

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

(From the ‘Oakland Enquirer’)

Tuesday, March 13, 1900

IN WORK AND LOVE

*Says the Swami, Lies the Way of
Salvation*

*Final Address by the Exponent of the
Religious Philosophy of the Hindoo*

Wendte Hall of the First Unitarian Church was crowded last evening with a large audience to hear the “Way of Salvation” from the standpoint of the Hindoo priest, Swami Vivekananda. This was the last lecture of a series of three which the Swami has delivered.

He said in part: “One man says God is in heaven, another that God is in nature and everywhere present. But when the great crisis comes we find the goal is the same. We all work on different plans, but the end is not different.

“The two great watchwords of every great religion are Renunciation and Self-

sacrifice. We all want the truth and we know that it must come, whether we want it or not. In a way we are all striving for that good, and what prevents our reaching it? It is ourselves. Your ancestors used to call it the devil, but it is our own false self.

“We live in slavery and we would die if we were out of it. We are like the man who lived in total darkness for ninety years and when taken out into the warm sunshine of nature, prayed to be taken back to his dungeon. You would not leave this old life to go into a newer and greater freedom which opens out.

“The great difficulty is to go to the heart of things. These little degraded delusions of Jack So-and-So’s, who thinks he has an infinite soul, how small he is with his different religions. In one country, all as a matter of religion, a man has many wives, in another one woman has many husbands;

so some men have two gods, some one God and some no God at all.

“But salvation is in work and love. You learn something thoroughly; in time you may not be able to call that thing to memory. Yet it has sunk into your inner consciousness and is a part of you. So as you work, whether it be good or bad, you shape your future course of life. If you do good work with the idea of work, work for work’s sake; you will go to Heaven or your idea and dream of Heaven.

“The history of the world is not of its great men, of its demi-gods, but it is like the little islands of the sea, which build themselves to great continents from fragments of the sea drift. Then the history of the world is in the little acts of sacrifice performed in every household. Man accepts religion because he does not wish to stand on his own judgement. He takes it as the best way of getting out of a bad place.

“The salvation of man lies in the great love with which he loves his God. Your wife says, ‘Oh, John, I could not live without you’; some men when they lose their money have to be sent to the asylum. Do you feel that way about your God? When you can give up money, friends, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, all that is in the world and only pray to God that He grant you something of His love then you have found salvation.”

March 14, 1900

MORE LECTURES BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The great popularity of the course of lectures just finished by the Swami Vivekananda has been a matter of surprise to those who have been familiar with the almost empty houses that have greeted some of the lecturers that have appeared here.

At the earnest solicitations of those who have had the pleasure of listening to him, he has consented to give another course of three lectures. They will take place at Wendte Hall, Fourteenth and Castro Streets, on successive Monday evenings, beginning with March 19. The subjects are: The Manners and Customs of India; The Arts and Sciences in India; and the Ideals of Quakers.

As no more tickets will be sold than enough to comfortably fill the hall, persons desiring to hear these lectures will do well to apply to the sexton at the church during the mornings of this week.

March 21, 1900

INDIA’S PEOPLE

*The Swami Vivekananda tells
of His Countrymen*

The lecture which the Swami Vivekananda gave Monday night in his new course on “The People of India”, was interesting, not only for what he had to relate of the people of that country, but for the insight into their mental attitude and prejudices which the speaker gave without really meaning it. It is apparent that the Swami, educated and intellectual man that he is, is no admirer of Western civilization. He has evidently been a good deal embittered by the talk about child widows, the oppression of women and other barbarisms alleged against the people of India, and is somewhat inclined to resort to the *tu quoque* in reply.

In commencing his talk he gave his hearers an idea of the racial characteristics of the people. He said that the bond of unity in India, as in other countries of Asia, is not language or race, but religion. In Europe the race makes the nation, but in Asia people

of diverse origin and different tongues become one nation if they have the same religion. The people of Northern India are divided into four great classes, while in Southern India the languages are so entirely different from those of Northern India that there is no kinship whatever. The people of Northern India belong to the great Aryan race, to which all of the people of Europe, except the Basques in the Pyrenees, and the Finns, are supposed to belong. The Southern India people belong to the same race as the ancient Egyptians and the Semites. To illustrate the difficulties of learning one another's languages in India, the Swami said that when he had occasion to go into Southern India he always talked with the native people in English, unless they belonged to the select few who could speak Sanskrit.

A good deal of the lecture was taken up in a discussion of the caste system which the Swami characterized by saying that it had its bad side, but that its benefits outweighed its disadvantages. In brief, this caste system had grown up by the practice of the son always following the business of the father. In course of time the community came thus to be divided into a series of classes, each held rigidly within its own boundaries. But while this divided the people, it also united them, because all the members of a caste were bound to help their fellows in case of need, and as no man could rise out of his caste the Hindoos have no such

struggles for social or personal supremacy as embitter the people of other countries.

The worst feature of the caste is that it suppresses competition, and the checking of competition has really been the cause of the political downfall of India and its conquest by foreign races.

Respecting the much-discussed subject of marriage in India, the Swami said that his people did not believe in matches being made by a couple of young people who might be attached to one another, without regard to the welfare of the community, which is more important than that of any two persons. "Because I love Jennie and Jennie loves me," said the Swami, "is no reason why we should be married."

He denied that the condition of the child widows is as bad as has been represented, saying that in India the position of widows in general is one of a great deal of influence, because a large part of the property in the country is held by widows. In fact, so enviable is the position of a widow that a woman or a man either might almost pray to be made a widow.

The child widows, or women who have been betrothed to children who died before marriage, might be pitied if marriage were the only real object in life, but, according to the Hindoo way of thinking, marriage is rather a duty than a privilege, and the denial of the right of child widows to marry is no particular hardship.