

The sacred charm and strength that dwell
On Aryan altars, flaming free ;
All these be yours, and many more,
No ancient soul could dream before—
Be thou to India's future son
The mistress, servant, friend in one.

May the mothers of our race lovingly treasure
and cherish this noble ideal, and prove by their life
and action that a regenerated womanhood does
always stand for a regenerated Indian nation !

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE.

BY SWAMI SUDDHANANDA.

Prophets come and go. When they are in our midst, a tremendous upheaval comes upon society. People find that the solution to the various problems, which they were trying to find out themselves but without any success, is within their reach, and they hail the prophets as their ideals and look upon them as gods incarnate on earth. No doubt there are sometimes heard voices which try to antagonise their clear life-giving message. And occasionally these opposing forces grow so powerful that they apparently succeed in killing the physical bodies of the prophets or in shutting them up in a criminal's cell. But their message is not killed with their death or incarceration. It assumes larger and larger proportions, perhaps in silence, perhaps in a small despised community, till at last it emerges from the obscurity in full glory before the astonished world. Such has been the history of Christianity; such has

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 been also the history of many other noble movements of this world of ours.

Every prophet comes to deliver a particular message suitable to his age and environment. Krishna came with his message of universal toleration, or more correctly, of universal inclusion and acceptance and *Nishkama-Karma*; Buddha with his message of Nirvana or annihilation of all desires as the ideal for one and all; Sankara with his message of oneness of the individual soul and the Universal Spirit; Jesus with his message of love for the Universal Father; Mahommet with his message of oneness of the Godhead, Islam signifying resignation to the Lord and the equality of all accepting the faith; and Chaitanya with his message of impassioned love for the Divine Spouse. We shall endeavour in this short article to trace out what was the particular message of the prophet of Bengal—we mean the late Swami Vivekananda—who passed away from this world more than twenty-one years ago.

Swamiji has been called variously by his contemporaries,—the Patriot-saint of Modern India, a second Sankara, a powerful preacher of Social Service, or as he himself used to style it—the worship of the poor Narayanas, and so on. Even the so-called anarchists and revolutionaries of modern India took him as their ideal, and thought he was a great revolutionist. The social reformers are fond of quoting passages from his writings to prove that he was a great social reformer, while the rigid orthodox people also are not slow in appreciating his services to, what they call, the Sanatana Dharma.

Now let us see what was the central theme of his preaching, or in one word, what was his 'Message'.

An ardent disciple of the Prophet of Dakshineswar,—a man of an intense spiritual realisation and a wonderful eclecticism—the Swami renounced what the ordinary folk consider a promising career, for a life of perfect chastity and poverty. And after passing through tremendous *Tapasya* and devotions, which lasted for about seven years, he came before the public with his message of Hope at the end of 1893 at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, and continued to deliver it in various ways all over the world, till he left his physical body in 1902.

We shall quote some significant passages from his utterances that, we think, give the key-note to his wonderful message before the world, which in his own words we want to style as 'Practical Adwaitism'.

In his paper on Hinduism read before the Chicago Parliament, we find a passage which appears to us to be a prophetic and inspired utterance on account of the loftiness of sentiment expressed by it.

After quoting a famous passage from the Upanishads, in which the Rishi calls on the whole world, as the 'Children of Immortal Bliss', Swamiji addresses his audience thus :—

“Children of Immortal Bliss! what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name. Yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye 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, O lions, shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal. Ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.”

In his reply to the address given him by the Citizens of Madras, he appeals thus to the young men of Bengal :—

“First, let us be Gods and then help others to be Gods. ‘Be and make.’ Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God.”

\* \* \* “Let us say, ‘we are’ and ‘God is’ and ‘We are God’. ‘Sivoham’, ‘Sivoham’ and march on. Not matter but Spirit.”

In his reply to the address given by his beloved disciple, the Raja of Khetri in Rajputana, he refers to his message in the following prophetic language :

“And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier than those which preceded it, for it is the summation of them all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the Saraswati, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak of the ‘Father of

Mountains', and descended upon the plains through Krishna, Buddha and Chaitanya in all-carrying floods, has spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the realms of Light, the gates have been opened wide once more."

In this passage, Swamiji especially emphasises the doctrine of the harmony of religions preached by his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna. But how can that harmony be brought about? Whoever cares to read Swamiji's writings carefully will find that Adwaita was his key to the solution. Only he, unlike the great Sankara, did not use that Adwaita in order to refute all other philosophies and religions, but rather to reconcile them all.

We would like to give here another quotation from his famous book—'Raja Yoga'. Indeed he himself used this as the motto of his book, because, we think, it brings out in a nutshell the real purport of Swamiji's teachings regarding all religions and all possible religious practices :—

"Each soul is potentially divine.

"The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

"Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more or all of these and be free.

"This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details."

This divinity, this eternal glory, this almightiness of the human soul, he preached to the world

with a voice of thunder. When we bear this in mind, it becomes easy for us to discriminate his real message from the various conflicting opinions regarding the same.

Let us take for instance the opinion that Swamiji was a great patriot—a great nationalist. We admit that he *was* so, but we add this qualification that he avoided the narrowness of a so-called nationalist, without at the same time losing his fervid enthusiasm. However much we may try to disguise the fact, a fervent patriot, even though he might be actuated by lofty sentiments, cannot but cherish hatred and prove antagonistic to what he considers against his national interests. But a cosmopolitan or a man with international sympathies, on the other hand, loses much of the enthusiasm of the patriot. We find, however, that in Swamiji the good features of both of these types were present without their wrong tendencies. For illustration, let us read the conclusion of his lecture on 'My Plan of Campaign' delivered in Madras, where he describes the three absolutely necessary qualifications of a real patriot, *viz.*, first, feeling for the good of the masses, second, finding some sort of solution to their good, and third, sticking perseveringly to one's principle under all adverse circumstances. Again, consider many other utterances scattered throughout his voluminous writings, where we find him as a passionate adorer of his own Motherland and where the enthusiastic patriot in him comes out in bold relief. Yet he was an ardent advocate of the unification of the East and the West, and this by spiritualising the materialistic

West and by teaching the East the Westerner's power of organisation and knowledge of machinery.

How could he combine in him these two apparently contradictory principles? We answer, it is because his real message was 'Practical Adwaitism'. This message he gave to his disciples in the form of the following mantram—"आत्मनो मोक्षाय जगद्धिताय च" 'For one's own liberation and for the good of the world'.

What is the real significance of this Mantram? An individual worker has to work out his own liberation, which consists in rousing his potential divinity. When he realises this perfectly, he becomes one with the Absolute,—in other words, he realises the Adwaita, by following, as hinted before, whatever path he may like—whether by hearing, reasoning or meditating on the great Vedantic formula—'That Thou art'; or by loving the beautiful and beloved Divine Person with such an ardent love, that the lover and the Beloved at last become one; or by concentrating his mind on higher and higher principles, and acquiring power over them, till at last he reaches the source of all power and knowledge, and becomes omnipotent and omniscient; or by the constant practice of selfless work by which the self grows thinner and thinner, till at last he becomes absolutely selfless, in other words, he loses his 'I'ness, his 'ego', his individuality. In all these paths, the goal is Adwaita, and when a person realises this Adwaita, he may be called a 'Practical Adwaitist.'

But this is only one aspect of the message of

‘Practical Adwaitism’, and is the meaning of the first part of the Mantram—‘For one’s own liberation’. What is the significance of the second portion—‘For the good of the world’? And what connection has it with ‘Practical Adwaitism’, by which term we have tried to sum up Swamiji’s message?

We remember to have once asked Swamiji himself what he meant by the term ‘Practical Adwaitism’, and he explained thus:—“The term, of course, may mean realisation of the human soul as God Himself; but as it is rather a very far-off ideal for many, when I use the term, I use it generally in a lower sense. My Guru Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna often used to say—अद्वैत ज्ञान आंचले बंधे या दुच्छा ता कर—‘Securing the Advaita knowledge in the hem of your garment, do whatever you like’. I have taken this as my motto, and I want to rouse all men and women of this world to the consciousness of the almightiness, perfection and divinity of their souls—so that every one may apply it to one’s particular need.”

The point may be made more clear by the following quotation from his ‘Reply to the Madras address’ :—

“This infinite power of the Spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality and made to act upon Itself makes of man a God”

In working for the good of the world, the remote ideal to be kept in view is the liberation (Mukti) of all people. But how can that be brought about? All countries and all people are not equally



fit for striving for this summum bonum all at once, though—

“The ideal of this world is that state when the whole world will again be Brahmana in nature. When there will be no necessity of the Sudra, Vaisya and Kshatriya powers; when man will be born with Yoga powers; when spiritual force will completely triumph over material force; when disease and grief will no more overtake the human body, the sense-organs will no more be able to go against the mind; when the application of brute force will be completely effaced from men's memory, like a dream of primeval days; when love will be the motive-power in all actions on this earth.”

To obviate this difficulty Swamiji suggests that the following method of work must be followed:—

“In some countries only spirituality is needed, in others some amount of material comfort is extremely necessary. Thus we must lead nations and individuals into the realm of spirituality through their particular path, by fulfilling the particular wants that such nations and individuals may be most suffering from.” For instance, “It is impossible for a hungry man to become spiritual, unless food is provided for him.”—(*Extracts from the Rules and Regulations of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur.*)

So we see that Swamiji believes and teaches that this good is not one and the same for all under all circumstances, but is rather different according to the difference in time, place, and person (देश, काल पात्र). We shall here deal only with two particular

forms of work for the good of the world, as advocated by Swamiji, viz. the preaching of religion in foreign countries and social service, and try to show their connection with 'Practical Adwaitism'.

He advocated a systematic religious propaganda by Indians among the people of the West, and this not for any proselytising purposes, not for making the Westerners actual Hindus or Buddhists, but for making them spiritual, by rousing the sleeping divinity within them. He fully believed that in religion the Easterners, with all their defects in various other matters, could act as the religious Gurus of the West—only if they would shake off the hypnotism that the Westerners were our natural superiors in every respect.

We would like to emphasise this aspect of Swamiji's teachings, which he in his inimitable language styled 'the conquest of the West', and ask our leaders to send preachers to the people of the West by hundreds and thousands, not on any begging mission, not to poison their ears by wailings about our backward social state, which by the bye, they have little time to hear,—but by showing them the real spiritual path that will save them from the perils of utter dissolution incidental to their following too much the materialistic path. And it does not matter even if they cannot do this with perfect disinterestedness. Let them remember that the indirect result of this missionary work is not inconsiderable, as Swamiji himself points out in a letter to a friend:—

“If you could send and maintain, for a period,

a dozen well-educated strong men, to preach in Europe and America, you would do immense service to India, both morally and politically. Every man who morally sympathises with India becomes a political friend.—(*Epistles, II series, Second edition, Page 58*).

Thus we see that this good work is sure to secure respect for us and our nation,—which is sure to be a great asset to the future generations.

It has been given to understand by the Government as well as other authorities, that some revolutionaries from India now and then approach foreign Governments and ask for their help in bringing about India's political independence. If there be any truth in this assertion, they are pursuing a wrong policy which cannot but prove unprofitable and harmful. For, that very begging for help from others shows their want of self-respect and self-help and betrays their slave-mentality. If, instead of this, they would follow the path of 'Practical Adwaitism' as taught by Swamiji, and would be satisfied to live an ideal spiritual life and teach spirituality to the foreigners, they would create a profound respect for themselves as well as for Indian culture. This requires, however, a little real strength, and that strength only the 'Adwaita' can give; for it asks everyone to shake off all fear and stand on one's own feet.

We need not amplify this idea, as everyone with a little commonsense in him may understand that this sending of religious missionaries to places outside India, if carried on a big scale, will be pro-

ductive of great good to India herself in many direct and indirect ways. Do we lack such religious Gurus? We believe, we do not. What we lack, is simply the courage, and Swamiji wanted to preach the 'Adwaita' in order to inspire that courage.

Swamiji's idea of 'Social Service' or serving all human beings as Narayanas, has also this idea of 'Practical Adwaitism' as its background. Apart from its intrinsic merits—the actual help received by the helped, as well as the spiritual uplift received by the helper—it will, if also acted upon on a large scale, enable us to solve many intricate problems in our present society. The great problem of untouchability in India is of a very easy solution with this idea of serving the members of the depressed classes as 'Narayanas.' Let us hear what Swamiji says in his lecture in Madras on 'Vedanta in its application to Indian life' :—

“Look upon every man, woman and every one as God. You can not help anyone, you can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. \* \* \* I see there are some poor, because of my salvation. I will go and worship them—God is there. The poor and the miserable are for your and my salvation, so that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased, coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper and the sinner.”

We may quote passage after passage to illustrate our point, that what Swamiji called 'Practical Adwaitism' was at the back of all his ideas and preachings, and that he was in this age the bearer

of this particular message, but space forbids us to quote more.

Before we conclude, we earnestly ask every reader of ours to carefully go through all the writings of Swami Vivekananda, and we assure him that he will find in them the solutions to all the personal or national problems which agitate now the sons and daughters of India. This short article is only a feeble attempt to convince the reader of the necessity of carefully studying Swami Vivekananda's works before he jumps at this or that programme of life for his personal or national well-being.

( *To be concluded* ).

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## THE PROPHET OF REFORM.

BY "YAJNAVALKYA."

A friend who describes himself as an enthusiastic admirer of the Swami Vivekananda writes with an expression of disappointment that the Swamiji's disciples are not following their master in that they are not actively helping the attempts that are being made to improve the political status of the country. Occasionally a similar complaint reaches us from those who are commonly designated as "social reformers." In the press and on the platform the message of the Swami has been discussed so often, and yet the misunderstanding referred to above is not altogether inexplicable. For, the Swamiji's mission was no common one. He was both a prophet and a pioneer of a new order of evolution. It was, to put it briefly, to realise and exchange the highest ideals of the East and the West. Only by a careful study of the ways in which the Swami has attempted to fit this new ideal into the details of practical life can one get a clear idea of the essential aspects of his glorious mission.