

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

(From 'The Oakland Enquirer')

Friday, February 23, 1900

A DISTINGUISHED HINDOO

Swami Vivekananda, Teacher of the Vedânta Philosophy, to Speak Here Sunday Night

Swami Vivekananda, a distinguished Hindoo lecturer and teacher of the Vedânta philosophy, arrived in San Francisco last evening from Los Angeles. He expects to remain here several weeks teaching and lecturing, and will occupy the pulpit of the First Unitarian Church next Sunday evening, in the parliament of religions which is being held there. He represents the order of Sannyâsins, a travelling priesthood, which inculcates its philosophy, after the Hindoo fashion, to learners wherever found, whether at the plough, the bench or in pilgrimage. The Swami is a man of profound learning in the line of psychology and the philosophy of Eastern religions.

Saturday, February 24, 1900

A MAN OF MARK

Swami Vivekananda, A Remarkable Oriental

An Eloquent Expounder of the Faith of Brahminism

When the Congress of Religions was held in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair in 1893 several remarkable men from the Orient appeared, including H. Dharmapala of Ceylon, Rev. Zitsuzo Ashitsu, Narasima Charia, and Professor C. N. Chakravarti. But the most remarkable exemplar of orientalism was the Swami Vivekananda, a Hindoo who stands for the Brahmin

religion, or Vedantism as he prefers to call it.

Those who heard Vivekananda at Chicago have been enthusiastic in praise of his power as an orator. He is a large, fine looking man who has an excellent command of English and is a master of elocutionary effects. After the Chicago parliament Vivekananda lectured to thronged houses in the large cities of this country and then returned to India, where he was received with extraordinary honours. It seems the simple-minded people of India had heard of Vivekananda's success in America and had exaggerated it so much that they believed he had converted the whole American Continent and in particular had rescued the United States from the errors of Christianity, as they considered them.

So when he reappeared among his friends they hailed him as the deliverer of the Western world and, being wrought up with excess of enthusiasm they took Vivekananda in their arms and it is said that he was passed from village to village and city to city until he had been transported seventeen miles without his feet having once touched the ground.

Vivekananda is now in the United States a second time for a tour of some of the large cities. Swami means monk of the order of Sannyâsins. Viveka means "discrimination" and ananda means "bliss". The Swami comes to Oakland tomorrow to deliver his address at the local congress of religions in the evening at the Unitarian Church but Rev. B. F. Mills hopes to arrange with him to deliver a course of lectures here.

The Swami claims to belong to "the most ancient order of monks in the world" and his faith he characterizes as "the mother of religion". Vedantism is the religion of the Vedas, or the ancient Hindoo books. In one of his Chicago addresses Vivekananda said: "Hindoos have received their religion from the revelation of the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience—how a book can be without beginning or end; but by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times."

In another address at the same place the Swami said: "I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal tolerance, but we accept all religions to be true. I am proud to tell you that I belong to a religion into whose sacred language, the Sanskrit, the word exclusion is untranslatable."

The following brief extract from one of the Swami's speeches gives an idea of his style as well as of his doctrine:

"So, then, the Hindoo believes that he is a spirit. Him the sword cannot pierce, him the fire cannot burn, him the water cannot melt, him the air cannot dry. He believes every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is located in a body and death means the change of this centre from body to body. In its very essence it is free, unbound, holy and pure, and perfect. But somehow or other it has got itself bound down by matter, and thinks of itself as matter.

"We are the children of God. The sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth, sinners! It is a sin to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature.

Come up, live, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep—you are souls immortal, spirits free and blest and eternal, ye are not matter, ye are not bodies. Matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter."

Monday, February 26, 1900

THE PHILOSOPHY OF VEDANTISM

*As Expounded by Swami Vivekananda
Last Evening*

*A Vast Throng Attended His Address
at The Unitarian Church
Will Speak Again Wednesday Evening
at Wendte Hall on Vedantism and
Christianity*

The announcement that Swami Vivekananda, a distinguished savant of the East would expound the philosophy of Vedantism in the Parliament of Religions at the Unitarian Church last evening, attracted an immense throng. The main auditorium and ante-rooms were packed, the annexed auditorium of Wendte Hall was thrown open and this was also filled to overflowing and it is estimated that fully 500 persons who could not obtain seats or standing room where they could hear conveniently, were turned away.

The Swami created a marked impression. Frequently he received applause during the lecture, and upon concluding held a levee of enthusiastic admirers. He said in part, under the subject of "The Claims of Vedantism on the Modern World":

"Vedantism demands the consideration of the modern world. The largest number of the human race are under its influence. Again and again, millions upon millions have swept down on its adherents in India, crushing them with their great force, and yet the religion lives.

"In all the nations of the world can such a system be found? Others have

risen to come under its shadow. Born like mushrooms, today they are alive and flourishing and tomorrow they are gone. Is this not the survival of the fittest?

"It is a system not yet complete. It has been growing for thousands of years and is still growing. So I can give you but an idea of all I would say in one brief hour.

"First, to tell you of the history of the rise of Vedântism. When it arose India had already perfected a religion. Its crystallization had been going on many years. Already there were elaborate ceremonies; already there had been perfected a system of morals for the different stages of life. But there came a rebellion against the mummeries and mockeries that enter into many religions in time, and great men came forth to proclaim through the Vedas the true religion. Hindoos received their religion from the revelation of these Vedas. They were told that the Vedas were without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience—how a book can be without beginning or end; but by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times.

"Before these men came, the popular ideas of a God ruling the universe, and that man was immortal were in existence. But there they stopped. It was thought that nothing more could be known. Here came the daring of the expounders of Vedântism. They knew that religion meant for children is not good for thinking men; that there is something more to man and God.

"The moral agnostic knows only the external dead nature. From that he would form the law of the Universe. He might as well cut off my nose and

claim to form an idea of my whole body as argue thus.

"He must look within. The stars that sweep through the heavens, even the universe is but a drop in the bucket. Your agnostic sees not the greatest and he is frightened at the universe.

"The world of spirit is greater than all. The God of universe who rules—our Father, our Mother. What is this heathen mummory we call the world? There is misery everywhere. The child is born with a cry upon its lips; it is its first utterance. This child becomes a man, and so well used to misery that the pang of the heart is hidden by a smile on the lips.

"Where is the solution of this world? Those who look outside will never find it; they must turn their eyes inward and find truth. Religion lives inside.

"One man preaches if you chop your head off you get salvation. But does he get anyone to follow him? Your own Jesus says, 'Give all to the poor and follow me.' How many of you have done this? You have not followed out this command, and yet Jesus was the great teacher of your religion. Every one of you are practical in your own life and you find this would be impracticable.

"But Vedântism offers you nothing that is impracticable. Every science must have its own matter to work upon. Everyone needs certain conditions and much of training and learning; but any Jack in the street can tell you all about religion. You may want to follow religion and follow an expert, but you may only care to converse with Jack, for he can talk it.

"You must do with religion as with science, come in direct contact with facts and on that foundation build a marvellous structure.

"To have a true religion you must have instruments. Belief is not in the

question; of faith you can make nothing, for you can believe anything.

"We know that in science as we increase the velocity the mass decreases; and as we increase the mass the velocity decreases. Thus we have matter and force. The matter we do not know disappears into force, and force into matter. Therefore there is something which is neither force nor matter, as these two may disappear into each other. This is what we call mind—the universal mind.

"Your body and my body are separate, you say. I am but a little whirlpool in the universal ocean of mankind. A whirlpool, it is true, but a part of the great ocean.

"You stand by moving water where every particle is changing, and yet you call it a stream. The water is changing, it is true, but the banks remain the same. The mind is not changing, but the body—how quick its growth! I was a baby, a boy, a man, and soon I will be an old man, stooped and aged. The body is changing, and you say is the mind not changing also? When I was a child I was thinking, I have become larger because my mind is a sea of impressions.

"There is behind nature a universal

mind. The spirit is simply a unit and it is not matter. For man is a spirit. The question, 'Where does the soul go after death?' should be answered like the boy when he asked, 'Why does not the earth fall down?' The questions are alike, and their solutions alike, for where could the soul go to?

"To you who talk of immortality I would ask when you go home to endeavour to imagine you are dead. Stand by and touch your dead body. You cannot, for you cannot get out of yourself. The question is not concerning immortality, but as to whether Jack will meet his Jenny after death.

"The one great secret of religion is to know for yourself that you are a spirit. Do not cry out, 'I am a worm, I am nobody!' As the poet says, 'I am existence, knowledge and truth.' No man can do any good in the world by crying out, 'I am one of its evils.' The more perfect the less imperfections you see."

At the conclusion of the address Rev. Mills announced that Swami Vivekananda would speak again on Wednesday evening instead of Tuesday as had been announced. His subject would be Points of Resemblance between Vedantism and Christianity.

UNITY IN HUMANITY

BY THE EDITOR

I

The most pressing question that has engaged the attention of great thinkers of the world since the end of the Great War is how to promote a better understanding among nations, how to create conditions that may give rise to the morality that would accompany scientific achievements of the day, how to

increase the material comfort of the teeming millions, and also how to prevent the means of slaughtering men. When the War came to a close with the loss of millions of souls, the unemployment of millions of men and women, the crippling of trade, commerce, and industries the world over, and the piling up of crushing debts of billions of pounds by