existence is wanting. That such a Power operates is credible enough, though we cannot see its form. It has functions without form.

Take the human body with all its manifold divisions. Which part of it does a man love best? Does he not cherish all equally, or has he a preference? Do not all equally serve him? And do these servitors then govern themselves, or are they subdivided into rulers and subjects? Surely there is some soul which sways them all. For coming into existence with this mortal coil of mine, with the exhaustion of this mortal coil its mandate will also be exhausted.

You hear not with the ears, but with the mind; not with the mind, but with your soul. But let hearing stop with the ears. Let the working of the mind stop with itself. Then the soul will be a detached existence, passively responsive to externals. In such a detached existence only *Tao* (the Divine) can abide.

It is easy to stop walking; the trouble is to walk without touching the ground. As an agent of man, it is easy to deceive; but not as an agent of God. You have heard of winged creatures flying. You have never heard of flying without wings. You have heard of men being wise with wisdom. You have never heard of men wise without wisdom.

A man does not seek to see himself in running water, but in still water. For only what is itself still can instil stillness into others.

By nourishment of physical courage, the sense of fear

may be so eliminated that a man will, singlehanded, brave a whole army. And if such a result can be achieved in search of fame, how much more by one who extends his sway over heaven and earth and influences all things; and who, lodging within the confines of a body with its channels of sight and sound, brings his knowledge to know that all things are one, and that his soul endures forever!

Life and death, existence and non-existence, success and non-success, poverty and wealth, virtue and vice, good and evil report, hunger and thirst, warmth and cold,—these all revolve upon the changing wheel of destiny. Day and night they follow one upon the other, and no man can say where each one begins. Therefore they cannot be allowed to disturb the harmony of the organism, nor enter into the soul's domain. Swim however with the tide, so as not to offend others. Do this day by day without break, and live in peace with mankind. Thus you will be ready for all contingencies, and may be said to have your talents perfect.

VEIL OF THE HEART

By the Sufi Poet Hafiz. 14th Century

The heart is the veil behind which is hidden His love;
the eye is the mirror-holder which reflecteth His countenance.

The kingdom of love and the wealth of enjoyment—all that I possess is bestowed by the hand of His destination.

If we have offered for a ransom ourselves and our hearts, why need we fear? The goal towards which we strive is the purpose of His salvation.

Never cease to make His image the object of thine eye, for its cell is the peculiar chamber of His privacy.

Every new rose which adorneth the meadow is a mark of the color and perfume of His benevolence.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Introduction, July number. Chap. I. "Inception of American Work." October number.)

II

SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS

The Swami did everything with a lightness of touch and a gladness of heart which gave constant inspiration to those about him. There was never anything solemn or forced in his methods. He made work seem like play and also interwove many happy hours of relaxation. Here is a chance picture of his daily routine given in one of his letters. He was living in the country at the time with a small group of earnest members and going to New York when anything at the Society needed his special attention. "Now I will try to give some news of our life here", he writes. "We rise early, take regular exercise by rowing; then we have bathing in the lake,—morning bath out of doors just like the Hindus; then meditation till nine o'clock. Then we have our breakfast between nine and ten, sometimes even after; then we have our reading from Raja Yoga which I finished to-day. We have read it all through, Raja, Bhakti, and the lecture on Immortality. We all enjoyed it immensely. Perhaps to-morrow we will begin 'Colombo to Almora'. Time is spent in this way. We have our dinner between five and six-thirty, a real vegetarian dinner. We all enjoy it very much. We only have two meals and do not feel the least need of another; so you see how Divine Mother has drifted us into this kind of regular life, almost like the Hindu mode of living. We retire early, often before ten."

This is another picture given when he was at the Society house: "The day was a pretty busy one for me. In the morning I decided on the next lecture list and the notice of Sri Ramakrishna's anniversary, and I took my usual walk

about the reservoir. After my lunch, which I take nowadays at one o'clock, I rested for a little while; then my engagements began from two p. m. and kept me busy until a few minutes after four. We made a new member to-day. Again I shall have to see a lady at eight p. m."

Nearly always there was a gathering of closer members after the midweek classes, and occasionally some one would go to a neighboring confectioner and bring ice cream. It was on one of these evenings that the Swami composed his first English poem:

Ice is nice
And cream is a dream.
Ice cream
Is a nice dream
Of human life.

These lines, spoken in laughing jest, may offer nothing to foretell the exalted and deeply mystical poems of his recent volumes, yet even here we find a philosophic hint,—that pleasures of the senses are the mere dreams of bodily life.

Although a gentle gayety was the habitual clothing of his mood, there ran beneath always a strong undercurrent of prayerful thought. This is especially apparent in the letters written during this period. At the top of a page we find some simple statement of fact such as this: "The weather has been like spring since yesterday. This morning it rained very hard but cleared off towards the afternoon and I took my walk around the reservoir. It is nice and warm and I was able to walk, taking off the hat." And at the bottom of the same page we read:

"Sincerity and self-sacrifice enable one to receive His blessings. Although the Lord is merciful to all beings equally, yet it is impossible to grasp His loving blessings unless we are pure and sincere. All glory must go to Him. Offer all the honor and respect and love you receive from

people at His Divine Feet and you shall never create any bondage for yourself. That is the secret. Never forget this and you will never make any mistake."

Or such words as these: "My whole life is a struggle to serve Him with pure and unselfish love. I shall do the same so long as life remains in the body. I can only do and die. To the fruits I have no right. As long as I live I will try to live the life; never mind what others say. I am a Sannyasin bold, a baby lion. Infinite strength is behind me, who can touch me? I am pure. I am a child of Mother Divine; there is my life, there lies all my strength. Must live boldly, work boldly and die boldly. Fear is weakness, fear is sin. I have nothing to do with that. I must struggle as long as I live; no matter if I fail thousands of times, still must get up with fresh vigor and courage. Life is a struggle, one must be bold enough to stand everything."

"Pray for me that I may be able to serve Him in the right way and in the right spirit. Oh, how I wish to serve Him and His children. But it is not possible to do unless we are thoroughly unselfish. But never mind, life is a constant struggle, and even if we fail hundreds of times, still must get up with fresh vigor to struggle. This is the way we should be. No weakness, no weeping, but strength and courage." And in an exaltation of self-sacrifice, he writes: "We shall have to die some day or other, those who are crucified are indeed very lucky, they meet a really honorable death. Oh, there is a great happiness in it. You know very well this is my path."

Service was for the Swami a watchword which sounded like a continuous bugle call in his heart. It is still a burning passion with him. This is the appeal in a letter: "Pray to the Lord that I may do a little service to His children, remaining always a true instrument in His hands; other-

wise this life has no value. I have only right to live a true and pure life, and serve as much as I can all His children. Sometimes the task appears very hard, as if I would never find any way out of it. But nothing can remain permanent in this world; the clouds vanish and again life becomes hopeful. Still we must try to stand like a rock under all circumstances. Let everything come and go, but try to remain undisturbed."

And again these lines written to me in India:

"Blessed are those who sacrifice their lives to serve the Lord and His children. There is no greater work than what you are doing now and it is such a blessed privilege to be near a God-man like Swami Ramakrishnananda. I am so glad you are serving him. You know Paramananda's one thought is to be unselfish. I may fail many times, but still I shall try to get up with fresh vigor, remembering those words of courage which still ring in my ears—'A thousand times failure let not frighten thee, child.' "

When he was able to render the smallest assistance, he was child-like in the simplicity and spontaneity of his joy. "We had a very good gathering this morning," he writes, "and the lecture was on 'God-Vision.' After the lecture and announcements I made a little appeal to the audience for the famine-stricken souls in India. It had a very good effect as we got seventy-five rupees at once. Wasn't that splendid? Oh, it made me so happy. Whenever I can do any service to Him by serving His children that makes me happy. I am glad to tell you that I sent this morning to our President two hundred rupees for the Famine Relief."

One Sunday afternoon some strolling negro singers came and sang beneath the window. Their voices were unusually melodious and we dropped a coin to encourage them. They sang for some time and the Swami was about to throw

down an additional five cent piece, when he suddenly closed the window and exclaimed: "No, that will buy a meal for two hungry mouths in India. Let us start an Indian Fund with it." We took a candy box, cut a slit in the top, printed on it, "For the hungry of India", and placed it at the door of a small private chapel he had arranged. Before long there were more than fifty dollars in the box; and it was touching to see the Swami's delight when he tied the dimes, quarters, halves, bills and one shining gold piece in a handkerchief and gave it to me to carry to India a few weeks later. Converted into rupees and annas, it made a generous sum and fed many famished mouths.

III

FIRST BOOK

The Swami's first book came out in December, 1907, a little less than a year after his landing. It was not meant to be a book at all. I was spending the summer months in the Catskills, busy preparing for press Miss Waldo's notes of Swami Vivekananda's teachings given at Thousand Island Park and published later as "Inspired Talks". It was a moment of grave crisis with me and the Swami sought to sustain me in every way possible. His frequent words, stirring and vital because they came from one who lived them, carried me over the difficult places and made the darkest hours bright with the satisfaction of conquest. Such appeals as these made defeat or faltering impossible:

"Do not be discouraged or disheartened; do everything fearlessly; never mind for the future." "Die like a hero-mother, fighting for the Truth." "Be bold, be fearless. Never mind if thousands of Paramanandas die before you, still stand firm and never give up. Oh, what a great thing it is to have love and devotion for the Lord. It is the only thing that can make one happy." "Do what is right, do

what is strengthening, do what is purifying, do what is uplifting and die quietly."

"You must always remain steady now and try to be cheerful. Remember this, we must not take up the true path for anybody's sake or give it up for any one's sake, but must do it for the sake of itself, and must stick to it as long as we live. Pray to the Lord to give us strength and light so that we may always serve Him in following the right path. Never mind if we die in the path, but never, never we shall give it up through weakness. *Jai Guru!* (Victory to the Master)"

And again: "May the sincere prayers of this child bring blessings to you and protect you from all evils. Nothing is permanent in this transitory world. So we must bear patiently everything, knowing that it is only for a few days. Happiness is transitory, so also misery. If I do not accomplish anything at all, let me die on the battlefield. Oh, there is a little happiness in that. Pray for this child that he may remain always true to his word. That is religion and that is my mission."

I fell in the way of copying the instructive portion of each letter in a little note book. One day at the noon hour of meditation it flashed across my thought that such life-giving words should not be for one only; and with the suggestion there sprang into my mind ready-made the preface as it appeared later. When I returned to New York in September, I told the Swami of my note book and of my plan for it. His child-like pleasure was delightful to see. There was no vanity in it, no thought that he was to have something in print; only deep joy that what he had done so lovingly for one might prove a help and blessing to many. This is, I believe, the strength of the book, that the words were written for a single striving heart. It is the tra-

ditional Aryan way of giving teaching, hallowed by a long line of holy sages. The Upanishads are only a sacred record of what Yajnavalkya taught the king, or what Satyakama Gabala told an eager disciple beside the sacrificial fire. I have always thought that the reason St. Luke is the most living of the three narrative Gospels is because it was written solely that Theophilus "might know the certainty of those things in which he had been instructed".

Work began soon after on the little book, as it was always called. There was nothing to do to the text. That was left untouched except that it was classified and arranged in chapters; but the prayers, salutations and litany at the end had to be selected and translated from the Sanskrit by the Swami. The manuscript was ready for the printer in November, and came out just a month later under the title "The Path of Devotion." It met with immediate success and since then has gone through many editions. A large number of the best critics in the country gave it favorable reviews; and like the Swami's later works it was compared to Thomas a Kempis, Brother Lawrence and other devotional classics.

I carried a large case of the books with me when I went to India three weeks later, and it found the same appreciation there as in America. The Dewan or Prime Minister of Mysore was so impressed with the purity and beauty of its English and the rare quality of its spirit that he wanted to make it one of the text books in the Mysore schools. He requested me to write the Swami and ask him to have a cheap school edition printed; but unfortunately the delay in doing this caused the plan to fall through. A school in Northern India, however, did adopt it as a text book. The morning I arrived in Madras, as we drove along the ocean front, I asked Swami Ramakrishnananda what he thought of the little book. He replied: "It is grand. It sounds like

Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). It has the same ring and spirit. I am proud of the boy."

The Indian Review of Madras wrote of it: "The words are so alive that they seem rather spoken than written. No one can read the book without gaining a new impetus for the spiritual life and fresh courage to meet the difficult conditions of life in the world." "The Hindu", leading daily of Madras, gave it a whole column and many other Indian publications printed admirable notices of it.

Swami watched all this as a quiet witness. His attitude is best shown in the following fragment of a letter written at the time: "It is through Mother's blessing that your effort on the little book was possible. I never take any credit about it. The most curious thing about it is that I never feel that I am the author of that book. I read it with the same loving feeling and respect as I do the beloved Master's works. To me it is the same breath that breathes through this, too. As far as my abilities are concerned, it is the same feeling I still hold and in same position I stand to say sincerely, I have no power or anything of my own, but everything in me came direct from Him. As the days pass I find this feeling firmly rooted in me. How can I help seeing it? All the lectures, the talk and praise that come before me make me convinced every day of that wonderful Power. It is wonderful, indeed; irresistible. Those who have eyes to see it will be fearless and blissful." "Divine Mother will protect me. Without Her Grace nobody can do any good work. Let us not forget that, then we shall always be on the safe side. Man is in danger when he forgets his Divine Mother and runs after worldly things."

Surrender and humility were then, as they are to-day, accented notes in the Swami's nature. They mark the rhythm of all his thought and action. The whole course of

his life is shaped by a spiritual force far down within his soul. Until the urge rises from that inner depth, he waits and may appear to lack in decision; but when the impulsion comes, he moves swiftly, unswervingly, with a decisiveness and certainty which seem bred of second sight. I have known him to cross an ocean or a continent impelled by a sudden intuition, which justified itself later in some event at the time entirely unsuspected. Such surrender implies by natural sequence great lowliness of heart. It leads one to write such words as these: "Thousands like me may die in this moment, but that won't do any harm to this vast world. Truth is deathless and that will shine forever. Be bold and face the truth. If you have got an Ideal give your life for the realization of it. We must sacrifice our lives for our Ideal. It is no weakness, it is no hypocrisy, but sincere love and strength that will make us worship the Lord."

(Chap. IV. "Early Days in India" will appear in December number.)

This mayest thou do the better and the more readily, if thou be diligent and careful to set thy heart upon one thing; and that is nought else but a spiritual desire after God: how to please Him, love Him, know Him and see Him, and to enjoy Him by grace here in a little feeling and in the bliss of Heaven in a full being. This desire, if thou keep it, will tell thee what is sin, and what is not; and what thing is good, and what better; and if thou wilt but fasten thy thoughts to the same desire, it shall teach thee all that thou needest, and it shall procure thee all that thou wantest. . . . Set the point of thy thoughts more upon God, whom thou desirest, than upon the sin which thou abhorrest; and if thou do so, then God fighteth for thee, and will destroy sin in thee.—*Walter Hilton, English mystic, 15th century.*

REPORT

With the opening of the Fall season Swami Paramananda is once again at Ananda-Ashrama after a six weeks' visit in the east. Boston claimed him for most of this period, but on his way out as well as on his return he stopped at Cincinnati, St. Louis and other cities. His program was exceedingly full, especially in St. Louis where he spoke five times in twenty-four hours.

Just outside the city of Cincinnati is the Clovernook Institute for the Blind which has recently put into Braille the Swami's "Way of Peace and Blessedness" and has placed it in libraries for the blind all over the country. Nothing in his many years of public work has pleased the Swami more than this living contact with those "whose outer eyes are closed", so when a visit to Clovernook was suggested he eagerly acquiesced. Unfortunately the head of the Institute was out when the Swami arrived, but in spite of this he was given warm welcome and was shown over the buildings which contain an added interest owing to the fact that they were once the home of the Carey sisters, Alice and Phoebe, of poetic fame. The Swami was especially impressed by the printing establishment where the plates are made and the printing done for the Braille publications. The next book of his to be put into Braille will be the book of poems, "Soul's Secret Door". The Swami's teaching contains a peculiar stimulus for both the blind and the deaf. In Boston a member who is connected with work for the deaf has given to those whose "ears are deaf to the noises of the world", many copies of the "Creative Power of Silence", believing that it contains for them not merely comfort but a vitally constructive message. This applies equally to the blind and to all who are handicapped physically. Recently a gentleman at Ananda-Ashrama, a

doctor, whose specialty is crippled children, exclaimed with delight over the stress which the Swami laid upon the necessity for silence not only in spiritual life but in any life that seeks to be productive. Thus when through material limitation we are forced to curtail our outer restlessness and to turn our attention inward, it is not always a curse. Rather is it an opportunity and can become a blessing. Having to face the stern realities of life makes people peculiarly receptive to the profoundly simple and fundamental message which the Swami brings. A most cordial invitation has been extended him to address the blind girls at Clovernook on his next trip east which will probably be some time in January.

The Swami regretted that he could not remain longer at the Boston Centre, but his departure was hastened by the completion of the new building at Ananda-Ashrama. This building, to be known as Ashrama Cloister, is an extension of the present house and will provide living quarters for the consecrated workers. Those who have seen it have commented on the beauty and simplicity of its lines and arrangement. During the winter months the outdoor Services will be held in its spacious patio which provides a shelter from the wind while giving an unparalleled view of the rainbow-tinted mountains which form an impregnable background for the Ashrama. Giant bamboo, banana trees and other tropical and semi-tropical plants will soon add their charm to the architectural effect. Recently two members of the work brought as an offering to the Ashrama many sprouts of the giant bamboo. These are already sending up shoots and with the winter rains should show appreciable growth. Friends are thus represented in the Ashrama gardens in lovely flowers and shrubs, as well as in hours of devoted service given in cultivating Chapel Garden, rose beds and terraces.

DEC 9 1924

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

DECEMBER 1924

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Issued by

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CONTENTS

Christmas Reflection	Swami Paramananda
Night and Dawn	Rig-Veda
Universal Message	Various Sources
Poems	Swami Paramananda
God Everywhere	Swami Ramakrishananda
Faith and Love	Pere Caussade
Benefit of Prayer	St. Theresa
Swami Paramananda and his Work	Sister Devamata
Ashrama Cloister	Sister Daya
Creative Power of Silence	Book Review

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

(Extension of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, Est. 1909)
La Crescenta, California

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Of India, Founder and Head

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14—Man his own Redeemer
21—Universal Christ
28—Harmony of Thought

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In these classes the Swami will give lessons in practical spiritual unfoldment.

We urgently request our subscribers to send their renewals early in December to avoid the congestion of Christmas mail. We also beg to suggest that a year's subscription to the "Message of the East" would make a thoughtful Christmas gift to your friends, or a fitting New Year's present.

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

By Swami Paramananda

OUR heart is glad when the spiritual sun sheds its beneficent light upon our life. In the absence of that light we are sad and the whole world is merged in gloom of sadness. He who penetrates this gloom by his light and rescues the souls of men is our Redeemer. Perhaps for this reason even the birth of a Saviour is portrayed by light. Often the glow of a distant star points the way to the Divine Infant and always the celestial light surrounds the Holy Child. Light is the symbol of His coming; light is the symbol of His being. But if our light is hid under the bushel of materialism, of selfish thoughts and vain concern, then we are neither aware of His coming, nor conscious of His being.

Something very definite is required on our part in order that we may recognize the light and derive benefit through it. The universal sun gives its light and heat to all creatures, but those who deliberately keep their doors and windows shut, what benefit can sun give them? If through our arrogance, self-seeking and narrow bias we keep the doors and windows of our soul shut, then the coming of a Saviour benefits us nothing.

The real import of Christmas is not centred in its outer

festivities. The true happiness of the occasion does not spring from excessive gaiety, but from an inner sense of our spiritual worthiness. It is said in the great Bibles of the world, give and it shall be given to you. Give light and light will fill your life abundantly. Give joy and joy will be given to you abundantly. Give peace and peace will fill your life wholly and abundantly. Give your very life and it shall be given to you abundantly and eternally.

Is this not the basis of all true philosophy, ethics, idealism and religion? Christ will never dawn in a selfish and narrow heart, for there is no room left for His manifestation. Let us first cleanse our hearts of malice, envy, hatred and selfishness, else there will be no room for the Lord in our house. If God is love, then we must receive Him in love; not only the love that we bear towards Him, but our love must include all His beloved children. Nothing short of this can prepare us for our Christmas Feast. Let every Christmas candle be a symbolic reminder to our soul of our innate allegiance to God and our kinship to man. Let the glow of the sacred light dispel from our hearts all unholy feelings and fill us with joy of God and peace born of holy love.

PRAYER

O Thou eternal, all-compassionate Spirit, come unto us.
Give us refuge in Thy sacred Presence and may we never be torn away from Thee.
Thou art the Resting-place of all weary souls.
From Thee comes all life and strength and gladness.
Bestow upon us spiritual insight that we may know our union with Thee and always follow the path of light.
Rouse us from our slumber of ignorance.
Purify our sight that there may dawn in our hearts that vision which melts all coldness, wipes out all blemish, cuts asunder all doubt, removes all darkness.

Thou art the light of the universe, light Thou in us the lamp of true devotion and help us to keep it burning with steady flame.
Make us constant and unflinching.
May our faith and love for Thee be undying.
We ask Thy blessing and Thy protection from all weak and selfish thoughts.
Grant unto us serene and peaceful hearts.
Fill us and surround us with Thy holy peace.

NIGHT AND DAWN

Hymn from the Rig-Veda

The light, best of lights, has come. The brilliant shining forerunner has been born. As Night is impelled according to the impulse of *Savitar* (the Sun), so has she abandoned her seat for the Dawn.

With her bright offspring the bright one gleaming has come, and the dark one has abandoned her dwelling. Of the same race, immortal, following one another, both heavens (Dawn and Night) move blotting out each other's color.

Common is the path of the two sisters, unending. One after another they traverse it, instructed by the Gods. They quarrel not, they stay not, firmly established, Night and Dawn, of one mind, of different hues.

The shining bringer of youthful vigours has appeared. The brilliant one has opened our doors. Rousing the world she has discovered for us wealth. The Dawn has awakened all living things.

The generous one, that he who lies down may go—one to his enjoyment, one to his desire, another to wealth; that those who behold little may see widely, the Dawn has awakened all living things.

That one may win rule, another fame, another his desire, another achieve his end, to behold their different livelihoods, the Dawn has awakened all living things.

She, the daughter of the sky, has appeared shining afar, the young maid in white robes. Ruling over all earthly treasure, O Dawn, here to-day, auspicious one, shine afar.

She follows the course of the Dawns that have passed away, she the first of the endless Dawns to come. Shining afar, rousing up the living, the Dawn awakens none that is dead.

As thou, O Dawn, has put Fire in the kindling wood, as thou hast shone forth with the light of *Surya* (sun), as thou hast awakened men to offer sacrifice, so hast thou procured among the Gods fair wealth.

How long has this been? While she abides between those that have shone and those that shine now, she longs desirous for the former ones, looking forward with joy she goes with the others.

Those mortals are gone, who beheld the former Dawn shining afar. Now has she come to our sight. They are coming who shall behold in future times.

Removing foes, protector of Law, born from Law, kindly one, stirring youthful vigours, auspicious one, bearing food for the Gods, here to-day, O Dawn, most excellent one, shine afar.

Endlessly from of old the Dawn, the Goddess, has shone afar. To-day has gleamed afar the generous one. So will she shine upon days to come. Ageless and immortal she goes on in her own wont.

With unguents at the threshold of the day she has beamed forth. The Goddess has thrown aside the robe of darkness. Awakening the world, with ruddy horses the Dawn comes with well-yoked chariot.

Bringing prosperity and riches, showing herself she raises her brilliant banner, last of the endless Dawns that have passed away, first of the shining ones to come, the Dawn has beamed forth.

Rise up. Living life has come to us. The dark has passed away. The light comes. She has abandoned the path for the sun to go. We have come where men prolong their life.

With the rein of speech the singer of the car raises hymns, praising the far-beaming Dawns. Shine then to-day on the singer, O generous one. Beaming down upon us grant us life.

Mother of Gods, the banner of sacrifice, O great one, beam forth. Bestowing renown on the prayer, shine afar upon us. Make us to be fruitful among the people, bestower of all blessing.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The *Avatara* or Saviour is the messenger of God. He is like the viceroy of a mighty monarch. As when there is some disturbance in a far-off province, the king sends his viceroy to quell it, so whenever there is a decline of religion in any part of the world, God sends his *Avatara* there. It is one and the same *Avatara* that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving down again rises in another place and is known as Christ.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.—*St. Paul.*

Not a thorn pricks without His will; not a thread is broken without His direction.—*The Dabistan.*

In His eternity, outside of time, outside of every other limit, as pleased Him, the eternal Love unfolded Himself in new loves.—*Dante, Il Paradiso.*

Have confidence in the Truth although you may not be able to comprehend it, although you may suppose its sweetness to be bitter, although you may shrink from it at first. Trust in the Truth. Have faith in the Truth and live it.—*Buddha.*

If ye call upon God, ye will be able to subdue your imperfections, and the evil inclinations of your mind will depart from you; but they will return to you again when ye cease to call upon Him.—*Dadu.*

He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure, he shall be the whole world's model. Being the whole world's model, his virtue will never fail. He reverts to the Absolute.—*Laotze.*

All our natural tendencies and desires appear to be nothing but applied religion. The heart seems to be, as it were, the religious organ. Religion arises with the heart, withdrawn from all real (material) objects, feels and makes itself an ideal object. All individual desires, united into one desire, whose wondrous object is a higher Being, a Deity; and hence genuine piety embraces all feelings and tendencies.—*Novalis.*

Better one life-master than a thousand reading-masters. If I sought a master in the Scriptures, I should seek him in Paris and in the high schools of high learning. But if I wished to ask questions about the perfect life, that he could not tell me. Where then must I go? Nowhere at all save to an utterly simple nature; he could answer my question.—*Eckhart.*

WAKE, AWAKE!

By Swami Paramananda

Wake, Awake!
A new light hath come into this house
that was once so dark.
Rise, my spirit!
Arise, my mind, my body and all ye
sense-slumberers!
Behold the glory of light,
dispelling all darkness!
Let all doors and windows of this house
be opened to the sanctity of sun.
Leave nothing unopened, nothing hidden
from the beneficent light.
Gloomy thoughts shall never enter this
house again;
Doubt and despair will vanish.
Yea, they will all vanish from this house
before the light.

GIVE ALL

By Swami Paramananda

Lover, give thine all,—
All thou hast and all thou art.
Give—give till thy hands and heart
are free.
Dost thou fear?
Nay, perfect love knoweth not fear,
nor aught but joy in giving.
When thou hast naught,
thou hast all;
When thou art naught,
thou art all.
Give thy life and give thy love:
Give all—give all!
When thy hands and heart are free
Thou shalt receive Him who is all,
yea, all in all.

GOD EVERYWHERE

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

A man who realizes God will have to be realizing Him throughout eternity. No power can make him forget Him.

Every portion of the universe is bristling with omniscience. To an ordinary man this appears to be a dead, soulless universe; but that man who has the inner eye opened can see that this whole universe is palpitating with life, because it is God's body.

In India Nature is to us our mother, our father, our friend and companion. We have been able to commune with this Nature as our own mother and so we boldly give out that the whole universe is living. Those poor western thinkers think that when a nation is in a baby condition, it has a tendency to personify everything; just as a baby sees a leaf flying in the wind, and takes it to be living, saying: "No, no, leaf, you must not move like that, keep still"; and that is the reason why in the Vedic period they saw mountains, rivers, etc., as living entities. But this is a great blunder on their part. A baby is very pure and for that reason it has some insight into the workings of nature. A *Paramahamsa* (Great Soul) has also been compared to a baby. But while a baby through its ignorance sees everything as living, the *Paramahamsa* sees everything as living through his wisdom.

Having thus found out that everywhere is God, the wise men have given this good news to people who have not the power to see God for themselves. But ordinary people cannot grasp this idea easily. It is too difficult for them, this idea of the Supreme Lord existing everywhere. So God has been broken up piecemeal, as it were; but not really broken up. As a man looking at you from the outside, does not confound your eyes with your ears, or your ears with your

nose; so this one God is broken up into many forms of Deity, through which the ignorant man may reach the one God; and each one may choose that one which is best suited to him.

FAITH AND LOVE

Pere Caussade. 17th Century

All creatures are living in the hand of God. Our senses perceive only the action of the creature, but faith sees the divine action in all. The action of creatures is as a veil which covers the deep mysteries of the divine weaving. If we could penetrate this veil, God would be revealed to us unceasingly and we should recognize Him in any event that befalls us. *Dominus est.* It is the Lord! would be our constant cry, and we should feel each circumstance of our life an especial gift from Him. Faith alone reaches the Truth without seeing it, and touches it without feeling it. It sees this world, as if it saw it, not beholding other things than those which are visible.

Hasten then! hasten happy and courageous souls! Hasten and follow this beloved spouse who passes onward with a giant step. Nothing escapes Him. Nothing is hidden from His eyes. He passes over the smallest blade of grass as above the cedars. The grains of sand are under His feet no less than the mountains. Wherever you step He has passed and you have only to follow Him wherever you may go.

What a lovely peace the soul enjoys when she has learned thus to see God through all His creatures, and through all events, as through a transparent veil. Then darkness becomes luminous, and bitter things turn to sweetness. Thus the human instrument, which would of itself be a hindrance,

becomes in the hand of the Divine Workman a help and a support.

If we only knew the infinite treasures which are continually presented to us, we should find all that our heart could desire. Love alone can measure them. The more the heart loves, the more it will desire and it will find nothing created can fill it, nothing less than God can satisfy it. The divine will is an abyss of which the present moment is the entrance. Plunge fearlessly into this gulf and you will find it even more boundless than your desires. Leave alone creatures, cleave not to them. Do not worship phantoms. They can neither give nor take away. The love of God alone can be your fullness, and will never leave a blank or a void. Adore it, go straight towards it, turning aside from all shadows. Pluck your idols from your heart. It will weep perhaps like a disconsolate child, but faith will triumph—faith which smiles at these apparent losses, as a governor of an impregnable fortress smiles at the futile attacks of the enemy.

BENEFIT OF PRAYER

From Letter of St. Theresa

You ought to enter on your prayer in a spirit of submission and resignation, resolving to let yourself be guided unresistingly along the path God wishes you to follow, confiding absolutely in His divine Majesty. Listen attentively to His teaching, whether He withdraws, closing the door, and leaving you outside, or whether He shows His Face to you, taking you by the hand. . . . Not to be willing to submit the understanding in prayer would evince a wish to instruct instead of being instructed. . . .

Man ought to stay at his post in prayer even though the evil ones wear him out by images or importunate sug-

gestions or anxieties . . . for they seize hold of the fancy, turning it hither and thither in such a way that it carries the heart along with it. To bear patiently with all these distractions, these importunities, is always to derive great benefit from prayer. This is what I call offering one's self as a holocaust, that is to say, letting the victim be entirely consumed in the fire of temptation, so that nothing of itself remains. It must not be imagined that to remain at prayer without any consolation is waste of time. On the contrary, it is to gain greatly, for it is to labour without any thought of self-interest, purely for God's glory. . . . There is a close connection between this prayer and that of our Lord in the Garden of Olives. . . . He did not ask to be delivered from sufferings, but from the repugnance of His human nature to those sufferings. What He prayed for was, that in the interior part of the soul, the power of the Spirit should be so communicated to the flesh as to make it as ready as the Spirit to suffer all. He received no other answer to His prayer than that He must drain the chalice, that is, overcome the weakness of the flesh by enduring it as God's will.

God who is the Giver of every good gift, using every instrument according to what He hath fitted it for, a beast as a beast, a man as a man, a saint as a saint, a prophet as a prophet, holds the hand of the scribe, so that he would else draw but misshapen characters, and guides, assists and acts in and by him, yet He let the action bear its denomination from its next and immediate agent, which is not God Himself but men. It is but the spiritual man's testimony for God though specially assisted by Him in it.—*Samuel Fisher, (Quaker, 17th century)*.

SWAMI PARAMANANDA AND HIS WORK

By Sister Devamata

(Introduction, July number. Chaps. I, II and III in October and November.)

IV

EARLY DAYS IN INDIA

The village community is the pivotal centre of both the social and the governmental structure of India. Every family of importance is identified with a village, where it lives from generation to generation and has its land-holdings. Town residence is a comparatively modern innovation. The Swami's home village was in East Bengal. The family spent some time in Calcutta when he was a boy, and later they had a house in Dacca; but their real home was in the fertile country of East Bengal; and wherever they were, their rice and other provisions were brought from there by servants.

The father of Suresh, to use the name given the Swami at birth, was a tall stately patriarchal figure, with long waving white hair and beard, peculiarly fitted to stand at the head of a large and influential family, distinguished for its breadth of vision and its progressive spirit. He introduced many reforms in his village, among them a girls' school, one of the first to be established in East Bengal. The blossoming of the seed planted then has come recently in the work of his granddaughters, the Swami's nieces. One, a young wife of sixteen, passed ninth among twenty thousand students who came up for matriculation at the University of Calcutta. She was the first woman to attain that rank since the founding of the University and her name is known to every student in Bengal. She was given a scholarship and is pursuing her studies, maintaining the same high average. Another granddaughter is making an equally brilliant record, while a third has been for some years principal of a large girls' school in Dacca. The father

continued full of active concern for the welfare of his community for many years; but as he advanced in age, he withdrew more and more from public and social life and devoted himself to sacred study, prayer and meditation, with such growing fervor that at the end he became almost a religious recluse. He was known for his generous charities. He spent freely for those in need and his home was an unfailing refuge for the distressed and afflicted.

The mother of Suresh passed away when he was nine years old. The family observed special mourning for one month. This did not mean merely wearing a particular dress and withdrawing from social amusements. It meant practice of the most rigid austerity. In India when a mother dies, the children, if they observe the age-honored tradition of mourning, exchange their bed for a straw pallet; instead of their customary meals, they eat only plain boiled rice and vegetables, unsalted and unseasoned; the sons shave their heads; and all spend long hours in prayer and meditation. Suresh followed these observances with ardor, not out of childish imitation, but from genuine depth of feeling. When his older brothers had their heads shaved, he asked to have his shaved also. When straw was spread on the floor for them, he begged a pallet for himself; and he refused to taste any other food than that prepared for his elders, although some of the ladies of the household tried vainly to coax him to eat the special dishes they had cooked for him.

He was one of the youngest in a very large family,—ten brothers and sisters, a number of aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces (some older than himself),—a whole community in one enclosure. This enclosure, however, was an extensive one. A moat or wide ditch surrounded it and one entered the property by a bridge. Near the entrance

was a spacious *mandapam* or pavilion where at the time of weddings and other secular or religious feasts hundreds of people would gather. The office also was here. All the other buildings stood round a very large court. One was devoted to the dining-room, store-room and kitchen; another was the family Chapel or Shrine, where the daily worship was carried on; and the rest were living quarters. In the stretches of surrounding land were rice fields, a mango grove, a lichi orchard, a date and a cocoanut palm grove, a vegetable garden and other fruit trees. There were also three large tanks or reservoirs. One was kept exclusively for drinking and the villagers came there to fill their jars, because the water was known to be particularly clean and pure. A watchman—a tall, powerful man—used to make the round of the property with his lantern at intervals during the night and call out in a loud deep voice that all was well. Suresh was especially fond of this man, and when he was put to bed, he would beg to be wakened from his sleep to hear him shout.

Because of his mirthful, loving nature, the child was exceptionally dear to every member of the household, servants and family. But above all was he tenderly cherished by his father, who made him his constant companion. When he paid his visits to friends, the little boy was nearly always by his side, and the father could not conceal the glow of pride he felt when the child at the age of five would entertain large gatherings by his singing. Yielding to his persistent coaxing, he even took him on one of his long boat journeys, which he made frequently to look after his property. All the boatmen became the boy's devoted friends, and one of them not only begged the privilege of exclusive care of him, but he spent his entire wage on toys and sweetmeats for the child.

Suresh was also a pet with the missionaries who came into that section of the country to preach. The largeness of feeling shared by all of the family led them to open their doors to these Christian teachers when many other doors were closed to them. The most cordial relations existed between them. Often they would tie their house boat to the landing on the river bank in front of Suresh's house and spend days there in friendly association with the family. The ladies of the household would prepare lavish refreshments and this especially interested the little Suresh. His older sisters were remarkably beautiful. Because of their unusual beauty one was called Labonya or the Beautiful One, and another Hem-nalini or the Golden Lotus. The missionaries made much of them and brought them little tracts, which the young girls read with courteous interest; and there were frequent interchanges of song. The English visitors would join in the Bengalee hymns to Divine Mother and in return the Bengalee girls and boys, Suresh among them, would sing the Christian hymns; but no conversion ever took place.

Innumerable are the stories told by the family of Suresh's adventuresome spirit. In the garden of their village home was a swimming pool over two hundred feet long; around it grew tall mango trees; and one morning some gentlemen of the household were discussing the possibility of jumping from the trees into the tank, when Suresh overheard them. The suggestion was sufficient. Although he was not six at the time, he clambered up to a lower branch of one of the trees and dropped; there was a splash and he was in the water. It was the work of a moment only for some one to jump in and bring him out, but great was the consternation and excitement for that moment.

Rest at the hot noon hour is traditional in India; but for

Suresh it was a great hardship, when he wished to be running in the fields outside. One day he pretended to be asleep until he was sure that all his elders were deep in their usual siesta; then he crept away, joined his playmates and they all began to fly kites. One of the boys, watching his kite rise, discovered a bunch of ripe dates. The tree, however, was very high and no one dared climb it. Suresh volunteered to go up. He reached the top safely, picked the fruit and threw it down; but in his delight at getting it he failed to look where he was going; he stepped on a withered stem and fell headlong into a wet ditch. It was apparent that his arm was badly injured, but he insisted that he was unhurt. He got up, washed his clothes, dried them in the sun, put them on and was about to begin his play again, when his mother and aunts came running in great anxiety, having heard of the accident. The doctor found the arm broken and Suresh let it be set without uttering a cry. When a few weeks later it had to be re-broken and re-set, he bore it with the same mute heroism.

Although very slender, he was exceptionally tall for his age; and his height, added to remarkable agility and fleetness, made him a valuable factor in every game. He was only twelve when he was asked to substitute on a football team made up of grown men. He played so well that he was made a permanent member of the team and took part in many matches, some against professionals. At fifteen he was elected captain of a Boys' Athletic Club and he became an acknowledged leader in sports. But with all his buoyant enthusiasm, one thing was characteristic of him then as now,—he would never allow himself to become involved in any quarrel or dispute. He was always the peacemaker; and once when he could not curb an angry boy, he threw himself between him and his opponent, a man in

years, and took the blow the boy dealt, a blow so heavy that it made him faint.

A rare and subtle beauty of person with great gentleness and simplicity of manner wove a charm about him which attracted everyone, especially older people. Some of his closest associates were men twice his age or more. Yet with all his power to attract, there was an imperceptible inner shyness which made him shrink from undue attention. It gives him still, on meeting strangers, a grave dignity and serene reserve which render it difficult for any one to suspect the gay, playful nature beneath.

As the months passed, games and sports ceased to fill the whole day. Suresh sang holy songs to his father at the evening hour and read much aloud to him from sacred books, for his father's sight was dimming. One of the books the older man liked most to hear was a collection of the Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. Suresh too read it with ardent interest; and one of the Sayings which began: "The butter that is churned in the early morning is best. That which is churned after sunrise is not so good," made an indelible impression on his mind. This impression was deepened by contact with a friend who was in intimate touch with the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission. A new aspiration was waking in the depths of his being and moving gradually towards the surface. It broke through one night when he had a dream that stirred him to the innermost recesses of his soul. It was more a vision than a dream; and for ten or twelve days after, the world about him seemed the dream and his vision the reality. At times he staggered like a drunken man; and so abstracted was he from his surroundings, so changed in manner and appearance that the family thought his mind had become affected. They could not understand how one who had always been

so tender-hearted could suddenly grow cold and indifferent to family, friends, games, to all that had been dear to him.

The call had come and Suresh answered. As the saying had counselled, he would give himself in the freshness of the early morning of his youth. With unsuspecting frankness he carried his decision to his father and eldest brother, believing they would rejoice with him. Instead, they met him with firm opposition. They tried coaxing and scolding; they even set a watch on him to prevent him from leaving secretly; but the call to renunciation continued to sound; and when a few months later the opportunity opened, he went.

There was no elaboration of preparation, no formal announcement, no seeking consent. He slipped away quietly, telling only one member of the family, who wept bitterly over his going, yet dared not intrude on the sanctity of his new consecration by an appeal to stay. He went straight to the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur on the Ganges, three miles above Calcutta. When he asked to be admitted, a hot discussion rose among the members of the Order. Some thought the boy was too young; others suggested that it might create trouble if they accepted a minor; others begged to keep him. Suresh listened in patient silence, but he felt deep content in his heart when Swami Vivekananda checked all further argument by declaring: "I will take the full responsibility. The boy shall stay."

(Chap. V. "Life as a Brahmacharin" will appear in January number.)

Adoration to that Adorable One who endows all beings with consciousness, who is the soul of the universe, the seed of the cosmos, the Supreme Lord. Let us meditate on Him.
—*Srimad Bhagavatam.*

ASHRAMA CLOISTER

By Sister Daya

On the afternoon of November second at half past three o'clock Ashrama Cloister was dedicated. Only those who knew the Ashrama a year and a half ago when Swami Paramananda first acquired it can have any conception of the months of concentrated labor which lay back of this event. It would be very difficult to convey by written word the blossoming of a flower, all the little subtle, delicate changes which made the full bloom possible. Just as difficult is it to give a mental picture of the gradual growth and change in a place like the Ashrama. In truth the new has supplanted the old so gradually and so naturally that even those who have been associated with the Ashrama from the beginning find themselves forgetting how it looked when the pretty walled garden above the parking place was a briar-choken chicken-run and the attractive grey cottage which it shelters with its graceful pepper trees stood below,—an ugly, dingy habitation. The road that connects the driveway with the lower cabins seems always to have been there, and the lower cabins themselves beneath their oak trees make one forget that morning when the Swami struggled through thick undergrowth to explore the wild little canyon where they now stand. As for the main building, kodak pictures alone remind us of its gradual evolution.

In the beginning this attractive low-lying, red-tiled house, suggestive of southern Europe, gave shelter to the first comers, providing chapel and lecture hall, and in fact making the immediate beginning of public work possible. The arrival of more workers taxed its capacity to the utmost and soon it became necessary to expand. The cabins of "cabin row" were built on the hill slope above the garage and when even these became inadequate the lower cabins were con-

structed. But at best these arrangements were but temporary and entirely insufficient. The great need was a unified dwelling place for the consecrated workers. Ashrama Cloister has been built to supply that need.

Last spring at a Sunday Service, the Swami called for architectural suggestions. In response a well-known architect of Pasadena who was among the congregation came to the Swami with an offer of service. Plans were quickly made for an extension to the original house. An addition to a house is generally ungainly, but not so in this case. Even though the house is of stucco and the cloister of rough-hewn stone, there is no sense of disharmony. The cloister grows out of the house quite naturally in the form of two wings which are closed at the back by a third wing forming a spacious patio with arcaded walks and a pergola. The east wing extends beyond so that only by making a tour of the building can one realize its full extent. The park-like beauty of the site has in nowise been marred. On one side tall eucalyptus trees bend over the roof as though planted by an artist hand; on the other side stately young deodars show forth their fresh green against the background of grey rock wall which looks as though it had been built in the days when builders were artists, and labored for the approval of the centuries, for beauty and endurance rather than for money. A tree or two had to be sacrificed, but so cleverly was the building planned that it winds its way among the greenery as though the trees had been planted in relation to it. Mulberry, locust with a rare violet bloom, Norwegian spruce, a grevilia, a dainty flowering pear, and two banana plants give the charm of foliage to the interior of the patio. In the northeast corner stands a natural bower from the shade of which the Swami conducted the first public service at the Ashrama, and from which he spoke on the afternoon of the dedication.

None who sat there that afternoon listening to him while their eyes rested on the purple sweep of the mother mountains showing above the red tiled roof, could have imagined that even a few hours before, that morning even, the flagstone walls were still unfinished, the grilled doors at the patio's arched gateways still unhung. Everything about the building gave a sense of harmony and order, of beauty and completion. It was a summer sun that drew the fragrance from the hills and threw its glint upon the out-door altar. Garlands of oak and the wild cherry were hung from the columns of the cloister. At the south end of the patio the great glass doors of the new dining-room, through which one enters the original building, were thrown wide to give more seating space. It was no ordinary Sunday congregation that assembled. Ever the motors kept coming, undaunted by distance or mountain road, till at least five hundred people had gathered and were comfortably seated in the patio. There were those who came, perhaps, expecting an unusual or exotic ceremonial; instead they found simplicity itself and the vibrant living spirit. New buildings there are a-plenty, and of ceremonies there are no end, but the spirit of true dedication is not met with every day. It was in that spirit that the Swami spoke.

"Dedication of a place," he said, "can only be accomplished with a sense of spiritual presence. We can build castles and churches and magnificent places, but sometimes they are cold and lifeless. No place becomes of great interest or great benefit to people unless it is a living thing, and we make a place living by our own life, our own love, our own interest in humanity. There are people who can go aloof, away from the world and give themselves to meditation and higher thinking. Perhaps they can find peace. It is far easier to find peace when we go away; that is, if we have the

understanding, but it is far greater when we can forget ourselves in the thought of others and that is what I call true dedication and consecration. Not what we get from people, but how much we are able to give, that is the leading spirit of our work. We have gathered here a band of consecrated workers, not working because we want something for ourselves, but working here because we believe in the power of this ideal. Suppose we stand alone, that does not make any difference; it only makes us stronger. Whenever we stand alone with any ideal, that means that it is deeply rooted, and that is the theme of my address to you."

These words are but a fragment of what the Swami said, but they give the soul of his utterance, the living quality which he conveys to other hearts. Music helped to create this atmosphere. Some of the Swami's own poems harmonized by a devoted friend were sung by one of the household, while a Russian member sang two Russian hymns full of Slavic yearning and intensity. As a final benediction clouds and mountains were turned to gold and pure amethyst by the setting sun so that on their homeward way people faced a glory of light and color.

The Tuesday following, the Ashrama again gave warm welcome to its friends in its more social aspect,—a reception in honor of the new Cloister. "We want people to come to the Ashrama," the Swami explained, "for their recreation as well as for their spiritual study. The spiritual life must be a well-balanced life." He forthwith introduced the artists of the afternoon, some talented members who kept the audience between laughter and tears for an hour or more. Then as the evening chill crept down the canyons, dining-room and living-room were thrown open and all were invited to warm themselves by the open fires and share in the refreshments the Swami had prepared with his own

hand. That night rain fell and continued to fall on and off for some days, so even the weather gods smiled on the Ashrama. Until the time comes for the building of the auditorium, the Service on Sunday will be held in the new patio when the weather is fair.

CREATIVE POWER OF SILENCE

Review in Vedanta Kesari, Madras, India

The torch which the late Swami Vivekananda so assiduously lit in the U. S. A. is now burning steadily with ever-increasing radiance, carrying illumination and enlightenment to a region where they are most needed. The Vedanta Centre at Boston has been familiarising the American public with the ancient truths of India through that band of devoted selfless Sannyasins of the Sri Ramakrishna Order of which Swami Paramananda is one of the shining lights. Students of the Vedanta are already familiar with the Swami's earlier writings, "Plato and Vedic Idealism," "Reincarnation and Immortality," "Spiritual Healing" and others, and have learned to associate with his writings profundity of thought and spiritual balance.

In the volume of illuminative essays before us, the Swami has given us heart to heart talks on spiritual attainment and reveals himself as a true mystic. The rush, the turmoil and the hurry of modern life leave us little time to realize that life has a secret which does not merely lie on the surface. As a recent writer has aptly put it, man is an immortal being clad in a garb of flesh, which is vivified and moved by desires and passions and which he links to himself by a thread of his immortal nature. This thread is the mind and this mind, unsubdued and inconstant wanders out among the things of the earth, is moved by passions and desires, hopes and fears, and deafened by the tumults of its

surroundings. Swami Paramananda has shown how peace of mind can be attained, which is by a systematic disciplined practice of silence, which again creates an atmosphere and enables the seeker to find access to the inner sanctuary hidden from the restless and turbulent material world. He has taken care to guard at the outset against the popular delusion of confounding the idea of silence with inaction, for the aim of silence is not to free our mind from thought and assume a state of emptiness and passivity. On the contrary silence born of a peaceful, restful mind becomes a definite factor for efficient and concentrated thought. One may shut himself in the forests' untrammelled depths, and yet not obtain the state of quiescence if his mind is noisy and has not learned to identify itself with the true instead of with the apparent self. This state of mind has to be sedulously cultivated by devoting a certain time daily to silent relaxation. Just as the physical body recoupes its vitality by rest, the mind recoupes its vitality by silence. Or, as the Swami beautifully puts it, what sleep does for the body and the nervous system, that silence does for our mind and spirit. The practice of physical rest restores our body and sense organs, while the practice of mental rest—silence —restores our mind.

We are all familiar with the old adage, "a sound mind in a sound body." If a healthy body produces a healthy mind, there is something which a healthy mind produces the value of which is equally great. I mean a healthy heart, which is the best shrine man can create for the Supreme. One who is yearning for spiritual perfection should needs be a votary in this shrine by a practice of habitual, faithful devotion. Then only shall he realize that the purpose of life is to fulfill the will of God. The Swami's essays deserve to be carefully read and thought over by all students of the Vedanta.

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