

MESSAGE AND MINISTRATIONS

R. VENKATA RATNAM

VOL., IV.

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THE MESSAGE AND MINISTRATIONS

OF

DEWAN BAHADUR

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Vol. IV

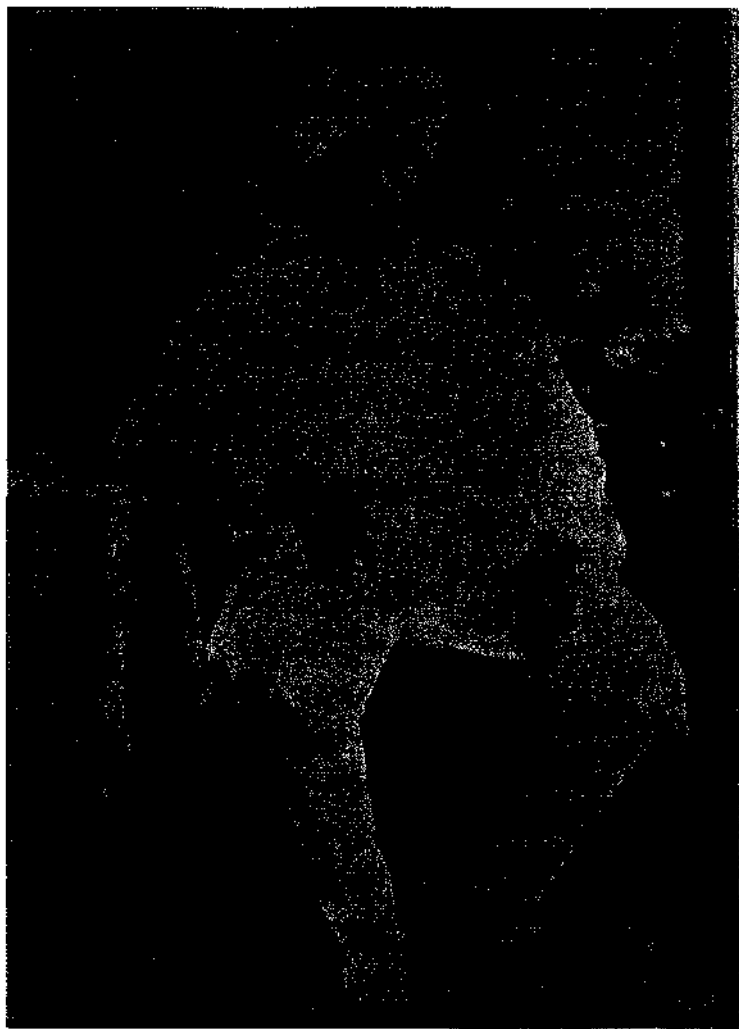
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R. V. D. P.
Sukata Rahman.



OM!

INSCRIBED,

with prayerful benediction
and cordial affection,

TO

HIM

/•hose stintless

bounty

==

HIM

whose tireless

devotion

alone have, under **Providence**, rendered it possible
for this volume and its three predecessors
to come into the light of publication.

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Om!

INTRODUCTION.

BETWEEN the last published and the present Volume of the *Message and Ministrations*, full six years have elapsed, much to the enduring disquiet of the Editor responsible for the ardent expectations previously raised and renewed. And now the explanation due to a wide enough circle evermore eager for the fulfilling embodiment of those cherished hopes lies, not in any impoverishment of the bullion in the mine, but in the quarryman's busy preoccupations forbidding the conditions requisite for the arduous processes of its conversion into specie stamped with the royal imprint.

Around the trio of volumes that has gone before, there still shines as ever a glowing halo of grateful appreciation from diverse quarters. "I read through them with the greatest interest and realised what a very noble person Sir R. Venkata Ratnam was. He is one whom I have always wished and longed to know for his⁹ goodness, about which I have so often heard." So wrote the good

Rev. C. F. Andrews with characteristic depth of insight and breadth of sympathy. Across the waters, the Rev. Dr. Rosslyn Bruce of Sussex conveyed himself in the vibrant words: "It is very touching to us here to see how greatly his powerfully expressed teaching corresponds with what we have to say to our people here. 'High and low, rich and poor, old and young, in the East as in the West, have but one lesson to learn that is worth learning.'" Nearer home in our own fold, a truly faithful testimony to the life radiant through word and deed was that of Brother Beni Madhav Das, M.A., President of the All-India Theistic Conference of 1923 at Cocanada. The third Volume, commemorating the sixty-second birth* day, elicited from him a tropically warm appraisal in the columns of *The World and the New Dispensation*: "To go to him is to feel the touch of a mother's heart,—the Supreme Mother reflected,—the mother's heart which has spread itself out in the form of a grand Orphanage at Cocanada—really a home and mother's bosom for the homeless orphans. To go to him is to find a noble presence and a personality which goes deep into the soul to transfuse it, to lift it up and to spiritualise the whole being. To go to him is to live and move in the light and

atmosphere of a high, noble life so full of tender love, grandmotherly doting humour toned up with a high-strung spiritual life, with a play of light and sweetness, that culture of a very high type spread around. . . . His writings are a rich ore of gems of spiritual life of purest ray serene. They easily lend themselves to tunes and, if translated into hymns, will enrich the hymnology of the Brahma Samaj--The New Dispensation of the Age has marked him out as an organ of its self-expression." *The Modern Review*, in its notice of the Volume, extolled the Author as "a practical reformer"⁷⁷ and added the suggestive encomium, "His ideas are very high." Again, in his judicious review for *The Indian Messenger*, Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhusan recognised the Volume in question as "a worthy successor of the first two volumes" and "a valuable addition to Brahmo literature"⁷. He appended also the further assurance that "Headers of all denominations will find it highly edifying and stimulating to higher thought" and commended to all the welcome "opportunity of being enriched with such aids to spiritual life as we know the volumes to be".

In its turn, this fresh offering of a sacred service will be found to comprise any but a thin gleanings in quality, as compared with the golden

harvest of its predecessors. Rather is it strewn everywhere with ample evidence of the summer growing in the heart alongside, and in despite, of the winter gathering on the head. This latest sheaf cannot fail to impress itself as a superb instance of how, more and more, the foliage of exuberance has been shed and the hues of elegance refined and the richness of the grain itself multiplied in quite an arresting manner and an amazing measure. Wanting but two years for threescore and ten, the lengthening of days has, indeed, sweetly mellowed the inner core as also the outer casement. And the mild mystic light in serene repose reveals, more than of old, the increasing fulness and fascination of 'the vision and the faculty .divine', At every turn, you are supremely delighted and edified as you encounter the 'glad surprise' of the crystal thought, the classic phrase, the chastened sentiment and the consecrated spirit. This estimate any single item among the contents of the present collection will suffice to verify within its own compass. But with cadence upon cadence, rhapsody upon rhapsody, analogue upon analogue through all the meaxiderings of far-penetrating thought, the cumulative impression of the **whole from** cover to cover **must call forth from every**

discerning mind and every devout soul the awe-inspired, gratitude-laden acclaim of ⁱ *Gloria in Excelsis!* *

It is the part of the competent expositor, as it is the despair of the humble compiler, to rise to the standard fixed by a critical biographer like Sir Sydney Lee and bring to bear upon his task "the insight to interpret what he has sifted and the capacity to give form to the essence of his findings". Even the first step to such an approach stands barred by the obvious limitations of now and here. Nevertheless, a few snatches from the incomparable original may prove of help, if only just to 'introduce' and briefly to correlate the more outstanding pieces. Thus, through the familiar folds of the three main sections, may be traced the golden thread that knits them together into an exquisite fabric with all the wealth of variegated yet well-integrated warp and woof.

The very opening words of the Volume aptly strike the key-note of the entire gamut: "The loftiest conception and the profoundest experience of man's 'idea of God'". Theism as Theology and Theism as Faith—Faith in its double aspect of Realisation **and** Regeneration—these primarily

constitute the two precious hinges upon which turns the door of a veritable 'message' and 'ministration'. The "recorded God" and the "reported God" are not only vividly shown as preluding, but also gently moved aside to make room for, the "realised God". And as *Sat*, He becomes at once the All and All-in-all, the one Reality and the only Environment. Chance and conflict, so called, are rehabilitated in their ultimate colours as respectively "so much providence not anticipated" and "the onrush to merge into one harmonious unity". So that, "nothing lags behind as partial and casual, nothing stays away as aloof and alone, but all is summed up in Thee as the Supreme One".

As arising out of, and by way of application of, this common, underlying basis of all Truth, we have a number of discourse specially and severally devoted to the vital relations between Religion and the varied interests and incidents of life—individual and communal, national and international. In the process of selection, though not exactly also in the ordering of sequence, care has been taken, as will be seen, to provide material such as pertains to the liberal reinterpretation of the principal problems of philosophic and of public thought and the

prominent passages of personal existence. Topic and title directly coinciding in most cases, on one side are set forth the necessary bearings of religious conviction and spiritual progress upon knowledge, upon toleration, upon soul-serenity, upon world-peace, upon submerged humanity, upon personal purity and social entertainment, upon adversity and affliction, upon anniversaries and conference-assemblages and, to crown all, upon the practice of worship. On another side, channels thoroughly adequate in every way and to every need are cut open and made available for proper emotional outflow in the solemn observance of typical sacraments like *jathakavma*, *namakaranam*, *aksharasweekaram*, *udwahan*, *alayanivedanam* and *sraddharn*. As such, it is to be fervently hoped that this Volume, like its two forerunners, will duly acquire and afford practical usefulness as one more model manual of Brahmic or Liberal Religious Ritual—a *Navatarasamhita* after our own Brahmananda Keshub Chander's *Navasarnhita*. So shall "the New Dispensation of the Age" employ unto its own high ends this newly-marked-out ^a organ of its self-expression ". Then again, a due share of alteration is devoted to the dear domestic concern* of our own Household of Faith—its fundamentals

and its festivals, including the fraternal amenities with our kin in the Unitarian Communion of England and America. Accordingly, this post-centennial publication will be welcome, too, for its cluster of luminous expositions and persuasive exhortations round about the epoch-making, thrice-sacred episodes of the foundation of the Brahma Samaj, the inauguration of the first Brahma Mandir and the promulgation of the famous Trust-Deed by Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, as also the consecration of the two Mandirs at Bezwada and Cocanada and the institution of the Sadhanashram at the latter.

Now for a few strides along the avenues and a few glimpses into *the* vistas thus opening out. To begin with: the recondite charge to youth on " Religion and Knowledge " illustrates how " the whole cycle of knowledge ", covering all Science, History, Literature and, of course, Theology—*Paravidya*, the Queen of the Sciences—" forms one beautiful halo of Religion ". And so it proceeds to the inculcation which not only the student world but all else cannot lay too close to the heart: " Really, no study need be considered alien or secular, provided it is done in a devout spirit." From this altitude it becomes easy to perceive the pious import attached to *Aksharasweekaram* as a

solemn sacrament of initiation into the mysteries of Divine lore. Indeed, with the accredited '*KulapaW*' of the South Indian Teachers' Union, while ministering "to set the trustful feet of the pilgrim on the shining path of wisdom," how could it be otherwise than that "the letter uttered by the tongue is the oracle voiced in the soul"?

The impartial universality of Light develops the larger meaning of Toleration, as elucidated with robust historic sense and spiritual prognosis in the two speeches on "The Brahma Samaj : its Background and its Outlook". Not the passive pose of 'Live and let live' but the active principle of 'Give and receive' is the 'patent' mark of "the higher cosmopolitanism, the ampler universalism." And towards this happy goal we advance only by "eliminating none of our varied experiences but continually sorting them all into the charming mosaic of that catholicity of spiritual valuation which judges all things from the sublime standpoint of the spirit and discerns the doings of His grace in all times and climes".

And thus we are led to the wider vision of "Eeligion and World-Peace". With assimilation **and** not exploitation as the Divine ordinance,

mutual sustentation even more than mutual sufferance is instilled as the deeper duty. The problem of war-against-war is discovered to be, at bottom, a soul-to-soul problem. For, the one thing needful is a cleansing change of heart with a revulsion against the hate-heritage of the past and a revolt against the ego-begotten feud of the present. And surely, the struggle nought availeth with prudential programmes and pacts;—^{na}y? with moral maxims and nostrums either. 'Thro' all the secular to-be/ it is reserved for,, religious reconciliations alone to effect and ensure the transfusion of the red flame of animosity into the white heat of amity; and that, by the sacred spell of " ' Under Heaven, One Family' in the Sisterhood of Faiths'⁷. The terse antithesis of "Not by the reduction of huge armaments but the 'induction' of high emotions" is finally made clear through the familiar formula, " ' The League of Nations ' can fulfil itself only in and through ' the League of Religions.' "

' The thousand wars of old' thus rung out and ' the thousand years of peace ' thus rung in, the altruism of world-catholicity gifts us with the key to the at-one-ment of soul-serenity. ' Calm after storm' is all you can read on the surface of Nature. ' Calm above storm ', aye, ' calm within storm ', is

what you may realise in the retreat of the soul. To this effect, that rare specimen of our 'Silent Paster's' musings-aloud, the apocalyptic 'meditation' upon the ambrosial word justly described as all too grateful to the Indian taste—*Santhi*—counsels "the far-sighted calm which declares, * Let us not talk of ⁴ mine ' and * thine ', let us avow 'ours ' For; "thus alone can I be at peace with you ; and it is only by being at peace with you that I can be at peace with myself ". Here going back one step, we see, as in the meditation on " Self-Conquest", how the self, to be thus at one with another self, has first to pass through " the disciplining of the enemy-self into the friend-self"¹. And if the tranquillity thus attained is the tranquillity, not only of together-ness towards brother-man and sister-woman, but also of "thankfulness for both shine and shower ", it is because, or in so far as, the soul abides in God and "our God is *Santhi-dhamam*, the Eternal Abode of Serenity".

Passing on to Purity—*Suddham* in the wake of *Santham*—and the inviolable challenge of Religion and Righteousness to personal character and to national amusements, how powerfully all this is enforced in the £"Anti-Nautch" speech at the National Social Conference, charged with the

meridian splendour—the virile vigour of erudition, eloquence and epigram—of thirty-six years ago! A fine foreshadowing of the magnificent thesis of a later date which leads the Second Volume in this series, the speech clinches the whole argument by its threefold appeal to economy, humanity and morality. Of the far-reaching movement valiantly initiated and strenuously championed by himself and honourably identified with his name in the public mind, the prophet in the protestor predicts even at the start what the later story has, under Heaven, already abundantly confirmed. "This agitation will eventually, sooner or later, succeed in elevating a down-trodden, a low-fallen class of India's daughters and in wjding away a long-standing stain upon the nation's fair fame". With concentrated force, the peroration directs its wise warning against all syren-strains of subtle seduction. "He who fritters it (life) away in questionable entertainments cuts his own throat with a golden razor ". And this counsel about individual weal it follows up, as regards individual worthiness, with a censure against according—rather, against failing uncompromisingly to deny—"ati honourable recognition to a person, however striking in beauty, however brilliant in parts or however eminent in

position, if he or she has a tainted character". Trenchant thrusts these, tenderly meant, from the divinely-dubbed knight-valiant of Purity! And they carried, their own special point with them at the hour, close upon the stirring 'Norton incident' wherein the lion had been bearded in his own den upon the floor of the National Congress.

So much about the ghastliest of the three ⁴ 'skeletons' in the 'house' of Hindu Social Polity—the 'Dancing-Girl,' the Panchama and the Child-Widow—stereotyped as they are by pseudo-religion into the curse of caste-enjoined professional debauchery, the incubus of society-sanctioned perpetual degradation and the cross of custom-enforced penal darkness. The self-same dynamic enthusiasm of humanity and practical idealism in the cause of the neglected and the helpless, as of the fallen, is made manifest, in general terms, in the sibyl leaf on "the social obligation of religion" under the title of "Shelter the Weak from the Strong". In particular aspects, again, it is crystallised in the Masulipatam "Advice to Depressed Class Boys" of 1929 and in the Rajahmundry "(Re-) Marriage Service" of 1928. Of these latter, the first will approve itself as a sweet, simple, straight reminder of the "uncut diamond" in the mine, recalling the beautiful imagery of 'God's

image cut in ebony \ And the second, likewise, wall adjudge itself as of especial Value for its abounding sympathy with "love-lorn gloom", its rapturous delight over the heroism of the redress, its lively appreciation of the heartening conditions of the exemplary couple, its reverential awe before the pervading presence of the *locus dei* of the hallowed spot, its noble reaffirmation of the sublimities of the *grihasta* ideal and its profoundly spiritual appropriation of the customary forms of marriage ritual, including the *saptapacli* symbolism of united pilgrim-ing. Two other suggestive pieces chiming in with this melody of matrimony are : the "Marriage Benediction" at the Orphanage with its own distinctively tender appeal; and the meditation on "Chastity and Celibacy" with its vindictive glorification of holy wedlock. The wife no less chaste than the virgin; "man the stem, woman the creeper; man the sap, woman the flower"; man and woman the conjoint "trustees of posterity"—they make "the weal or the woe, therefore, of the individual or of the race, the salvation or the perdition of the soul or the society". And the sacramental institution of marriage is the self-multiplication instrument of the Divine "Arithmetic of Love." As unfolded in the *JSIamakaranam* discourse,

" the true unit of life is husband and wife welded into one, with the 'wonderful capacity also of remaining a unit while expanding into the beautiful manifold of increasing offspring " ; and the separate affixing of a name to each individual is even the reflex here below of God's own unfailing identification of each of His dear ones in the multi-manifold of His universal family.

One word, next, as to the outlook upon Adversity and Affliction and all ' the far-off interest of tears '. The "thankfulness for both shine and shower" already noted as the supreme mark of the soul of serenity—this is the poet's mood of "with a heart for any fate" uplifted into the devotee's temper not only of repining hushed into resignation but also of reconciliation sublimated into rejoicing. For the parched lip of pain and the arid tongue of agony; the distilled essence of the spirit of hoary Job is what is caught up in the refreshing chalice of the *sraddha* outpouring, "The Ministry of Sorrow." "As comes the ray of joy, we feel it is the radiance of Thy holy presence. And as envelopes the gloom of bereavement, we feel it is the shadow of Thy outstretched arm". Eternal Providence constitutes the sheet-anchor of Immortal Hope. And the spiritualised eye and the

celestialised heart are enabled to see and to sing,
 "Thou resumest but to restore. Thou seemingly
 withdrawest but to reserve."

Even the occasional or periodic incidents of life like the conventional round of Anniversary Celebrations come in for the explication of their religious significance. "An exclusively human institution" by virtue of the capacity "to overreach the bounds of time" and, Janus-like, to look behind and before, "the anniversary of any movement signifies that it is a link in the ever-growing chain of wisdom, righteousness and humanity". Then, how much more effectively this lofty, wide-extended perspective is, as it may be, applied to the recurring, auspicious *utsavs* of a directly religious, a purely spiritual movement like the Brahma Samaj ! Hearken, for instance, to "the rhythmic joy of the benediction of the *Sreekara* and the *Subhakara* on the Foundation-Day, hailed with a hosannah of thanksgiving as "this truly peace-imparting, progress-proclaiming, bliss-vouchsafing occasion."

In the scale of symbolic values, the "Mandir Consecration Service" at Bezwada, with the adoration in it forming a pattern picture of resplendent

fulness, dilates upon the threefold object of a common house of worship as a shrine of adoration, a retreat of repentance and a cloister of communion. It further transports us beyond the dear tenement of brick and mortar to the holier tabernacle not built with human hands. "As we meet here,, apparently to dedicate a building, we have really to dedicate ourselves and make Him; as we sing time and again, the true *Manasamandira*, the Enshrined One in the spirits of His worshippers.'⁷

For the elucidation of the "four basic, fundamental principles visioned, as by a genuine *Riski*, by Sree Rajah Ram Mohan Roy", we repair with benefit, in particular, to the Sermon in the aforesaid Service and to the "Words of Welcome" at a Theistic Conference, besides the address on "The Brahma Samaj : Its Background and its Outlook " previously referred to. It is, by the way, of no small significance that in the whole range 'of Theistic literature, the Rajah's Trust-Deed and the Maharshi's Autobiography furnish to the Master the two most favourite sources of tireless and exhaustless discourse. The fundamentals of the vision of the Father of Modern India are summed up as : th& unity of Grod, the spiritual worship of God, the catholic (judicious yet reverent) treatment of^aU

faiths and the hearty confraternity of all spirits in the worship of God. The speech before the Conference gives to these principles a general setting, both positive and negative, in a form and in a manner which it should have so rejoiced the soul's venerated preceptor, Pandit Sivanath Sastri, to ratify from the chair at the time. " The mission of the Theistic Church is to make religion an absorbing devotion and not an elegant formality, human brotherhood a rapturous embrace and not a well-bred courtesy, and virtue a self-perfecting service and not a barren sentimentalism ". Add to this enunciation the qualification supplied in the speech on the "Background" of the Brahma Samaj, which runs to the effect that the Movement is characteristically " modern in the sense only of its latest expression but eternal in the spirit of its essential truth" and distinctively Indian in as much as Aryavarta is God's " special laboratory—His chosen work-room, for discovering and formulating a religious synthesis." Finally, note also the verification as laid down in the sermon on " Enjoy Him Alone": " The Brahmo is to the Brahma Samaj the witness ; and the Brahma Sameij is to the Brahmo the verification ". And recall the

roll of honour indicated in the pages on the " Outlook " of the Brahma Samaj and those on " Love and Service " as standing for its typical, representative exemplars. Thus outlined, the enunciation, the qualification and the verification yield a fair enough conspectus of the field and the position.

Of the central, cardinal, congenial, celestial theme of "realising the doctrine of *Monotheism* through the sacrament of *Monolatry*", the whole Volume is, indeed, redolent. Not alone in particular places or in set sentences but well-nigh through every line and under every caption, it breathes the spirit of the spontaneous naturalness, the perfecting potency and hence the perpetual paramountcy of a duty which forms the delight of all delights and to which all disciplines are but accessories—so many stepping-stones of our living selves to higher things, even to the Mount of Transfiguration. The address exclusively and exhaustively appropriated to "Religion and Worship" easily reaches the culmination of the flood-tide with the high-water-mark of inspiration. The force of nature—aye, of nature and of art, of intuition and of experience—could no further go. Little wonder, since we know already and are assured again in so many words of, the seciri*

strength and the sweet sanctity of 'tire life behind. t?he-message. " If I might venture to place before you what I hold as the root-faith, the basic conviction, of my life, I shall declare that life realises and fulfils itself, life works out its purpose and attains its destiny, only in so far as the life is inspired and ordered by Worship ". The evangel opens with the definition of Worship as " God-consciousness intensified into •God-communion". It proceeds to sound the depths and scale the heights of the spiritual revolution or regeneration which ti'ansforms the man into the mystic and the seer into the saint. It works out an elaborate and illustrative parallel study of the two typical *blialrtas* of our national tradition, Gajendra and Prahlada. And even after our own blessed poet-portrayer of those universally cherished episodes of devotion, it unravels " the mysteries of the ways and the miracles of the grace of God in the beatification of man." ' Close your Byrons; open your Goethes', said the Sage of Chelsea. So shall we pray, 'Put by all else; and first read, mark and inwardly digest this latest *locus classicus* on the Practice of the Presence of God' ?

^f Of the body of 'Services' and 'Prayers' proper, ififrrustfoe far from profitable or even 2>ermtesiHte

to enter upon anything like a detailed analysis* In that sphere, dissection would mean but desecration; and enjoyment alone could signify homage. Let the student of science botanise upon his mother's grave, as he may. But the babe upon the bosom—what has it to do with the chemical composition of the milk beyond the sucking in of the nectar with all the avidity of nature's hunger and thirst? It is, then, a boon inestimable to be privileged to participate in "the impelling, compelling reaction of the soul to the incoming, inflowing, insurging spirit of the Lord". Self-rated as "humble halting accents", those "outlets but for which the heart would throb with emotion beyond endurance"* are verily full-fed by the deluge of pentecostal downpour. And the realisation of Ilim who is "oppressively sweet" bodies itself forth in the gracious elements of praise, penitence and prayer in varying proportions. The *magnificat* adorations are there as so many full-petalled, fine-blown lotus offerings unto the Infinite, Eternal, Perfect Lord of Truth and Wisdom, Bliss and Peace, Love and Holiness—One only without a second; One in the union of the metaphysical and the moral attributes . and Olie in the transcendental and the immanent*! aspects. Implications and interrelations these

which, as set out by the knowing guide, thread the unerring way for us right up to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. Yet the undertone, if not the dominant note, in this jubilee of 'heard melodies,' as, indeed, still more in those unheard, will be seen to be that of a John the Baptist's solemn cry unto the stolid Self. And so "Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" amplifies itself here as "The spiritual suffering from the sense of bereavement, of banishment, from God" and in its wake and ennobles very account, the after-bliss of "the rock struck evermore with the bolt of grace to draw forth the baptismal spray of contrition." "The secret of the abysmal caverns of my iniquities" and, again, as its complement and counterpart, "the secret of the fathomless depths of His mercy"—these are the two hemispheres of the complete orb of beatific experience at the Footstool. Hence, amid much of excellent assimilation from ancient Yedantism and mediaeval Indian Protestantism and Western Christian lore, devotional and literary, the closest bond of filiation is that established with the Sufi mysticism of a band of vali-bards led by Rumi and his "soul's twin-brother, Jami". **Here**, as we are reminded in the terms of Rumi's **analogue**, here is another **reed cut from the stem and**

shaped into the flute to tell only of the anguish of separation. "None praiseth Thee, glorifieth Thee, more than this sinner, even because he is the vilest of sinners. All else may praise Thee for what they have enjoyed. I, the sinner, praise Thee for what I have suffered". Thus, the final outcome is a charming—quickenning and elevating—composite of the sweet lyric of personal redemption, the engaging drama of congregational intercourse and the grand epic of universal perfection.

As for the Sermons, suffice it, in passing, to point to the more than common drift and moment of the one at the opening and the one at the close of the section. These and the discourse on "As Thou Art, So is Hari" group themselves together in their progressive, well-rounded-off contemplation of the Meaning¹ of God in relation to Man. God images Himself in man : this is the first 'protestant*' phase developed, after Kabir, in contradistinction to the anthropomorphism that sets up man as the measure of God. God not only images Himself in man but also reveals Himself to man : this is the next facet of the concept disclosed, with side-lights from Sufi Rabbia and Miss Cobbe, in the commentary on the Upanishadic text, *Aaviraveermayedhi*.

tiod is not merely the self-revealing God—Self-reporter and Self-exponent as from a distance—but even the self-donating, self-imparting God, His supreme gift to one and all consisting in naught but His own Self for exclusive, for eternal enjoyment: this is the final saving truth borne in through the* commentary, after Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, on the other Upanishadic text, *Thenathyakthena bhunjeetha* in "Enjoy Him Alone". So that our substance is of God,; our strength is from God ; and our very sustenance is, not simply in God, but God Himself. Religion being, not the result of human quest, but the reception of Divine Grace, which is only another name for the self-gifting of the Deity, the whole process of growth in man lies in the increasing experience of the consubstantiality of the Father with the son, the communion of the Preceptor with the pupil and the enjoyment of the Spouse by the spouse. Here, in fine, is the mystic of religion other and higher than the scientist of religion or the philosopher of religion: his life fashioned out of God, his light flowing from God, his love fulfilled in God.

Space must be found at this point for a rapid survey of the land-marks of the leading life-events

since the chronicle of 1924. Blessed are they whose lives cover more experiences than events even by the transvaluation of the events into experiences ! Such a life is the one we are about, all its occurrences solemnly accepted and faithfully employed as obligations, aye, as opportunities, of well-doing for right living. " So shall the days be strung together into a sacred rosary for Thy praise and Thy glory! " is the burden of each Birth-day song, as of the *Anandasagara* pean of the last Birth-day—itsself 'a wavelet from the Ocean of Bliss.'⁷ The crowning glory of the public career on the 'secular' side was marked by the first elected Vice-Chancellorship of the reorganised Madras University for a term of three years from 1925 and the conferment of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters by the newly-created Andhra University at its first Convocation in 1927. The former period was intensively filled with administrative reform and educational development, including the organisation of the Departments of Oriental Studies and Scientific Research ; and it was fittingly signalised, early in 1980, by the seal of official recognition through life-membership in the Senate. And on the latter occasion, the University Orator, Rfcv. A. B.

Johnston, M.A., gave himself the pleasure of *presenting ' " one of the most revered leaders of education not only in the Andhra country but also in South India "; while a band of admiring and grateful old pupils afforded themselves the privilege of providing the outward insignia for one long since cherished as worthy of the highest distinction of learning, whom the University felt itself honoured in so honouring. In succession to the honours showered first by the rulers and .next by the academicians, last came those from the people in the shape of the graceful civic addresses presented by the Municipal Councils of Bezwada and Masulipatam towards the close of 1927 and 1929 with the pendant also of 'the Freedom of the City' from the former. The one hailed with approbation the doughty ' lieutenant ' of Veerasingam, the pioneer of Andhra advancement. The other, on behalf of the dear old birth-place and the scene of former fruitful labours " which had seen the best part of your early life ", acknowledged with pride that " your contributions to the educational, social and religious world are without a parallel in the history of the Andhra country ". Then our brother of the *Kistna Patrica* repaid, too, his own debt as a dear, devoted *chela* white

rejoicingly congratulating his fellow-townsmen on the due discharge of their common indebtedness. " If there is ", wrote he in weighty words, " one worthy of the sacred appellation of ' mahatma ' in the Andhra country, it is Nayadu garu and he alone to whom we could so render our obeisances with folded hands ". Among the media of beneficent educational and social activity within the bounds of the half-dozen years behind us were : the Chairmanship of the Inter-University Board for 1927—28; the nominated membership in the Madras Legislative Council in connection with the Andhra University Bill of 1926 and in resumption of a triennial seat vacated in 1923 ; the Chairmanship of the Reception Committee of the Ninth Indian Economic Conference opened by His Excellency Viscount Goschen in January 1926 ; the opening of the Annual Educational Conference, of the South Indian Teachers' Guild in February 1925 on introduction as " a missionary of faith, hope and charity by its President, Rao Bahadur A. C. Pranatharthihara Iyer; and the Presidentship of the First Madras Provincial Anti-Untouchability Conference opened in October 1925 by the Maharajah Saheb of Pithapiiram. On the religious plane, three purple patches shine forth for grateful

contemplation time without; end; (1) The completion and consecration of the Cocanada Brahmo-pasana Mandir "during the Brahmotsav of 1927 came to pass as a vital part of the life-work, as witness the enthusiastic avowal in the gospel on "Religion and Worship" for which it furnished the immediate urge of inspiration. " Deeply interested in Cocanada from the very beginning, it has been my innermost desire and aim, my sincerest prayer and heartiest hope, that Cocanada should possess some distinguishing object to mark it out as a centre of certain importance, whence the message of the worship of the one God in spirit - in truth, love and holiness—should be delivered and a certain measure of genuine effort should be put forth towards the cultivation of the essentials of Religion". At the celebration of the Dedicatory Sacrament, the good Maharajah Sahib was pleased to avow: " God Himself, in His infinite mercy, has, I ardently believe, created in my humble soul the desire to worship Him in spirit—in truth, love and self surrender. Thus vouchsafed the opportunity, in some small measure, to experience and enjoy this blessing, I have been naturally prompted to wish and hope that, as a little token of my deep

gratitude for this mercy of the All-Holy One, I might be enabled to rear and dedicate, unto His glory, a shrine where kindred spirits might congregate for such Divine Worship". And whence, humanly speaking, the godliness and the prompting behind the generosity, is common knowledge time and again stressed with grace and force by that very instrument in the "gracious fulfilment of my devoutest dream". Thus is accounted for the prolonged and toilsome care tenderly bestowed through years upon the minutest details in the actual uprearing of the Mandir into a unique sanctuary of piety, as of the Orphanage into a singular shrine of philanthropy. (2) A red-letter day in the Theistic calendar was that in October 1928 which witnessed the creation, under the same stimulus and from the same source as in the case of the Mandir, of the Andhra Brahmadharma Pracharaka Trust Fund of one lakh of rupees. How deeply this permanent, princely enrichment of the resources of the good cause stirred the Master's heart, will be clear from the following extract from a letter of grateful acknowledgment addressed to the munificent Donor and Trustee:—"In fact, this is the latest and most substantial evidence of the zeal and enthusiasm—

unparalleled in the history, of the Brahma Samaj—with which, during a period of more than two decades, you have been advancing the ideals of pure Monotheism in India by unstinted liberality. Posterity will remember and honour your name and that of your illustrious House for this ardent adherence to a movement inaugurated by the heavenly-inspired genius of Sree Rajah Ram Mohan Roy for the increasing glory of God through closer and heartier fellowship in spirit of all sections of the human race. May He in whose hands the ample issues of the future are vested, prosper, in an abundant measure, this gift sanctified with your soul-deep prayers, by accepting it as an offering deposited in the treasure of His Heavenly Love !" (3) To the processes of self-donation the finishing touch was given in the equipment of the Mandir with the Master's own entire library of over 1,000 well-thumbed, precious volumes representing diverse branches of knowledge. The consecration of the ' Venkata Ratnam Theistic Library' at Cocanada on the Ram Mohan Ascension Day in 1929 repeated for the present writer the pleasant conditions of its happy prototype, the * Veeresalingam Theistic Library' at Rajahmundry, consecrated at Veeresalingam's wish and so

christened against his will by Venkata Eatnam himself. In truth, the story of material gifts is like a shaft that knows no bottom. We learn from the reflections on "Self-Conquest" that "The high-souled men are they who daily illustrate the sublime paradox, "What is kept is lost; what is given is gained! *\' And for the daily illustration of this definition which finds the 'best riches', not in 'ignorance of wealth', but in the wise joy of the dedication of wealth, there is no need for one to go far afield. Of the Vice-Chancellor's total emolument to the tune of Rs. 72,000 an almost incredibly paltry pittance of Rs. 125 *a month* (including medicines, books, journals and servants) was all that went to cover the beginning and the end of the necessities and comforts of personal upkeep. But for the enjoined confidence which could not be rightly betrayed, we should be able to bring home the certainty behind the apparent incredibility. Above all, the inner frame of mind as to the outlets of the purse in this connection is caught sight of in an epistolary note, "God knows how the thought of it is as a hook caught in the heart. The episode is one that I strive to forget for my peace/" What, then, to say of

⁴ that best portion of a good man's life,

*His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love V?

A few of the more noteworthy, typical public benefactions can alone find mention here : Rs 10,000 to the Madras University for recurring course© of lectures on "The Ever-increasing Purpose of God" in memory of the "ever-revered Pradhanacharya ", William Miller; Rs. 600 to the Andhra University for special courses of "lectures on ⁴ Greater India' and on ' Vemana ' ; Rs. 1.000 for a medal endowment in memory of Dinanath Banerjee, Headmaster of the old *alma mater* at Banda; Rs. 300 to the Sivanath Sastri Memorial Fund; and Rs. 2,000 to the Brahma Samaj Centenary Fund. One other event not to be missed out of the record is the gratifying circumstance of the 'graduation ' this year of Saguiamma, one of the six ' Co-settes ' of this good Bishop—a miracle of love and service which, if engaged upon an autobiographical sketch, the foster-father (who has been more than father and mother in one) would so enjoy dwelling upon in vindication of the God of Supreme Love and Service.

After this, the mind travels back with satisfaction to three little brochures of recent date, each admirable in* its own way. Unable; to undertake any

proper etchings of our own, we take leave to close with a reproduction of the common, salient features of those delineations in profile. In the "Sparks and Fumes" of 1928, Mr. K. Iswara Dutt observes too truly, "In him the down-trodden finds a champion, the distressed a benefactor, the forlorn a friend, and the orphan a parent." And again, "The achievements of his life in his twin-role as teacher and reformer are. . . . substantial episodes in the history of Andhra Renaissance." Next, the last Birth-day *souvenir* from Mr. K. Ramasastry opens out a bundle of homely instances to show how, with "My Master", "reform is not a fashion but a faith, not a convenience but a conviction/* Lastly, in his Madras discourse on the same occasion, since saved from fugitiveness, Brother V. P. Raj sums up his estimate of a true Paresh Babu in the *Gora* of real life & one "intensely human in his very make" and "treading the heavenly path with earthly feet"— "a devout idealist", "a *hridayasadhak*". And so it is. The humanness develops the humanity; and true humanity is heavenliness on earth, the secret of it being traceable to the disciplined constancy of keeping pure the heart out of **which** are the **issues of life**. Far beyond the vulgar measure, the

Master knows human nature ; and hence his perception* He enjoys human nature ; and hence hi* humour. He feels for human nature; and hence his sympathy. He believes in human nature; and hence his optimism. He reverences human nature; and hence his devotion* And of this human nature in its light and shade his interpretation in terms of "the loftiest conception and the profoundest experience" is what is locked in part in the precious pages that follow. ⁴ A bean in darkness : let it grow.⁷

COCANADA,

Maharnavamij

1st October, 1930)

V. RAMAKBISHNA RAO.

ADDRESS

AND

ARTICLES

I
GOD IS SAT*
(1908)

The loftiest conception and the profoundest experience of man's 'idea of God' was realised and voiced by the *rishis* of old in the homely yet sublime word, *Sat*. Primarily, above everything else, God is *Sat*—Fact, Truth, Verity—not merely the prime reality but *the sole*, all-compassing, all-interpreting Reality. Philosophers may puzzle themselves in naming this Reality as *He' or 'She' or *It.' But there you are confronted with the Reality, the *Sat*. Some opine that it acts as a wholesome check on society to believe in a God. Some arrive at God as the result of an inference; for, since the world exists, there must be a God, according to the old argument typified in the relation between the watch and the watch-maker. But this mechanical view of God as 'the final wherefore' of a series of why's,* as Keshub Chander Sen puts it, must be, to a true believer, far from acceptable or agreeable, in the

" * Discourse at an anniversary of the Young Men's Prayer Unipa, Oocanada.

same way as the other view, which may be called the calculating view of social expediency. God is not merely the 'prime-mover' that supplies energy to the whole factory of the world. No; His is the all-vivifying Presence—a subject of direct vision and of realised experience. How do we know that God exists? He is, indeed, the starting-point; from Him, as Aristotle teaches, all demonstrations proceed. Demonstration implies a precedent fact. God is the basic datum for all our conceptions. As Prahlada avows, He is the *marmara*, the secret doctrine, in all branches of learning. It is literally *preposterous* to ⁴ 'prove' Him. Even the school-boy learning elementary science assumes certain veritable axioms, the proof of which lies in themselves. Manipulate the figures in any form; two and two makes four; the result is there. A certain American thinker says, 'Think not, when we have discerned the eye, we have made the eye.' There is a pre-arranged relation between the sun and the sense-organ, wherein the former is the condition precedent to the latter. Likewise, unto a believer, the faith in God springs out of the reality of God. Just as we recognise, as a truth of science, the adjustment between the eliciting sun and the responding eye, the whole process of human life is the unfolding of

the spiritual organism of man with a besetting God as the spiritual environment. The noteworthy fact is that there is a close kinship, an intimate affinity, an essential similarity, of nature always existing between God and man.

Thus God, unto a believer, is the prime Truth. This is testified to in very wonderful ways. When a fanatic threatened to kill Chaitanya with a sword and asked him to name his protector, he unhesitatingly answered, 'Hari.' That name was enshrined in his heart. In the Sanskrit drama of *Vikramorvaseeyam*, Urvashi, who has deeply cherished love for Pururavas in her heart of hearts, spontaneously utters * Pururavas ' in place of 'Purushottama' when she plays the part of Lakshmi, as it is the former name that has possessed her heart. As Martineau has said, to prove the existence of God to a believer is to prove the existence of the earth to a geologist. Thus God is *Sat*. He is the Reality of which the world is an image. He is the Creator in the sense that He reflects Himself in, emits vital rays out of His own being in the form of, this world. You notice that there is always a certain inner cohesiveness that constitutes an organism. Witness the sea-shore scene. Wave follows wave with marvellous continuity ; you behold a panorama of

joy exhibited on the ocean. Thus, amidst the manifold of our phenomenal life, we are held together by, we are integrated with, God. Is God, then, subject to all our imperfections? It is not in the creeping, struggling worm, but it is in the aspiring, heaven-scaling soul, that the divine and the human touch closest. It is in the *fulfilment* of human nature that God is one with us. In the evolution of man, there are ever so many processes outlined as imperfect; but they are the germinal beginnings of His enduring strength and expanding charm. What we call chance is so much providence not anticipated. All apparent conflict is but the onrush to merge into one harmonious unity. God being apprehended as the Supreme Substance, the age-long history of the universe becomes a sacred drama of which He is the hero. He has been there from the beginning, as He was there before the beginning.' Yonder savage, in a far-off past, who plied a stick to turn the sod and sowed a seed—that man, too, was a token of the Divine *prasadam*; and our modern artist who entrances the human soul with his creative genius, is but a mirror of the Divine *anandam*.

Science aids the human spirit to expand inimitably. As we gaze at Mars through a telescope and

<espy indications of life and society in mother-lSarth'i neighbour, there thrills through our frames a joy that transcends all mundane bounds. As we lift up our awe-filled eyes to the countless orbs above, so numerous and each sweeping through such **vast** distances, yet secure from all clash or collision, do we not feel elated as princes—Heaven's own princes—in a Heaven-reared crystal palace? Let us only learn to be Nature's princes; and we shall find a pearl in a dew-drop and derive from the meadow-grass the delights of an emerald-throne. God is the sole Reality, the supreme Bliss; and we are embraced by Him. Thus He is *Sat*, the celestial vision that we carry within us always. We behold the presence of God even in the humblest of His creatures. The true son of God will strike at a rock and draw out thence the holy waters of Love.

Again, God, as the supreme, abiding Reality, is the great Conservator of things. In Him is no waste, since there is no friction. He is all Truth* All sages are only His oracles. Every truth is His gospel. Nature is God's laboratory wherein He is working out great results. Nature's laws are the changeless ways of God. The scientist reveals the methods of God. The philosopher discerns the -wisdom of God. The historian proves the purpose

of God. And the poet sings the beauty of God* Truth is a gem of myriad facets through which shines the God of Truth. When, after her return from a lecture by Emerson, a humble washerwoman was asked what she had understood of it, she replied that the lecturer made her feel that in her, too, there lay a divine promise. God's truth is proclaimed not only through the thunders and lightnings of nature but also in the gentle accents and beaming smiles of homely love and hearty friendship. It is Emerson, again, who says, 'Jove nods to Jove from behind each one of us.' Wherever there is truth it is God's truth. Our narrow bounds and partitions are nowhere in His ken; everywhere there is His harmonization. The Prophet Mahammad avows*
 * 'There is no God but the one Allah.' The Rishis of the Upanishads proclaim, ' *Tatwamasi*,' 'That Thou art.' When prophets and sages thus deliver their messages, they function only as so many reporters of God's truth. Even we, humble ones, are privileged to be ministers in the temple of God. In all the truths that we utter, our souls are the 'æolian harps' of the one *Sat*. Teacher and pupil, wife and husband, doctor and patient—all these are to one another the emissaries of God. That alone stands the test of time which is indwelt by the spirit of Truth. The verity of this observation is established

in the ITpanishadic saying, 'Satjameva jayathi.'¹ Truth alone triumphs; because it has its inherent conquering power in the might and mercy of God* What is Law in operation is Love in purpose and motive. As Emerson tells us, 'Gravitation', which draws bodies together, has its spiritual variant in 'Love', which welds hearts together. Wherever there is attraction between man and man, wherever there is a focus-point for divergencies, there is God as *Sat*, Thus the same God is in India and in far-off California. Although you may not go into the outer world, yet the outer world greets you. The whole world is yours. Once, an American friend of mine, the Rev. Mr. Dall, said, 'I have come from the western wing of God's home to its eastern wing.' Yes; Hell, too, is the abode of God, because Hell has been described as the Hospital of God where Love is the Senior Physician. What severer punishment does God impose than purifying repentance ?

* I have no punishment to fear;
 But ah ! that smile from Thee
 Imparts a pang far more severe
 Than woe itself coidd be.'

Again, Heaven is the intimate companionship of God. Thus Heaven and Hell are not places **but**

principles, not localities but states. And God, who is in both Heaven and Hell, is the Temple of all Truth.

God is alike the guarantee and the evidence of immortality. Man is immortal, because God, his Creator, is immortal. Immortality consists in constancy of life and work. And in that sense, too, God is *Sat*. Immortality is secured to the extent to which the ways of man fall in line with the ways of God. Righteousness then comes as a matter of course. God is known as the Truth only to the extent to which I *live* the truth. Pope says, 'An honest man is the noblest work of God.' A parodist says, 'An honest God is the noblest work of man.' Both are true. As Ruskin reminds us, God to us is loving, mighty and wise only to the extent to which we are loving, mighty and wise. God is felt to be honest only to the extent to which we live honest. All the rest is mere supposition, expectation. Do I love without differences and restrictions? Then, to me God's love is cosmopolitan. God is magnified by the reproduction of Him in the life of each and every one of us. When Pandit Sivanath Sastri was lecturing in London, a certain man went up to him and told

1dm that he considered him a man of real spirituality from the telling emphasis with which he uttered ⁴no.⁷ Let thunders threaten; let life be imperilled; if you hold a challenge for the cause of Truth, then you are on the side of God. To that extent each one of us is testimony to God's reality. Just as the author of a book is incarnated in each woi*d of it, so also each happening in this world is His manifestation. God.is incarnate in every particle of creation. Within thee God is incarnate. Every impression carries a significance, because God is within thee. *This* is the highest truth. He who stifles Truth, is guilty of the direst suicide. To the extent to which we realise our true selves, to that extent God stands as *Sat* to us. As this supreme, all-indwelling, all-inspiring, all-expanding, all-harmonising, all-sanctifying, all-immortalising Qne, God is *Sat*!

Oh Almighty Father, not a moment passes without Thy promptings in us. Not a leaf waves but is balmy with Thy presence and goodness. Oh, when shall we feel that this universe is a holy temple? When shall we feel the thrill of the conscious joy that we are ever compassed and cherished l)y our dear God? Father, tear away our sins. Wipe out everything, however dear, that comes

between us and Thee- May, we abide in Thee and glorify Thee; may the whole race become one fraternity; and may there rise up one psalm of praise unto Thee all over the universe !

Oml Thath SathJ

II

THE ARITHMETIC OF LOVE *

(1927)

RYWJS—KanuQontim (Telugu).

SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

Just now you have witnessed and, I hope, witnessed with a certain degree of satisfaction and a certain measure of solemnity, the 'initiation' of some sisters and brothers of ours into *Brahma-dharma*. The reason for such 'initiation', I am confident, has been made fully clear to you by my beloved brother, Babu Hem Chandra Sarcar. The fundamental idea behind such soul-consecration is similar to what I am sure you have all realised in your own personal experience. It is this. There is, say, an occasion for a festival in your home. You go to the market. You buy out of the general heap of flowers and fruits those which you set your heart upon. Once the purchase is made and the selected flowers and fruits are separated from the rest, you

* On the occasion of the Namakaranam of Mr. V. VenuGOPala Rao ftaidu's son, Kesava Damodar, at the Brahmopasana Mandir, Oocaoada (25—1—27).

say, 'I should not touch and use them for my private purpose any longer.'—Again, when the slaves were set free, it is said that after the declaration of freedom each liberated slave was called up and made to declare, 'I am my own man.' To this there is a reverse process also. In the condition of freedom, we ask, 'Who are you'? But in the sacrament of dedication, we ask, 'Whose are you'? Well, if you are of Him whose vow you have taken, you are His true devotees.—Here is another aspect; of the question. The worshipper who has taken the -vow of devotion can no longer feel that he is a wholly separate unit; he feels that he is eternally related to God. And there is the counterpart* namely, that he who is eternally related to God must seek to receive and realise every other relation of life with reference to God alone and only in so far as it is calculated to glorify Him. The same idea is beautifully set forth by Yagnyavalkya in the *Brihadaranyakopanishad*: " Verily, the husband is not dear that you may love the husband; but that you may love the Self, therefore, the husband is dear "; and so on, with the wife, the son and all; Thus all associations and relations, all ties and bonds, in human society have for their vitalising source and their satisfying end the goodness and

the glory of God. And the purpose and mission of religion is to teach and train each one always to realise every relationship as thus established in God. When thus accepted, valued and cherished, every relation instals Love as the only rule of conduct. There cannot be any other rule or criterion by which to judge any value. The distinguishing feature of Love is to give. I give *myself*. Love asks not *what* to give. Wonderful is the arithmetic of Love. As Rabindranath Tagore has it, all that you give is so much of gain for yourself. Aye, what you give is alone your real possession. Accordingly, as we enter into various relationships of love, we are giving ourselves and at the same time also gaining ourselves. Give through love and gain through love; for the two are made one and the two become one. According to the arithmetic of love, the true *unit* of life is husband and wife welded into one, with the wonderful capacity also of remaining a unit while expanding into the beautiful manifold of increasing offspring. Every family, then, constitutes a unit in which the several members, ceasing to be separate, isolated units, get intertwined into one. Why; nothing can, nothing shall, disturb the eternal principle of the Dividend in God's household of this whole creation.-

notwithstanding all its varieties of development in the ever-unfolding roll of Time—namely, all is *one*; no division, no separation, no multiplication, but only the one amplifying and enriching itself. God is One ; creation is one ; and thus every integral part of creation is one with God and the Universe. In His household, there is no other enumeration than ' one '—*ekamevadviteeyam*. You may add to one a second and a third and so on and say, ' So many in the family circle,* according to arithmetical calculation. But the miracle of love that God hourly and momentarily works in this world, fuses them all into one and *only one*. Thus, all the joys of all become the one great joy of every one ; and all the sorrows of all become the one deep sorrow of every one. The man of God cannot feel quite distressed, so long as there is a single joyous heart; neither can he feel quite elated, if there is a single sorrow-stricken heart. So intimately do the children of God belong one to another. As he who declines to look at a thing of beauty only deprives himself of ' a joy for ever/ Even so he who excludes himself from the joy or sorrow of a brother or sister, simply atrophies himself, renders himself insensitive, non-human. Unto us, then, there is not merely a call from

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without but a prompting from within to rejoice with those that rejoice, whenever there is an occasion for joy anywhere. The system of the universe is so integrated, so articulated, that, if you took away one blade of grass, the entire balance of the sum of things would break down. Literally, the *universe* is the numberless *turned* into, *harmonised* into, *one* system.

Now, as to the darling child awaiting its sacrament of *narnakaranarn*, we cannot do better than recall what Rabindranath has said about every child born, namely, that it comes as a new proof, a fresh message, that God is not tired of us, has not despaired of us, mankind. Otherwise, He would long ago have cut off further production. So, the new child declares that God believes yet in man. And man has an ascending destiny, even as, not in mythical imagination but in essential fact, God Himself deigns to descend into the child in a divine *avatharana*. We rejoice with our sister and brother that unto them has been vouchsafed a fresh token of God's grace in this dear little one of theirs. There can be no exhaustion, no superabundance, *xjLiito* the capacity of Love. My dear jnother oi*ce told me the story of a mother, poor in the world's goods but affluent in love's stores, who, when

commiserated by &, kindly neighbour on her hard lot and her heavy responsibility as the mother of eight children, wished she had two more to make the full decade! She and her good-man could well afford to spare enough from their own small fare, each for one child ! Just as, in the holiest of relationships, the Divine is like milk and the human like water and the true, pure love of the human for the Divine is exemplified in the common experience of the boiling milk being kept uncharred till the last drop of water in the mixture has been burnt out, so, where there is love, there is utter self-forgetfulness and complete absorption, and the person loving reduces himself, rejoices to reduce himself, into a mere accessory, into thorough subserviency. Feel, then, the supremacy, the sovereignty, the celestial majesty of Love. The child of one bosom is the child of all bosoms ; the darling of one heart is the darling of all hearts—a common joy unto all eyes „and a common sunshine unto all homes. Thus to feel does our souls infinite good. It is very heaven on earth.

And then, why * name ' a child ? The philosophy of Love is wonderful. On one side Love, at times, does not admit of names. Ask a little baby its mother's name. ' My mother's name ? *Amma* '

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(mother)! Again, a line of proposed lovers marches before the prospective bride in the *swayamvardm*; and she can give, one after another, the names of all the suitors -except that of the chosen one of her heart, before whom the head only bows and the tongue is mute. Silence is the symbol of soul-deep Love here. At other times, Love must affix a name to every dear object. No object shall go unnamed, In the relationship of love between God and man_f will *any* name given by you do for your God? No; for_r all man-given names only set up limitations by their one-sidedness in regard to 'the Nameless One'⁴ of a hundred names.' But God gives every one of us a name and a name above all mistake. People say one looks like another. But this is essentially incorrect. No two persons are ever exactly alike.¹ Twins are mistaken only through the superficial nature of the observation. For each one has a* distinct mark in look, in deportment, in voice, in gesture. God's gracious attention is always individual attention, focussed on the unit, not merely spread over the type. No two, let me repeat, are quite alike. Else God's very capacity to create world look exhausted. But wonderful is the Divine Mother's fecundity in infinite variety within tli'e bounds of general uniformity. Creation is a growth,

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a richer production, every minute; it never marks time ; it never brooks bare repetition.

Realise the profound significance of the holy brotherhood of man thus borne in upon us at every turn, including us within the fold of all and yet Making every one's individual concern a point of interest distinct unto all else. Let us, with one faith of brotherly love, address our common thanks and supplications to the Parent of all.

Eternal Source of life; the sacred Spring whence flows forth the stream of all humanity ever exhaustions and ever richly, abundantly varied ! Thou the Author of all being, the Parent of all humanity, the Fountain-head of all love, ! Unto Thee we render our whole-hearted thanks on this occasion. The joy Thou hast brought into the dear little household of our sister and brother is a joy unto us all. The dear nursling, coming even as a gleam of light, a thrill of hope and a song of joy, is welcome as Thy blessing; and we value and cherish it for Thy sake. Thou hast brought it into being; and as it grows in stature of body and amplitude of mind, may it feel the vitalising touch of Thy presence and receive the sanctifying inflow of Thy grace ! As for the past we bless Thee with grateful hearts, so for the

future we supplicate light and guidance, **strength** and devoutness, from Thee to fulfil the destiny of Thy ordaining in this sweet little darling—:O tie more overture of Thy love for humanity. As we name it, we render it all the dearer and secure* within the embrace of Thy love, under the shelter of Thy providence. Thy providence does not **prove** itself merely in the mass. But each individual soldier Thou dost endow with all the wealth of love and righteousness. Acknowledging the child as Thine, we prize it as an offspring of the Holy Spirit and honour it as a harbinger of Heaven. Put into as the heart tenderly to cherish it in Thy name and the soul trustfully to consecrate it to Thy glory. As we address ourselves to this solemn duty, may we feel all the union and all the harmony of one family! As we name our child 'Kesava Damodar,'⁷ may we realise our, each one of us his, responsibility in respect of personal duty towards Thy gift—unto us! And as we seek to render that duty as unto Thee, mayst Thou so bless it as to employ even these, Thy humble servants, as well as the good parents, as Thy chosen agents for the upbuilding and uplifting of the child! May love parental and love social work together! May the family prove a blessing to all as it fulfils its **great**

destiny in Thy worship ! We invoke Thy blessing
Xipoxi all those ordained to carry the message of our
 faith and to reap the harvest of our prayers, that
 tljey may be led ever onward, achieving all that we
 have been aspiring after ! May what of truth there
 is in our lives, be a heritage to these and be passed
 on through these, a trust from generation to
 generation ! Hallowed be Thy name now and for
 ever !

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

Om! Santhih! Santhihl 'Santhihl

Om ! Harih Om !

in
ADVICE TO DEPRESSED CLASS BOYS.
(1929)

After the Superintendent, the staff and the pupils had been very cordially thanked for the kind welcome, with the exceedingly generous sentiments embodied in the two addresses, and after deep satisfaction and happiness had been expressed at the fulfilment of the long-cherished wish to visit the excellent Institution, itself a monument of selfless social service, the following words of advice were addressed to the pupils assembled in the main hall:—

You all know what a diamond is. The charm of the diamond is that even in the darkness of the night it shines. When taken out of the earth, it is dull; but it is cut and shaped by clever people into a nice form, so that it gets many faces on all sides; then it is very bright. Every one of you is really a diamond like that. As I said, when first taken

* In reply to the Addresses of Welcome from the Staff of the Government Higher Elementary School and the Members of the Hostel for Depressed Classes, HastiUpatam (22-11*29).

out, the diamond does not shine. Some men of skill must cut and shape it right and then it is quite bright. So also, you must be made fit to shine in life. And what makes you fit thus to shine is this training here. It is like the work of a clever man cutting and shaping a diamond and making it shine.

The training, as you know, is of three kinds, as it is in three ways. The first part is by means of books to learn to read and write and work sums *etc.* The second part is by means of some things turned out with the hands—spinning, weaving or tailoring. The third part is the training to become good, being taught to be clean and kind, to speak the truth, to love one another and to serve all your people. Thus the training for the head is through books ; the training for the hand is through work ; and the training for the heart is through morals which teach you to be pure, good, kind and just. Now, you should know that, if the diamond is not cut and shaped on *all* sides, it will never shine. In the same way, if you are not trained *all round*, you **will** not shine in life either.

Any of you come from what are called the depressed classes. But never think that the

* depressed classes' are really low. That is not true at all. In the eye of God, all are equal. God loves all as their equal Parent—Father and Mother. Therefore, you depressed-class children also have some powers, some ability to learn, improve and grow. You *can* do all that others do. Do believe, do feel sure, that God has given you all these powers. Don't say, 'I can't do it.' It *is* in your power.

This training you must take fully, with all your mind, heart and soul, with the best care and attention. Give every day and every hour to it. If you are weaving, say, 'I want to be a first-class weaver.' If tailoring, say, 'I want to become one of the best tailors.' If learning, say, 'I will get out of this book all that is in it.' And while learning to make yourself pure, good and true, say, *•I will be as pure and good and true as I can be.' In fact, this last point is the *first* thing. If there is a thing dirty, will you take it and put it on your tongue? No. In the same way, say, "Lying is dirty; I will never take it on my tongue. Truth is clean; and I will use my tongue only for truth. Being clean, I will be pure, kind and just,? Therefore, my advice to you, again, is about these three kinds of training—training for the body,

training for the mind and training for the soul. Get it fully here. Look at this building. Why is it good? At bottom, there is the strong basis, which makes it good and sound. In the same way, you must be good and strong in every way—in body, mind and soul. Then you can be very useful and quite happy. Every day, when you rise from the bed, think of God. First, thank God that in the night He was with you, took care of you, kept you safe and gave you sleep and rest. Next, tell God, 'I wish to do my work neatly and rightly. Oh, teach me so to do it.' Then go to your work, and you will be quite safe and happy. As you thus first of all speak to God and then go to do your work neatly and rightly, try to be good and kind to one another at all times. You see, in Telugu we have the figures 3 and 6. You put them together, back to back, *like strangers*, and they total only 36. You put them together, face to face, *like friends*, and you get the much bigger total, 63. That is why we say in Telugu, 'Better && axr-sfc than *&r#>e>&.' So, you should turn face to face and **stand like** friends to one another. **Then** alone you **will be strong** and happy. One other **point** is **this**. **Your teachers, your Warden and your Superintendent do not want to do you any harm. They**

want to do you only good. They know much more than what you know of men and the world. There is a funny story. A teacher punished one of his boys. The boy went home and said to his father, 'The teacher beat me.' The father said, 'What if, and what then?' And the boy said, 'I will beat him, too.' Very funny this, was it not? You should never think like that about your father or your mother or about your teachers. They speak strongly to you, when you are wrong, because they are good and wish you well. As you grow older, you will see how the training you get here is really very good for you.

With these words, I pray God to bless you—every one of you—now and for ever. I heartily thank you all once again.

IV

< AS THOU ART, SO IS HARI \ *

(1930)

Oh Thou Supreme and Perfect Being, the Lord of all creation, the enshrined One in all hearts, outreaching in magnitude the greatest of creations yet indwelling the minutest of objects ! Thou art the God of majesty without and of holiness within. As we behold Thee in Thy matchless majesty, we bow to Thee in adoration. And as we vision Thee in Thy holiness, we worship Thee in absolute self-surrender. Thou dost thus elicit our boundless admiration and absorb our complete interest, as the grand, glorious One to be obeyed and adored and as the good, holy One to be revered and rejoiced in. Unto Thee, the Supreme One alike in the myriad-faced world without and in the profound, sublime soul within, we render our worshipful praise and obeisance on this solemn occasion. We invoke Thy inspiration thus to reveal to us Thy twofold

*** Opening speech at the Brahmopasana Mandir. Cocanada, as Resident of the Centenary Celebrations of the Brahma Samaj Mandhr Sand trust Deed of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (25-1-30).**

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nature of the great God of the miter world and the holy Deity of the inner soul and so to instruct us & to behold in Thee the marvellous union of greatness and holiness. Do Thou teach us how all greatness, to be honoured should be good and all goodness to be revered should be holy. Thou God of infinite immensity and of immaculate purity, we bow before Thee and render our hearts' profoundest reverence unto Thee. On this day teach us even through the inner voice of Thy own holy spirit- Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Friends,

As you are aware, this evening we meet on the special occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the establishment of the first Brahmopasana Mandir in India on the 23rd of January 1830,. During the preceding evenings, that memorable event, in all its import and importance, was presented to you by divers exponents. This evening, some more aspects of the same outstanding occurrence will be submitted for your best consideration. Besides the Chairman, three speakers have been announced each to deal with certain prominent characteristics of the Dispensation of "*Brahma Dharma*". With your permission, I shall

employ whatever time might be assigned to me as Chairman in presenting to you one essential element in true religion.

Kabir has, in his own homely and penetrating manner, enunciated this great truth. Though, perhaps, several of you may not be able to follow the original, yet its mere form, to my understanding, is so telling and so attractive as to impress us even with the very sound of it. I shall first recite the original:

*Harka kya puchat ho ?
Kya batavun Har kaisa hye ?
Kya khunti-se bandhun bhynsa hye ?
Ya hat-men dedun pysa hye ?
Tu jaisa hye, Har vaisa hye.*

Rendered freely into English, it reads—'Is it about Hari that you enquire? How, in what manner, can I show you what Hari is like? Is it a buffalo that I might fasten to a peg and exhibit to your physical eye? Or is it a coin that I might straightway pass into your hand? As thou art, so is Hari'. Now that I have given you the translation of it, you will, I presume, enjoy my repeating it again in the original.

(Here the verse was repeated.)

¹ As thou art, so is Hari'! This is, to many, a startling assertion. We are liable to think it almost blasphemous that a saint like Kabir should make man the very measure of God and that God should be asked to be apprehended in terms of man. However, though not always put in this blunt form, this is a vital truth clearly stated and repeatedly emphasised by several great teachers. Of course, later theology has put various strange and subtle interpretations upon the plain, straightforward words of Jesus. But unto us that are willing to receive the teachings of that great Master with the utmost reverence and yet with a correct understanding, there is the same lofty truth in the declaration, 'He that hath seen the son hath seen the Father'. And in India there has been quite a succession of prophets and teachers who have proclaimed the very same truth: 'Wouldst thou see God in the vividness of true presentation, then behold Him in thyself\ Now, one most regrettable mistake that we generally make when this golden truth is commended to us, is to fancy that the teacher is venturing, presuming, to present God to us as the image of man. But the teacher's real intent is just the reverse ; he desires to present man as the image of God. It is not that God is to be viewed as a

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reflection, a copy, of man; but that man is to be appraised as a reflection, a copy, of God. That greatest of Persian Sufi poets, Jalaluddin Rumi, says, 'Man, thou art a magic mirror in which the great Charmer (as the mystics love to name God) reflects His own beauty. If thou wouldst present that beauty in its captivating charms, then burnish this mirror\ Jami, the soul's twin-brother of Rumi, declares in identical terms, 'Thou art the glass in which His Face is reflected; in truth He is manifested but thou art hidden'. In other words, if thou wouldst realise thy God as reflected in thyself, then make thyself godly. To the extent to* which, and in the manner in which, it is granted to any one to reproduce in himself the Divine qualities, not in mere abstract theory, no. not even in occasional outburst of sentiment, but in the abiding and impressive presentation of the virtues developed and the character cultivated in oneself, to that extent and in that manner alone is God realised. As Buskin observes, that 'God is Love' is a precept quite familiar; but God is Love, He is apprehended by thee as Love, He is unto thee real Love, only in proportion as thou hast developed in thee that supreme, diving quality called love. 'The greatest argument for love is, love', says Dryden. Therefore, the prime

function of Religion is to present, to manifest, the true nature of God in the best and noblest growth of man. Of course, it is a commonplace reflection that, if you would understand all the powers and possibilities of any being, you must judge it by its highest embodiment. Would you realise what is called will-force? Then, it is not through weaklings that succumb to the first attack of opposition and fall an easy prey to the first onslaught of temptation but through those that stand four-square to the assaulting storm of trial, temptation or bereavement, that you have to understand the potency of will-force. Would you appreciate the finest genius of a master-artist, be it in song or in colour? It is not to the rough sketch or to the 'prentice production but to the finished piece that you have to turn. Similarly, if God, the all-perfect God, is to be visualised, vividly felt and enjoyed, it is by the rebirth of the god-like in the human soul that this great revelation of God's glory can be accomplished. This is one of the three offices of Religion. It should first disclose the *mahima*, manifest the *majesty*, of God in the universe and next reveal the *sanctity* of God in the human soul and finally synthesise these two and thus unfold the *providence* of God in the processes of history.

First as the mighty yet minute Architect of the universe, next as the secret yet shining Glory in the human soul and then as the incessant, tireless Ordainer of the destinies of nations—in these three aspects has God to be brought home to us by Religion. These are three initially differentiated but ultimately unified self-manifestations of God, the realisation of which constitutes the triple *yoga* man has cultivated through the ages—what Keshub Chander Sen called the *Vedic* yoga in the universe without, the *Vedantic* yoga in the spirit within and the *Pauranic* yoga in the human race around.

My present purpose is to dwell upon the truth so beautifully declared to us by Kabir : Wouldst thou know God, then be godly. No other way is open to man for the realisation of God. Mystics, sufis, *rishis* of all times and climes have avowed that true knowing consists in becoming and being. You know an object only when and in so far as you become, imbibe the true nature of, that object. To stand apart and to turn the microscope of analysis and, as it were, map out the miniature of an object—that gives only the surface-view of the object. Penetrate with ⁴ 'second sight' into the object itself, and you come to its vital core, its inner soul. **This**

is pre-eminently true of our understanding of the perfection of the Deity, so far as it is given to us to understand it. Only he who has passed through the triple *sadhana* of peering through the veil of God in Nature without, of pilgriming into the holy of holies of the Divine Spirit within and of spelling out the secret trend of human history, even that Divine purpose which runs through the ages—he alone can truly understand the All-embracing One. As Martineau, referring to this aspect of Religion, observes, would you come upon the truest and most glorious manifestation of God, then it is done, not by wanderings without, but by pilgrimings within. Therefore, on us is enjoined this great and, as we proceed, this blessed task of so submitting to the divine process of illumination and to the divine discipline of sanctification as to receive the holy light of heaven and raise the golden harvest of humanity. How great, how blessed, is the responsibility laid upon us! Read ever so much, nay, discuss and debate ever so much, ponder and reflect ever so much; all that is only a peep into the outer court of the Temple. You reach the *Sanctum Sanctorum* only when you are blessed by God to receive His own divine essence into your inner feeling. Just as music is mere sound to him that has not the

sense, the receptivity, for melting melodies, so all religion, on one theory, is but a bare logical subtlety unto him that has not come into direct touch with, and reproduced in his own life, the divine traits of wisdom, goodness, beauty and holiness. In this sense, it is to the extent to which you have, by God's grace, developed into the child of God that you are fitted to state from personal experience what God is like. So many illustrations of the negative side of this truth are furnished by what to us appear to be altogether ludicrous conceptions of the Deity in earlier ages or even in less developed minds in our day. He who believes in might as the rule of right in the world believes only in a God of might. He who finds the destiny of life fulfilled in the enjoyment of pleasures, not necessarily carnal but secular and sensational, is content with a religion that purveys pleasure. Study and compare the methods of worship in various denominations, and you see how the mode of worship is an index to the 'thought of God.' Here, then, we have one more illustration of the truth of Kabir's dictum. If I might, consistently with solemnity, refer to one incident which is characteristic of those who make their religion after their own manner, I might mention how, **about that time when the**

Boer War was raging and feelings were high-strung between the British and the Boers, a girl of British parentage asked, 'Mamma, in which language does God speak?', and the ready answer came, 'Of course, in English.'⁷ The same tendency we notice in theological as in literary bias: this is sacred and that is profane; this is the chosen oracle for God's message and that is far from fit for Divine use ! But he who realises God in His universality and His eternal self-donation unto all souls—he believes, as Keshub Chunder Sen has said, that God speaks ever in the native vernacular of the heart. God is a loving God where the devotee has, after His God, grown into a great source of love himself. If a man, being struck, strikes not again but prays for the offender and thus grows to be divine in forgiveness, it is because he has imbibed the spirit of the Supreme God, of whom it may be said, without any reflection on His majesty but with full reverence for His mercy, that, struck, He strikes not back again. How He receives into Himself, with an illimitable, inexhaustible capacity, all the complaining, all the vilification, all the rebelliousness of man ! And as the mother discloses the maternal virtue in her, she also typifies, the Motherhood of God. Likewise, as every other relation, human and

unifying, testifies to the operation of the Spirit of God in that direction, so the soul in which are centred the divine qualities of truth and wisdom, love and beneficence, beauty and bliss, alone reflects the image of God. How, when at last there came to him this vivid, quickening and sanctifying experience of God's immediate self-revelation in him, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore exclaimed, ⁴ Hereafter, from my heart I shall shed light upon the world.'! So long as the mind is narrow, shrunk-en and, if not selfish, at least so dwarfed in sentiment as to define justice as rendering unto the friend his due and withholding from the enemy his due ; so long as the heart's longings are fastened upon the immediate and profitable objects of life ; so long as the soul is satisfied with the position, if not of conventional, at any rate of traditional, worship, so long God must remain an all too circumscribed and colourless being. When into the heart has been received the glowing light of Truth, the nectarine sweetness of Love, the captivating charm of Beauty and the heavenly aura of Holiness, then the soul mirrors forth the True God, As the photographer's plate, to the measure of its true sensitiveness, reproduces the original faithfully and impressively, so the soul is, as I have just said

in Rumi's phrase, the magic mirror on which, according to its freedom from dust and twist, God is vividly reflected. God, as Love, is self-donative; God, as Beauty, is self-reflective; God, as Holiness, is self-propagative. And man at his best, constituting the sublimest instance of that Divine self-donation, self-reflection and self-propagation, must shine forth as the brightest mirror—aye, the noblest image—of his Maker.

Again, Rumi says, in another striking figure: the reed is cut from the stem and shaped into the flute; from the moment it is severed from the original stock, its one note tells of the anguish of separation; and in the result, what happens is that, bereft of the sweetness of communion with the parent plant, it proclaims, through its very moanings, how sweet Love is. Its lamentations are the best expositions of Love. God is that One Supreme Object (*Paravastu*) the quest of which is never fruitless. The struggles of that quest are the springs of strength ; bitter failures *in* that quest are "stepping-stones" to sweet success. "On this road no traveller has lost his ways", is a Persian adage. And as the reed laments, it creates in others a yearning for that love ; it transforms the tasteless stick into the sugarcane. What it seems **to have**

lost in itself, it regains in others through that *sympathy*, that kinship of the spirit, which Love alone can evolve. Man, bereft of God by his own transgressions, tortured on the rack of remorse and passing through the purgatory of penitence—even he thus proves a messenger of God; his sighs and tears foster and feed the germinal love in others. Says the poet Shelley, himself an acute sufferer in the great quest,

* Most wretched men

Are cradled into poetry by wrong ;

They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

This spiritual suffering from the sense of bereavement, of banishment from God, though seemingly a fruitless aridity, is really the sod-breaking preparation for that fruitful faith which is both balm and cordial for the pang-smitten heart. Let us go a step further and say, without any blasphemy in it, that the tear of sorrow is the truest homage unto the God of grace. Shudder not, again, when I add that, in a real sense, God is a long-suffering God, suffering the heart-ache of the guiltless parent for the prodigal child. Thus, he aWe who suffers from the transgressions of his fellow-men presents the finest picture of God. Not by each of u3 suffering alone for his own violations of virtue but

by that indissoluble tie of brotherhood by which the privations of one become the losses of all, do we become a God-possessed, God-illuminated humanity. A great critic has observed that the finest couplet in the English language descriptive of the ideal *moral temper'—the model man—is the verse of the poet Pope,

'Never elated, while one man is oppressed ;

Never dejected, whilst another is blessed."

Therein is the reproduction of Divine greatness and Divine goodness in the heart and life of man.

Next, in conclusion, I will recall one incident in our Maharshi's life. The *pandas* at Puri pounced upon him and proffered their mercenary ministrations. He was conducted into the temple, corridor after corridor; and eventually so teemful of worshippers was the inner apartment that he could see nothing beyond, when, 'This is Jagannath (the Lord of the universe)', cried out the *panda*. But, as the Maharshi tells us, he could not see 'Jagannath' there ; all the same, the ardent, adoring congregation made vivid to him the presence of the Formless Jagannath. And he continues: In this idol-shrine I have seen the Formless; here every one sees that which he desires; I have desired to see the Formless Jagannath, and I have

been blessed with His *darsan*. Aye, in this vast universe, in this world-wide Puri, is enshrined the Formless Jagannath ; and only to the degree to which we breathe in the sweet, sacred atmosphere of the universal temple do we get into living communion with the Formless Jagannath. It is only this worship, not in set phrase or with well-tuned music, but of hearts swelling with love and souls glowing with devotion, that will make true to us the golden precept of Kabir—"As thou art, so is Hari." May God, in His mercy, bring home its truth to each one of us in his or her life !

V

ON THE DECLARATION OF THE GREAT
WORLD-WAR. *

(1914)

Fellow-Citizens of the Empire,

So do I desire to address you ; for it is on that world-wide platform of the Empire that we meet today. About a generation back, when Russia threatened to invade India, there was called up, from all quarters of the country, an impressive demonstration of loyalty and devotion to the British Sovereign. But that, after all, was patriotism confined to our Indian shores. Today we are required to show an Imperial patriotism; that is,, a love of the Empire—even of that glorious Empire on which, in a higher and holier sense than the barely physical, the sun of glory shall never set. Here, indeed, is a golden opportunity given to us for evincing our appreciation of, and devotion to, that 'mother-country' whose aegis of peace

* Speech seconding a resolution at a public meeting in Cocanada, the Kajah Saheb of Ptthapuram pressing (10-8-U).

•extends over a hundred tribes and whose empire of protection stretches over every zone and every realm. It is, therefore, with that exalted pride—a pride generated and justified by far loftier considerations than that of the ancient apostle who said,

I am a citizen of no mean city'—that we are all animated on this solemn occasion. Not that England needs the assurance of an open expression of our loyalty, nor that we need indicate our true sentiments by an explicit avowal of that loyalty. This is wholly to demonstrate to that ill-advised nation that has rushed so precipitately into a devastating war, while peace has been yet urging her claim and justice demanding her recognition, that India is at one with the Empire and is determined, shoulder to shoulder, realm to realm, to present a united' front to the enemy of the Empire. It is to that end we now declare our loyalty, not that there is, in India or in England, the shadow of a doubt & to its existence.

A second point that I would mention is this. Even because in times of peace we seem to separate off from internal differences, we realise, in the presence of a common enemy, that we do stand heartily together on the same solid ground with a close community of interests and aims; and it is this

spirit of cordial comradeship that, like a silken string, runs through and unifies the Empire today. We feel, whether we be in South Africa or in Canada, in India or in China, we are members of one consolidated British Empire ; and we accept the responsibilities of that membership. Duty, which, as the poet would define it, is the 'stern daughter of the voice of God', has imposed it upon England to draw her sword to guard the peace and maintain the integrity of the Empire. And we feel confident that if, as we all believe, this world is under the guidance of a benevolent Providence,, the Lord of Hosts will soon bless the righteous cause with complete success.

The third thought which I shall suggest is this. We have a story in one of our ancient epics that, while they were building the great bridge that connected India with Lanka and every loyal devotee of the Prince of Ayodhya was doing what he could to further that righteous end, a small squirrel came and contributed its mite, too. What the mite was, how little its external substance yet how glorious its internal spirit, every Hindu knows. Thus there is no British subject, however insignificant, but might contribute his little mite, sure to weigh much in the scales of Heaven's judgment, unto the success*

oi England. And we hope and pray that God do grant unto her a short campaign, a decisive victory and a prolonged peace.

VI
GOD DESERTETH NOT.*
(1927)

Good friends, dear brethren and beloved ones,

My heart is too tenderly touched to admit of a speech, I shall crave your forgiveness if, only in a few plain words, I heartily reciprocate the extremely generous sentiments which have moved you to come together on this occasion and return to you my grateful thanks for this annual expression of kindly good-will and regard.

It is, as you are aware, now five years since the first of these celebrations took place in this very dear home. From some unavoidable circumstances, we could not meet last time. But undoubtedly the feelings of affectionate appreciation which had prompted the earlier gatherings did make themselves felt then also, notwithstanding the absence of their expression in the usual form. For this great and repeated honour quite beyond my

***On the occasion of the Thanksgiving Service at Pithapuram Paiaice on Sixty-fifth Birthday (5-10.27).**

merit, I feel sincerely grateful. But more than these human acknowledgments, I must turn towards the Parent Source of fraternal promptings—towards Him who is the common Friend and Father of us all. I have all along felt, and so have you, that it is due to His gracious suggestion throbbing in many hearts that these gatherings year after year have been possible from the very beginning. To Him, therefore, I turn with profoundly humble and devout thanks.

I shall not dwell upon what might have been suggested to your generous minds by the extremely kind words that this, my dear brother, has been pleased to employ on this occasion. But one thing I shall take leave to refer to. We should be missing the vital significance of this gathering, if we did not bear in mind that in the case of any life to which is granted the privilege of being, in ever so small a measure, serviceable and helpful, that life and that opportunity are wholly due to the grace and guidance of God. That it is all His doing is the literal truth—the bare fact. In what may be termed the human factor, there is nothing but the outer expression, the mere medium. The reality, the substance, the essence, the spirit, is wholly of God. Hence it is that we should be omitting our

fundamental obligation on an occasion like the present one, if we did not turn to God and say,
 * Blessed be Thy name !'

Now, the longer one lives and the deeper and wider one's experience grows, the greater is the aversion in one's innermost self to be independent and the stronger, on the contrary, the inclination to find in God alone the main-spring, the moving power and the vital breath in our lives and to value everything else as merely the mode or the manifestation of that Divine purpose and movement. This conviction grows deeper with time; and with it comes, too, the joy that it is out of mercy so ordained. I should shudder at the very thought that it could be otherwise. I say I decline to be imagined an independent entity—that is, something that is not wholly His implement and instrument. All momentary fluctuations notwithstanding, this conviction matures into the abiding trust that all is well in this world. True, it is very difficult to hold unswervingly by that faith. But this truth must stand firm and clear, through all the ebbs and flows of life, that of us is required, not mute resignation to fate, but the knowing and rejoicing acceptance of a holy dispensation that brings God to us as the perpetual Indweller and the peremiopl

Inspirer in each one of us; From casual moments of miraculous intervention, we grow into the abiding experience—not the postulate of faith but the rooted conviction of experience—that not now, not then, not occasionally, but incessantly and immediately, God is present with and in each one of us. We rejoice to see that the genius of a Sir J. C. Bose has achieved the discovery of oneness of life in all the kingdoms of creation. But while, in the name of Science, he is prying out the secret of the unity of life, there is, behind it, as the seat, the heart, of this cosmic unity, the profounder truth of the unity of the Spirit which provide th, pervadeth and perpetuateth all. Therefore, whereas the task of the scientist is to spell out unity, the work of the devotee is to vision the very Spirit that constitutes the unity. But sad—thrice sad—it is that as against the moments of devotion when we are privileged to say the Divine Spirit is all-pervading, there are lapses and breaks when we exclaim, ' Oh, how God has deserted us !' Yet there is no real illusion in this world except this delusion that God deserts any one of us at any time. Never, never does God recede. Only, man has oftentimes failed to pray,

⁴ Create in me this abiding conviction that Thou art ever with me and in me, or rather, that I am

ever in Thee and therefore always secure, with my happiness for ever guaranteed'. Imagine for one moment what the plight of the child (when it is a trusting child) would be, if for a single second the doubt should cross its mind: 'My mother is not my mother; she is lost unto me .' Why, that very moment it has ceased to be a child, it has become a waif! How much more, then, the tremendousness of the loss, the privation, the bankruptcy, the misery of that soul which should be haunted by the misgiving, 'I am deserted of God'! Miss the mother, lose the home; miss the Deity, lose the Universe. Such tribulations do come to us; but they are the convulsions, not the normal beat, of the vital breath. Man's life is unthinkable except as the emanation of a living God. Human existence is conceivable only on the foundations of this faith—'from Him, with Him, unto Him, in[^] Him '. As long as God, in His boundless compassion, vouchsafes this faith, man is not only secure but truly blessed. You are familiar with that little anecdote in the accounts of Islamic mysticism. A devotee felt that, after all, he had every right to believe that he was loved of the Deity. Said God, 'Hussain, shall I disclose thy secret sins that men may stone thee to death for what thou art?' And

out came the answer, ' Yes'; do. And I will disclose_y too, Thine own surprising secrets—Thy unexpected compassion, Thy unmerited mercy, Thy undeserved forgiveness, Thy unsolicited grace—so that mankind might close the doors of Thy mosques and say no more prayers !' ' Nay, nay', said the Lord, ' Thou keep My secrets and I will keep thine '. So, He keeps the secret of the abysmal caverns of my iniquities and I keep the secret of the fathomless depths of His mercy.

Sixty-five years is a long enough span of life even to the weak vision and the narrow range of man. But if only we can realise that, to make these sixty-five years at all possible, unimaginable millions upon millions of fruitful years have gone before—oh, the mercy of Grod simply overwhelms, us. How futile, then, to say, ⁱ I will tell out the tale '! On this day I will but supplicate it of you as a particular favour that you will, every one of you, send up your prayer that unto me might be vouchsafed the trust—the confiding faith—that passing darkness proves the perpetual light all the more certain. And even as in God's love we stand ever united, whether or not I shall have the privilege of again meeting you in the flesh, now tffhile we are here together at the footstool of the

Almighty, I will, in closing, invoke upon you, one and all, His choicest blessings in length of years, in wealth of peace and in abundance of grace. May His truth prevail and His holiness be the law of life for the rest of our days here on earth and for evermore in the hereafter !

Om! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

Om! lhathsath!

vn

A THEISTIC CONFERENCE:

WORDS OF WELCOME.*

(1907)

Under whatever auspices we meet, to whichever denomination belongs the place of worship, it has to be noted that religion is, not merely the supreme, but the sole, all-comprehensive concern of life, all-leavening, all-chastening, all-strengthening and all-sanctifying. Not what the man does, but the spirit he does it in, constitutes the test of religion. Not the casual visions, not the periodic practice of praise and prayer, but every act done and every habit cultivated in the right spirit, constitutes an inalienable factor of religion. Thus supremely sacred becomes the object of this, our conference. We are met here, not to spend a couple of days in conviviality, but to realise the intimate relations existing between the devotee and the Deity. We should feel that God is not a remote goal but that

*As Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Andhra Theistic Conference, Cocunada, Pandit Sivanath Sastri, M. A., presiding.

we are in a present paradise ; that heaven is not a far-off probability but an impressive reality; that truth is not paying prudence but saving grace; and that faith is not a tradition or a routine but a living motive-power. The mission of the Theistic Church is to make religion an absorbing devotion and not an elegant formality, human brotherhood a rapturous embrace and not a well-bred courtesy, and virtue a self-perfecting service and not a barren sentimentalism. Such a church, it goes without saying, is rich with promise. Perfection all its followers may not claim ; it is only possible to approximate to the ideal; and in the measure they do it, they found the Kingdom of God on earth. As Emerson has said, man is an eternal reformer—renouncer of old lies and restorer of fresh truth and goodness. That this is true is borne out amply by the history of the Theistic Church in India, which teems with notable examples of persons that devoted their whole lives to the cause of true religion and fulfilled God's purpose by boldly and successfully bearing forward the banner of reform through re-establishing a pure and devout form of worship. Judged by far-reaching results, the Theistic Church has been a mighty moral force, a penetrating spiritual leaven.

India is verily the chosen land of God, not in the sense that religion is the monopoly of the Indians alone and that God revealed Himself to them exclusively, but because here, as nowhere else, are congregated the several races of mankind who have witnessed the glory of God—the Divine goodness and grace, each in its own way. The mission of the Theistic Church is reverently to ponder the ancient wisdom of our land and wisely to reinterpret it in the light of the modern and fuller knowledge of the religious experiences of all races. It endeavours to amplify the holy aspirations of mankind and not merely to pare down excrescences. It seeks to find each man's good in universal brotherhood. The three essentials of a Universal Religion are : firstly, catholic sympathy; secondly, personal faith and individual piety; and thirdly, assimilation and harmony of all that is true, good and holy in all dispensations. The greatness of the past ought not to engender a false pride in us. It ought, rather, to develop new virtues and new aspirations. As Emerson, again, has said, our growth must be from within outside. Each religion reveals one or more phases of God's goodness and grace; and we of this land ought freely to enrich our ideas about our relation to God in a spirit

of organic inclusiveness. Then will it be possible to realise the high mission of the Theistic Church when we make 'Ram' and 'Raheem' one in conception and realisation.

We, Delegates to this Conference, shall be quite mistaken if we think that the assembly fails of its purpose if it does not show immediate material results. The Conference is more for advisory, deliberative and devotional purposes, thereby to bring it home to every true son of God amongst us that creation is an organic whole. The end of a devotional 'gathering' such as ours is to sow the seeds of sound, practical piety and to gain freshness and joyfulness of heart from mutual fellowship. It is in this spirit of fraternal reunion that I offer a hearty welcome to the several Delegates that have kindly responded to the invitation of the Reception Committee. And, in closing, I would humbly request them to forgive all shortcomings in the very imperfect arrangements made for their comfort in our midst.

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RECEPTION TO THE UNITARIAN DELEGATION
TO THE BRAHMA SAMAJ
CENTENARY.*

(1929)

Hymn—*Jayahey jayahey Bharathabhagyavidhatha*
(Bengali).

Glory, for ever glory be unto Thee, the Dispenser of the noble and far-reaching destinies of *Bharathamata*, our own dear mother-country! We praise Thee and we render our thanks unto Thee that, shaping the aspirations and controlling the energies of all nations, Thou hast chosen, in Thine own penetrating wisdom and inexhaustible love, to vouchsafe unto India the supreme privilege of the meeting-place and the harmonising home of so many different faiths, diversified cultures and such variant civilisations. It comes, as we feel assured, of Thine own ordaining that India attains distinction

* Speech at Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, to welcome Dr. & Mrs. F. C. Southworth, Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Drummond and Dr. Khandwaia (2-2-1929).

as the converging centre and the gathering-ground of the ideals and the hopes of the followers of diverse faiths and the inheritors of various institutions.

We thank Thee for this thrice-happy occasion when we are gathered into one congregation here on this consecrated spot as pilgrims from many quarters. And we tender our united obeisances unto Thee that, beneath all appearances of race and country, culture and tradition, ours, by Thy grace, is the blessed union of hearts and souls that adore Thy Holy Self as our one Lord and Parent and the cheering fellowship of co-workers that seek to serve Thy will. Grant us, we beseech Thee, on this joyful occasion the grace that shall fill us with the sense of Thy sacred presence and quicken us with the touch of Thy Holy Spirit now and here. May a new hope move us and a new vow bind us to the dedication of our minds and hearts, our souls and strength, unto Thee in the fellowship of worship and the comradeship of service ! Blessed *be* Thy name now and for ever!

Sisters and Brothers,

It is my privilege, truly a coveted privilege, to accord the heartiest of welcomes unto these, our

sisters and brothers, who have so generously put themselves to the trouble of coming here that they may bring to us the message of peace and goodwill, of affection and fellowship.

Our venerable brother, Dr. Khandwala, is from Bombay; and though past the Biblical threescore and ten, yet, through God's great mercy, he commands all the zest and energy of youth. At his age he has only recently travelled as far as Japan; and as if to outshine that achievement, he is now going the round of all India as an illustration unto us of the doings of God's grace in the hearts of His believers. Unto him we accord our sincere and cordial welcome. Then, coming to our esteemed and honoured sisters and brothers, representatives, as we truly believe, of the western wing, as Keshub Chander Sen said years ago, of the mansion of the Father of all nations and all peoples; as for them, I feel that my poor language is utterly inadequate to express the deep feelings of affection and esteem with which we cherish and honour them—two of them, Dr. and Mrs. Southworth, coming from America; and the other two, Dr. and Mrs. Drummond, from England. They are, all the four, prominent members of the Unitarian Church in the **West Only** the other day, our sister, Mrs,

Woodhouse, observed how the Unitarians and the Brahmos are all one in the larger category of Theists, the former by tradition being Christian Theists and the latter for similar reasons Hindu Theists. As the two terms connote, we are alike believers in, and worshippers of, the One Supreme God of truth, love and righteousness; and as the logical corollary to this belief and this worship, we embrace the entire human race as one fraternity and congregation and accept the whole earth as one home and temple. Not as strangers, then, amongst strangers but truly as sisters and brothers amono-st their own do our honoured guests from abroad come to us now and here. It is really a welcome home that we receive them into. The cordial relationship between the Unitarians and the Brahmos is really of a somewhat ancient standing. The late Justice Ranade used to urge it incessantly that the Brahmos were the lineal descendants of the ancient seers of India who, behind the veil of the phenomenal, visioned the glory and the grace of the Eternal manifesting itself for our salvation through temporal and spiritual relations. Similarly, with equal truth, the Unitarians may be esteemed as the present-day representatives, with deepened convictions and enlarged sympathies, of a

succession of believers in one unconditioned and undivided Godhead, indwelling and transcending all, even from the beginnings of Christianity. Therefore, in the correct historical perspective, neither the Brahmos nor *the* Unitarians form a community only a century old. But the whole trend of history reveals the one increasing purpose of God to be to attract the far to the near, to commingle the diversified into the unified and thus to disclose the original—as some may like to say, the aboriginal—kinship of the human species and to guide humanity along its Godward pilgrimage. The Brahmos and *the* Unitarians are members of this one fraternity receiving and delivering, through God's grace, the message of the oneness of mankind as the emanation of the Holy Spirit. In the latest issue of the Hibbert Journal, we are reminded of a spiritual paradox of great significance, namely, that the Unitarian stands for the humanity of God and the divinity of man. And the Brahma Samaj has the same message to receive and to deliver. God, transcendent, makes Himself, in His man-ward descent, felt and adored as the Indwelling Spirit; man, sense-shrouded, proves himself, in his Godward ascent, to be the pilgrim of eternity with an ever-expanding vision of ineffable Glory. This

constitutes the complete process of the beatification of man and the glorification of God—the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The spiritual affinity existing between the Unitarian Church and the Brahma Samaj distinctly traces itself back even to the days of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy. Before he immortalised himself as the Heaven-ordained messenger of the alliance, the league, of peace and love to be established between East and West, by achieving what was acclaimed, at the meeting where he was received by his Unitarian brothers, as an act of true moral heroism—even the crossing of the 'black waters'—I say, before that date, Ram Mohan had already established spiritual communion between himself and the Unitarians. And when he went on that pilgrimage, Ram Mohan completed, as Max Muller has observed, the circuit of the spiritual current begun thousands of years ago by the advent of the Aryans into India: the Aryan *to* India and *back from* India—that was the circle of human affinity, of spiritual fellowship, completed in and through Ram Mohan's life. Amidst so much that was hostile and adverse, he was accorded the warmest sympathy and support by the Unitarian community. At a session of the Unitarian Association in 1831, he was

received with open arms and designated as a brother and fellow-worker.

Too numerous to recount have been the gifts and blessings to us of brotherly help, encouragement, enlightenment, guidance and inspiration from our sisters and brothers of England and America. I shall refer only to three particular instances in this big record of our indebtedness. We have always studied with the greatest benefit the literature—the philosophical, theological writings—of the Unitarians. Amongst these, the towering name is that of Dr. James Martineau, whom the non-Unitarian author of *Robert Elsmere* appraised as the greatest thinker of his day. Equally beneficent unto us in spiritual grace and moral strength have been such gifted souls as our brother, Dr. Drummond's honoured father, and Dr. Estlin Carpenter and several others. Again, through personal contact and ministrations, "gifted teachers like Fletcher Williams and J. T. Sunderland have laid us under great obligation. Then, in my younger days one of the very favourite authors in the Brahma Samaj was Theodore Parker, besides the noble-souled Channing. I need not expressly refer to the immortal Emerson.' We have also continued to study with pleasure and profit many

a Unitarian poet, voicing high ideals of truth and humanity from the lands from which our brothers and sisters come. It was but natural that gifts thus generously bestowed should produce their fruit in return, not only in the comradeship of Ram Mohan Roy, but also in the spiritual kinship revealed through Keshub Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, Sivanath Sastri and many more. Now, the second gift I would refer to is the generous arrangement that the Unitarian Church in both America and England has made for training a number of our promising young men for the ministry of religion. The Meadville Theological School, of which Dr. Southworth has been the honoured President for a quarter of a century, has thus trained some of our young men, among whom we can never forget our own dear and lamented Sambasiva Rao. Again, Manchester College, Oxford, represented by Dr. Drummond, has similarly helped us by training ministers and missionaries for the Brahma Samaj. Among these latter, I can mention one who, by untiring zeal and incessant labour on our behalf, has been, in spirit, an Andhra of Andhras, though a Bengalee by domicile—Dr. Hem Chandra Sarcar. The third benefit I shall recall is that admirable spirit of * fraternity and

fellowship which, despite the arduousness of the task, has brought these living representatives of liberal religion to our shores and into our very midst to participate in the Centenary celebrations of the Brahma Samaj. They have come from the other end of the globe, even from the antipodes. They have shown the strength, the motive-power, of their fraternal relationship with us. And for this we feel so deeply beholden to them. Unto them, in the name of the Brahmos and their sympathisers, I accord a most heartfelt welcome ; and I assure these sisters and brothers that, through the grace of God, the trouble taken will be amply rewarded with an increase of illumining faith and buoyant hope in our hearts and in our lives. God is truly the Inspirer of our conjoint mighty movement ; and He will sustain and amplify the good in it through generation after generation. Once more, with that faith and in that hope, I humbly yet heartily welcome you, as sisters and brothers, to this, our common Church.

IX

RELIGION AND WORLD-PEACE.*

(1929)

It would look almost impious in me to interpose now with any of my stale thoughts and feeble words, if gratitude did not demand as an elementary duty that I should acknowledge not only my own deep debt but also the sense of great obligation of all those present here, in thankful appreciation and admiration, to the honoured teacher for the inspiring address of this evening.

Dr. Drummond has aptly closed with a quotation from Rajah Ram Mohan Roy. Is this not significant to us of the fact that all chosen souls, whether of Britain or of India, are in perfect agreement on the great question of peace on earth and good-will among men—viz., that enduring peace and hearty good-will are conceivable only on the basis of soul-deep, united acknowledgment of a Universal Father as the Author, Unifier and Protector of all the races which inhabit the globe ?

*** Remarks at the close of an address by Dr. W. H. Drummond, at the Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, in connection with the Brahma Samal Centenary Celebrations (4-2-29).**

Those of you who may have chanced to glance at the tablet at the head of this *Mandir* will have noted on it that inspiring text from the Upanishad, ⁴ 'He alone is to be known and worshipped as the Adorable One.' Hence, it follows that they alone who are prepared to join the world-wide congregation of adoring spirits, wherever be the ground on which the congregation meets—they alone form the confraternity of humanity. The Adorable God is the Universal God. A profound saying of a Greek poet is that in God goodness and being are *one*, so that he who divorces these inseparable attributes of the Deity makes Him no God. The basic truth about God-conception, therefore, is that He is the good God. And the adorers of God, if they care rightly to know His nature and loyally to worship Him, must themselves be good. To worship the good God and be other than good in life is either subtle self-deception or rank hypocrisy. As the distinguished speaker has observed in impressive language, the conception of God as the Universal God makes Him at once the universally good God who brooks no barriers and tolerates no divisions.

Such is the Adorable God whom, not by human custom but by divine urge, **we are invited**

to approach and worship in an edifice like this. The dear person who has been privileged to be the human medium for providing this lovely temple of God, does not think of himself as the mere donor, but recognises himself even as the worshipper who has designed this *Mandir* to be his own - soul's offering unto the Deity he loves to adore. And that which is intended to be an offering unto God must necessarily serve as a free, welcome meeting-place for those who would consecrate their lives unto God. To rear a temple out of physical materials without the antecedent spirit of self-devotion and self-dedication, would be, at best, an all too superfluous act—aye, often-times an act of self-deception. Next, he who desires to worship in this temple of God must, first and foremost, realise God as the *Manasarnandira*, the eternal effulgent One that establishes His tabernacle in the human mind, His shrine in the human heart and His shekinah in the human soul. Here we come, not to see our God with the eye of flesh, but to commune with the God indwelling our souls. As this spirit of divine communion is cultivated by man in general, then, though we may, to outward appearances, fall under diverse denominations, yet we cannot but converge all towards the universal God, eliminating none of our varied experiences

but continually sorting them all into the charming mosaic of that catholicity of spiritual valuation which judges all things from the sublime standpoint of the spirit and discerns the doings of His grace in all times and climes. Faithful will be the Christian brother to the distinctive gospel of the Christ; truthful will be the Moslem brother to the particular message of the Nabi; and loyal will be the Hindu brother to the special vision of the Rishis. But the higher cosmopolitanism, the ampler universalism, which it is the age-long design of God to establish, will be widely accepted, side by side with unswerving yet intelligent attachment to one's own tradition, household, or organization; and it will be realised as consisting in the deep conviction that from the single, mountain-top of Divine Inspiration there has flowed forth, taking different directions but carrying the same blessing, the perennial stream of devout life. Thus, however labelled in human language, all are the offspring of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, sisters and brothers one unto another. When that gospel is acknowledged and lived up to which Keshub Chandra Sen has proclaimed—even the gospel of the communion of saints, the harmony of prophets and the synthesis of scriptures, in the light of that divine

ray evermore radiant in the human soul—the peace within that is generated by this Universal Theism must inevitably promulgate itself as peace all around. Thus and thus alone can war be effectively 'out-lawed' by Sovereign Peace. 'The League of Nations' can fulfil itself only in and through 'the League of Religions.'—Again, one great historic inspiration in our country is that of the Emperor Attoka, with his deep devotion to the cause of peace, as is witnessed by his monumental edict forbidding even that feelingless pastime of hunting throughout his vast domain. To appreciate its significance, let us place this edict against that cartoon of the war period which pictured the Kaisar with the inscription, 'Let us prey!' This spirit that can pray to the Creator and all the same prey upon His creatures—this terrific ghoul, is the 'direful spring' of war and all its woes. This aboriginal preying passion in man can be purged out only by true fealty to the good G-od. Not by the reduction of huge armaments but by the 'induction' of high emotions—not by beating swords into ploughshares but by converting Cain, the fratricide, into the 'keeper' of his brother, can permanent peace **and** genuine good-will be established among **the nations and races of man.** Not **the formal deed of**

* charity' will suffice; not even the burning desire of righteousness alone can ensure that peace and that good-will. Under Heaven, all the world over, those 'royal souls' that are 'firm-rooted in the faith that God is good' are the sponsors of world-peace.

While on this theme, I love to refer to a little incident that will help to indicate the real obstacle to the progress of World-peace and also the part which Religion has to play in its removal. Rajah Maun Singh, the renowned *subadar* of the great Akbar, was appointed the Governor of Kabul, to carry a certain difficult campaign to a successful termination. Maun Singh wrote, pleading that, as a Hindu, he was forbidden from crossing the river 'Attock' in the north of India. Now, *attock* in Urdu means also a barrier. So, Akbar wisely answered, ⁱ 'This world is all God's, in which is the river Attock; he that has an *attock* (barrier) in his heart, will fancy an *attock* wherever he goes.' It is only the wiping-out of the countless *attocks* (barriers) of the heart, all the hydra-brood of disbelief in or disavowal of the good God, that can clear the ground for establishing universal peace. Then the races of men will have learnt to practise their common, conjoint allegiance, with all one's

heart and soul, to the Universal God, the single Parent of countless children. Hence, it has been said, and it requires to be repeated over and over again, that, if there is to be peace, world-peace, our conception of God as well as of man must undergo a radical change. The nations must come to appraise one another as members of one family bound to live side by side, not merely mutually tolerant but reciprocally appreciative and serviceable. As for the Deity, the God who merely rules and judges should yield place to the God who loves and serves ; for it is this loving and serving God alone that can be the Universal Father. May Me, in His grace, reveal Himself to us, in an increasing measure, as the loving and serving God, and guide and help us in the fulfilment of life's purpose as endless growth in love and service !

For the fresh delivery to us of this soul-elevating message of 'Under Heaven. One Family,' we feel profoundly grateful to our brother, the honoured lecturer of the evening. No ordinary, conventional thanks do we render to him on this solemn occasion. Rather will I assure him, on behalf of us all, that our fervent prayers will ever go forth with him in his noble mission of peace.

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Finally, this being the last of three successive evenings of cherished engagements for us with our sisters and brothers from the West, forcing the Centenary Delegation to the Brahma Samaj, we can only ask ourselves, as the rich feast comes to a close, ⁱ 'How may we render adequate thanks to these generous purveyors of love?' Also, to you all in this large concourse of eager, attentive spirits, gathering here night after night—together a grateful sight unto any feeling heart—we are only too happy to convey our deep-felt obligations. God's choicest blessings rest upon one and all here present!

X

ANTI—NAUTUH.

(1894)

The Conference notes with satisfaction that the movement started in Madras to discourage the employment of Nautch-girls to sing and dance on occasions of social and religious festivities has received support from many societies for social reform, castes, social and religious bodies in the North-West Provinces, Oudh, Panjab and Bombay; and the Conference hopes that the members of all reform associations throughout the country will continue this good work and, pledge themselves to discountenance all such entertainments.

Chairman and gentlemen,

I have very great pleasure in moving this proposition*—pleasure born of a genuine love for my country. The institutions for public amusement are almost always an index to the characteristics of a nation. They are wholesome or unhealthy, harmless or injurious, gentle or

*Seconded by Rajah Rarapal Singh and earned unanimously at the Eighth Indian National Social Conference, Madras, Dewau Bahadur S. Subrahmanya Aiyar, C.L.E., presiding (30—12—1894).

violent, according to the prevailing moral tone of a people. It is, therefore, an imperative duty of every lover of his country to purge the national amusements and recreations of every element of impurity, injustice or cruelty, and thus to make play or amusement itself indirectly edifying and elevating. When it was said that on the games-field were lost and won a nation's battles, a great, though rarely appreciated, truth was given expression to ; for a person's character is built up, not so much by the conscious effort of deliberate instruction as by the silent influence and secret workings of those views, motives, inducements and aspirations which actuate him in hours of ease and relaxation; because, not being in a resisting or actively discriminating attitude, the soul then freely imbibes whatever comes readily and naturally. Hence it becomes an important concern with all that wish well of the coming generations of their nation to give to the natural instincts nothing but healthy and generous surroundings. This great principle, and no cynical or sophistic spirit, is, beg leave to submit, at the bottom of this agitation against the Nautch.

To me it is a matter for sincere congratulation to see this movement become popular. When,

some eighteen months ago, we—I had the privilege of being one of them—raised a humble voice of warning and protest against the national institution of the Nautch, diverse opinions were expressed from different quarters. Some pronounced it to be, a wild-goose-chase ; others ridiculed it as silly-sentimentality ; a few went the length of denouncing it as unpatriotic—nay, even irreligious; and one venerable gentleman, well-known and much respected as a veteran reformer, considered it to be no less chimerical than seeking to remove the Himalayas! But the day of impatient scorn, of unthinking ridicule and of meaningless exaggeration has passed away; and people have begun to hear patiently, in many cases to tolerate, in several instances even to sympathise ; and I have no doubt that, sure as a good and holy God rules over us and certain as truth must triumph and purity must prevail, this agitation will eventually, sooner or later, succeed in elevating a down-trodden, a low-fallen class of India's daughters and in wiping away a long-standing stain upon the nation's fair fame.

Now, are we of the Madras -Social Reform Association singular in our views about this, question? Not a few of those to whom not only

we but all look up as leaders or representative men, have spoken out, in no uncertain words, against this degrading institution of the 'dancing girl'—^dancing girl,' as a shamefast euphemism calls her whose footsteps mark the pathway to man's moral perdition ! Passing over foreigners who have long and lovingly laboured for this land and avoiding a multiplicity of examples, I will mention only three instances. He who presides over this Conference so wisely and well and who cannot fairly be charged with a tendency towards go-ahead reforms but is everywhere credited with extreme sobriety and moderation, has pronounced his opinion emphatically in favour of this agitation. That 'solitary figure' (to use my honoured friend, the Hon'ble N. Subba Rao Pantulu Graru's words) who has so long and with such admirable perseverance been sustaining and pushing forward this Social Conference—one whose gigantic intellect, vast and deep erudition, lofty position, spotless life and earnest and continuous endeavours to serve his country have raised him to the rare honour of a prince among Indian graduates—has declared himself altogether in cordial sympathy with the Anti-Nautch movement. And that sage and saint who is honoured as an erudite pandit in India and

respected as an eminent savant in Europe, that noble representative of all that is wise and good in the lore of East and West, the genuine patriot who exemplifies in his illustrious life the harmonious and simultaneous growth and progress in all directions which alone can make the strong and great India that is to be—he has with characteristic breadth and acumen struck the key-note of the whole problem, when he has asserted that, so long as the Indian nation patronises—nay, even tolerates and connives at—such damaging institutions as the Nautch, the moral tone of our society must, with deep regret, be admitted to be weak, indeed, and that until intense moral indignation is roused against such horrid enormities in our social ethics, we shall be false to our fatherland, untrue to the culture and enlightenment which have been given to us. Surely, this array of learning, wisdom, character and position on our side must make up for all deficiency in mere numbers.

It is mainly for *three* reasons that we take such serious exception to the institution of the Nautch.

1. *Economy*.—According to the law of love, wealth is a holy trust ill the hands of the rich for

the benefit of the poor * and all waste of money is a wilful violation of sacred confidence. Only three days ago speaker after speaker dwelt eloquently on the poverty of India; and most feelingly was the deplorable fact again and again referred to that a full fourth of the population of India has from year's end to year's end been eking out a miserable life upon insufficient and unwholesome food. And if these our doleful complaints be not merely occasions to harangue against Government but the outcome of genuine pity for our unfortunate sisters and brethren—the expression of full and feeling hearts, ought we not to husband our resources to the utmost degree and utilise the hundreds and thousands which are every month—nay, every week—emptied into the laps of these Jezebels, in feeding hungry mouths and covering unclad backs, in nursing the sick and educating the ignorant? Money thus spent is money invested in the Bank of Heaven.

2. *Humanity.*—In this the land of the zenana system—of the seclusion of women—modesty and retirement are the special graces of the fair sex; but here it is that a class of women—the victims of social tyranny—is so miserably degraded, so hopelessly fallen and so pitiably low that, as an

Indian poet has said, even to the approaches of a leper, to the advances of a most ugly creature, a 'dancing girl'⁷ is open by the mandate of custom and social polity. Here is my sweet, chaste sister, a rose in the Garden of God, protected by sacred barriers from the frost of an alien's gaze ; but there stands her unfortunate sister, flesh of her flesh, blood of her blood, and yet doomed by our society to be a profane vane against which the lust of any person may with impunity blow and rage ! Can womanly degradation go further ? Is it not a most damaging proof of our selfish callousness that, with all our pretended culture, vaunted liberality and loud-proclaimed tenderness to all creatures, we allow thousands and tens of thousands of God's children to be thus immolated on the unhallowed altar of man's in chastity ? Is the law of repentance and reconciliation the privilege and monopoly of man alone ? Is the principle of eternal condemnation, of visiting the parent's sins upon the helpless child and meting out lasting punishment for human errors the special doom of woman ? Verily the Divine Mother has her prodigal daughters and rejoices in their salvation. But by stereotyping the 'dancing girls' into a class and by practically making an erring life an invariable accompaniment of a public songstress and

dancer, the Hindu society has not only thrown the noble arts of music and dancing into utter disrepute but also cut off the path of these unfortunate daughters of India to repentance and regeneration.

3. *Morality*.—According to the pure ethics of the soul, he who sanctions immorality is no less guilty and punishable than he who commits it. Our great Manu has said that not only the butcher who kills the goat but also he who cooks and he who serves and he who eats the meat are alike answerable for the loss of that life. And shall not we be held morally responsible for sanctioning and perpetuating by our silence and connivance that social law which condemns the 'dancing girl' to her pitiable plight? If she is a social leper, we are accountable for it. Again, no person has a right to an enjoyment that works the degradation of a brother-man or a sister-woman; and yet they are all respectable and honourable men who enhance the mirth of their social gatherings and the attractions of their religious processions by securing the services of a woman who is enabled thus to be a public songstress and dancer only when she is *'fallen'*! Surely we share in her sin when we require her, virtually though not verbally, to degrade herself for our amusement. Further, to

avoid temptations is a solemn duty of our lives. Let it be borne in mind that it is one thing to wrestle with an unavoidable danger, it is another thing wilfully to taste the 'mortal' fruit. He who wantonly strikes his hand upon the cockatrice's den and rouses the sleeping viper, 'tempts the Lord' by making light of the purpose of life. He who courts cholera commits suicide: and what is enjoying a Nautch, knowing the dancer to be a fallen woman, but ensnaring oneself in temptations and committing moral suicide? 'Life is real, life is earnest'; and he who fritters it away in questionable entertainments cuts his own throat with a golden razor.

Gentlemen, for these besides some minor reasons, we condemn the Nautch. It is not out of hatred for the poor fallen woman, it is not out of a puritanic spirit that would proscribe all amusements, it is not without a full consciousness of the immediate consequences of the practice which we recommend, that we have undertaken this great, this uphill task. It is because we cherish the 'dancing girl' as a sister and pity her abject condition; it is because she must be stripped of her false glare and brought down from her adventitious position before she will repent or the community

will pity her; it is because we sincerely wish to see the national amusements and recreations rendered innocuous and innocent; and it is because we feel sure that, apart from any present temporary loss,, music will thrive when divorced from immorality and dancing will become a grace when it will have ceased to be a disgrace—in a word, it is exactly and absolutely because nothing but lasting and wide-spread good will accrue from the success of this movement that we have taken this determinate stand against a hoary institution, though it has the strength of tradition and even the sanction of popular religion to support it. Brethren, it is righteousness alone that exalteth a nation; and future India shall not and cannot be good, unless she unflinchingly put down every immoral institution and uncompromisingly deny an honourable recognition to a person, however striking in beauty,, however brilliant in parts or however eminent in position, if he or she has a tainted character.

XI

THE BRAHMA SAMAJ: ITS BACKGROUND AND ITS OUTLOOK.*

(1929)

Opening Prayer.

Om ! Unto Thee, the *ELesiutra*, the One, the Absolute, the All-embracing Lord, we render our hearts' devout worship and our souls' reverent love. We thank Thee and praise Thee, we glorify Thy name and we proclaim Thy mercy measureless which in its inexhaustible and all-reaching abundance for ever cherishes us, prospers us and blesses us. We call Thee by the sweetest of names; we adore Thee with the holiest of offerings; we seek to live with Thee and abide in Thee with all our hearts and soiils. Thou art All and All-in-all unto us. We are possessed with Thee, we are enriched and exalted by Thee, beyond human imagination. Thou the beloved One, Thou the adored One, Thou the eternally holy and saving One, do Thou, on this happy, auspicious occasion,. so disclose

• Presidential speeches at Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, on Srahmotsar Day (23-1-29).

and manifest Thyself in our midst and within our hearts that, as we pronounce Thy sublime name, *Ekeswara*, we be thrilled and exalted by the vivid consciousness of Thine all-transcending wisdom and love. Thou art truly and verily the Reality,, the eternal Truth, the immutable Substance. May the assurance of Thy Reality so dwell in our hearts and so quicken our spirits that even now and here we may feel the inexpressible joy of the blessed experience of Thy vivifying truth and captivating love ! Be with us, we beseech Thee,, and so shape our thoughts and our very expressions—that, frail and erring creatures as we are, we might be heartened with the regenerating touch of Thy truth and Thy love. Be with us, be with us, even with the certainty of felt experience and enjoyed bliss. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever !

Introductory Remarks.

Friends and Fellow-worshippers of the *Ekeswara*,

We are here, as you are aware, to participate in the joy, and receive into our hearts the strength_y of the ninety-ninth annual celebration of the consecration of the first Mandir of the Brahma Samaj. What does the inauguration of this noteworthy modern movement of the Indian Monotheistic[^]

Church—modern in the sense only of its latest expression but eternal in the spirit of its essential truth—what does it signify as to its 'origins' and suggest as to its outlook? On this subject two of our really competent and worthy brethren have consented to speak. On an occasion like this, the task of the President becomes somewhat trying for the reason that he ought not to anticipate, even if he is able to surmise, what the lecturers propose to expound. Offhand, casual remarks will only go to impair the value of considered thought and studied expression. Again, on the present occasion,, without flattery it is to be observed that the speakers who are to address are such as have all their lives striven to understand, endeavoured to make known, and laboured to live, the message they are to deliver. Accordingly, the customary task of the President to introduce the subject is far from necessary in the present context. Yet I should be rather wanting in due appreciation and regard, if I did not venture on a few, julst a few, preliminary observations. These, with your permission, I will now proceed to make.

In that valuable little book, 'Greater India/ comprising four of the inspired poet, Rabindranath Tagore's discourses, there are two or three

observations which, to my understanding, are appropriate as introductory to this evening's expositions and experiences. As we survey, says Rabindranath, the religious condition, the religious composition, the religious content, of the Indian nation, embracing as it does representatives of all the leading dispensations of humanity, we are impelled to believe that God has designed this land of *Aryavarta* to be His special laboratory—His chosen work-room, for discovering and formulating a religious synthesis which shall comprise all these faiths and hopes. Then, he adds that this comprehensive conception of the relative position of India in the spiritual evolution of man is, historically speaking, a comparatively modern conception. From age to age, the confluence and congregation of different faiths in India has gone on increasing and accumulating, till it has come to what, according to our present outlook, makes the complete circuit by the ingress, in somewhat recent times, of the Christian Dispensation. The first person that visioned the destiny of India as the nursery of a spiritual synthesis to be fostered and then propagated to the wide world, was Rajah Ram Mohan Roy. If you study the growth of the seed of Truth in his mind and spirit, you will be impressed with the striking

fact that, from the questful day of *Tuhfat-id-Muwahhiddin* to the prophetic day of the Trust Deed, there was in him a continuous and ever-increasing realisation of the all-embracing, all-invigorating and all-exalting truth that, though, in form and expression, cults and creeds be many, yet in the central substance there is an essential unity holding all the dispensations in one comprehensive synthesis of ever-manifest and yet ever-evolving consciousness of man as the recipient and reproducer of the Eternal Spirit. It is this current of thought and ideal and hope that runs through the whole career of Ram Mohan and distinguishes him, not only as a great scholar or even as the first intelligent and serious-minded student of comparative religion, but also as the first deep-sighted, large-hearted and ardent-souled advocate of not merely the possibility but, indeed, the necessity of congregating men of all kinds and descriptions into a single fraternity of God's worshippers. Therefore, it is imperative, to come to the next observation of Rabindranath, that the history of India should be re-interpreted in the light of this great trust the Supreme Dispenser of human destinies has reposed in India—viz., the unification of the faiths and hopes of all, not in any rigid and partisan narrowness, but in the rich,

variegated multiplex of the many blending into the one, as in a soul-enrapturing symphony. If India is to make good this trust, Indian History will have to be re-read and re-interpreted, so as to bring out vividly to the bosoms and business of men the great message that India is designed to reveal the culmination and consummation of the world's spiritual history. Then, far from being an empiric agglomerate of dreary incidents, History will unfold itself as an impressive, panoramic presentation of the life-stories of all the peoples that constitute the human race. As a prelude to this, it is, as more than one interpreter of Ram Mohan's life-story and among them Kabindranath, have said, the heaven-ordained duty of India to bridge the existing gulf between East and West, between alien and ally, between ancient and modern. This is properly a process not merely of bridging a gulf—rather an imperfect symbol!—but of fusing into one outlook and aspiration the characteristic contributions of various dispensations ; led and urged by which spirit the world shall, as an articulate and organised-unit, enter on a new epoch of all-round progress*-This is our divine destiny to visualise which the history of India should be re-read and re-interpreted. The Brahma Samaj is an essentially religious body ,

and its function in this re-reading and re-interpreting of our history is to stress and bring home the eternal fact that man's stability at the root and man's strength in growth has, in every detail, to be derived from the religious spirit—not the routine profession which exhausts itself in creeds and ceremonies but the quickening spirit which imparts to the whole frame of the individual and of the race the joy of divine companionship and the hope of human perfection. This, as I understand, is the trust vouchsafed to the Brahma Samaj; and this message, if the Brahma Samaj is not to vanish, it must deliver through the lives of those that presume to call themselves Brahmos. I shall only hope that in my remarks I have not in any way hampered the free movement of the lecturers to follow.

Concluding Remarks,

The Brahma Samaj has been generally credited with practising and advocating toleration. For this generous appreciation we feel deeply thankful. At the same time, I may be pardoned if I claim that the Brahma Samaj really stands for more than practising and advocating toleration. It inculcates mutual assimilation—n't merely the polite attitude of * Each unto himself and God for

all', or of * Live and let live *, but even the principle of 'Give and receive'; since God *is* for the good of all and each one of us *is meant* for the happiness of all. If I may, without irritating any scientists here, use some little particle of my antiquated science, I shall refer to the process of 'Osmose'; that is to say, if liquids of different degrees of density be partitioned by porous septa, they tend to mingle and become similar. Now, there is a corresponding process of interfusion between spirit and spirit. And such integration is, to my understanding, the real purpose of creation. We are familiar with the proposition that all over nature there prevails one system of unity, [f there is such universal inter-permeation, it must suggest three ideas to us. First, it must declare that there is nothing whatsoever that is superfluous and, therefore, rejectable in Nature; that fact is implied in the idea of *Unity* itself. Nothing can be thought of as out of place, out of date, quite incongruous and utterly unnecessary in the whole domain of Nature. The myriad contents of the universe are summed up and held together in one encircling bond. The countless objects and beings comprised in Nature constitute one compact organism. As has been observed by a great thinker, such is **the**

summation, the interlinking, of all the objects contained in the world that if a single blade of grass be destroyed, the entire balance of the universe shall be disturbed. Thus the whole cosmos is one close-knit system with nothing that is superfluous and nothing that shall be 'cast as rubbish to the void'. Secondly, there is a continuity running through ages and eons in the process of universal development. The evolution of universal life and progress admits of no breaks or blanks. One steady swelling current of purpose runs on from age to age. And thirdly, if there is thus a sustained flow of purposeful life and progress in ever-increasing magnitude, it brings out the last implication of unity: between the numberless souls that make up the human race there exists one fundamental kinship, one basic affinity, with perpetual assimilation, integration and fraternisation. All this is implied in, as it is effected by, reciprocal attraction and permeation. Accordingly, let me repeat there is nothing superfluous or isolated in the universe, but everywhere there is the reaching out of each individual spirit towards multitudes of kindred spirits. With this conception of unity, the conclusion cannot be escaped that this unity should be effected and realised by men through self-discipline, self-expansion*

and self-dedication. The principle of unity being—once accepted, perpetual expansion in and through universal interest and sympathy becomes the prime rule of life. It will not avail at all to hold that we ought to be tolerant towards one another. Rather, we ought to be hospitable unto one another—seekers out of one another to be mutual givers and receivers. I proffer freely unto others any mite of real value in me; and, not with the supplication of a beggar, but with the claim of a brother, I shall ask and receive all that is, by God's grace, of worth in others. Every man, according to Emerson, is a quotation from all his ancestors; and so he is, in however imperfect a manner. Likewise, is he not also a parenthesis or a focus-point for all kindred spirits? Emerson himself claims for every one that he has a birth-right for, is owner

* Of Caesar's hand, and Plato's brain,

Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's
strain

These great gifts are, indeed, the heritage of every man that cometh into the world. But even for Emerson, mind you, the ambit of the horizon is within the West! But with faith in a Universal Father, we can rise higher still and say, ' Not these

.alone but innumerable others as well are ours.' Those hoary Rishis led on by the shining heavens above and the radiant soul within—all those mighty Seers that have visioned (rightly is the Rishi accredited with *visions*) and all those prophetic spirits that have proclaimed *the* truth: they all consummate themselves in our hearts and souls. ^Nay, every selfless one that has toiled in the service of man and every anguished one that has writhed with remorse and held out penitent hands to God; tevery brow not merely decked with the rose of purity but, as the victim of man's bestial appetite, scorched with the brand of impurity; alike the lofty that scale the heights of the Mount of Transfiguration and the lowly who, as the dust, protect the feet of others from injury—all these are knit into one confraternity. Our duty lies not in passive toleration but in active co-operation, as the glow-worm reminded the nightingale in the well-known parable: * Providence has planted thee and me together on man's path that thou with thy song and I with my gleam might cheer and light that path.¹

Again, when the Brahma Samaj is styled the Modern Monotheistic Church in India, the designation has to be received with this qualification **that**

its distinguishing feature of Monotheism has, from time immemorial, been India's doctrine about God. Even in some of the earliest hymns of the Rig^ Veda i\$ found the gospel of one God proclaimed. But, as Ranade pointed out, while the belief in one God has endured through untold generations,, somehow the nation, as a nation, never arrived before at the definite position of realising the doctrine of *Monotheism* through the sacrament of *Monolatry*. The basic element in the message of the Brahma Samaj is that, if you would make Monotheism a living faith, then you should feed it and sustain it with unqualified, universal Monolatry.. As Mozoomdar has observed, the Brahma Samaj aims at setting up this *monolatrous worship* as the sacred lamp in the niche of each heart and the sacramental fire on the altar of each home. I beg of you, impute not spiritual arrogance when we place this sacred ideal before you; but pray, turn your sympathetic ear to the great truth promulgated by Rajah Ram Mohan Roy that for man it is both natural and incumbent to worship God in spirit and in truth. The humble appeal—not the presumptuous dictation—of the Brahma Samaj is : one God as the spirit and, therefore, one worship in spirit. Not merely as a logical proposition, not

simply as a social* convention, but even as the heart's own confession and benediction, the faith in one God as the Supreme Spirit must prove itself, refresh itself, fulfil itself, bless itself through the worship of the one God in spirit and in truth. That is the vital element of the larger message of Unity. The logic of theory and the sincerity of practice cannot be divorced in religion without fatal consequences.

Then, somehow, Dr. Ramakrishna Rao, with laudable modesty, withdrew or modified his original proposition, namely, 'Judge of Brahmaism by the lives of the Brahmos'. But, after all, that is a very valid position, as it offers even the true criterion. By all means, judge of Brahmaism by the lives of those whom the Brahma Samaj, as a whole, accepts as its typical, representative men—not the prattling lip-professors like myself but those loyal, royal souls whose inner and outer lives are a challenging witness to the truth of the message : Maharshi Devendranath; Brahmananda Keshub Chandra; Rev. Bhai Pratap Chandra ; I Jpadhyaya Gour Govinda Roy ; Pandit Sivanath Sastri; or that saint among* the secular, attentive to mundane occupations and yet sustaining .the soul upon sublime heights—Ananda Mohan Bose, and his

twin-brother in spirit from Western India, Mahadev Grovind Ranade ; or Avinas Chandra Mozoomdar of Lahore or Swami Ekeswarananda of Mangalore—again, spiritual twins in the 'grace'⁷ of a devout life equally rich in piety and humanity; and our own venerated leader, a prince among men, Viresalingam Pantulu; or, again, comijig to hidden retreats and speaking of those who, not in the sight of man but before the eye of Grod, consecrated their all and literally poured themselves out as oblations to the Deity, like that serene soul so early sublimated from the alloy of flesh and translated before its time—Bapayya, or that ardent spirit aglow with faith and zeal, literally consumed by devotion to the sacred cause—Sambasiva Rao. Judge of the Brahma Samaj by the lives of such as these and of a host of others reverently remembered but left out of enumeration on the present occasion; and the Samaj shall be more than content to. be so judged and appraised.

One further observation to make before closing is this. It was—was it not?—a deeply soul-touching, a profoundly heart-moving, appeal which was made in my brother, Lakshminarayana jGraru's reference to the familiar yet mystic phenomenon **of sleep.** Yes; **why search for proofs far and wide?**

Ask yourselves, each one of you, the real import of the common and commonplace experience of sleep. Mankind rightly honours and blesses the name of him who found out chloroform—the great benefactor of his race who robbed surgery of its torture ! But what to think of Him or, rather, of Her, the Divine Mother, who places each one of Her children night after night under that marvellous anaesthesia called sleep? All life drawn into and closeted with what is mysteriously termed 'subliminal consciousness'; but the spell vanishing at dawn, leaving no nauseating after-effects—the languished flower restored to shining bloom and the rejuvenated child joyfully regaining all its belongings held in trust! A mother asks for some fresh water; the son goes out to bring it but on return finds the mother fast asleep. Waking after a good while, the lady is surprised to find the son devotedly standing by her bed with the cup of water in hand. 'Have you been waiting and watching here all the time?' 'Yes, mother dear'. 'Surely, you are an ideal child—a blessing to the mother-heart!' But how to appreciate Him who, with more than a son's devotion and a steward's fidelity, waiteth and watcheth all night by the bed-side, closer than breathing and nearer than

hands and feet, and gently rendereth back all life's possessions ? I ask again, need we any other proof of--that simply indescribable Love which baffles all attempt at appellation or appraisal ? That heavenly Love hands each one of us a blank cheque for any entry we like; and the cheque is honoured in the Eternal Bank of Heaven! 'His endless treasure made all mine own; myself the end of all His labours/ as an English mystic poet puts it.

Finally, the Gospel of the Brahma Samaj proclaims God as Everybody's Own God. He is longing and yearning to draw each soul amongst us to His paternal bosom ; and it is our simple duty as well as our noble privilege to respond with 'Have me !' Religion is not a matter of report enjoined by authority or convention satisfied by conformity, not a conclusion validated by a process of logic, not a passing flash or a momentary thrill leaving behind the old languor of flat, purposeless life; but it is the abiding experience and intense rapture of the Divine Presence—a music that knows no silence, an aroma that sustains no diminution, a sweetness that suffers no surfeit.

In the name of Him who has brought us here together and unto whom each individual is

incalculably precious, I invoke the supreme blessing that unto each one of us may be granted the grace to realise that He is with us everywhere and will abide with us evermore !

Oml Thath Satkl

XII

RELIGION AND WORSHIP.*

(1927)

Esteemed President, Sisters and Brothers,

For the last ten years at the least, it has been my general practice to avoid a public discourse. Yet, now, strangely enough, I have myself offered to speak, as if on the spur of the moment. First of all, I request permission for a few words of a personal nature.

If you count five days more, it will make twenty-two years since I began to work here as Principal of the College. Public opinion, at that time, was very sharply divided on the question of my appointment; some hoping that, after all, I might do well, but some, again, holding that I must prove a calamity to this Town. The reason for my mentioning it here is this. I recall how, during this period, it has been, by God's ordering, my humble duty in life to render to this City what service has

* Speech, during Brahmotsav, at the newly consecrated Brahmapaana Mandir, Oocanada (26—1—27),

lain in my power. Deeply interested, in Cocanada from the very beginning, it has been my innermost desire and aim, my sincerest prayer and heartiest hope, that Cocanada should possess some distinguishing object to mark it out as a centre of certain importance, whence the message of the worship of the one God in spirit—in truth, love and holiness—should be delivered and a certain, measure of genuine effort should be put forth towards the cultivation of the essentials of Religion.

What is Religion; and how is Worship the outstanding expression of Religion? If I might venture to place before you what I hold as the root-faith, the basic conviction, of my life, I shall declare that life realises and fulfils itself, life works out its purpose and attains its destiny, only in so far as the life is inspired and ordered by Worship. The poet says, ⁱ 'Worth makes the man and want of it the fellow'. It may be laid down as a deeper and nobler truth that Worship makes the man and want of it the animal. It constitutes all the difference in the world whether a man leads his life according to his own terms of self-exertion and social propriety or with reference, and in deference^ to a higher Power and a profounder Wisdom. That fact distinguishes, in other words, the routine from the

responsible life. In that marvellous advance of mankind from *herd' to 'society'—from self-protecting fear to self-reliant duty, Worship has been the motive and the strength. Hence the rule, borne out by wide and deep experience, that a life desirous of being wisely regulated, that is, systematically and purposefully developed, should, at its very core, be quickened and amplified by a constant practice of Worship. It will argue very faulty judgment to imagine that he who thus goes through set worship need not mind other issues of life. On the contrary, Worship, which is God-consciousness intensified into God-communion, will always enjoin 'service' as sacramental homage to God. Therefore, the essence of the matter is: if life would be propelled by the motive-power of a wholesome and beneficent purpose, if life would advance towards a definite and worthy goal, if life like a vital organism would grow—that is, expand from within and not merely 'accrete' from* without—then, life should be perennially nurtured—enriched and ennobled—by the devout practice of Worship. What is Worship? This implies, what is Religion? Religion is, not a theorised conclusion, but a realised consciousness, which grasps, in one's individual experience, that basic truth which

makes all systems of refined faith akin in essence—namely : the Universe, with its countless contents and its eon-old history, is an emanation of *Anandam*. According to Dr. Tagore, the correct English word for *Anandam* is Love. Creation, then, originates in Love; creation grows and expands in Love; creation fulfils and perfects itself in Love. We apprehend the true object of life only when we realise creation as the self-expression of Love, the *anandam*—the divine delight—of the Supreme Being. Then alone we can appreciate the truth, and subserve the purpose, of our life. To deliver this message and to enjoin this self-dedication is the office of Religion. Formularies repeated by rote cannot meet this demand for the individual apprehension of the truth that the soul's birth, continuation, evolution, destination, perfection, all are in and through Love. And Love necessarily implies, invariably relates to, a Loving Being. Impersonal love is a myth. Love that is not felt by, is not the emotion of, a living being, is all moonshine. Any talk of love abstracted from conscious life—pure, noble life—is a jugglery in words—Cherishing true love, we must be devoted- to a loving beings In fact, the truth is, not merely

that God *has* love, but really God *is* Love. Again, Love, genuine Love, is inherently good!; and as certain as that fact, Love is also profoundly wise. It is no love that is not inseparably, (organically, incorporated with wisdom. Else, it w<pre not love of the soul but mere impulse of the sense. We have heard of the tame bear which, eager to scare away the annoying flies from the fa^e of its sleeping master, hurled a big stone and thus crushed the head! Similarly, we may recall the story of the two women who claimed each *tot* be the mother of a child—how the pretentious one was quite willing to have the babe cut into two parts and divided between the claimants; while the true mother would as readily forego her claim and save the child's life. 'Carry the point,' urges false love; 'save the main issue,' pleads true love. Thus, true love is always wise in the interests of the object of love. The God of Love is the God of Wisdom. Likewise, the God of Love and Wisdom is also the God of Righteousness. Love generates, Wisdom fosters, and Righteousness perfects, the human soul. To the loving God even this sin-stricken soul is dear; to the wise God is manifest the germ of sanctity hid at its core; to the righteous God is owing that the germ grows.

into the fruit of godliness. The God of Righteousness elicits the *Prahlada* (the supreme joy) out of the *Daitya* (the child of gloom). And Religion consists in the realisation, the verified experience, the vivid consciousness, the unbroken continuity, of the joyous sense that this *visvarn*, this sum of all, is desired by Love, designed by Wisdom and accomplished by Righteousness. A life of Worship implies all this. Look at the sunny spectacle of the mother with the babe she loves. She lifts it, washes it, cleanses it, dresses it, anoints it with fragrant scents, kisses it with rapturous smiles, and so on. The child feels and enjoys all this love and gently throws its tiny, tender arms around the mother. That is symbolic of Worship., All the mother does is as much as to say, 'You are my precious darling'; and all the darling does is as much as to say, 'You are my sweet mother/ Here is the out-going and back-coming of Love. Worship is this completing of the circle of Love started by God in. creation. Says the Islamic Scripture: God spake to Mahammad and said,. 'We have made thee for Oursell' God's love goes out for man to return to God through Worship. Thus, there is no separate, independent function super-imposed, but only the reaction of the spirit

with the vow, *Love shall command my love in return.⁷ And that vow is made in Worship. Thus, as the circuit is completed, Love going out in Creation and Love returning in Worship, there is the constancy of holy companionship. With our mundane limitations, the darling child and the human mother keep together but for a brief period and merely at set points. But the intimate relationship between the child-spirit and the Divine Mother is satisfied only when this companionship continues and grows infinitely. Hence, not in occasional happenings and in special providences alone, but all through and always, we have to realise God's presence. The spirit of Worship, glowing with devotion, sees God in everything as the All-enveloping One. There can exist absolutely nothing with which, with the innermost core of which, God is not inseparably associated. Our activity by day, our rest by night, both are in God. And all devotional exercises are methods, not for 'sitting down by God' (*upasana*) once in a way, but for constantly exercising the vivid sense, ceaselessly practising the living presence, of God. How terrific is that situation in *Gajendramoksham*, when, overwhelmed by antagonism, the believer breaks down with Vectfb *ootf atfwdfc KvcB* 3cS* !' ('He

who is avowed to exist, exists He or not!') But there, too, Devotion is not completely foiled. Prostrate faith is combating oppressive doubt even with the weapons of piercing, wounding, agonising experiences, until rejuvenated faith starts up from the unexplored recesses of the soul.

It will do us good to dwell for a short while upon this and another very instructive episode in that *Mahapurāṇam*, a veritable *Divina Comedia*, in which our Heaven-illuminated POTANAMATYA unfolds the mysteries and the miracles of *Bhājati*—the mysteries of the ways and the miracles of the grace of God in the beatification of man.—Gajendra typifies the soul (in Sa'adi's fine phrase) 'snared in the noose of the senses'¹—revelling in pleasures, slipping into the quagmire, struggling for extrication, and invoking intercession. The proud monarch of the vernal woods heedlessly strays into an alien element and is held in bonds by the lord of the transgressed domain. A life-and-death conflict, prolonged over weary years, ensues. His unaided powers completely worsted, and his mind quite distracted by biting regret for indiscrete trespass, the captive wistfully casts about for succour. Whither shall he turn, to whom shall he resort, for relief? With penetrating psychological

insight, the poet-seer sets forth the entire process of this spiritual struggle—the painful awakening, the hard self-straining, the frustration, the prostration, the supplication, the rejuvenation, the redemption. As yet, it is mere regret, not repentance—only the sense of injury to self, not of wrong to the Lord. The mind, however^ turns shortly towards God—again, not to confess guilt but to elicit aid. In sublimest metaphysic set to the melody of sweetest verse, he betakes himself to the praise of the Deity whom he would adore and serve. But in the harrowing hour of spiritual tribulation, poetry or philosophy is but a make-shift substitute for Religion, the soul's intimate⁴ converse' with the Over-soul. "Fancy", observes a Sufi, "the madness of the man who, within full view of the blood-thirsty lion, still loiters *outside* the castle, shouting pious ejaculations—'You are my safety, my shelter, my protection, my stronghold; I take refuge in you, in you I take refuge!'"⁴ Fool, flee for thy life, rush indoors, if thou wouldst be safe and secure.' The voice is ringing with classic phrase; but the lieart is writhing with an •aching void. In the midst of the full-throated pean, Grajendra collapses with an anguished moan. "He that is **reported** to be everywhere and accessible to

all petitioners—exists He or exists He not? " Let us take note that this is not the mood of saucy denial or of crazy doubt; it is the dazed infant's cry amidst the gloom which has veiled the Mother's face. " Where, oh where is He of whom they postulate that He is available unto all, high or humble, that He protects the meek and the lowly, that He turns His eye of compassion on all that approach Him in straits, that He listens to the laments of all that carry their afflictions to Him? Will He not hear, see, mind, draw nigh to, this forlorn one?" From cheery praise to heart-splitting groan, it really means, for the sin-smitten soul, one deeper dip into purgation and thus one closer step to redemption. The situation is unutterably excruciating: annihilation itself would be mercy! Oajendra is ^tupefied like one engulfed in a dreary chasm—above starless, around breathless, underneath bottomless. But it is evidence of Divine mercy that in the spiritual, as in the physical, world the darkest moment of night ushers the first glimpse of dawn into sight. Whisperings from witnesses around and intimations from the ' storied past' behind—God in Nature and God in History—serve to shed a gleam through the gloom—**an ethereal ray from 'the heavenly Flame'—which**

points to the secret door opening inward, out of the dungeon into the shrine. The 'reported' God and the 'recorded' God prelude the 'realised' God : Gajendra is thus vouchsafed *Iswarasannidhanam*—the touch, the thrill, of God in the soul. 'The sleeping springs are awakened', as an Urdu poet puts it; the frozen fount thaws with the returning warmth. Inference yields place to intuition; the Cosmic 'All' becomes the Psychic *Mine'; the style of address changes from He and Him to Thou and Thee : the soul's approach is not through studied praise from a distance but through spontaneous supplication at the Foot-stool. "With energy exhausted, with heart sinking, with senses swooning and body drooping; knowing and owning no haven, no refuge, save Thee, I bring my soul's agony to Thee ; and it befits Thee, *it* is Thy prerogative, to pardon the prostrate penitent; Thou the Supreme One, Thou the Fountain-head of Bounty and Benediction, haste, protect, save." In the dispensation of Providence, *confession' and ⁴'absolution' synchronise to the very moment. Instantly the darkness dissolves, the bonds break, the enemies vanish; and in the golden dawn, with a matin-song, the saved one is seen nestled at the feet of the Saviour. Gaiendra exemplifies oije

type of worshippers or devotees—the sinner saved or rather the strayer reclaimed. Against him stands forth that shining pattern of the other type, that peerless paragon of devotees, * the immortal Prahlada.

Gajendra and Prahlada furnish an impressive parallel in the study of God's variant ways in fulfilling Himself. They are, so to speak, the two sides of the one shield—Gajendra, the side of slime-stained silver which is 'seven-times tried' in the blast-furnace before it is burnished into the mirror of Divine Mercy; Prahlada, the side of pure gold which no acid of 'the world' can corrode and no fire of ⁱ 'the flesh' can consume. From Gajendra to Prahlada it is the soul's ascent from the deep-eroded glen to the sky-piercing peak. Prahlada is the chosen vessel, the consecrated chalice, for the spirit of godliness. His ante-natal vital-plasm itself is impregnated with holiness. Filled with the Unforgettable, he forgets all else. The cardinal principles of morality—humanity, humility, purity, charity, veracity, amity, are in him, not merely touched by emotion into uplifting ideals, but quickened by devotion into spiritual fertilisers. He bears all the time-honoured marks of the God-possessed—soliloquising and sobbing by himself,

singing and laughing with inner transport, now leaping-up in ecstasy, anon stock-still in absorption. His domicile is on those 'shining table-lands to which our God Himself is moon and sun'. He habitually moves amidst, is invariably accompanied by, those empyrean sights and ambrosial airs—those celestial visions and seraphic voices—that eternal Effulgence of which all the lights of the world are an irradiation and that universal Harmony in which all the sounds of the world are attuned into a song celestial. His soul has undergone, as Francis Thompson describes it, 'the heavenly magnetisation by which it points always and unalterably towards God'. He is the incarnation of that 'sanctity' which, according to the same great mystic singer, 'is genius in religion'. Squared to this supreme spiritual strength is his God-assigned task in life. His Heaven-ordained mission is, not merely to confute the erring unbelief which denies God and pronounces worship as inconsequential, but to 'convict' the arrogant egotism which defies God and denounces worship as self-abasing. Invulnerably panoplied, as he fancies, by a heavenly boon against assaults of all imaginable powers and potentates, Hiranyakasyapa⁴ assumes the God' and challenges his son to

vindicate his faith in one higher than the world-controlling father. He ruthlessly subjects the son to every conceivable mode of torment. But the malignant agents of ferocious persecution—flame or flood, stone or steel, hunger or hemlock, cannot scathe or 'quell' the devotee of Hari. Humiliated and infuriated, the 'demon-king'⁷ demands ocular proof of the persistently proclaimed Narayana. "Where exists, in which quarter is to be spied, that phantom of which you incessantly prattle in a servile tone?" "For a certainty," answers the God-illuminated one, "Iswara exists as the one eternal Reality; with a clearness that cannot be missed by any seeing eye, He is manifest everywhere: why this supei-fliious search here or there?" go3oc?c<◇coe&"3off) T\$6Z>S\$*\$XEV&> (Away with all doubt whether here He exists or there He exists not!) This categorical answer is driven home with 'the Ever-lasting Yea'—'«(\$X8^r*o'6X&>osk>' (the Encircling One is implicit, as the ultimate Truth, in all). Let us note, by the way, that Prahlada does not argue with the acumen of the philosopher, but he asserts with the 'authority' of the seer. Again, what mine of meaning is comprised in that appellation of the Most High, *Chakril* It denotes the 'circumambiance', the love-embrace, of the Deity, within which the whole universe rests

ensconced.---Stung to madness by this undaunted assurance of the youth, the heaven-challenging 'Asura' rushes forth, sword in hand, with the cry, " Disclose thy Hari in this pillar of iron, or fall by my sword ! " The serene answer to this mortal threat, " From gods to grass-blades, He permeates all; indubitably He is j\$osr^To©"tfgbcfb—the Indweller of this pillar: Him you shall behold now and here." How the inspired singer of this Divine Lay sends a sanctifying thrill through our souls with the profound observation that, as Prahlada thus proclaims the Immanent God, the entire universe stands, through its myriad denizens, translucent with Divine Immanence ! From all quarters, through all avenues, this holy light of an All-permeating Personality floods in upon the awe-inspiring scene ; " the confession of the lover," observes a Sufi exponent of *Laid va Majnun*, " is confirmed by the voice of the whole world ; to the prayer of the lover, all mankind cries *Amen* !" The God-defier has no foot-hold in a God-indwelt world. Hiranyakasyapa hits with, his haughty might, but reels and sinks to the ground with the supernal rebound. It is a law of the spiritual world **that** blind fury is hurled headlong by its own unbridled momentum. Prahlada, the vision-seer, stands

vindicated. Nor is the God-defier annihilated—that would not be god-like. Forceful egotism implies, goes with, a developed intellect and a vigorous will—themselves qualities of no mean merit. Egotism excised, the residuum is the Lord's. Such is the Divine process of conservation. What erring mortals live and do, the God of grace will ⁱ 'within Himself make pure'.—Gajendra and Prahlada, then, stand for the two main classes of worshippers—both *bhaktas*, both devotees: he who is brought into worship and he who is born into worship—he who proves God's all-saving goodness and he who proclaims God's all-sanctifying holiness—the misguided straggler divinely recovered and rehabilitated and the unflinching standard-bearer divinely habited and honoured.

This brief study of the two typical *bhaktas* imprints on our souls the commanding conviction that God's eternal design of salvation is all-inclusive, and that it is enjoined upon us to subserve that design. The great responsibility is reposed on each soul to labour, through worship and service, to win the whole world for God's Kingdom. To praise, to honour, to glorify God—that is the be-all and the end-all of the worshipper's life: 'Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come!'—that is the sum-total

of the devotee's prayer. This is enjoined on us not merely by Duty but also by Honour—by self-regard, by self-reverence. What is the real position? Between God and the humblest, lowliest son of man, there can be absolutely no divorce. It is God, God alone, God everywhere. And the fulfilment of the purpose of our being consists in rendering back to God what is His by everlasting right—in not shirking from, but cheerfully accepting, our fullest responsibility to ensure His absolute possession of the universe, seeing how unlawful, how reprehensible, it should be to withhold anything from its rightful owner. ⁴ *Isavasyamidam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat'*.

Then, another implication of Worship is that in His love God has created each one of us and has said, 'Thou art my child'. When we come to realise consciously the truth and purpose of our creation, the spontaneous expression of that realisation is the response, 'Yes; Thou art my Parent—Father and Mother in One.' There is absolutely no formality in this; it comes wholly of our realising and acknowledging an eternal fact. God for ever knows that fact; for me Worship marks the stage when I, too, have come to know it. God creates the world and beholds it to be good and

rejoices in it. That is the nature and function of *Anandam*. Man beholds it, too, and rejoices in it h\ his turn and pours forth his own *anandam* through *aradhana*. And even when he attains the stage of absorption, creation is not cancelled as an illusion. No; it is not cancellation but completion. As man is perfected through Worship, he is gifted with a continuous enjoyment of intense, ecstatic communion and companionship with God. The thought of God becomes the vital breath of life; the presence of God shines as a cloudless vision. "Once His gifts I owned; now Him alone." When Mahammad and his two friends lay concealed in a cavern and the enemy's forces came up in hot pursuit, Abu Baker whispered, all in a tremor, * We are only three against a host!' ' Nay, *four* ', spontaneously avers the Prophet of God. *This never-failing One, this ever-entrancing One*, is the God of our Worship.

Let us beware, then, of the illusion that there can be any happening or any occasion not to be related to God. He is no mere casual or even periodical visitor. The song with which we went round this *Mandir* at its consecration the other morning, says, *Purushadheenam kinchinnasthi ; Dai-vadheenam sarvamidam!* That is literally true—no

fit of spiritual adulation or emotional exaggeration. Rather than that He is in all things, it is truer that this all, this *sarvani*, is in God. From within the halo of radiant transfiguration on the holy heights, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore exclaimed in the exulting phrase of Hafiz, 'Bring no lamp into the audience-hall; the Full-moon, my Friend, Himself is shining here !' ⁱ 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy,' says the poet. As we grow, this impression fades away; the golden glow of the dawn pales into the stale day. But as there grows in him the spirit of Worship, man's new experience is summed up thus: ^L *God was around* us in our infancy ; *God is within* us in our maturity; and we commune with God both within and around! ' That is the genuine mark, the real essence, of Worship. Although the tides of the spirit do at times cast us into situations so trying that our faith seems to be dashed into doubt and disbelief, yet the eternal verity remains unaffected, that as the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere and all points are alike related to the centre, so God is related to, God embraces, all equally; all drawn with equal force to that Centre, all integrated with equal cohesion to that Centre, all ranged with equal reciprocity around that Centre.

To realise this oneness in the Holy Spirit is Worship—not to run away from the Centre or to stand detached from the other points comprised in the circle, but, loyal to the Centre as the focus of *Sarvadheenam*, to own that the universe is God's and, therefore, I also belong to God, and hence I should and will, in this subservient position, render my humble all unto God and His universe. Thus, I shall justify my existence and vindicate the Divine in me by the solemn resolve and the strenuous endeavour, 'I will suffer none to be slighted as unprayed-for and uncared-for in God's universe'. For His own part, God presents the whole creation as His blank cheque in my favour, over His own sign-manual. I am unfriended? He says, 'Here is your Companion'⁷. I am helpless? He says, 'Here is your Patron'. I am orphaned? He says, 'Here is your Parent.'⁷ I am sinning? He says, 'Here is your Saviour'. Worship is our 'patented monopoly' of God's love and grace. My daughter, when a girl, happened to say something unkind about me. My mother's rebuke was, 'Why are you so harsh?' The defence was confidently put forth: 'He needs must put up with it all'. The next breath

added the all-sufficing justification, [^]^csbg-[^]^sfce f (for, is not he my own papa ?) That is the noblest achievement of Worship—the acknowledgment, the acquisition, of God as the Supreme Parent, who is everything unto the child and from whom, therefore, the child can claim all consideration, all indulgence. Surely, out of the mouths of babes is wisdom spoken! Say, ssrsr** (Thou art our Father) andtfssjS?&(our salutations unto Thee); and there-upon you claim instruction, protection, redemption, benediction. Cognate with this is another story. My first niece, about five years of age, was seated by her little sister who was being nursed by their mother; it was the mango season; she had been given a mango fruit; and as she sucked in the nectar, she exclaimed in joy, ^ £ ^ & > 3g&^©a^ra;\$1b ^tf^a (this is just like little sister sucking in milk from mamma!) Blessed truth that! Every fruit is *amritam* (nectar itself) from the bosom of the Divine Mother; and the essence of every gift is to be imbibed like milk from the mother. How profoundly true is the observation made by a certain devout soul that the spirit of the worshipper, bowing or kneeling or prostrate before the Deity, is in a posture identical with that of the child when it reclines on the maternal bosom as 'the spring

and fount' of its life ! Thus, become a child, and Worship becomes spontaneous. From babyhood we have been taught the roundness of this globe. But in the geography of the spirit, the round earth is verily the bosom of the Divine Mother. Geography calls this spherical orb the Earth: Religion calls it /the Mother's Bosom.' Worship is this-child-spirit of repose on that Bosom.

Indeed, my sisters and brothers, how pitiably bankrupt I find myself in the store of right sentiment and the stock of apt expression to appraise the priceless blessings of Divine Worship—that Worship which traces the soul's translation into the heart of God; that Worship which fosters the soul into its second-birth in Eternal Truth and Infinite*Love; that Worship which begets the sense of man's divine sonship, endowed with a princely heritage and honoured with a royal commission from his God; that Worship which, through the spousal vow of the soul to the Lord of Holiness, becomes the cradle of conscience and the nursery of righteousness! Worship exalts the cross over the crown and makes the monarch kneel to the martyr. Worship generates that spirit of ' catholic wholeness' which cultivates, with equal ardour, reverence for the highest and regardfulness for the.

humblest. Worship draws the currents of creativeness into the soul of the worshipper, and directs the recreated soul to recreate the world. Worship, which is antecedent to all creeds and theologies, struck that primeval note of praise in the human heart of which all later hymnology is the amplification and set up that ancient oracle in the human soul of which all later prophecy is the fulfilment. To the man of Worship, with his purity and serenity, communion with the Beautiful and the Good comes congenial and exhilarating' like morning-dews and mountain-airs to the healthful body. Worship, as it trains the human will in the ways of God, reveals the love which formulates the laws of nature and thus urges man to achieve his destiny through selfless service in love. To Worship, the Author and Preserver of the physical world is endeared as the fostering light and the bracing atmosphere of the growing character. To still the stormy passion, to quell the disruptive discord, to refresh the wearied spirit, to cheer the listless" heart, to widen the narrow outlook, to serve out the feast of Inexhaustible Mercy, to strike up the music of Eternal Hope—these are the holy offices of Worship. The 'alchemy' of Worship transmutes the hearth into the altar, the school into the

in

sanctuary, the mill into the granary, the prison into the hospital, the sentinel's post into the steward's cabin, the prodigal's confessions into the son's confidences. As creations of the genius of Worship, the grandest edifice is a cathedral, the noblest monument is a mausoleum, the sublimest verse is a psalm, the pleasantest journey is a pilgrimage, the happiest assembly is a congregation. In a word, Worship, which is the freest outpouring of the human heart in thankfulness and the intensest yearning of the human soul for communion, makes man the first-born of the Father's Love and the eldest child in the Father's Home. The great *sadhak* of the Worship of the *Paramamath* has pictured, in a charming analogue, the spirit of Worship as the entire effacement of the sense-bewitched self, with its desires and cravings, until the soul learns completely to confide, and joyfully to possess its all, in God. Man's career in life ought to be, we are taught, like the railway-journey of a little child—with no ticket to purchase, no berth to reserve, no luggage to book, no provisions to carry; seated on the mother's lap, nourished from the mother's bosom, secure in the mother's arms, restful under the mother's smiles, the darling cherub is conveyed to

its destination, which is, after all, the maternal mansion; enjoying the freedom from care that a sage would covet and commanding a solicitionsness of service that a prince would envy. Truly, the full formation of this child-spirit is the perfection of the *sadhan* of Worship.

So, let me conclude by repeating, 'Acknowledge this Divine Motherhood and cultivate this child-spirit of Worship'. This *Mandir* has been constructed and consecrated just for that purpose. It is meant for one and all who desire to approach and embrace the Mother. Here is an open door, day and night, for the Worship of the Mother. Enter at any time and hold your own sweet 'converse' with the Mother. The only appropriate and adequate prayer here shall be, 'I want my Mother, my All-in-all \ By all means, come and use the *Mandir*, one and .all; welcome—thrice-welcome. There is nothing sinister, nothing dangerous, here. Only one condition is laid down: as we repair here for Worship, whether in small bands or in large companies, let us remember that to worship the Mother truly is to love every child of that Mother heartily. Says the Persian poet, 'The sons of Adam are all limbs one of another; for they are of **one substance**¹: issuing out of the one Spirit and

children of the one Parent. Forsake man the brother, and God the Father is forsaken. It has been said of Dr. Johnson that, driving out on a very rainy day, he felt pity for a poor ill-clad woman plodding along the road with her baby in arms. He took the mother and the child into his carriage, but sternly forbade all crooning and caressing. After a while, the woman forgot the injunction and began to fondle her darling with the usual 'nursery nonsense \ A warning was growled ; a brief pause, and a second offence ; and the lexicographer opened the door and turned out the woman and her senseless jargon. He could pity the woman but could not tolerate the mother ; and as he rejected motherhood, he ejected all humanity. In the same fashion, we would have the Creator but would leave out His creature ; and as we reject the creature, we eject the Creator. ' Love me, love my darling,' demands woman the mother ; ' Love Me, love My darlings,'⁷ enjoins God the Parent. And the highest, fullest and noblest admission of this heaven-created brotherhood is that we *pray together*. Hence, Shylock repudiates all true brotherhood with the Christian in sternly declaring, ' I will not *pray* with you '. In united prayer to God is the profoundest acknowledgment

that all are brothers in God. A prisoner for years, his original name long since forgotten and himself known only as No. so *and so*, Jean Valjean gives to the Man of God, the good Bishop, his name and asks whether the Bishop knows it. The noble reply is, "That, I see, is your man-given name; but I already knew you by your God-given name—*my brother.*" Thus, although familiar to us by no announced name, every woman is sister and every man is brother, because of the One Supreme Mother. Recognise the paramount bliss of this Worship and the beauty and the duty which it implies. Come and worship ye here as often as the child-spirit moveth in you! The Mother's richest blessings be with all Her children! And my heart's profoundest gratitude is my offering to Her for this dear House of Worship which She has vouchsafed to our City, as if in gracious fulfilment of my devoutest dream.

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam I

SERVICES

AND

SERMONS

I

SERVICE*

WITH SEEMON ON

'ENJOY HIM ALONE'.

(1925)

UDBODHANA.

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

God is Love itself—tender and endearing Love! What other invitation do we need, what other appeal can be made to the heart—the awaiting heart, the yearning heart, the throbbing heart, the hungering heart—so irresistibly attractive, so absorbingly engaging, as this one supreme spell, this *mahamantra*—'*Brahma Kripahi Kevalam*'? God is Love itself; and it is in the lap of Love that we are here seated. This is, of all days, the Day' of Love, the day on which Love sprang up from the heart of man even as Love shone forth from all quarters of the firmament, Love reaching out to love as they, the devotees of Love, met in that

* At the Cocauada Brahma Samaj on the 7th anniversary day of the Foundation of the Brahma Samaj by Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (23-1-25).

Tabernacle of Love and chanted, ' *Brahma Kripahi Kevalam* !'. God is Love itself ; and as the God of Love, He evokes our admiration, He commands our affection, He enraptures us into worship, and He thus takes hold on our whole being. Adore that God, the only Adorable, even because to adore Him is to live truly, to live in love; and to live in love is to be immortal. This message was proclaimed not by human voice but by Divine *Vani*, even through the prayerful souls and the joyful hearts of those blessed adorers, our progenitors of the spirit, who met on the memorable day of universal rejoicing over the grant of the heavenly charter guaranteeing life immortal to every devout soul. This is the day, therefore, unto us, not of national festival alone, but of universal pentecost, when in the untaught vernacular of the spirit, ever understood by the waiting soul, the God of holy love speaks through every feeling heart. Him the God of Love—aye, that is language all too poor—Him the Love-God and the God-Love, Him we are come here to worship—not merely to praise, or only to glorify, or to sing hosannas unto, but to worship with our whole being, our full being, gathered to and absorbed in our dear God. Sisters and brethren—yes, those ever-sweet terms are sweet as nectar,

sweet beyond our humble conception, on this day ; for now the fraternal spirit greets the fraternal and in the sweet household of the One Divine Parent soul rejoices in soul as sister or brother. We are to realise, to enjoy with the intensity of a vision, that it is not in a man-built room but in a God-indwelt shrine that we are met to glorify Him and revere Him, as He alone can and ought to be revered, as the Lord Supreme of the heart and the Spouse Divine of the soul. And as we perceive, realise and enjoy His holy presence, His sweet and charming presence, why need we tell ourselves in feeble words that we are blessed ? Truly and verily we are blessed that self-same moment when we feel that God is with us, in us, around us and above us —everywhere.

ABADHANA.

Thou the All-true, the All-knowing, the supremely Blissful, the Infinite One ; Thou the All-cheering, the All-sustaining, the inextinguishable Light of life ; Thou the eternally Peaceful, the everlastingly Serene One ; Thou the One only without a second ; Thou the All-pure, the All-holy, the All-beautiful One ! We prostrate ourselves before Thee, and we find our bliss in praising

and glorifying Thee. Not because Thou hast demanded it as a tribute, not because Thou hast enjoined it as a duty, not because the church has prescribed it as a discipline, not because the congregation has ordained it as a testimony, but wholly because the heart thirsts for it and the soul hungers for it, are we here to worship Thee. And as we worship Thee, we learn to appraise the supreme worth of Love as it dwells eternally in Thyself, as it is poured forth ceaselessly from Thyself, as it is gathered increasingly into Thyself and as it is perfected and sanctified unto Thyself. Thus we feel, oh Thou Supreme One, there are realities surpassing the reach of the subtlest thought and the swiftest imagination, transcending the bounds of the keenest insight and the vastest comprehension. And as we find ourselves to be not merely standing face to face in Thy presence but elated and transported into one intense rapture of love, ours is the beatitude of absorbing communion and ecstatic enjoyment. If we speak, it is as the heart bounds with joy; and if we utter forth words, it is as the soul is jubilant to know and to make known how we rejoice, how **blessed** we feel, in Thee. If at this moment the **whole universe should melt away into mere mist,**

should vanish as an idle dream, yet we would rejoice, as we knew, that the universe, seemingly consumed, was resumed into Thee; and then we should enjoy communion with Thee all the closer and sweeter with the veil of the earth withdrawn. Oh! Thou dear One, as we thus hold Thee rapturously close to our hearts, what words can describe the overwhelming intensity of our enjoyment? If Thou wert always and everywhere as Thou art now and here, so vivid and so certain unto us, oh, how blessed would life be—not only with a sure and secure warrant of truth enduring and love prevailing, but aglow with that ecstasy wherein the two may be twin only as the enjoyed and the enjoyer but fused into one in reciprocal rapture! Dear God, I confess before Thee and before these, Thy worshippers, that Thou art indeed oppressively sweet, too sweet for human capacity, too sweet for human understanding, too sweet for human expression, but—blessed be Thou!—not too sweet for human adoration. As we adore Thee, we know and enjoy Thee as increasingly, inexhaustibly sweet, and we are drawn deeper and deeper into adoring Thee as the only Adorable. Thou adorable God, Thou drawest forth our adoration through Thy sweetness. Thou sweet God, Thou dost win

our adoration even with Thy gift of sweetness. Thou art sweet to the heart, and the heart clings close to Thee. Thou art sweet to the soul, and the soul forgets itself in Thee. Clinging to Thee in heart-love and merging in Thee in soul-rapture, we worship Thee, our sweet God of holy love. Blessed be Thy name ! As we bring the heart with its love and the soul with its adoration, we leap out of this little self into Thy Supreme Self. And as we enjoy Thee, the Immanent One, not the sterile One but the fecund One, with unnumbered kindred spirits likewise gathered into Thy parental embrace, we feel we are in Heaven itself. Thou art our Haven and Thou art our Heaven—the Haven whither our pilgrimage tends to union and the Heaven wherein our pilgrimage ends in union. The whole life is thus revealed as one perpetual process of attraction to Thee, of adoration of Thee, of rejoicing in Thee, Thou adorable One. Emerging out of Thy own *anandantj* Thou dost set to the tune of Thy *ananclam* the whole universe with its myriad contents—setting, it adance with the celestial symphony of love. And once again stepping out of Thy loving lap and yet irresistibly held within the embrace of thy sanctifying smile, we group ourselves around Thee and chant the sacred psalm and dance the holy rhythm

of Thy love. Thus Thou art the God of Love and the God of Bliss. Hallowed be Thy name ! Words are outlets but for which the heart would throb with emotion beyond endurance. And in these humble, halting accents, we would disclose unto Thee the secret, cherished joys of our hearty Thou art our acknowledged Lord, our adored Lord, our eternally wedded Lord. We render our hearts entirely and absolutely unto Thee. Blessed be this offering even with Thy gracious acceptance! As we offer our hearts unto Thee, we see that this spirit of self-offering is the witness within us of Thy gracious acceptance of us ! Who are we, how could we desire, to bring our hearts unto Thee, were it not for the eternal attraction Thou hast established between our souls and Thy grace ? What can our souls wish for, what can satisfy the yearnings of the spirit, except Thy grace—Thy grace which consists not merely in the healing power of redemption but also and essentially in the captivating charm of holiness which irrevocably weds all hearts to the dear Lord ? A soul that bows before Thy holy altar in the spirit of the beggar-maid, is dowered with a wealth that will never exhaust and endowed with a prosperity that can never decline. Thus to adore Thee is to enrich and exalt ourselves;

and in this enrichment and exaltation through Thy divine grace, our lowly heads and humble hearts bow before Thee, even with the sacred weight of that grace. Our proper place is at Thy footstool; our dear abode is in Thy eternal and holy peace, *mangalam*. We bless Thee; we glorify Thee. Hallowed be Thy name ! Thus rendered one with Thee, seemingly making up to Thee but really finding ourselves in Thee, we feel we are all of Thee, in complete union with one another in Thee. Every star of light shining in the firmament, every blade of grass bedewed with pearly dew, every ripple of the brook, every whistle of the wind, every smile of the flowery meadow, every throb of the heart, every lisp of the child, every benediction of the parent, every rapture of the lover—all join with us in pointing to Thy glory. At this very hour, as the shades of evening close in, all creatures, it is said, repair to their nests, their lairs, their abodes and their homes; but we feel that they all retire only into Thy love, the whole creation converging into fellowship in the sanctuary of that love. And there we rejoice to find ourselves, our hearts abounding in love, with no desire but for peace and good-will and no longing but for praise and adoration. Thus we are gathered to praise Thee and adore Thee.

Thou art truly our own dear God, wholly giving Thyself unto us and completely resuming us unto Thee, our good God, our beloved God, our holy God. We render our hearts and souls unto Thee. Blessed be Thou now and for ever !

HYMN.—*Koniyada daramey ninnu kuvalayavinutha*
(Telugu)

Did we presume to praise Thee and glorify Thee in the full measure, how humiliating a confession of our utter ignorance of Thee we should make ! Who can praise Thee as Thou oughtest to be praised ? Yet we feel irresistibly impelled to praise Thee, since Thou art the supremely praiseworthy Deity. Thou art the God evoking all praise ; and our hearts are drawn into the song of praise even with the impelling attraction of Thee, the All-loving, the All-charming God. It is not for what Thou hast done, pictured and figured forth in the universe, but for the indescribably, immeasurably, ail-surpassingly sweet and charming Spirit that Thou art to the grace-lit soul, that we praise Thee. It is not the stars that elicit our praise, not the flowers that evoke our praise, not the rainbow that impels our praise, not the rosy morn nor the golden eve that calls forth our praise ; but it is the

<eharm, the radiance and the glory of which these are but a faint expression and a dim reflection as revealed in our sweetest communion with Thee and our enraptured experience of Thee. It is the sweetness of that charm, radiance and glory, oh Thou our dear God, that makes the praise of Thee both a relief and a rapture—a relief for the heart that throbs for it and a rapture for the heart that enjoys it. In praising Thee, do we not truly commend and exalt ourselves? For, how could we praise Thee, if we were not of Thy Spirit—the offspring, the very children, of Thy Holy Spirit? This self-reverence in us, generated by Thee, turns to Thee in the reverence of worship; and worship voices itself in Thy praise and glory. Thou art thus not merely a God creating and j^rotecting, perpetuating and perfecting, but the all-permeating, all-including, all-embracing, all-enriching, all-sanctifying God, as receiving our hearts' love and our souls' adoration and praise. The whole universe joins this chorus of praise.. The sovereign upon the throne humbles himself before Thee. The hind in the hovel uplifts his soul towards Thee. The mother, in tender sweetness, smiles forth Thy love. And the child, in lucent trust, returns that smile in the laugh of Thy love. Aye, all, all join

with us in thus praising and glorifying Thee. And none, oh Saviour, none praiseth Thee, glorifieth Thee, more than this sinner, even because he is the vilest of sinners. All else may praise Thee for what they have enjoyed. I, the sinner, praise Thee for what I have suffered. Yes, Thee I praise for what I have suffered. If the sinner did not suffer, the Saviour were asleep. If the sinner did not writhe in anguish, the Saviour should be callous in His sanctity. For this I praise Thee that through the blast of penitent suffering Thou cleanseest the sin-stained prodigal into the redeemed child of God. I praise Thee that Thou wouldst not turn away from me or spurn me afar from Thee in Thy supreme holiness but wouldst send Thy piercing rays of saving grace even into my hardened, darkened heart of sin and thus elicit its hidden possibilities of repentance, the rock struck evermore with the bolt of grace to draw forth the baptismal spray of contrition. And thus, with my sisters and brethren here, all engaged in praising Thee for what Thou hast been to them and done for them, each brings: her or his own tribute of thanks, we form one choral fraternity far praise and glory unto Thee and compress all our praise and all our glorification of Thee most intensely **and**

vividly into the one ever-dear chant ' *Jai Sachchidananda Harey!* ', ' *Jai Sachchidananda Harey!* ' Glory, glory, glory unto Thee, the Truth and Substance, the Wisdom and Light, the Bliss and Beatitude of the Whole, of the All! Blessed be Thou now and for ever! And thus praising and glorifying Thee, completely and whole-heartedly commending ourselves to Thee, submitting ourselves to Thy behests and dedicating ourselves to Thy purposes, we invoke Thy strength, grace and guidance and Thy sanctifying benediction as we chant, ' *Asathoma sadgamaya, thamasma jyothirganiaya, mrithyormamritham gamaya ! Aaviraveermayedhi Budra yaththey dahshinam muham thena mampahi nithyam !* ' That is the bond—the vow—of our covenant with Thee—*nithyam, nithyam*. It has no termination, no cessation, no stipulation attaching to it. It is the eternal covenant unto which there can be no qualifying clause of condition and consideration. It is the eternal covenant of the wedlock of the human soul to the Divine. And who has the temerity to pronounce a divorce to it, the indivorceable, indissoluble, eternal? Thou art eternal, and Thy love is **eternal**. **Eternal**, too, is the **vow**, the **pledge**, the

covenant, of dedication we now make with Thee.
 Bless it with the blessing of Thy grace ! *Om!*
Thath Sath!

AVAHANA.

Thou God of time and eternity ! Thou hast meant us for eternity. Yet Thou hast called time into existence as our altar-stair unto eternity. Thou hast willed that even through days and seasons we should pass beyond time unto the limitless realm of eternity. Such is Thy marvellous dispensation that eternity, though without the least limitation, yet figures itself before our thoughts and brings Thee and Thy presence home to us in and through days and seasons. It is the occult virtue of Thy eternal life that it can thus reveal itself through the life-incidents, occupations, interests, problems of Thy myriad creatures. And as Thou hast designed and ordained, in Thy infinite mercy, to train us and develop us through the disciplines and the devotions of days and seasons, we adore Thee, the Eternal One, even through festivities and sacraments, according to our humble computation of days and seasons. With this adoration, we thank Thee for this holy day and this joyful season. And as we meet here with the

intensest eagerness to rejoice in Thee, to bless ourselves through communion with Thee, do Thou vouchsafe in Thy boundless mercy that our desire be abundantly fulfilled even with the boundless bounty of Thy benediction. This sinner, this criminal, this moping mole in Thy creation—even unto him is granted the privilege to rejoice, because of the gleam of hope Thou, in Thy mercy and grace, never sufferest to be quenched, to be wholly darkened into gloom, even in the most sordid—even the hope that Thou hast created me and will, therefore, never forsake me. In this hope, I venture to accept the invitation of these, my sisters and brethren, Thy children, to speak of Thee as the Dear One of all. Bless this hope and this utterance with the blessing of Thy mercy and grace.

UPADESAMU.

Commenting in his Autobiography upon the second part of the opening verse of the *Isopanishad*, *Thenathyakthena bhunjeedha*, the God-illuminated Maharshi says: The holy sage of the Upanishad tells us, 'Enjoy what He has given to thee.' And the Maharshi puts the question, 'What is it He has given to thee?'; and with the thrilling joy of

personal experience he exclaims, 'Why, God **has** given unto thee Himself—Himself has **God** given unto thee ! And He desires that we should enjoy Him.' That; is the gift of God through the Brahma Samaj. Not that He has given the gift only to the Brahmos. They would be the worst of sectaries and the most hardened of unbelievers, if they ever imagined that God gave Himself only unto them. But, again, they would be the most pitiable of the misled, if they did not feel that the supreme dispensation of the Brahma Samaj consists in this, namely, that in a measure which knows no stint, in a spirit which harbours no doubt, with a completeness which admits of no qualification and with an absoluteness which provides for no exception, the Brahma Samaj has been granted the grace to know and to declare that God is the sovereign Gift unto every soul in all ages and in all countries. All the approaches and avenues to the worship of the One Supreme God that went before the days of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy and all the expressions and confessions of the same faith since his days, find a point of meeting, a channel of confluence, in that life-mission, that inspired message, of the Rajah, namely, that it is both possible for, and obligatory on, every person to worship the Supreme One without ceremonial

limitations, without conventional substitutes. That is the saving gospel vouchsafed by God through what we call the Brahma Samaj. The honoured Ranade might say—and he was not wrong in saying—that the Rajah was only the nineteenth-century successor unto an unbroken line of precursors who might all be accepted as the founders of the Theistic Church. Yet the Theistic Church, of which he was the rallying-point and the radiant source differs from all previous dispensations even as the full-fledged life differs from the antecedent stages of existence. Different not in the sense of 'diverse' but in the sense of 'higher and ampler,' the Brahma Samaj is the Theistic Church into which is infused all the inspiration of the past and out of which must proceed all the illumination of the future. As I say this, oh? do not think—I need hardly warn you not to think—that Ram Mohan was the Brahma Samaj, or Maharshi, or Brahmananda, or Sastri Mahasaya, or any other revered worthy, or even all of them put together. No ; the Brahma Samaj is the Dispensation of God which, necessarily limited and bounded in and by its chosen prophets and elected apostles, reveals itself in progressive stages. The kernel, the vital seed, the nurturing tap-root of the whole is, however, there in the inner spirit of

the Brahma Samaj. And that is the gospel that God has given and will give of Himself unto every man. All the distinguishing and soul-satisfying tenets of the Brahma Samaj are but natural corollaries, logical sequels, unto that one fundamental principle of the Samaj.

When God gives Himself to us, it needs no stretch of imagination to perceive what it is that we get therein. Rather, it would be more to the point to ask ourselves what it is that we do not get, that we lack then. All the vital needs and essential requisites, the profoundest intuitions and the loftiest aspirations, the amplest sympathies and the richest services of man—all, all and more, immeasurably beyond that all, we find compressed in this one gift—God giving Himself unto one and all. And truly this is the most wonderful of gifts—a gift that makes the receiver divine ! Herein lies one fundamental distinction between a gift and a present. A gift is possible only between kindred spirits. He that gives and he that receives are made one in the gift. Otherwise it would be only a present, a favour, a charity. A gift is that which makes the giver one with the receiver, even as the receiver becomes one with the giver, through the act of giving and receiving. That is the essence of a

gift. As he does often, Emerson takes us to the heart of the matter when he observes, " The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me,, correspondent to my flowing unto him." We never ask why a gift is given. We never ask what it is intended for. It is in itself self-explained, self-justified, because it carries with it its own end and purpose. The end is that giver and receiver would, through the gift, realise their oneness; even as the purpose is to disclose that oneness. In every gift the giver gives himself and the receiver realises the giver. Say, I make you a gift. If at once that gift did not make you a permanent factor of my life and I did not become an inseparable element in your life, that gift should be a failure as a gift; it would be a mere memento. A gift is a vital, living object, not a mechanical thing. Its life, its essence, consists in this that giver and receiver are knit together by it. Thus, the vital link between God and man is that God is the giver and man is the receiver; and thus, God and man know and appraise each other as one. How can I receive a gift from God but as the God of Love? How can God be a gift unto me unless He is my God? Love is (Emerson again) " the genius and god of gifts," and from love alone we can receive a gift. Another point is: a present

is to be used, while a gift is to be enjoyed. A present is used to bring some other pleasure, while a gift is enjoyed for its own sake. As God gives Himself to us as a gift, He is not to be employed for any other purpose than the enjoyment of Himself. A third idea is : a present is used with the calculating consciousness of its use ; a gift is enjoyed only as the enjoyer forgets himself in its enjoyment. Who can enjoy a thing and yet be conscious of himself? Thus, as God gives Himself unto us, we enjoy Him as a gift only as we forget ourselves, lose ourselves, annihilate ourselves as separate entities, in the enjoyment of God. Sweet-souled Sa'adi has said: " As I was entering the garden, the friend said, ' Fetch me, as you return, a few flowers from the garden.' I went in ; I enjoyed the garden. When I remembered my friend's request, I found myself outside the garden." The memory of a separate entity, the recollection of another object—that was incompatible with the enjoyment itself. As enjoyment ceased, memory came up to the surface. In the enjoyment itself he could not remember. In remembering the friend, he lost the enjoyment. Also, let us incidentally remind ourselves that, even as God gives *Himself* unto us as a gift, nothing, in fact, is given by Him

except as a gift; and we are forbidden from any word except to say, 'Whatever Thou givest I receive; and as I receive Thee and Thy gifts, I render myself unto Thee; and in thus giving and receiving Thou and I do become one in truth.' These are the terms of every gift granted unto us by God. The gift can be a gift only when it is enjoyed in and for itself; and enjoyment is possible only when the enjoyer loses himself in the enjoyment. Finally, as the enjoyer loses himself in the enjoyment, he lives in the giver, because a gift has no significance except as the gift, the portion, the substance, the essence, of the giver, aye, no existence for the receiver, in fact, except as an expression of the giver. And as, in enjoying a gift, we must forget and lose ourselves, this forgetting and losing comes to be only a negative name for living in the giver. Where do I forget and lose myself, and why? I am not eliminated but only taken up, assumed, monopolised, possessed wholly and completely; and that is why I forget myself. This, absorption, it is clear, must be somewhere and in some one. Thus I lose myself in the giver; **and he** who loses himself **in** the giver becomes, according to the Science of the Spirit, integrated with **the giver**. **There can be no losing in the Infinite Spirit**

except by being incorporated in the Spirit through time and through eternity. Thus there is here no losing of the self except by way of being integrated in God. And thus it all comes to be a complete circle of blessing: 'From Him, of Him, with Him, unto Him and in Him from eternity to eternity.' God is our gift. We must enjoy Him. And as we enjoy Him, we must lose ourselves in Him. Further, such is the wonderful alchemy of enjoyment that with every single occasion of enjoyment we are enlarged, expanded and made fitter for intenser enjoyment. If thus every single experience of enjoyment fits us for larger enjoyment, this is the same as saying that enjoyment is growth. And if there is the growth, where, again, is the losing? The seeming loss is a real gain; and as we lose ourselves, we lose not the real, central self but only the encasing self that the enjoyment might find a freer and larger scope for expansion. As Emerson has said, life is a circle which, from being a ring imperceptibly small, rushes out on all sides into newer and larger circles, and that, without end. That is the whole geometrical expansion—so to speak, the graphic presentation of the evolution—of life under the grace of God. Life is a self-evolving circle and, therefore, it is that there is an inner throat

which keeps it growing and enlarging. It is true of all healthy life that it is a life of enjoyment. For, as Carlyle observes, the true test of health is that you are not aware that you have a body at all. The moment you feel that you have a body, your health has suffered. Therefore, a life of enjoyment is a life of growth; and unto this there is no limit. The so-called losing in God is a growth in the Eternal God; and were it otherwise, would it be a gift worthy of God or worth taking from God? Where God once loves, He loves for ever. What God once grants He grants for ever. It knows no termination. It is an eternal gift from the Eternal God. And, therefore, we are eternal enjoyers of God. Ours is an eternal life of enjoyment; because, as enjoyers, we owe our enjoyment to the Eternal God. God has made me His eternal enjoyer. And finally, as the Giver gives and as the receiver receives, it means enjoyment; and this process means growth; and growth means further enjoyment and further growth. Then, what does it come to? The enjoyment is enjoyment by the Giver Himself. He would not give a gift that He would not enjoy. Who would make a gift of something which was unseemly, unsavoury, to himself? With God, it is the enjoyment of enjoyment. Man is only a co-enjoyer with God; and yet with

this difference: I the man enjoy the gift; while God enjoys my enjoying it. Now we have the full meaning of that Upanishadic text known to us all which tells how two lovely birds related to each other are seated on the same branch and the one enjoys the sweet fruit and the other sees and enjoys. Therein is God's eternal self-abnegation, beneficence and goodness; and therein unto man is the triple guarantee of eternity, enjoyment in eternity and enjoyment of God in eternity. We enjoy; we enjoy God; and we enjoy God eternally; and in our enjoyment of Him eternally does God enjoy Himself. What need we more? Do I want truth and wisdom? I have my God. Do I want purity and holiness? My God. Do I want strength and stamina? My God. Do I want company and comradeship? My God. Do I want wealth and prosperity? My God. For everything, there is my God—my God, who makes me the heir of the past and the purveyor to the future; my God, who makes me *one*, a definite unit and not a negligible fraction, in His vast family. This enjoyment of God—do not call it life. Life is only the process of enjoyment. The gift is God. And as we enjoy Him more and more, we see that it is a gift with a marvellous virtue never, never decreased. It cannot

decrease, but it increases, with enjoyment. All other things abate with use ; but this heavenly gift increases with enjoyment. God, as He gives Himself, grants us that which is imperishable, inexhaustible, interminable, inexpressibly sweet, indescribably engaging, ineffably enrapturing.

Gladness, then, is the only spirit proper unto us in life—not hilarity; not the mere impulse of excited merriment; but the opposite of sadness. We may be pensive ; we may be solemn; we may be, at times, grieved, pained or depressed. But sadness is distinguishable from these as darkness is from eclipse. Darkness sees no plan in existence. Darkness cannot be in the light of the sun. Pensive-ness—a dash, a streak, of grief—there might be; but sadness is unwarranted in the Kingdom of God. For, sadness is the darkness of spirit; and darkness and spirit are no more homogeneous, no more reconcilable, than night and day. The God of Grace gifts Himself unto man in a spirit of gladness, *mangalam*. In the realisation of God there is no other reciprocity of feeling possible between soul and soul than each soul pronouncing the self-same benediction, *mangalam*, upon all.

This is the gift that the Brahma Samaj has, not brought, but pointed to us. The Brahma

Samaj, as a church, as a congregation, as a community, only points, shows, discloses. But it is the Brahmo individually that must receive it, retain it and enjoy it. Thus it is that the Brahmo is to the Brahma Samaj the witness, and the Brahma Samaj is to the Brahmo the verification. I witness it as a Brahmo ; and the Brahma Samaj verifies it for me. It verifies itself through me as one definite, concrete witness. Thus this gift is not unto the Brahma Samaj except in and through and for each Brahmo. And as the reciprocity indicates, this gift is unto each Brahmo for the sake of, and unto the vital existence of, the Brahma Samaj. The Brahma Samaj verifies it for me; but only when there is the inner witness in me do I feel invigoratingly reassured as it is verified in the Brahma Samaj. Thus God is a gift unto every man for himself and unto humanity through every man for the eternal weal of the whole of humanity. This gospel is the gift of the Brahma Samaj. Let us receive it with all the solemnity, reverence, gratitude and gladness appropriate to it.

PBAEDHANA.

Thou art the *Mangaladatha*, the Boon-giver, the Gift-maker of supreme bliss. Thou hast brought

us into being with the sole object even of imparting Thy own beatific self unto us. Therein lies the inmost truth of Thy love that Thy love can create only *anandam* and come out in *anandam** alone. Creation were impossible except in and from *anandam*. Thou hast not meant us to be machines but created us as the children of the Spirit. Aye, *anandam* is the only purpose and characteristic of Thy whole creation. *Mangaladatha*, we feel it is beyond the power of our expression to thank Thee and the only thanks possible are to beseech Thee more and more to quicken in us the sense, the realised experience, of this blessing of Thine that Thou hast given Thyself unto us that we may enjoy Thee and, enjoying Thee, find our eternal bliss in Thee. Oh, grant that every hindrance to it might be unrelentingly swept away. Be the very chords of our hearts torn and snapped to pieces, and be our eyes dimmed of vision and plucked from off their sockets, if once they eclipse Thy glory from us. Grant, we beseech Thee, that we might ever be prepared, yearning and longing to receive in an ever-increasing measure this blessing of Divine enjoyment that we might thus be in Thy company, of Thy fellowship and within Thy embrace for ever. Bless all those from whom we

have derived direction and help in this our pilgrimage of grace. Bless all those unto whom Thou hast designed that we should be as humble signposts and guiding-lights. Vouchsafe that from realm to realm, from age to age, this message of the Brahma Samaj might spread till all should feel themselves equal partners and participators in this supreme enjoyment and that from east and west and north and south and from all climes, out of every heart and every home, there might go forth one eternal chant: *Ekamevadwitheeyam Brahma, Sachchidananda Harey, Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !* And thus receiving Thee as the One and living in Thee as one, all in one, may we grow into Thy perfection and be the reciprocators and reproducers of Thy love ! Blessed be Thou now and for ever !

ASEESH.

May the God of Light lead us, the God of Wisdom illumine us, the God of Love cherish us, the God of Holiness sanctify us and the God of Bliss exalt us into the ecstasy of enjoyment! Be His name sung, His praise chanted, His Kingdom established everywhere, all over this universe !

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

Oml Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih Om !

II

RELIGION AND KNOWLEDGE.*

(1907)

It is a mere truism to say that man is a composite being, endowed with divers powers and faculties in the development of which he lays in a stock of knowledge comprising a number of facts or a set of general principles. Man, as a scientist, observes the trend or tendencies of objects, whence he deduces certain laws constituting scientific knowledge. The basic assumption of this research is that every object or occurrence is according to some law. The immediate aim of all scientific inquiry is to ascertain the mode or operation of the various laws to which the world conforms and to classify them as gravitation, combination, conservation, correlation, evolution *et cetera*. All the sciences agree in testifying to the existence of one supreme **plan** which takes in the whole universe. History was at one time imagined to be a number of casual

* Sermon at a special Service in connection with the Third Northern Circars Students' Conference, Cocanada.

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occurrences and happenings. Later, it was surmised to be a series of loosely connected events. Next, it was realised that the so-called great was the aggregate of the so-called small. Proceeding further, it was discovered that the succession of various events was not out of mere chance but due to some clearly-laid ground-plan—co-operation, combination, corporation; that History, too, was a science in which chance had no place. Ultimately, it has been recognised that, viewed as a whole, the same influences are at work in the histories of the several nations ; and also it has been discerned that not only are the general principles fundamentally the same but even the details are largely similar. The particular forms or methods may vary in different ages and countries. Yet the main processes and the ultimate objects are very much the same. Thus it has been with all other branches of knowledge, too. In mathematics it is amazingly the same story. At first it was understood to be a number of abstract figures and symbols ; but later it has come to signify a series of fundamental principles, so that the mathematician's arc spells the astronomer's orbit. Abstract Mathematics thus stands merely as the background of numerous ratios and relations which impart uniformity to

the transactions of the world of objects. Similarly, Religion is not something essentially different from other kinds of knowledge. On the other hand, the whole cycle of Knowledge forms one beautiful halo of Religion. Or, it is like the white beam focussing in the seven rays which, when assorted in their individual charms, adorn the firmament with a rainbow. Of this great law of harmony Religion, as Faith, is the expression and, as Theology, the interpretation. Hence, Knowledge is an indispensable auxiliary, because an essential datum, of Religion. Every branch of knowledge is a pathway to that Reality which is the object of Religion. If you are a literary man, take up the deep-sighted dramas of Kalidasa, the inexhaustible outflow of the song of Valmeeki or the surpassing grandeur of the Mahabharata with its encyclopaedic range. There you will see, not only in every piercing cry of suffering, in every solemn vow of resolution, in every generous offering of sacrifice, but even in the transporting thrill of the rhythm and in the apt adoption of the phrase, how the rhapsody of Poetry merges into the rapture of Religion. As you listen to the gentle cadence of a smiling brook or the organ-peal of an ocean-tide, you do experience that magic-spell of communion with Nature which alone

could touch and tune the poet-soul into ecstatic melodies. As you imbibe the beauty of nature into your soul, you, too, become the spiritual kindred of a Kalidasa, a Valmeeki or a Shakespeare. In a well-thought-out work on History you see the various threads weave themselves into one another, so that the plans laid out by the preceding generations are sagaciously utilised by those succeeding for their material and spiritual advancement. There, what secular History notes as the doing of past generations, Religion reads as the unfolding of the 'Eternal Now,' which neither was nor will be but *is* for ever and always. Botany tells us how the petals twine into one another to constitute the citadel of the future flower and fruit. This, says Religion, is the handiwork of a deep-sighted Genius who, as Plato observes, geometrisises everywhere. A certain student of Plato went into a meadow and marvelled to note in countless flowers the same unfailing symmetry in the several parts. He exclaimed, *Plato, thou spakest the truth when thou didst declare that God geometrisises.' By mere mathematical calculations one can map out the whole orbit of a planet precisely as the telescope may slowly trace it. Does not this disclose the unerring ways of God? Once at Dublin, Sir Robert Ball

concluded, through his calculations, that the 'transit of Venus' would occur at a particular definite moment. Accordingly, he sets his telescope to the expected region of the sky, though overcast with dense clouds. At the right minute, the weather clears a little and reveals the planet as it floats across the solar disc. Such is the wonderful order and correlation disclosed by Astronomy. Here, again, Religion steps in and asks, 'What think ye of this harmony?' Then, take any book of sound Theology belonging to your own race and country; and you will be enraptured by its 'revelations.' Take, next, any similar sacred work of another race and country; there you will find the same gospel in almost the same form conveyed in a different language. The Egyptian records chronicle the same throb of felt spiritual experience as your own, though with different illustrations. How, then, does this harmony exist among the various scriptures? The answer is that the throb and the vision that are felt in, and revealed to, different hearts and eyes, proceed all alike from one Heavenly Source.

Accordingly, the paramount function of Religion is to make all beings realise that there is one ever-expanding revelation. We give different

names to the same river in different parts of a country; yet it is one and the same live-current. The 'truth' of the Hindu Rishis is the same as that of the Christian Apostles and of the Moslem Oulia. God's inspiration is at the source of the whole hutiaan aspiration. Its communication depends upon the degree of devout receptivity in the soul. In this behalf, two principles required to be borne in mind are: (1) Think not lightly of any study, provided it is a right one; and (2) think not that time is being wasted because there is possibly another path through which you can make progress. All persons in this world are pilgrims that press to the same goal; but some march slowly and some quickly. This is only due to diversions and digressions. The fences hedging us in are put up, not by God, but by ourselves. This we realise as we get into the spirit of Religion. Be not satisfied with Theology alone. As Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar has it, Theology is to prove that God is in us, and Religion is to prove that we are in God. When once we ⁴feel' God, we cannot withstand the irresistible eagerness for Him or the insatiable yearning for- the embrace of His person. It was the same spirit that prevailed in Prahlada, in Ramadas, in Chaitanya and in

Tukaram. At the centre, along the circumference and everywhere within the circle, there is a mighty, vital presence and power that pervades and presides over the universe. A great philosopher has said that the wise man is he who would study phenomena, not from the stand-point of time, but from the stand-point of eternity. From this latter stand-point, gymnastics in the school means an exercise not only for the build of the body but also for the development of the spirit. Let us so train our bodies that we may be pure and righteous and thus become fitting tabernacles of God. Really no study need be considered alien or secular, provided it is done in a devout spirit. Let us realise the presence of the Supreme Spirit in all and over all. There is one goal—the goal of the realisation of the Deity; and one joy—the joy of the realisation of our common sonship to the All-Holy. This is the richest result of true Religion. May God grant that this expanding, this enriching God-vision be beheld by us all!

Omf Thath Sath!

MANDIR CONSECRATION SERVICE *

WITH SERMON.

(1926)

UDBODHANA

He the Supreme One—His, is Love itself and Bliss itself. It is out of His limitless love and His boundless bliss—it is from the very heart of His Holy Spirit—that the whole creation has been welling up from time without beginning and through ages beyond count. And it is, too, out of this very love and bliss that He has put into the human heart the desire and the power to approach and adore Him and has made such approach and adoration alike the purpose and the beatitude of our existence. So, to worship Him in and through our whole lives is our highest destiny and our deepest delight. To worship Him both in the solitude of personal adoration and in the fellowship of conjoint communion, is for us the ordinance *at once of His

On the occasion of the *consecration ' of the Brahmopaaatt a Mandir, Bezwada (4-4-26).

eternal purpose and His benignant providence. Blessed be His name and blessed be they that bless His name now and for ever!

Om I Parabrahmaneynamak! Our thanks and salutations, our humble prostrations and reverent obeisances, we proffer unto Him who is the supreme Lord of all creation. He in His majesty surmounteth all greatness; He in His love surpasseth all goodness; He in His holiness transcendeth all righteousness; He in His beauty outsoareth all admiration. Unto Him in His glory, in His love, in His holiness, in His beauty, we reverently tender our hearts' adoring salutations. Blessed be His name! He has brought us here for this sacred act of dedication, not of brick and mortar, but of the heart's devotion and of the soul's adoration unto Him as at once the Lord of every heart and the Spouse of every soul. And as we meet here, apparently to dedicate a building, we have really to dedicate ourselves and make Him, as we sing time and again, the true *Manasamandira*, the Enshrined One in the spirits of His worshippers. Blessed be His name that He has vouchsafed it to us to turn to Him, to make up to Him, to touch Him, to embrace Him as the beloved One of our hearts, the adored One of our souls ! We are here

in the fellowship of spirit and in the fraternity of worship, transcending all divisions, submerging all sections and harmonising all individualities into the supreme peace and the holy joy of conjoint worship, of united praise, rendered unto our God—my God, your God and the God of us all—as the One Only Lord and Saviour. Blessed be His name that He has granted unto us this happy and auspicious occasion ! He draws us by the irresistible spell of His love; He cherishes us with the all-sufficing protection of His providence; He leads us from truth to truth, from grace to grace, under the guidance of His inspiration. We are with Him; we are unto Him; we are in Him for ever. Blessed be the One, the all-embracing One, the all-redeeming One, the all-sanctifying One ! Blessed be His name now and for ever!

ABADHANA.

Om! Satyafn Jnanam Anantam Brahma Ananda-roopam Amritam yadvibhati Santam Sivam Adwaitam Suddham Apapaviddham!

Thou art *Satyam*, the essential Truth, the enduring Reality, the underlying Support, the sustaining Vitality of the whole creation. We realise

the truth of our being and we enjoy the benediction of our being, surviving all the happenings of the moment and outliving all the succession of days, only and even as we realise Thee as the very Heart of our whole existence. We bow before Thee with all the reverence of our souls. Thou art *Jnanarn*, Wisdom; for that Truth which perceives and pierces through all the expanding and retreating limits of time and transcends all the divisions and distances of space, is really the Spirit of Wisdom—the Wisdom that apprehendeth all and enfoldeth within its embrace the entire history, purpose and destiny of creation. Thou art that *Jnanarn*, the Illumination of that inner vision, whereby this world is transfigured into glory past all description. Blessed be Thou, the Vision of the soul! We bow before Thee with all the reverence of our adoring spirits. Thou art *Anantam*, Infinite. As the Truth that constitutes reality, as the Wisdom that conveys light, Thou art illimitable, unsurpassable, outsoaring the flights of imagination and outreaching the depths of insight. Thou embrac«st in Thy infinitude every passing incident which enters into the life-history of this world. Truly and really, Thou art the shoreless, boundless Ocean of Infinitude, never

exhausted, never outstripped, but ever outdancing alike the flights of poetry and the quests of philosophy. Thou art the all-inclusive Wholeness beyond which our conception cannot go. Thee as *Anantam*, endless, boundless, inconceivably profound, we praise and glorify with the reverence of our adoring souls. As Thou comest out of the veils of Thy own invisible; indivisible; inscrutable; incomprehensible being, Thou shinest forth over the whole creation as *Anandaroopam* and *Amritam*. Thou art *Anandam*, Bliss. For, this universe, the whole round of existence, sustained by Truth, illumined by Wisdom, nestled in Infinity, is enriched with Bliss—that Bliss which sweetens the bitters of earth with the nectar of heaven; which places in crucifixion the cradle of resurrection; which announces thunder as the assuring voice of Providence and employs the lightning-flash as the harbinger of the radiance that reveals hidden glories ; which attunes into perfect harmony all the seeming contradictions of life ; which enchants the wayward will into self-forgetting dedication; and which discloses even in the smallest of the world's casual happenings the hourly dispensation of the goodness of an ever-loving One. Blessed be Thou, the God of Bliss ! Our hearts revel in Thee; **our**

souls dance in ecstasy in Thee. Thou art *Amritam*. For, the Bliss out of which creation has been shaped and sprung into being knows no death and can be subject to no extinction through the inroads of engulfing time. This passeth human understanding ; but it proveth itself to human consciousness. Thou art *Amritanandarn*, quenchless, deathless Bliss. Thee as the Giver of immortal bliss, we adore and praise. Blessed be Thy name. Thou art *Santam*—the Peace which, while the thought is enmeshed in seeming differences, enters like a unifying design into isolated units of substance and weaves them into a golden garland for royal acceptance ; the peace which rises above the arena of competition and now administers the balm of solace to throbbing care and anxiety and again imparts the calm of fellowship to furious strife and animosity. Thou art the Peace of that serene spirit which proves how, if time has its preoccupations, eternity has its enjoyments ; if time has its temptations, eternity has its triumphs ; and if time has its toils, eternity has its benedictions. Thou art the *Santam* of that *Sivam* which, appearing to the eye as awe-inspiring, discloses itself to the heart as all-sanctifying. Thou art *\$ivarn*> Love, Harmony. In the gratitude of felt,

accepted and enjoyed love, we place at Thy feet all the reverence of our spirits. As *Sivam*, Thou art alike the source, the aim and the fulfilment of creation. In Thee as the Divine Love that harmonises all by fulfilling all, space and infinity, time and eternity, individuality and humanity, senses and spirit, are all integrated into the union of reciprocity and confraternity. 'The pile complete' is the shrine of *Sivarn*. Thus Thou hast been sensed and sung by all devotees in all ages, as they forgot themselves in the fellowship of the Lord, the self lost in the Supreme Self, to find its all in Him. (*Sivame AnbuJ* God is Love itself—that cosmic hosanna girdles the universe. We adore and glorify Thee as *Sivam*, the self-expressing God of Love whose *leela*—divine-delight—is this life in ever-unfolding, never-ending providence, with a pre-ordained heavenly, immortal destiny vouchsafed unto every soul. Thou art *Adwaitam*—*Sivam* pronouncing *Santam* and this resuming all into the One. Thou art One only without a second. I am Thine ; all are Thine ; and Thou art ours; for in this manifold, multifarious, myriad-faced self-manifestation of Thine, we all are one in spirit and substance, in destiny and harmony: that composite, comprehensive *Adwaitam*, which neither swallows

up the many nor attenuates the One, but implies, includes, embraces all in the manifold One. Thou art *Suddham*, *Immaculate* Holiness. For, as we are led by the benediction of *Sivam* through *Santam* into the Harmony of Union, *Adwaitam*—not self-stultifying unity but ever-increasing variation in the expression and fulfilment of the One—we attain Thee the all-pure, all-holy God. We bow before Thee, and we adore Thee in the stainless, speckless, all-transfiguring glory of Thy holy being. We dedicate ourselves unto Thee, who art the all-sufficing, all-enrapturing, all-sanctifying, eternally-wedded, immortally-spoused God of our souls. Hallowed be Thy name !

NIVEDAKAPRABDHANA.

Thou omnipotent God, omnipresent God! Thou hast inspired Thine own chosen prophets of truth to voice the eternal gospel, *Suvisalamidam-viswam pavitrambrahimamandirarn*. Thou hast made every inch of space sacred with Thy presence. Wherever we are, however we class and name our interests and doings, we are yet in Thy holy presence, standing on Thy holy ground, encircled by Thy holy light, sheltered and protected by Thy holy providence. The universe is Thy holy **temple 5 and because we worship in that boundless**

temple of Thine, we are bound by sacred obligation to the boundless God to set up niches and shrines in the holy temple of the universe and dedicate them unto Thee, not with the voice of faulty human speech, not with the vow of the frail, temptation-tossed human heart, but with the holy submission, the reverent supplication and the devout self-dedication of that spirit which is Thine own reflection. So, may we dedicate this shrine to be hallowed with the united worship of Thy adorers! A part of the vast, universal temple, this is a chosen tabernacle with an unreserved invitation unto all for the worship of the Father of all souls, the Lord of all lives, the sovereign Master of all creation. Vouchsafe the supreme gift of Thy unfailing presence—rather, the quenchless vision and enjoyment of Thy hallowed presence—unto Thy worshippers here, time and again, that this place, dedicated unto Thy adoration, may thus come to be cherished also as the retreat of repentance and the cloister of devotion. Thus cherished, may it endure from generation to generation till, rich with the sacred influences of worship and with the uplifting inspirations of lives truthfully led, it might become a standing, shining testimony unto the doings of God amongst the children of men! May it, in the time

to come, be, by Thy benediction, the fulfiller of the hopes and prayers, the prayers and hopes, of this day! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

UPADESAMU.

In his remarks invoking the right spirit for the occasion, our brother, Mr. Palaparti Narasimham, has observed that this is a day and an hour when the spirit of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy would be filled with unspeakable joy, because the love and hope that dwelt within his bosom and were embodied in the Trust-Deed of the Mandir he and his fellow-worshippers opened some 96 years ago, have been confirmed and manifolded all over the land, already in many other places and now in this historic town of Bezwada. In verification of that observation, I shall, with your permission, read to you from the Trust-Deed of 1830 that part which relates to the objects of the first Brahma Mandir. It will be seen to disclose to us three important ideas. The first is the conception Ram Mohan had of spiritual worship such as he designed and expected to be performed in the Mandir. The second is the prophetic vision which stretched over unborn generations and centuries of human history wherein his gospel would be increasingly realised and accepted.

And the third, which to us is of paramount inspiration, is the wonder that such a conception of spiritual worship should have come into the heart of that man well-nigh «a hundred years back, amidst the density of surrounding spiritual night. Here is truly a marvellously unique fact, which must stand out as a land-mark, to indicate the eternal truth that God devotes and grants an ever-enriching contribution to the spiritual advancement of man. We in the work-a-day world turn to this individual or that personality and trace our faith to the one or to the other. But the history of the human race in the spiritual realm establishes with irrefutable testimony the truth that God's inspiration is universal as the world-wide habitation of the human race and eternal as the all-absorbing hankering of the human soul for God. Said Prof. Max Midler that in the 19th century, rich with great discoveries, the greatest discovery was, indeed, that the Supreme God, who announced and defined Himself as "I AM," was realised and reported alike in the hallowed oak-groves of Britain, on the ethereal heights of Greece, over the stirring plains of Arabia and in the sylvan sanctuaries of the Himalayas. This comprehensive spread of one fundamental conception of God—how was it possible, unless it should

be acknowledged to be the self-imparting manifestation of God to the human heart everywhere ? This greatest discovery of the 19th century, one who rejoiced in it has illustrated for us in a homely experience. A man was travelling from the north of the country far down to the south with his little son, in his company. The little one fancied he had left his native sky behind. They reached their destination. Looking up, the boy exclaimed, 'Why, papa, the sky is here also !' Even so, we narrowly fancy that the firmament is only here and that, as we go out, we leave the all-sheltering canopy behind! Now, this grand truth that the supposed local is, in reality, the true universal—God Himself imparted this to Ram Mohan; and his voice became, in its literal sense, the oracle of the Eternal God for the proclamation of God's eternally old yet ever fresh gospel, namely, *Ekamevadvitheeyam Brahma!*

(Extracts from the Trust-Deed were next read out and the discourse continued as under:)

Here are four basic, fundamental principles visioned, as a genuine *Bishi*, by Sree Rajah Ram Mohan Roy; and he sought to realise those profound principles through the worship he was

prompted by the Holy Spirit to inaugurate : the unity of God: the spiritual worship of God : the catholic (judicious yet reverent) treatment of all faiths : and the hearty confraternity of all spirits in the worship of God. Let us, as has been suggested, remember with re-awakened gratitude on this sacred occasion the God who has vouchsafed unto the age its acknowledged prophet and sent forth in his footsteps a noble succession of apostles that have carried the torch far and wide. And let us remember too, with rejuvenated trust, that what has been thus inaugurated and thus sustained by those chosen spirits is guaranteed, under God, to hold on through untold generations. The name may change: the forms may alter. Bat the spirit, the essence, cannot but abide, even as the God of truth is the eternal, immortal God.

In the verdict of Prof. Max Muller, than whom no one could speak with greater authority, the *spirit* of the Brahma Samaj will spread and prevail till it pervade the whole of India, if not the whole world.

ANTHYAPRABDHANA.

Thou eternal, immortal God ! This is the shining miracle of all miracles, the crowning blessing of all blessings, that Thou dost start us as

mortals and perfect us as immortals. Our prayer is of Thy inspiring. Our pilgrimage is along the path of endless growth for everlasting participation in Thy bliss. Thine is *the* strength and Thine the guidance that have urged us to the endeavour to fix here a guiding post and plant there a cheering sign that will mark this pilgrim-march of the soul from the mystic portals of time-started being up to the shining heights of immortal existence. We repeat to ourselves and report to the world, week in and week out, times out of count, that we are pledged to this pilgrimage of spirit along the path of ever-increasing self-realisation even in Thee. Vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, the constancy which comes of the enjoyed experience, of the blessed prerogative, of being willingly and cheerfully dedicated to this pilgrimage under Thy lead. This is the meaning and purpose of the dedication of a distinct shrine in Thy vast temple of the universe—not to isolate but to unify, not to separate but to congregate, under Thy inspiration, all Thy children pledged to Thy holy path. Bless this sacred spot. Bless this auspicious occasion that has brought together into sweet company all those moved alike with the thrilling joy that Thou art their sole Parent, Protector and Saviour, gratefully

remembering the tokens of Thy mercy in the past and prayerfully reaching out, through and beyond the days to come, unto a transfiguring realisation of Thy holy purpose in their lives. All divisions eliminated and all animosities harmonised, Truth dispelling ignorance, Light dissolving darkness, Love vanquishing hate, Righteousness cleansing sin, do Thou bless us and be blessed of us in the plenitude of Thy wisdom, mercy and holiness. Hallowed for ever be the ancient saying familiar to our sages and now dear to our hearts with replenished vividness and richness and sweetness: *Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !*

ASEESH.

The choicest blessings of God go with every soul that is here in fraternal bonds of union with others; that, thus sweetened and sanctified with His revivified presence, the entire career of each one here be shaped into higher aspiration, vaster usefulness, sweeter amenity and holier fellowship ! Blessed, blessed, blessed be His name now and for ever!

OrnI Ekamevadvitheeyam Brahma I
Oml Satyameva jayathi!
Oml Santhihf Santhih! Santhihf
Oml Harih Oml

IV
SERVICE *
with Sermon on
THE RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF
ANNIVERSARIES.
(1907)

UDBODHANA.

Sacred and sanctifying is the season of worship when, heart to heart, the adorers, eager to experience the holy presence of the one true God, feel knit together in spirit. We understand, on this most happy occasion, the profound reality of the brotherhood of man in the Fatherhood of God; we appreciate, on this most inspiring occasion, the intimate relation between the human soul and the Divine Spirit; we realise, on this thrice-blessed occasion, the watchful, loving solicitude of our Father for the welfare of every soul that has emanated from Him. The immanence of the Deity in every heart-beat and in every light-beam is

* At the second anniversary of the Young Mens' Prayer Union, Oocanada.

borne in on us in all its awe-inspiring vividness and vastness. We are filled with the vision of the Divine Spirit permeating and inweaving itself into all that we see and feel. We stand in the immediate and holy presence of the all-embracing God.

PEAEAMBHAPEAEDHANA.

Obeisances unto Thee, blessed and adored and glorified One, the supreme Lord, the absolute Master, the sole Author, Friend, Guide and Saviour of all! To bless Thee, to adore Thy beauteous being, to glorify Thy holy spirit and to acknowledge devoutly all the invaluable boons and bounties vouchsafed unto us by Thee, we are gathered here this morning.

We bow down before Thee, Thou august and sublime One, our loving Protector and holy Inspirer. Do Thou so direct our thoughts and aims that the tongue may tell the true tale of what the heart panteth after and the soul yearneth for. Draw us close together into one strong and loving fraternity; and teach us to testify our affinity in our united worship of Thee and in our conjoint love for Thee.

To Thee, oh Thou merciful and holy One; to Thee, oh Thou all-loving and all-righteous One, we, Thy humble servants, have come together. Thou hast invited us here to this place of worship., We pray for no physical comforts; these Thou hast so bountifully provided beyond our merits or our anticipations. We render thanks unto Thee that we are ever safe in Thy keeping, in Thy tender, motherly protection. From dawn to eve of the day, our doings are reckoned by Thee, our desires are disclosed unto Thee, even as an open book in broad day-light. In the innermost core of our lives we feel the pang, how utterly unworthy we are of Thee, each one of us. We throw ourselves on Thy clemency; we appeal to Thy ever-forgiving compassion. May we, oh Lord God, be moved with the conviction that we are come here unto Thee to tell the tale of our transgressions, to confess our iniquities, to supplicate cleansing redemption, to dedicate ourselves to Thee and to find strength and comfort through communion with Thy Holy Spirit! Lord God, may every heart here be warmed with the fire of Thy holiness, and every tongue here be*tuned unto a hosanna of praise unto Thee ! Oh Thou ever-loving, ever-cherishing, ever-inspiring One, Thy love is simply

boundless; Thou art *Prernasinclhu*—the Ocean of mercy. We render ourselves unto Thee absolutely. Set us aglow with the sacred light of Thy presence in us—in faith and in love, in purity and in righteousness, in wisdom and in goodness. This is our humble prayer. Do Thou vouchsafe it unto us.
Om\ Thath Sathl

UPADESAMU.

Brothers,

The main purpose of an anniversary is to pass in review the work of the past year, to take stock of the doings of the twelvemonth, left behind. This is an occasion to gather up the efforts and the activities, the aspirations and the achievements, of the period concerned. Thus to focus into one moment the expectations and the experiences of several months is possible only for man—a being gifted with the power to transcend the present. Hence, this is evidently an exclusively *human* institution possible only for beings endowed with *human* faculties. It is otherwise with the animals whose outlook is so limited. A historical event is celebrated year after year. The birth or death anniversary of a noteworthy person is kept with reverent reminiscences. The endeavours **and**

accomplishments of a band of selfless servants of humanity sustained through successive years are summed up into a jubilee or a centenary. This proves the existence in man of a capacity and a tendency to take a survey of the past for the guidance of the future, to set up, from time to time, land-marks by which man's progress might be measured. This reveals the existence in man of a marvellous power and inclination to enfold within one bracket the past, the present and the future and thus to employ our time-conception as one continuous background to picture forth the onward march of the race. In doing this, man, as it were, transcends time. Man can collect into one day, into one moment, all the seemingly separate experiences, all the apparently isolated incidents, of a long duration of time. And in this he shows the capacity to rise beyond time, to outreach the bounds of time. And this capacity vindicates itself as regards not only months and years but also centuries and ages. The ever-accumulating records of history and the ever-expanding researches of science bear testimony to this fact, that unto man is given the privilege freely to outstep time. Here is one characteristic in which man is shown to be akin to God, the Author of time who is yet above

its limitations. The anniversary of any movement signifies that it is a link in the ever-growing chain of wisdom, righteousness and humanity. Man's days are thus arcs in a round, factors in a series. It has to be emphasised that this practice is designed to lift man above narrow limitations, above parochial predilections and above partisan purposes. Men being supinely oblivious of their rich heritage of golden opportunities for progress but morbidly sensitive to the pleasure of the passing day, anniversaries are intended to remind them periodically of the fact that man can be the master of time, that the supreme call on him is to rise above time to vast purposes and that, as such, he should know himself to be a being with a suggestion, a touch, a spark of the divine in him, a promise and a potentiality that are illimitable.

The divine spirit thus working in man imposes divine responsibilities on him. There is the providence of God, His watchfulness, His vigilant guard over the many centuries as over the many races. The past is not unknown to Him. The future is not shrouded from Him. Aye, the whole is one crystallised present unto Him. With Him everything fits into a system which can be studied in an ever-operative conservation and expansion through

evolution. The regular recurrence of times and seasons, the certain operation of the law relating to cause and effect, are guarantees of this eternal reliability in God. And it is the thoughtful employment of passing incidents that makes the present the seed-bed of future harvests. Accordingly, every one of the routine occurrences of life ought to be construed as bringing a very wholesome lesson for the good of coming times. This training demands the parent's watch over the child and the preceptor's care for the pupil. In fact, the proper frame of mind in any profession, teaching, medical, legal, engineering or any other, is to look, not to the emolument and the distinction, but to the resultant good—the pupil's enlightenment, the patient's health, the client's rights, the occupant's safety or the like, which are all real responsibilities in themselves. The remuneration is only an appreciation of the talent faithfully employed. A cultivator may be counting upon the future harvest; yet if he has love for his work, he will not complain that the harvest is not to be available for himself. He will be content; nay, glad, to sow that others may reap. In the true spirit of benevolence, which does not consist in any donation of self-satisfied superfluity, one should feel proud and

grateful to be invited and enabled to provide for the future. Well-planned, fruitful benevolence comes of what is prompted in man's heart by Providence itself. Hence, man seeks his own good in being beneficent. My vision of sympathy ranges so far; hence, my activities of service ought to extend thus far. Divine benevolence is utterly disinterested. God never seeks the slightest compensation for His ceaseless goodness. His returns are the multiplications, amplifications and reproductions of His own divine holiness. His benevolence spreads abroad and reveals Himself—His own gracious self magnified. He does not calculate in thrifty reckonings the sum He has laid out as capital. God said, 'Let there be light,' and 'there was light'; and He rejoiced to have it so. He seeks no return, asks for no compensation.. 'The essential feature of His benevolence is the extent to which He imparts Himself to us or brings Himself out in us, in our hearts and souls. Thus man, too, endowed with the divine faculty of transcending and surveying time, assumes, on that very account, the divine responsibility of living; for others, of living for the future, of losing and finding himself in the growth and progress of the whole, in a word, of being divinely serviceable

and beneficent. All this is the comprehensive, synthetic side of the problem of right living.

But think not that because unto man is given the privilege of viewing things on a grand scale, he is excused from minding the details. Every fibre in a living frame, every hair on the back of a worm; the slenderest line or the faintest tint on a leaf—all are scrupulously attended to in God's government. 'Nothing walks with aimless feet.' Everything has a definite purpose in the ordering of the world. If this globe became lighter by the weight of one grass-blade, its orbit would be inconceivably disturbed and the crisis of a clash would at once be introduced into the system of the universe. Certainly, not a sparrow falleth but God taketh note of it. Hence every moment has to be lived out—every moment that is as a sand-grain adding to the sum-total of time. Here is the analytic minuteness through which synthesis works out and realises its fulness. Then, let every day be as sacredly used as if it were a whole year. Human responsibility consists in providing for the future by scrupulously using the present. To a man like Gladstone, every little detail of life formed a serious concern, as if the whole life depended upon it. Therein press upon us the solemn obligations of our daily duties.

Take care of the pence, it is said, and the pound will take care of itself. Take care of the hour and the day; and necessarily, in the operations of God's providence, the years will prove fruitful. Those who have shaped the moral and religious institutions of the world have, therefore, prescribed daily duties and disciplines. They have made apt and detailed provision for the proper use of the hour and the day. The maxim, 'Think not of the-morrow,' is only intended to warn us against ignoring the smaller amidst the larger concerns of life... We need to be cautioned at times against allowing the future to oppress the present. Nevertheless, as the tiller sows the seed, he concerns himself wholly with the seed, the soil and the manure, and does, not distract his thought and divert his energy by any disconcerting anxiety for the future. This is true also of the harvest of life. Then, let our attention and exertions be concentrated upon the present. This is the detailed, analytic method of; right living.

An anniversary day is a day for careful reckoning, not for boastful self-gratulation. It is meant merely to give one the opportunity to plan the future with reference to the past. Now, my brothers, as we celebrate a year of prayerful career, let us,

•also turn our thoughts and feelings to the days, the weeks and the months before us. Now that we are permitted to estimate how much or how little of the past has been properly used, let us bear in mind that we shall be strong and happy only in the measure in which that past has been reverently rendered unto God. May the Lord God vouchsafe unto us the true spiritual vision, even as He has imparted unto us His own spirit; and may He clarify that vision more and more with His grace !

ANTHYAPBAEDHANA.

Thou, the Author of time and eternity, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee that Thou hast taken us all through one good year of earnest study and of loving devotion to Thee. Do Thou rectify our shortcomings and defects. We have pitiably fallen behind. Oh, let Thy finger be •ever uplifted to direct our steps along the right course. With shame and sorrow we make confession of our t d transgressions and implore Thy forgivene^-. We pray Thee not to judge us by the law of Thine own perfection. Vouchsafe unto us richer spirit, ampler strength, to discharge our duties willingly and cheerfully. May the sole*

purpose of our existence be the dedication of our lives to Thee to toil for Thy Kingdom and to do Thy Will! Blessed be Thou and Thy name ! All-merciful, ever-reliable Father, save us from temptation ; lead us unto righteousness and grant us the grace to consecrate ourselves wholly to Thy service.

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!
Oml Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!
Om! Harih Om!

AKSHARASWEEKARAMU.*

(1928)

OM\ Parabrahmanenamah !

He the Author and the Propagator of life, He is the God of Light, the Resplendent One that from the centre of the universe beams forth in unquenchable and interminable glory. Our salutations be unto Him ! He has created woman and man primarily for Himself, for His *anandam*. The rest of creation is only the expression, the presentation, of His wisdom; and countless are His self-manifestations in and through it, which not only reveal the manifold of His moods and movements but also ensure in us the conviction that those are but the passing expressions worn on the face of an eternal and abiding *Reality*.

Oh, Then God of Truth! Even in our little, frail bodies, how Thou dost exemplify the majesty of Thy many-faced but single-spirited Truth?

* Of Sreemati Sita Devi, daughter of Mr. V. V. L* Narasimha Rao, at Oocanada (2340-28).

The organs each functioning by itself ; the senses each discharging its duty; the various and apparently unrelated agencies whose conjoint labours result in life, health and enjoyment—these Thou dost assort in the marvellous museum of the body, now in one and then in another wonder. And Thou summost up the whole into one all-clustering organism of the body. We have only to contemplate how that which the world calls death discloses the mystery of life and manifests to us the fact that life is not a mere passing phase or only a fitful throb but it is an emanation even of Thee, sustained by Thee and abiding in Thee. This truth disclosed through the body is rendered even more impressive in all mental, moral and spiritual processes. It is a miracle how they all subserve the one purpose of building up a life after Thy divine pattern! We feel oppressed by the consciousness of our weak vision, our narrow outlook and our irresolute disposition. On an occasion like this, called together to pronounce a benediction, how our hearts sink within us as we recall our own failings and failures ! The chances granted to us, the opportunities afforded to us, the inducements urged on us, the happy co-operation of a host of associations and fellowships procured for us, all to be but so heedlessly wasted—the recollection of these blessings

so culpably missed, convicts us with the reflection how, on the one hand, the aim of life is divinely lofty and how, on the other, its achievement is lamentably low. And with the compunctions of conscience, with the rebukes of memory and with the self-condemnations of the mind and the heart, we pray that the lives thus mis-spent might, by Thy grace, be so reclaimed as to become even to a small extent the seed-plots for the lives that¹ are to spring up hereafter. Our dear ones—how we have betrayed ourselves in regard to the charge and trust reposed in us on their behalf! How shall we command the confidence to wish them God-speed? Ah; but it is a marvel of Thine own divine method that, as though to show how Thou choosest, in Thy grace and goodness, to employ the frailest of means to achieve the noblest of ends, the call comes now and here even to these wasted lives and mis-spent powers to subserve Thy glorious purposes in an increasing measure; and sorrowfully and penitently yet reverently we adore Thee, render ourselves into Thy keeping for being so used unto Thy glory.

Dear One, Beloved One, Thou art bringing home to us the truth, the saving, sacred truth, that in, Thee, along the pilgrimage of Truth, there is no

distinction between sex and sex. Thou hast drawn us into the dawn of a new age when, as against an elder day, we feel that woman and man are but yoke-fellows—twin-adorers and workers—in Thy sacred shrine and Thy fruitful vineyard. For this new revelation, the eternal gospel made manifest once again, we render whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. We rejoice to note that, in this dear family, Thy equal interest and attention, Thy equal care and solicitude, has been fully appreciated and is being faithfully worked out. Here in this home Thou hast given it to us to feel and say with truth and joy that the mother no less than the father is the parent of the infant-soul. For this double blessing we renew our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. With worshipful hearts we praise Thee that Thou hast brought us together to set the trustful feet of a new pilgrim on the shining path of wisdom. Ourselves ignorant, we can yet know what it is to be wise. Ourselves tainted, we can yet perceive what it is to be pure. Ourselves faithless, we can yet appreciate what it is to be loyal. With this confession of demerit in ourselves and this intimation of hope in others, as Thy welcome all that is evidence of true faith, we set this child in Thy school—in Thy world-school, in Thy

seminary of the spirit. The letter uttered by the tongue is the oracle voiced in the soul. Do Thou grant that, tongue and soul according happily, the Word be incarnate in this child—even the sovereign, sanctifying word, TRUTH. Grant her the richest opportunities, the healthiest accessories, the purest, the loveliest, the all-beautifying, the all-illuminating facilities and examples, that thereby this child might be firm of foot, single of purpose and selfless of spirit. Grant her the fullest benefit of the mother's and the father's guiding care and cherishing protection. May her career be not the painful, laborious one of a forced task, but the pleasant, refreshing one of a free and full growth in all directions. Open her eyes, sharpen her wits, sweeten her temper, chasten her desires, enliven her mind and bless her heart, that she miofht grow to the full stature of womanhood as Thou designest every she-child of Thine to do. Nothing of the taint, the tarnishing blemish, of him who now supplicates Thy mercy enter into the child's future, but the hearty benediction of him and those dear ones now with him around Thy footstool for ever enliveVi the child! All growth in the greatness of truth, wisdom, goodness, love and holiness be vouchsafed to her in the years to come ! May she

grow even to justify and exalt the name she bears —' a gem of purest ray serene ' among woman-kind, patient as the earth, pure as a flower, sweet as music, serene as the sky, eternally devoted to that profoundest of all womanly virtues, the holy trait of a chaste heart! In keeping with that name, do Thou shape her into a princess among women and an inspiring model to all mistresses of households. Grant unto her, we beseech Thee, the spirit to receive, hold, cherish and practise that truth of which the noblest of our national heroines is everywhere the honoured and sainted exemplar—the truth of one that makes the body the shrine of the spirit. Blessed be Thou that Thou hast given this tender gift to us ! While affectionately caressing the child, we shall be also awe-inspired with the sanctifying feeling of Thy presence in the child. May she grow to reflect Thy glory and to promote the true happiness of all around ! Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Father! Innured to custom, hedged in by the world's ways and methods, we seek to symbolise Thy truth on what unto the eye of flesh is only a slab of stone in a frame of wood. .But as we inscribe *OM* upon it, may that holy symbol, in its richness of truth, wisdom and goodness, be SQ

vividly presented to our hearts that we may, through Thy grace, feel Thy dear fascinating presence now and here with us ! Thou the Source and Spring, the Course and Career, the Close and Culmination, of all that is faintly hinted at in this marvellous utterance, *OM* Thou the Beginningless and the Endless One! May this be not writ merely on the slab but engraved on the heart and imprinted on the soul of this child, that, thus realising the triple bond of the Creative Spirit towards creation as Originator, Pervader and Perfecter, she may be blessed with the fullest gift of Thy wisdom, goodness and holiness !

My sisters and my brothers, do we sufficiently realise that, profound as is the expression, mankind is infinitely more than the expression, of God ? Mankind is the true *reproduction* of God's own glorious self. Measured by physical size, man is all too puny as against those > gigantic orbs that people the limitless space. But judged by the powers that are deposited in his bosom, man is the very crown of creation. Infinity is enshrined in every human soul. God truly regenerates, reproduces, recreates, Himself in every human spirit. How wonderful are the powers He has treasured in each soul—not merely to take the

measurements of time and space, but so to scale the heights and sound the depths of time and so to probe into the very centre and gauge the whole circuit of space, as to surpass and outreach time and space! Unto man is granted, even because he is truly and verily the child of God, the power to look ahead and afar, about and around, above and below, and to gather up the entire picture of the universe into his understanding; mind and the entire procession of life into his embracing heart and all the solemnities and sanctities of the spirit into his divinely-indwelt soul. .Wonderful is this offspring of God, known and honoured, cherished and exalted, as man—the possessor of that mystic eye which can pry into the sealed secrets of creation! What the rest of God's creation accepts and obeys as law, he spells out and adopts as rule of life. Thus man is the true offspring of God, even because he alone can reach out and reach up to Him unto whom, as the God of wisdom, the whole course of existence, from time's beginning to time's end, is mapped out in one connected and focussed panorama. It comes of His richest mercy, His profoundest love, that God grants to man this special gift of wisdom—of the correct appreciation **and** enjoying understanding of His **purposes***

Others are His vassals ; man is His agent; others are the carriers and purveyors of His Bounty, man is the true messenger, the divinely-commissioned herald, of His Truth. Holy truth it is that marks out man as the child of God; and further, the God of Truth reproduces Himself in every child of His. We bless Him for this marvel, this miracle, wrought by His Holy Spirit in our immediate, intimate experience of His wisdom. Enthroned at the very core of our being, He beholds His own creation through the medium of our spirits and pronounces it good and holy. It is this sanctity of His presence with and in the human spirit that makes every human being not only superior to the other creatures of God but also unique as a distinctively divine order by himself—ordained, however, not to spurn and condemn the rest of creation but to scan and study the marvellous works of God with an illumined eye. Thus, man is the true, the very seer of God, because of the second-sight or insight which God has vouchsafed to him as He cast him in His own image. Blessed, blessed be the name of God now and for ever!

Thou, Lord God, of all the several dispensations of Thy spirit unto us, this is the pith, the very essence, which brings Thee home as Truth, *Satyam*;

to our admiring and adoring souls. That solemn word, that supreme word, that vivifying and sanctifying word—does it not comprise the whole compass of our knowledge, our understanding, our appreciation, our enjoyment of Thee? Thou art the God of Truth. How pitiable we delude ourselves with the surface semblances, the empty appearances, of Truth! Our poor ideal, our paltry interest—how it rests content with thinking of Thee simply as the mere counterpart of what is seen and heard and felt! The consideration never weighs with us, whether, in our seeing and hearing and feeling, we have rendered ourselves fit for the experience of *Sat*. What we hear we report; what we see we state; and we fancy our whole interest in Truth is thereby satisfied. But since what Thou art Thyself Thou graciously designest us to be in relation to the very essence of Thy spirit of Truth, it is alike our duty and our salvation to progress in this pilgrimage of Truth tirelessly and eternally. Truth Thou hast infused into every movement of the world's forms and into every occurrence of the world's history. There is such a marvellous unity and harmony of purpose, of method and order, in the whole government and guidance of Thy creation that Truth is, like Thyself, one yet also myriad,

focal and yet all-inclusive, familiar and yet profound, plain and patent and yet ever-receding* and ever-eluding. In the far-off star there is Thy truth shining ; and in the near flower there is Thy same truth smiling. We, with our partitioning sense, pass by the one as far-off and hail the other æ-neighbour. But unto Thee the star is the other self of the flower; and light and aroma are but modulations of Thy beauty, now radiant and now again fragrant. It is for Thee so to disclose Thy truth unto us in its fulness and its winsomeness as to fulfil Thyself even in us and our dear ones, like this darling whom Thou hast just initiated into the mysteries of Thy lore. Be Thou with us all and bless us abundantly now and for ever. Glory be to Thee in the highest!

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih Om!

VI
BIRTH-DAY FAMILY SERVICE
(1929)

UDBODHANA.

HYMN—ENTHATI *karunyudey Paramatmudenthati*
Jcarunyudey (Teluga)

OM\ *Karunyamayayanamah!* Unto Him, the Fountain-head of all the goodness, kindness, affection, attachment, love, devotion in the universe; unto Him, the Parent-source of all that is beautiful, gracious and sanctifying; unto Him we render our humble, yet heart-felt, soul-deep salutations and obeisances. On this thrice-happy day, at this truly transporting hour, now and here, with the house hallowed into the shrine of the supreme Deity, gathered together with mutually loving and trusting hearts, assembled in this home-congregation of an adoring family, we offer our hearts¹

* In Pithapuram Palace, on the nineteenth birth-dajr of the Yuvarajah (20-10-29),

profoundest reverence unto Him, the all-sufficing and all-satisfying Parent, Friend and Protector. His goodness is beyond all measure; His kindness baffles all calculation; His affection outsoars human imagination; His love is an ocean whose depths human knowledge and experience can never sound; His devotion daily, hourly, momentarily, to the eternal growth and beatification of each child of His, who can describe, who can even in the faintest degree appraise? The dear God, endearing Himself to each one of His creatures and children through the ceaseless application of His own paternal Self to the countless concerns and the numberless needs of each creature and child of His—this dear God, the priceless Treasure of our lives, the unutterable Joy of our hearts, is now here with us, in us, amidst us, around us, enveloping us, embracing us, entrancing us, exalting us, with His blissful Presence. This dear One, so august and yet so homely, so awe-inspiring and yet so enrapturing, sublime with all the sublimity of the Holy One and yet intimate with all the intimacy of the Loving One—He is with us now and here. The steadfast ground beneath is exalted as His seat; the bracing atmosphere around is refreshing as His embrace; the overarching sky above is glorious %&

His canopy. Thus gathered, congregated and sanctified, our very frames thrill with the vivifying presence of our beloved God. This is a day and this an hour offering a special and rare opportunity for rejoicing in the Lord and glorifying the Lord. He has, out of the abundance of His measureless, mercy, showered His blessings upon us of this family. Impelled, then, by the irresistible attraction of His love, we chant from the depths of our being the song of His praise and the hosanna of His glorification. Not merely the word shaping itself upon the tongue, not merely the thought forming in the mind, not merely the sentiment pulsating in the heart, but from the profound depths of our being, from the vital centre of our soul, rises the hymn of praise and thanksgiving. He has been how abundantly merciful, how surpassingly bountiful, how surprisingly gracious, how overwhelmingly loving and cherishing! Where have we the words, what powers does the mind possess, that we should expect aptly and feelingly to own and render thanks for this immeasurable love of our Lord? And yet who can help, who can withstand, the impelling, compelling reaction of the soul to the incoming, inflowing, insurging spirit of the **Lord? He irresistibly draws us to Himself. And**

-as we gather together in His embrace and, with one intent look of awe and joy, see the serene sweetness of the Divine smile and behold the enrapturing glory on the love-beaming face of our benign Mother, oh, how to tell the transport, the ecstasy, the bliss of the mere look? Gaze answering the Holy Gaze, heart flowing into the Divine Heart, soul mingling with the Supreme Soul! Truly and really, this is a thrice-blessed moment. Let us with ardent spirits, with yearning souls, supplicate Him so to adapt us to that beatitude and so to absorb us into the joy of His worship that we lose ourselves in Him and attain our bliss in His adoration.

ABADHANA.

OM! Satyam Jnanami,nantam Brahma Ananda-rupamamritam Tadvibhathi Santham Sivamadwaitam Suddhamapapaviddham.

From the eternal Truth to the ever-enduring Bliss, from the deep foundations of deathless existence to the heavenly ecstasies of divine communion, Thou art our all-inclusive, all-suflicing, all-satisfying God. As Truth, Thou art the very Substance ^tnd Essence, the Guarantee and the Guidance, of the whole creation. As the Wise One, the

all-penetrating, the all-illuminating One, Thou art the Prime-Source of the gospels of the ages, the revelations of the centuries, the oracles of the souls, the light on the path of each pilgrim.—Deep as Truth, sure as Wisdom, Thou art Infinite as Perfection. Truth enduring as imperishable reality, Wisdom manifest as unerring providence, Thou dost, from the dawn to the end of time, reveal and endear Thyself as the all-inclusive and the all-pervading One. Eternally abiding in Thine own absolute perfection and yet in Thy limitless love reaching out into the bounds of time, to people this abysmal vast with the offspring of Thy *anandam*, Thou art at once the all-including and all-transcending God. It is Thy love, Thy *anandam*, that has figured itself forth in this universe. Creation is the self-manifestation of Thy love. Not only man with his abundant capacities for growth and advancement, but the soft dust under the feet radiant with Thy presence is a gift of Thy love. And as Thou hast brought into being this ever-enduring and ever-expanding universe even with the bounty of Thy love, Thou hast designed and ordained the whole creation to dwell in Thy immortal bliss. -*Amritarn* is the purpose, the destiny, the God-appointed end,

the God-vouchsafed bliss of creation. And as **Thou** thus manifestest Thyself, through love and in bliss, we behold Thee as the *Sundaram* in all the charm and grace of the beautiful, entrancing, enrapturing One. Then, Thy peace—the peace which words cannot describe, which thought cannot conceive, in which the soul rests in divine ecstasy; and again, that *Santham* with its *Sivam*—the eternal harmony, the ever-enduring and all-embracing unification, ordering and perfecting all into the supreme bliss of oneness in and with Thee ; so that nothing lags behind as partial and casual, nothing strays away as aloof and alone, but all is summed up in Thee as the Supreme One and for ever cherished and blessed with the sanctity and ecstasy of divine communion! Thus, we progress from Truth to Wisdom, from Wisdom to Love, from Love to Immortality, from Immortality to the harmony and the symphony of Union, to abide for ever and ever in Thee as the sanctified children of the All-holy God. Blessed be Thy name that, thus starting in Thee, growing in Thee, gathering into Thee, nestled in Thee, we find ourselves truly the offspring of the Eternal God! For this we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. Blessed, blessed, blessed be **Thy** name now and for ever!

CONGREGATIONAL CHANT.

*Asathomasadgamaya thamasomajyothirgamaya
mrithyormamritham gamaya* aavraveermayedhi, rudra
yatthey dakshinam mukham thenamampahi nithyam !*

Thee, as our sole and sure Griide and Protector and Saviour, we implore to lead us out of untruth into truth, out of darkness into light, out of death into life immortal. Oh Thou self-revealing One, do Thou reveal Thyself unto us. Thou awe-inspiring One, we beseech Thee to turn Thy benignant face upon us and, with the shelter of Thy protection, to keep us from trials and temptations; guiding our feet along the path of love, beauty and righteousness. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

DHANYAVADASAMARPANAMU.

HYMN—*Antha needayara* (Telugu)

In the simplest, barest fact of it, all this that we call and value as life with its countless relations and interests—all this is *Thy* gift. It is a gift, a boon, not only from Thee but with Thee and in Thee; not merely what Thou dost give and transmit, but more, in its essence, what Thou dost bring and impart of Thine own Self unto each one of us. All the concerns and all the occupations of life fit into this all-comprehensive and ^ternally

perfecting purpose of Thy divine self-realisation, Thy divine self-satisfaction, in and through Thy creation. Thus we emanate from Thee, and by Thee we are gifted and enriched with these numberless necessities and accessories of life. Every limb and organ, every sense and faculty, all the facilities and opportunities of life—all are of Thine own ordering and granting. The movement of the tiniest nerve, the functioning of the most rudimentary power, what every sense reports, what every mote manifests, occurrences apparently chance and random, incidents seemingly trivial and insignificant, all happenings from the wink of the eye to the roll of the stars, from the beat of the pulse to the march of the ages—all, all are Thy self-donating gifts. And not content with this perennial inflow of Thy blessings in their surpassing volume and this surprising abundance of powers and graces, Thou dost descend in Thine own gracious spirit—a true *avatharana* of Thine own Self into this small nook, this little spot, this dear nest, this hallowed retreat in Thy creation that we call our home. Here through every chink and opening enter not only Thy light and Thy air but also the proofs of Thy providence, the messages of Thy gracg. And as the heart responds in its beat

to the rhythm of the stars and the roll of the ages, we learn to appreciate ourselves as the chosen shrines wherein Thou deignest to dwell as the Holy Spirit. The sages have said that every relation—• spouse or child, preceptor or comrade—is dear, not in himself or herself, but as for Thy sake. To this oracle of the ages the pulse of the feeling heart responds with the complementary and completing faith that, as the child is dear for Thy sake, Thou art also dear for the child's sake. As the child, from the golden gleam of birth to the full orb of completed manhood or womanhood, grows in the truth and wisdom and love and beauty that Thou dost impart, Thou dost become increasingly dearer unto us as the Revealer and Fulfiller of that vision and that message. For all these reassuring evidences of Thy holy presence, the companionship that never fails, the love that never tires, the devotion that never swerves, the inspiration that never ceases—for these gifts we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. From the very earth on which this residence is grounded, every wall and every column, the whole structure, the entire edifice—all this is the endeared, sanctified home which Thou hast reared with Thine own loving hand for us. Thou art the Architect whose wise plan man faintly

spells out and imitates. Thine is the design for retirement and repose, work and worship, which the householder reproduces only imperfectly as he dimly apprehends Thy noble purpose. For all that goes to make a house the home, its provisions for comforts and joys, its strengthening and invigorating opportunities, its invitations to self-reproduction, its raptures of pure love, its exaltations of worship and, above all, its serene, God-inspired peace with its trust and hope—for all this we are deeply beholden unto Thee. No hovel so humble and cheerless, no retreat so isolated and forlorn, but does possess and can provide the peace, the goodness, the love and the joy of Thy Holy Spirit. The howling wilderness transformed into the joyous garden, the barren waste transfigured into the fertile nursery, the gloomy cell translated into the cheerful home—all are the benediction of Thy love. For all these myriad gifts vouchsafed with stintless mercy unto millions of our fellow-creatures, the kith and kin of our bodies, the sisters and brothers of our souls, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. From the crawling worm to the high-soaring bird, all the marvels of creation in the mountain and in the meadow, in the firmament and in the main, all are assembled in the loving heart

of the worshipper, as it receives them in their freshilfcss and in their joy as the messengers and harbingers of Thy goodness. Every beat of the heart, every breath of the breeze, every twinkling star, every laughing child, from the lamb that capers in jubilance to the orb that radiates in quenchless lustre—all, all are our *atmabandkus*—the kinsmen of the soul. For them all we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee.

And in this dear home how Thou hast manifested Thyself, dear God ! Left in great perplexity, bereft in early boyhood of the protecting arm of the father and then, a few years later, of the nourishing hand of the mother, with daggers of hate darting from all eyes, with frowns of ill-wishers scowling on all sides—at that terrific moment, in that earthquake of the heart, Thou chosest to draw close to that forlorn child. To mankind an orphan, to Thee a darling, he was nestled in Thy bosom. Though the powers of the world were arrayed against him, his safety was ensured by the *daivabalam*—the power of Providence—which was on his side ; and that oppressive desertion Thou didst transform into the solace and the strength of trust in Thyself. And day after day, Thou didst watch his **way and** guide his **steps**,

nurse his body; teach his mind, foster his heart and sanctify Ids soul, that, seemingly left alone, he did thus find his more than all, his ample bounty, in Thee. Then, as, to the forsaken, helpless one, has come the wealth of Thy mercy, so him standing alone Thou didst make twain ; and from the heart of wide-acknowledged benevolence, Thou didst bring grace to match goodness and thus create a generous home ; and in those hearts thus united and those souls thus wedded, Thou didst sow the seed of Thy benediction and bring forth the fruit of Thy love. Darling following darling—one and a second and a third and a fourth and a fifth and a sixth—they have come to tell us that this home is not God-forgotten but God-cherished and God-blessed. And these dear ones—how Thou hast made them unto us the beam of the eye, the joy of the heart, the hope of the soul and the light of the home ! For all this, so rich beyond the possibilities of our amplest language, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. With bowed heads and folded hands, with grateful hearts and praising soids, we proclaim Thee our dear God, our gracious God, our parent God, our provident God, our *Grihadevatha*, even as Thou wast the God of our fathers. **We adore Thee; and we cast ourselves**

upon Thy holy feet. Hallowed be Thy name ; and Thou be for ever adored and glorified of us ! On this day and at this hour, how Thy countless mercies again and again crowd in upon our minds ! One year gone ; another ; and a third ; we prayed, we supplicated, at times Ave shed tears of overstrained expectancy and lifted up our hearts and said, ' Thou, benignant God ! Send into this home one beam of Thy light, one note of Thy joy.' Thou didst deign to turn Thy merciful ear unto our prayers and send us this darling of our hearts. He came truly as the harbinger of good tidings, even to declare that *the* ancient House of Pithapuram was yet remembered and cherished of God. The days of trial, of tribulation, of suffering, are gone. The clouds have rolled away. And all jarring and disquieting sounds have been hushed. A new day has dawned ; a new light has beamed ; a new hope has been raised ; and a new joy has been kindled. And as if to confirm and ratify Thy love and mercy by repeated expressions, Thou hast vouchsafed welcome proofs and tokens time and again. When the heart is surcharged, the words fail. But Thou knowest the depths of the thankfulness that fills us as we recall how he, our darling, has grown from day to day to be the delight of our soils and **the**

strength of our spirits. Our only want is the want of still more adequate appreciation of this gift of Thine, in that we have not, on our side, fully realised his claim upon our love and attachment and thereby rendered unto him the due measure of our duty and devotion. For this, our failure, we supplicate Thy pardon. May the future be a happier and richer witness unto our loyal and loving gratitude through the lives we lead and the duty we render! As for this darling, wonderful has been Thy mercy, bringing with it its own precious evidence even during this year. Vividly we remember the day, just a twelvemonth ago, on which we bore the testimony of our gratitude unto Thee that he had come of age. And within this brief space how ample has been Thy bounty unto the joy of our hearts! Having brought him to that highly responsible and extremely arduous position of crossing the threshold of boyhood to march into manhood, thus Thou hast imposed on him the treble duty of employing himself worthily, bestowing himself lovingly and doing Thy will loyally. Thou art the Care-taker; and as the Care-taker, Thou hast brought unto him a dear and winsome co-pilgrim, that they might walk together the path of life, ever fixing their eyes on

Thee as the Goal of all existence ; heart embracing heart and the double life wreathed into a single sacrament, thus to dedicate themselves with all their gifts and graces unto Thy glory. For all these manifold blessings, we render Thee our whole-hearted thanks again and again.

PKARDHANA.

Dear Lord! We would serve our darling and subserve Thee through him. But we feel our incompetence to guide and lead him. Do *Thou* cherish him and prosper him as, with his chosen queen of the heart, he applies himself to the duties and joys of *grihastadharma*. May position unto him mean responsibility to the Lord that has vouchsafed the position! May possessions unto him mean a trust unto the glory of the Lord who is the source of all possessions! May health unto him mean dedication to the Author of all life's energies! May knowledge and wisdom unto him mean the experience of the illumination which Thou alone canst vouchsafe ! May conjugal love unto him mean the self losing itself and gaining itself over again in that fidelity of truth and devotion wherein man comes nearest to Thee as a sacred agent of Thine in creation! Vouchsafe unto him, we beseech Thee,

all that goes to make a man true and good and Wing and pure and righteous, that so he might, by many a degree, exalt the name and spread the fame and deepen the worth of this noble House. From the father to the son, from the son to the son's sons and from the son's sons on to coming generations, may the current of life, rich in truth and purity and goodness, flow in ever-increasing, ever-expanding fulness; that they might thus prove truly and verily a gift of God to mankind in love and service! Deepen our love towards him; reveal to our eyes and disclose unto our hearts all that is due from us unto him, that, never failing, never faltering, we might render all that is thus due to him. Bless, too, all the dear ones that have come after him; that each, in his or her place, may become a starting-point of light and a store-house of love. Likewise, we implore Thy tender mercy upon these dear ones around us, whom Thou hast prompted the hearts of the master and the mistress of this good home to gather into their embrace as their own children. Oh wonderful transformation this, from squalor into light, from loveliness into love! Thou, Thou alone, hast wrought this miracle. Grant also that we may fulfil our lives by fresh pledges and covenants of

love unto Thee and service unto them, and that thus not only our own minds and hearts but our whole surroundings may be consecrated unto devotion and duty in Thy name. Impress upon our hearts the true, the full significance of thi& happy, auspicious day ; and create in us an abiding sense of whole-souled devotion to Thee, that thus the doings of man may be transfigured into the ordainings of God. Do Thou live in us, with us and around us, and make each life bear true testimony of love and devotion unto Thee. This day, bless our home, bless every member of the family, bless this gathering, bless all these witnesses to and evidences of Thy goodness and love. Make this-day truly a day of new joy, of new hope, of new faith, of new love unto us, Blessed be Thy name now and for ever !

ASEESH.

May He, our own dear God, who has in His mercy granted it unto us to witness this happy day, vouchsafe also the wisdom and the love to see Him and, through His inspiration, appreciate the intent and significance of the day not only now and here, but through all'the hours of the day ! May His truth triumph, His love reiga

supreme, His righteousness be the rule of our lives,
His mercy make us rich in the wealth of the Spirit!
And thus may we be, for ever and ever, devout
adorers, faithful servants and loving children of
our dear God ! Hallowed, hallowed, hallowed be
His name now and for ever!

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om ! Harih Om !

VII

MARRIAGE* SERVICE.

(1928)

UDBODHANA.

Om Parabrahmaneynamah! Om Prajapathayeynamah! Our humble, our reverent, our adoring salutations and obeisances we render at the holy footstool of the Supreme One, the Creator and Preserver, the Guide and Saviour, the Eternal Companion and Friend of all! Blessed be the name, the gladdening name, the all-endearing name, the all-sanctifying name, the ever-hallowed name, of our dear God, Father and Mother, who has brought us together on this happy occasion! First and foremost, as the very auspicious beginning of this sacred ceremony, we bow our adoring heads and reverent hearts before Him and render Him our profoundest and most grateful thanks for having vouchsafed this thrice-joyous occasion unto us. We are here to witness, to take

•Of Mr. T. Venkataratnam. M.A., L.T., and Sreemathi Ranganayakamma, B.A., L.T., (widowed daughter of Mr. Y. V. Subbarao, B.A.)' in Ananda Gardens, Rajahmundry (23-12-28).

part in, to offer our hearty benediction to, and to supplicate His choicest blessings on, the happy union of two hearts, the sacred wedding of two souls, that so He may grant that they shall remain united, chaste and loving to the end of their days and even beyond time. God grant, too, that now and here all hearts be touched and thrilled, cheered and uplifted, by one common feeling of genuine joy, of profound thankfulness and of cordial benedictions! We are here on hallowed ground, this spot for ever honoured and sanctified by the pervading spirit of that noble, that exemplary couple that lived out a united and blessed life for years and decades in vindicating the love of God and combating the custom-ridden callousness of man. In this *Anandashram* dwelt those twin revered souls whose inspiring and uplifting influence pervades the very atmosphere we breathe at this moment. I have the belief that they are here with us in spirit, to bless this very noble, this deeply solemn occasion. I am, likewise, confident that all hearts that have ever felt for our sorrowing and suffering ones who, for no fault of theirs but through the blind sway of custom and the supine indifference of the community, have been consigned to love-lorn gloom, however eligible to be

restored into the sunshine of married life, do rejoice here at this blessed hour that the eclipse, the mist, the cheerless cloud that shed its sombre shade over a- tender heart, is being dispelled and removed for ever and that into a new, happy home of conjugal devotion is being introduced, by His grace, a couple whom we devoutly pray lie might for ever cherish with the richest blessings. Thus we address ourselves to the auspicious function of joining the hands and uniting the hearts and entwining the souls of the dear couple come here to be wedded. And as I thank all those here present for their welcome company in their hundreds, I solicit them to join, heart and soul, in pronouncing their best benedictions on this happy union.

(To the Bridegroom)

In the name of the Lord God of all wisdom, of all goodness and of all love, I bless you and pray that He may cherish you with His richest blessings.

(To the Bride)

In the name of Grod, the Father and Mother, the Friend and Comforter, who has mercifully brought you out of the shade of dark dejection into

the light of a new hope, I bless you and pray that He may cherish you with His choicest blessings.

(To the Bridegroom's eldest brother)

My friend, you are in *loco parentis* to the Bridegroom. I take it that he has the affectionate benediction of his whole family and in token thereof, I request you to garland him. (He is garlanded).

(To the Bride's parents)

My sister and my brother, you are the truly good parents of this child. I congratulate you on your having so laudably shaken off the fetters of custom. God for ever bless your courageous action with the richest gifts of peace and happiness. In the name of God, I request you to pronounce your benediction on the child and garland her. (She is garlanded).

AVAHANA.

Thou art the Unifier of hearts ; the Parent Source of all truth, wisdom and goodness; the Supreme Vouchsafer of all that is pure, good and lovable. We thank Thee and bless Thy name on this auspicious occasion for having vouchsafed, not only unto this couple and the relations closely

interested in them but also unto us all in this huge assembly the joy of witnessing this sacred alliance of heart and heart, of soul and soul. We praise Thee and bless Thee that it is wholly of Thy merciful ordering that this happy occasion has come about. Frail, custom-ridden and powerless against prejudice, man has pronounced the ban and decreed the despondence. But Thou hast proved that man may desert and, indeed, decry, but Thy loving hand is never withdrawn. Into the chamber of listless gloom Thou hast shed the light of hope and once again brought home to every feeling person's business and bosom the truth that righteous justice alone triumpheth and Thy mercy alone availeth. Thou designest heart to be united to heart in love and devotion. We invoke Thy blessing on this sacred union. We are pitiably frail; our faults and shortcomings are laid bare before Thee. Especially this seasoned sinner whom Thou hast invited to this solemn duty—what is he that he should officiate? Yet, even through his sin-stained heart Thou sheddest the shower of Thy grace.

Thou art the Peace-maker and the Harmoniser. Of Thy ordaining is the union that knits man with man. Thine is the mercy that for ever braces all together as one kindred and one family, Thjr

wisdom has planned this noteworthy event **and** prompted the loving sympathy of all kith and **kin**; of Thy imparting is the hope and of Thy infusing the resolve that thus justice shall be rendered. It is because of Thy grace that two persons seemingly unrelated and apart have been so drawn together as to be welded into one—no longer 'he' and 'she' but ⁴ one life ' in hope, joy and devotion. We proclaim Thy glory and we praise Thy name over and over again that Thou hast brought about this very happy event. Grant that these may tread together the path of truth and, as they make the pilgrimage of life, do Thou shower Thy choicest blessings upon them. Set them up, we beseech Thee, as models and examples to those around them, that thus they may fulfil Thy purpose and proclaim Thy glory for ever and ever!

Om Thath Sath !

VAEANAMU.

(To the Bridegroom)

My friend, have you come here moved by **the purest love of the heart and of your own free choice, urged by the spirit of God and led by the**

genuine affection you cherish, to receive **and**
-accept this dear one in holy wedlock ?

(Bridegroom—¹ Yes ')

(To the Bride)

My child, have you come here moved by the purest love of the heart and of your own free choice and desire; prompted by the love imparted by God and honouring the worth in him whom you choose as partner and co-pilgrim, to receive and .accept liim in holy wedlock ?

(Bride—⁴ Yes')

Thou art the Witness and the Attester of this sacred vow. We are but the humble reflections and tokens of Thy holy presence. Oh, Thou all-pervading, all-seeing Grod, do Thou ratify the declaration made here and strengthen and sanctify the resolve with Thy grace. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever !

(Bridegroom to the Bride)

I, Venkataratnam, moved, by pure love and pledging my whole-hearted truth and fidelity, have <come here to request and accept thee as the honoured and cherished queen ol my heart, *my

beloved and ever-trusted wife, through time and eternity.

(Bride to the Bridegroom)

I, Ranganayakamma, moved by true love and pledging my sincerest fidelity and attachment^ have come here to request and accept thee as the honoured and beloved sovereign of my heart, my ever-cherished husband, through time and eternity. .

(Bride and Bridegroom together).

In peace or trouble, in health or sickness, in the day of happiness or the season of affliction, in **all** circumstances, we determine, with trust in God,, to stand by each other, heart united to heart, **soul** wedded to soul. Hand in hand, we progress along the pilgrimage of life, rendering love and service to all. May the God of all wisdom, of all goodness and of all righteousness, confirm and ratify our vow and covenant made in His sacred jn-esence and in the company of this honoured, devout-souled congregation!

PEABDHANA.

Thou, the Holy Unifier of hearts! Do Thou sanctify this pledge of theirs with Thy blessing I

Hay they, with the full warrant of their hearts, ratify every word which they have uttered! May the phrase on the tongue for ever speak the truth of the soul! And united thus, may they accomplish the pilgrimage of life, guided by Thy light and enriched by Thy love ! Bless Thou the couple with the choicest blessings of truth, love and righteousness now and for ever ! *Om Thath Sath I*

ANGULEEYAPRATHIGHAHANAMU.

Here the happy couple present these rings to each other as tokens of love and devotion. I beseech you, friends, to be the witnesses to, and partners in, the joy of the solemn pledge.

(Bride to the Bridegroom.)

I place this ring on your dear finger as a token of the solemn vow I have taken this clay in accepting you as my beloved and honoured husband, through life and eternity. Through it I convey to you my heart, and I request you to give me your "heart in return. May God, the Holy Unifier, so weld together our hearts that, as this ring will never part from your dear finger, my image may be locketed in your heart in purity and love ! God grant it in His mercy!

(Bridegroom to the Bride).

I place this ring on your lovely finger as & token of my gifting myself, body and soul, to you as my beloved and honoured wife, through life and eternity. With this I pledge myself to be true to you in thought, word and deed, all my days, as your co-worker and co-pilgrim. God grant we may be thus indissolubly united for ever ! I gift my heart to you and request and receive your heart in return-God so unify our hearts in truth, wisdom, goodness, love and righteousness that we may make the pilgrimage of life as twin-children of one Divine Parent! God bless this pledge with His sanctifying grace!

PEARDHANA.

Thou art the Holy Unifier of hearts. It immensely delights my old, wearied heart to see these 'hopefuls' drawn, welded and wedded together in the love and the joy which Thou impartest. It is not my frail hand of flesh that links their hands together. I am barely the humble instrument graciously employed to unite their hands in token of the union of their hearts. Thou all-wise, all-gracious God, do Thou, in the abundance of Thy mercy, shower Thy richest blessing* upon this couple and make them an inspiring

example of a pure, loving and hospitable family and a blessing unto each other and to all around,' We conjointly supplicate Thy benediction. Do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it!

SOOTHRADHARANA.

This is a gold chain forming the thrice-auspicious *mangala soothram*. Unto the Hindu heart there is nothing so auspicious, so delightful, so richly symbolic of all that is pure and devout. I esteem it a great privilege to hand, to the Bridegroom, this sacramental symbol of the happy matron, as I supplicate God's choicest blessings, with the suggestion that he may prayerfully place it, not only around the neck, but close to the heart, of His beloved, in token that he has made her an integral part of his Qwn true self. And do you all, ' my friends, pronounce your benediction upon it in the name of God*

And here is a wrist-watch to be presented by the Bride to the Bridegroom—not a mere jewel but a wristlet, standing for that *rakhiband*, the distinguishing badge of the knight valiant. Just as he has tenderly placed that auspicious chain around her Neck and close to her heart, so is this wristlet to be fastened around his wrist. And as he has **made her his own**, so she **now makes him her own**. *Never

part with it,' urges he, 'because it is the mark of your commingling with me !' And responds she, "* Keep faithful watch that you are for ever by my side in spirit—in love and truth.' Thus have these two hearts, may I declare, been enchained by God, the Supreme Captivator of heai*ts, each to the other, for ever and ever ?

SAPTHAPADI.

(To the Bride and the Bridegroom)

Now you are securely and delightfully united by the grace of God ; and as a forecast of your united life in the great future before you, you will now devoutly take seven solemn steps *together*. {The couple step forth together.) The first step is the step of your united acceptance of, and adherence to, Truth. The second step is the step of your united discharge of Duty. The third step is the step of your united acceptance of the claims of Relations and Family. The fourth step is the step of your united apprehension of the responsibilities of Hospitality. The fifth step is the step of your united devotion to the service of Country. The sixth step is the step of your united submission to the great demands of Humanity. The seventh step is the culminating:, sacred step of

your united dedication to the glorification of the Deity.—Having taken these seven golden steps together, indicative of your *sahacharya*—your conjoint-conduct of life in all its noble tasks and sweet pleasures, may you walk, foot rhythming" •with foot, heart chiming with heart, rendering all that is exalting to country and humanity and glorifying to God, through thought, word and deed ! •God bless you together now and for ever !

(To the Congregation)

Now, I beseech you, my good sisters and brothers, to accept the respectful salutations and regards of the clear couple and to grant them your benedictions and good-wishes.

UPADESAMU.

(To the Bride and the Bridegroom.)

My child and my friend ; it is with inexpressible delight I have enjoyed the privilege of officiating at this exceedingly happy wedding and pronouncing the benediction of joyful union upon you two. I bless the name of God who has thus brought about this holy union under very auspicious circumstances. You are by education—by understanding, by culture and by refinement, 8Q

abundantly fitted to form a model couple. And it is my earnest and affectionate exhortation unto you two so to be devoted to each other, so to love and cherish each other, that your conjoint life shall, by God's grace, yield a rich harvest of companionship and service, prosperity and happiness, for the good of ail. It is a matter for sincere congratulation that the good parents of the Bride have taken heart and done this very laudable and exemplary act. I convey to them my most cordial felicitations. And my friend, the Bridegroom, has evidenced the wisdom in him in thus presenting himself as an inspiring example to others. My child, the Bride, has also very wisely chosen the right path in disengaging herself from the trammels of custom and making the valued offering of womanly attachment, through the devotion of love, to a well-chosen partner in life. In every respect, from all considerations, this is a most happy union, meriting our heartiest felicitations-

Let us, in a spirit of deep respect and profound reverence, move mentally just a few yards from kere to where repose the honoured remains of a noble couple who, through their heroic deeds and devoted lives, have made such happy occasions possible here and elsewhere in Andhratfesa. The

best benediction I can pronounce upon this couple is that the spirit of Veerasingam Pantulu Garu and Sree Kajalakshamma Garu might descend on their heads, pervade their hearts, exalt their souls, and thus make them the hero and the heroine, the champions and the protectors, that they themselves were unto the helpless and the neglected. May these prove that the spirit of that godly couple still prevails and operates through them ! God grant that, in one dear respect, they may even out-rival that noble couple, by their joyful union bearing golden fruit in offspring that will prove a rich heritage unto posterity! My dear friends, may your home be the abodes of goodness and the retreat of hospitality, to prove that even in this latter-day iron age it is quite possible to live lives rich in goodness and righteousness! Your lives made charming* with the grace of all that is appraised as pure and endearing in those pattern couples, such as Kama and Sita, in our hoary national traditions, may they, as shining lights, shed upon you two the radiance of their noble examples ! Remember all your days that it is in the *Anandashram*—the sanctuary of bliss—that your holy wedlock has been solemnised and realise **that** the blissful spirit of *Anandam*, of peace and

happiness, can very befittingly pervade your wedded life unto the glory of God and **unto** good-will among men.

ASEESH.

' God's best blessings be with you,' this is our united prayer on this thrice-happy occasion.—May the God of Truth illumine your minds; may the God of Goodness gladden your hearts ; may the God of *Anandani* vouchsafe to your souls all genuine happiness; and crowning all, may the God of Righteousness sanctify your lives! Thus, may not only this new, beloved couple, but all couples here and elsewhere who have tasted the sweets of wedded life, prove that human life in itself is love incarnated and righteousness personified ! Blessed be the hallowed name of the all-perfect God!

Oml Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!
Oml Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

VIII
SERVICE
with Sermon on
AVIRAVEERMAYEDHI;
(192S)

UDBODHANA.

Our humble salutations, our adoring reverences, our self-surrendering obeisances, we tender unto the God of all truth, the God of all love, the God of **all** holiness, the Perfect and Supreme God. Our God who controls the whole universe, who indwells every atom, who is enshrined in every heart, who sanctifies every home and family, who nurtures and protects every creature from the humblest to the loftiest, who with ceaseless solicitude leads and guides, illumines and perfects each soul—unto that God we offer the homage of our love and worship; and we find inexpressible happiness in praising and glorifying that good and wise and holy God. **We** are here this happy hour once again to experience **and to** enjoy the sacred presence **and the sanctifying benediction of** our God. **Worship is truly the**

reciprocal rejoicing of the Deity and the devotee in each other. As we worshipping the Deity, we feel how divine we are; and as we perceive the divine in us, we see how profoundly sublime, how surpassingly glorious, is the Deity who graciously offers Himself to us. Not only is He our Creator, our Protector, our Friend, our Companion; but He is the Spirit within us—the Light and the Love in the mind and the heart. As the Light in the mind, He discovers to us how brimful of enrapturing beauty the whole creation is; and as the Love in the heart, He discloses to us how rich in heavenly love this entire universe is. It is this God of Light and this God of Love that is to us the unfailing and untiring Friend and Companion, Inspirer and Saviour. It is this Supreme One that we are privileged to worship. How unimaginably merciful, how inconceivably gracious it is of our God that He has thus taught and won our minds to worship Him, has made it dear and delightful to our hearts to worship Him and has poured into our souls the bliss, the heavenly rapture, of worshipping Him! We should be mere animals—all appetite and all gross self-gratification—but for this heaven-created longing for worship. Thus **gathering** us close to Himself in worship, **thus rendering Himself dear unto us in worship, God**

has translated the animal in us into the divine and bestowed on us, mere women and men, the priceless privilege of understanding and valuing, of receiving and rendering back, pure, holy love. Blessed be the name of our God, who has thus granted unto us, wholly of His own free grace, this high privilege and rich happiness of worship! Let us, with eager, hoping and trusting hearts, enjoy our God in worship.

ARADHAXA.

How shall we, oh Thou All-loving, All-merciful One, how can we, express and convey all that our hearts feel on this blessed occasion? Thy holy Presence—its manifestation to us, its vivid witness in us—is so impressive, so challenging, that we tremble lest we wrong this enrapturing experience by misconstruing it in our poor, paltry human language. Yet, Thou, Dear One, the heart would be oppressed beyond endurance, if we did not utter forth the thrilling joy in us in words of praise and thanksgiving. We feel the crushing burden of ingratitude, the dead-weight of thanklessness, if we resist this urge within us to proclaim Thee the wise God, the good God, the loving God, the holy God, the beautiful God, the perfect God. . Supreme

sovereign of the universe as Thou art, Thorn deignest so mercifully to dwell within each one of us, and unto each one of us Thou dost become the charming Companion and the entrancing Lover. And how deplorably dead we should be to all impulses of love and righteousness, if we did not reach out our hearts to embrace Thee and to adore Thee ! Dear One, Dear One, what is thus irresistible is yet so difficult for us. By its very depth and strength this urge baffles us and overpowers us. Nevertheless, we rejoice to dedicate ourselves to this heavenward pilgrimage of life in Love. Teach us to reverence Thee as loyal devotees and to praise and glorify Thee as jubilant adorers.

OM! Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma, Anandarupam Amritam yadvibhathi, Santham Sivam Adwaitam Suddham Apapaviddham.*

Thou, the Ancient One of eternity; Thou who didst and shalt dwell in Thy transcendent self before the beginning of time and after the close of time; Thou the *Anadi-adi*—the sourceless Spring of all being; Thou art the Truth, the Substance, the Essence, the basic Reality; and in the profundity of Thy Perfect Self, Thou compriseth all

wisdom—all that is conceived as knowledge and practised as rule or law. And yet Thou electest to stand veiled behind the procession of fleeting phenomena. Didst Thou not choose to impart Thyself to us in the plenitude of Thy love and bliss, we should be nowhere, lost in unthinkable, inconceivable, absolute void. But Thou art the Self-manifesting One. Creation is Thine own self-expression; and Thou picturest Thyself on this golden scroll of the universe as Bliss, Immortality, Love, Ecstasy and Beatitude itself. Thus glimpsing Thyself out in this crystalline picture-palace of the universe, Thou callest forth from us our homage, our willing and rejoicing and adoring fealty. And in thus attracting us to Thyself, in adopting us to Thy Will, Thou achievest the bliss of our being in tune with the ever-increasing harmony between Thy eternal purpose and design and all mundane concerns and momentary interests. Thus, securely winning our free and full allegiance and devotion, Thou gatherest once again this wonderful, myriad-faced self-manifestation of Thee into the unity of one Heavenly Kingdom and one Divine Family. Thus Thou dost accomplish the perfection of enrapturing holiness. Thus Thou art at once the Ever Self-contained Absolute **and**

yet the Ever Self-expressing Wisdom and Glory, Ever Self-realising Bliss and Beatitude and Ever Adorable Beauty and Holiness. We thank Thee and we praise Thee that into the hearts of these darksome worms in lowly dust Thou hast shed Thy divine radiance—even the glory of Thy godhead. To experience and enjoy Thee is to be imbued with the divine and to be transmuted into the godly. For this blessing how can we thank Thee, where can we find the language in which to bless Thee? Our hearts' stintless love is the tribute, the offering, of gratitude that we proffer unto Thee. Do Thou accept this, our dutiful tribute and devout offering, and cherish us with the blessing of ever-increasing, ever-deepening communion and companionship with Thee in love and truth and righteousness. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Thou art our Teacher. From the dawn of time, through the expanding ages, Thou hast been the Teacher, the Illuminator, the Inspirer, the Regenerator; and we beseech Thee on this sacred occasion to vouchsafe one glowing glimpse of Thy truth, one fruitful germ of Thy goodness, one quickening thrill of Thy love, one gracious touch **of Thy holiness, unto us.** We come to **Thee more**

than hungering and thirsting; we come, prostrating and supplicating that we be fed with the divine manna, the soul-reviving nectar, of Thy love. We know that none ever turns away empty and disappointed from Thy ever-hospitable threshold. We bow here as Thy adorer \$ do Thou, as the adored One, so enrich us with the bounty of Thy grace that, eager as we have come, gratified we may go ; hoping as we have come, praising we may depart. This is our humble supplication ; do Thou mercifully grant it !

UPADESAMU.

Fellow-worshippers of our dear God and Parent and Teacher: let me invite you to a fraternal—a mutually trustful and helpful—contemplation of a grand, an inspiring, a saving truth relating to, and helping to disclose to us, our dear God. Let us, heart in heart, proceed on this pilgrimage to the innermost shrine of the Spirit.

There is that oft-repeated and yet never stale but ever fresh, always illumining text: *Aviraveerma yedhi Rudra yaththey dakshinam mukham thena mam pahi nithyam* (Oh Thou, self-effulgent,, self-radiant, self-manifesting, self-revealing One, that self-revelation of Thine do Thou make unto me; do

Thou reveal Thyself unto me. Thou Awe-inspiring One, do Thou, with Thy "re-assuring, re-vivifying countenance, ever protect me.) Now, let us clearly realise this superme truth, that the God of true religion is the Self-revealing God. Philosophy may accept the God of causation or the God of rule and government. Faith, simple faith, may be content with, and the popular creed may contemplate only, the God of supremacy and even of Affection. But Religion, which denotes true, noble life, needs, longs for, and is satisfied only with, the God of self-revelation. It is not the First Cause, not the Prime Originator, not the All-ruler, not even the All-beneficent, All-protecting One; it is the Self-revealing God that Religion demands and offers. God is the Supreme Self-revealer. Says Miss Cobbe, one of the earliest to expound pure Monotheism in this modern age, that the first principle of Religion is, not God the Father, not God the Son, but God the Holy Spirit—the Self-revealer, the Self-reporter, the Self-exponent; and we that are Theists can never get to the centre, the heart, of the truth in Religion until we have, not merely as formal doctrine, but as deep-rooted conviction, accepted the first principle that the spring, the fountain-head, of all religion is this—

God is a self-revealing God. It shows how Religion is certainly not the invention of man, not even the discovery of man, a result of man's quest and an achievement of man's probing insight; Religion is really the self-irradiation of God. It originates, not with man, but with God. It is God's own design that man shall be religious. It is not man that has struggled up to Religion. It is the eternal desire of God, as Miss Underbill observes, to pass beneath the low lintel of the heart of Man and thus be enshrined in the soul of Man. We should make it perfectly clear unto ourselves—there is no room for doubt or hesitation about it—that Religion is God's gracious gift to man.

God spontaneously reveals Himself. It is of the very nature of God—if such language could be permitted towards God, it is the true secret of Divine Love, of eternal, universal Love—to express itself through Creation. To think of the Sun existing and yet emitting no light—that is the very height of absurdity. In the physical world, all objects are perceived only in the light of the Sun. But the Sun functions both as the self-revealing luminary and the all-disclosing light. Likewise, in the realm of Religion, God is at once the supreme Author of Religion and the perfect

Exemplar of Religion. God is both self-effulgent glory and all-sanctifying holiness. He is Grace Himself, and he imparts grace to all. The whole round of creation is simply inconceivable except as the expression, the manifestation, of His Spirit. He, the Self-revealing One, is ceaselessly flooding our souls with the illumination of His truth and goodness and holiness, with such measureless wealth of variety and multiplicity, that we often forget its source and its inflow on account of its very fulness and continuity. What we never miss we do not care, to remember. Hence we should firmly grasp the truth that God is the Spirit pervading the whole universe and it is of His very nature thus to express Himself. God is God unto us, even because He is thus self-revealing; and the only creation of God that is real creation consists of souls that are repositories of this divine revelation. All the rest of nature is only accessory and auxiliary. The fecund responsive human spirit is the sole creation of God. The heart, the vital centre, of God's self-revelation is man, who alone can receive, who alone can be lit and led by, this Emanation of the Spirit.

Hence comes the prayer, ⁱ Oh Thou Self-revealing One! Do Thou reveal Thyself unto me.

Note, the prayer is that God reveal *Himself* to man. It is not the petition for extraneous gifts and graces. It is not the petition even for virtue and piety. 'Reveal *Thyself* unto me : ' Nothing short of God Himself will satisfy the adorer. Thou art the Self-revealing One; and I am meant to reflect and rejoice in that self-revelation of Thine. Therefore, do Thou reveal *Thyself* unto me. Here is the **full** sum and substance, the whole scope and content, of our prayer. Prayer may take a million forms according to time, circumstance and temperament. But this alone forms that true prayer which has been rightly defined as the God-ward reaction of man to the man-ward action of God. Creation, as defined above, is the man-ward action of God. And worship is the God-ward reaction of man. God is truly descending in His own holy and blessed nature; and man is His true creature, the offspring of His own spirit, designed to accord to Him a welcome and a reception. Prayer is the expression of the awakened desire, the conscious hungering, in man for God. The fulfilment and perfection of man's life consists in receiving **God** into himself. 'Lead, kindly Light' is, after all, a lower prayer. The higher prayer is: 'Come into me; **dwell in me ; make me a shrine of Thy Holy**

Spirit.' As that sainted female-Sufi, Ra'bia said, 'God, if I seek Thee from fear of hell, throw me into that hell; if I seek Thee from desire of heaven, keep me from that heaven; but if I seek Thee for Thy own sake, oh, unveil Thy face!' This is verily the highest, noblest prayer given to man, as God's child, to offer. And the whole process of growth in man lies in the increasing experience of this self-revelation of God in man. God is hidden within and around us; and our prayer and life-occupation, our worship and work, consists in this—that we are to bring into open vision this God enshrined in the heart of all creation.

When thus we are filled with the self-illumination of God, the very dust under the feet becomes sacred; and what the world contemns as the dirtiest of occupations, even scavenging, becomes the ministry of love. There is no longer the talk of self-sacrifice which one is tired of hearing in the work-a-day world. Once we realise that the whole purpose of creation is the self-revelation of God, our one business in time and through eternity is perceived to be not self-sacrifice but self-dedication, self-sanctification and thereby self-realisation—the verification of the God is man. Once I heard **two persons at a circus talk.** One says, *I desire

to see the *tamasha*¹; and the other replies, 'I desire to show the *tamasha*!' This is just the relation between the *jeevatma* and the *Paramatma*. Grant me to reflect the revelation of God made to me, in disclosing the godly aspect or significance of things. This divine import and intent of things we have to realise and then reveal to the world.

ⁱ Oh, Thou Self-revealing One, do Thou reveal Thyself to nW. I must become the mirror of God, the prism through which the charm of God is radiated. This is the meaning and the purpose of this noble prayer. The look, the gesture, the utterance, the whole air of the man imbued with the spirit of this prayer, has a divine expression. Every task becomes self-realisation. The seeming drudgery of life spells not merely the duty but also the delight of life. The prosaic business of toy-making is really creating after God. Thus we have to spell out the secret of the Divine in all. The appeal of the rose is not to the nose but to the God in man. That was why Emerson removed his hat when he saw a blooming rose in the garden—an act this which all cannot appreciate and which, in fact, even a learned and sympathetic biographer calls histrionic and theatrical. The tongue that utters, the ear that hears, the mind that interprets

and the heart that responds—all are but the ceaseless currents of God's self-manifesting truth, love and holiness. In consequence of this self-revealing nature of God, we gain the glorious gift of unfailing companionship with God. Bare solitude where I am absolutely alone becomes impossible. Utter desertion and isolation where there is none to bestow a thought on me, becomes unthinkable. The talk of evil that nothing can redeem is blasphemous. Impenetrable darkness—that is a mere myth. The storms were raging in all fierceness, the tiny cock-shells of boats were being ruthlessly tossed about, as they were voyaging over the Atlantic from England to America. While others tremble that any moment they may be gulped down the jaws of death, the man of God, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, exclaims: 'Courage, comrades, on the sea we are as near heaven as on the land! \ The self-revelation of God never forsakes him who has once seen that light. The carpenter has chiselled and smoothed; and we say, 'what a fine piece of furniture!' But all such human productions are rightly the self-donation of God, that man may see how God is attending and tending. And *nishkama*, having no desire and design, no calculation and profit-scoring, comes to **the** man of God with **the**

spontaneity of nature. God is self-revealing; and I must receive and render back that revelation. Again, unto the monotheist, God being always the self-revealing God, all jars and clashes between gospel and gospel, scripture and scripture, prophet and prophet, are an impossibility or an illusion. Variety must exist, because of the limitations within which alone the self-expressions of God can be disclosed. And, rightly perceived and sympathetically judged, these varieties of expression beautifully flow into one another and become but one vivid reflection of God's charm. Now, as this self-expression of God in man becomes a living process, a conscious experience and enjoyment, naturally there springs up the trust and the avowal, 'Thou art enough for me .' I want nothing but my God; and my entire safety, my complete satisfaction, consists in His Providence. That is why there follows the passionate supplication, *Ttundra yaththey dakshinam mukham. Jiudra:* that deeply suggestive, that surpassingly striking; appellation of the Nameless One of a thousand names, noteworthy also for the wide variety of human **sentiments which it evokes, extending from fear to awe—from fawning fear whose worship has self-security for its motive and incantation for its method to**

adoring awe whose worship has 'self-naughting'¹ in the Holy One for its motive and rapt communion, transcending even praise and prayer, for its method. Ignoring the excesses of uncultured fancy or unbridled impulse, the conception of *Rudra* may, in the main, be apprehended as signifying the God of Protection, the God of Redemption and the God of Sanctification. (1) Rudra is, surely, not the terrific One who hurls the crushing bolt and darts the blasting flash. He is *Bhayanam Bhayam*—the Terror of terrors, the Terror unto the terrific, and hence the Refuge of the terror-stricken, *Gathih Praninam*. The world is too much with me; and I cast myself on His protection. I seek shelter in Him, even because I know He is the Rudra before whose all-vanquishing eye the hordes of temptations quail and flee. Unto appealing helplessness, unto expectant supplication, unto remorseful transgression, unto struggling aspiration, He extends the *abhaya-hastam*—the plighted security, the guaranteed support. The humble and the lowly, the wandering and the way-worn, do not fear Him as the Terrific; even the erring and the sinning do not shun Him as the Fearful. They do not say to Him, ⁶do Thou leave us **alone and keep apart from us** .' In the dreary day of

desertion, in the dark hour of reproach, they appeal to Rudra to turn His *dakshinamnkh*am. His grace-lit face, towards them; for they know Him to be the supreme Protector of all that need protection. And their supplication is summed up in the prayer, 'Vouchsafe unto me Thy protection, not only from the ills of life, from the strifes and sufferings of the world, but also from that appalling plight when I shall fight shy of Thee and look askance at Thee .' (2) Then, Rudra is the God of Redemption. In Dr. Tagore's *Fruit-gathering* there is a most edifying song (XXXVI), describing three typical situations, which may, for convenience, be defined, in the language of medieval Christian theology, as 'the world', 'the flesh', and 'the devil'. There are the men 'mad in their mirth', soiling the robe of the Beautiful; and the serious-minded pray that these be judged and punished. But the Beautiful One passes by them in pity, self-bereft as they are of the beauties of Nature. Next, there are those 'pitiless in their passion', dishonouring the Supreme Lover; and the pure-hearted pray that these be struck down. But the all-judging One leaves them to the slow but sure decree of burning contrition—the pain of sleepless love, the fear of desolate night, the wound of

violated faith. Lastly, there are those who break into the Lord's store-house to rob Him of His glory. These are the spiritual atheists—not the philosophic agnostics—who feel sufficient unto themselves, who find no place for God in their universe. The astonished world cries, ⁴ 'Forgive them, O Terrible'; and Divine forgiveness takes the form of scattering storms and shattering thunder-stone and the angry red of the sunset. Thus does Divine Splendour eclipse and Divine Grace absorb the petty, glimmering self-sufficiency of man. Such are the ways of Redemption; and the true devotee prays to be protected from the privation, the devastation, of godlessness, by the Deity presenting Himself in the heart and the home as the all-engaging and all-satisfying One. (3) Finally, Rudra is the God of Sanctification. The dearest and profoundest desire of the human soul is to receive in quenchless love, and to render itself in deathless devotion to, a Being of Supreme Worth—a Being whose richness in Grace can never be measured out. The God of sublimest Sanctity, the God of absolute Holiness alone can satisfy the deepest longings of the worshipper. Not homage to the God of Might, not submission to the God of Right, not even

rapture for the God of Beauty, but reverence, in which blend adoring awe and self-losing fascination, for the God of Holiness, is the soul's divinest relationship to the Deity. *Rudra* with His *Dakshinamukham*—austere as Righteousness and captivating as Beauty in one, and that rare excellence carried to perfection—is the God of Holiness, 'Nameless beauties', observes a writer, 'rise into view (we may say, commingle) in Holiness. Wisdom, goodness, beauty are unified, perfected, and made eternally absolute, by Holiness. And man's whole being renders itself in unquestioning, unconditioned devotion to the Holy One; reserving nothing, seeking nothing, for itself—in fact, disowning insulated, individual existence. God is the Awe-inspiring One before whom the soul prostrates itself in utter self-effacement; He is, likewise, the Fascinating One in whose adoration the soul loses itself in rapturous communion. The poet speaks of the soul, at the highest point, losing itself in light. It may be said that, in devotion, the soul loses itself, at the deepest reach, in adoring awe. The beauty of Holiness so completely captivates the soul as to absorb all its capacity for love and devotion. Man's sole wish

and prayer then is, 'Assume me and absorb me absolutely into Thee'. This vow, this covenant, is to be eternal—*mampahi nityam*. The human soul is *wed in the eternal' to the Spouse divine—And this is the richest benediction that the Supreme One Himself can vouchsafe to man—to bless him with the transfiguring vision and the transporting joy of the beaming, benignant countenance of the All-Uolly : *Rudra* of the *dakshinamukham*.

PBAEDHANA.

Thou that art, not merely the Path-finder and the Leading Light unto us, but the very Holy Spirit within us, do Thou deepen in us the conviction and enrich in us the happiness that every one of us is indwelt by Thee and the whole universe is immanent with Thee. And may the light of that vision dwell with us everywhere and always! Beloved One, without Thee and Thy vivid presence—the experienced joy of Thine own indwelling glory—what could life be worth, who would care to be? The ignorant and innocent animal—that is happy. But to have seen the Face and then become blind; to have heard the Voice **and** then turn deaf; to have been clasped in the

Arms and then be condemned to bereavement—of what avail is that life? Oh Dear One, let the body be a prey to untold ills and the days be darkened with unrelieved misfortune; but **all, all** is joy and bliss if Thy gracious presence is always-vouchsafed. More than life, more than health,, more than wealth, more than friendship and more than love—in fact, as the pure essence of all these gifts—is Thy entrancing presence. We beseech Thee, vouchsafe unto us this supreme blessing of Thy unfailing presence. Here in the temple, there in the family, again in business, be Thy presence vivid and cheering within and around, before and behind! Make us, every one, Thine own, by making Thee our own. Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

ASEESH.

May the grace of our All-illuminating and All-sanctifying God, the All-indwelling and All-encompassing Spirit, for ever be with us, fostering us even as the children of Grace, the off-spring of the Holy Spirit! May our lives be dedicated, even with the zest and the joy of self-realising, self-fulfilling' bliss, unto Him for ever! His Kingdom come; **and** He be for one and **all** of us the God of **Truth and**

**Wisdom, Love and Holiness ! Blessed be the name
of our Lord!**

Om ! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih Om !

PRAYERS
AND
MEDITATIONS.

ORPHANAGE ANNIVERSARY.*

(1924)

Hymn.—Anandasagarudu aruguthenchey nedu (Telugu.)

Om! Anandasarjaraye naimth! Thanks and salutations, our reverent obeisances, our adoring prostrations, at the footstool of Him whom all feeling hearts, all loving* spirits, have proclaimed and glorified as *Anandasayara!* Blessed be this Lord of Love, this mysterious and yet ever-flowing Fount of *Anandam* ! Blessed be the God of inexhaustible clemency ! The son of man has said he has not where to hide his head, he has no place he can call his own. But the son of God has declared that there is nowhere but he is at home. Thus the trustful heart, seeing Him alike in solitude and in society, alternates between supplication and glorification, between prayer and love, between the serene enjoyment of God-absorbed *yoya* and the wide, universal expansion of man-loving *bltoga*.

•Fifteenth Anniversary of Sree R. V. M. O. Bamarao Bahadur Orphanage, Cocanada, (13-11-14),

Thus ranging between the sublime height of 'Alone with the Alone' and the boundless expanse of 'One with All/ we are, even through the grace and under the light of God, grown and nurtured into the offspring of the Holy Spirit. As, in the silent and secluded moment of personal devotion, we feel the all-engrossing presence of the Lord so monopolising the thought and absorbing the affections that we realise we are all at one with God; so, when assembled with the congregation of Love, we feel again all in one with man. Thus this day, now and here, we are in the solemn, inspiring presence of that supreme, holy Spirit who marks out each one of us as His own darling and yet points unto each one of us the whole fraternity of the race as the one home and family of His love. Where there is the needy, there is the All-sufficing. Aye, it is evermore the needy that finds in the Lord his own sovereign satisfaction; and in the Lord's household is garnered the whole store of all ambitions and aspirations. Thus, in the family of God, the orphan is God's own appeal and the philanthropist is God's own response. Thus drawn together through the grace and within the embrace of God, we feel we are in the blessed union of one home. Where am I where my God is not? And yet where am I

where I am not with His children and with Himself,, as the guiding, controlling, energising Power as well as the cherishing, companioning, co-pilgrim-ing Providence? Blessed, blessed be His name t As we worship and glorify our dear God as *Ananda-sagara*, our own hearts feci brimful with thankfulness, and we bow down with salutations unto the Lord.

Thou, Thou art the supreme Bliss of our hearts. And this Bliss of the heart—how many forms it assumes, along how many channels it flows, in what multifarious ways it enters and through what untold relations and associations it manifests and realises itself! Thou Thyself declinest to be alone, even though the supreme, absolute, all-comprehensive One. And even as Thou hast, from the propulsion of Thy love, manifested and magnified Thyself in this limitless self-expression of Thine,, this *viswarn*. Thou designest and desirest that every **true** child of Thine, a self-manifesta,tion of Thy *anandarn*, should, likewise, manifold and multiply himself or herself through every particle of Thy **creation**. For this holy love that Thou generatest,, **this supreme bliss that Thou vouchsafest, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. And this day Thou all-loving, Thou all-beloved One, as the heart**

throbs and the frame thrills with the blessed **idea**
 And the inspiring sight of this Home that Thou
 hast, with Thine own hand of mercy, reared unto
 us here, we feel the utter poverty of words to
 •express the depths of our gratitude and sing forth
 the full, the ample praise of our adoring souls.
 Every child here, a darling of Thy own loving
 spirit, is unto us truly a gift of Thy Love.
 Utter paupers, penniless bankrupts in the wealth of
 love, even us Thou hast invited to this plenitude of
 Thine overflowing love. Thou hast called and
 commanded us, even us, to find our riches and our
 happiness in these dear ones. This is a marvel of
 Thine own mercy. We render our whole-hearted
 thanks unto Thee. And we come all together, each
 individually and yet inseparably united with the rest,
 to Thy lap of tender love, Thy embrace of sweet
 affection, and singly and jointly, in individual note
 and with united chant, sing Thee and praise Thee
 as our dear, beloved, holy Mother. It is the Mother
 in Thee that is thus visioned unto us. We bow
 down before the Mother. We east ourselves into
 the arms of the mother. We look up into the face
 of the Mother. We reach our arms of lo.'e to
 embrace the Mother. And Thou, facing Thy **dar-**
lings, one and all, in all directions, beaming in

•equal love towards all, entering with ceaseless-solicitude into every individual self, how pure, loving, perfect Thou revealest Thyself as **the** Mother! As we glorify Thee as *the* Mother, how we feel that the whole universe is one vast nursery of the Mother ! Here Thy children grow under the Mother's fostering love; and here Thy children know themselves as the children of the one Mother. Unified thus in the Mother, as the Mother's children created for the love of the Mother, unto the bliss of the Mother, and eventually to be resumed into the love-light of the Mother, we feel we are blessed. Blessed be this dispensation of the All-mother that Thou hast vouchsafed unto us in Thy mercy ! We render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. As we gather here, girdled by child to the right and child to the left, child before and child behind, with the gleeful prattle of the child, the merry pranks of the child, the hearty hilarity of the child, the simple perplexities of the child, the petty puzzles of the child and, 'through all and amidst all, the nectarine sweetness of the child, oh, benign Mother, we experience and enjoy again the blessedness of being a child. The child is Thine own» darling, **the** caressed favourite of Thine own heart Heaven is **the abode** only **of children.** **The home too, really**

belongs to the children; where the Parent is placed only to love, guide and bless the children. Thus* as the Mother in Heaven is reflected as the mother in the home, we feel we are now in Heaven, and with the bliss of heavenly joy we praise and glorify our Mother. Each darling is dear unto Thee and for Thy sake dear unto us; sacred unto Thee and for Thy sake sacred unto us. For each one we praise Thee as the Mother of heavenly love. For each one, as Thy gift, as the promise and hope of our hearts, we supplicate Thy grace. For each one, rich with the embosomed wealth of Thy pure, holy love, we consecrate ourselves in service. Thus receiving these as Thy gifts, commending them unto Thee as Thy charge, addressing ourselves to their service unto Thy glory and ever holding them dear in Thy love as the treasure of our hearts, for all these dear darlings we praise and glorify Thee again and again. Do Thou reveal unto our dim vision all the glory Thou hast designed to shine forth through each one of these. May their talk be to us an evangel of wisdom; may their walk be to us the pilgriming of Thy witnesses; may their growth be to us the unfolding of Thy grace; and may their life be to* us the self-realisation of Thy bliss! This is our ardent wish and devout prayer as now in Ttrjr

name we embrace them, unto Thy glory we dedicate them and for Thine own eternally wise and righteous purposes we apply ourselves to their upbringing. Do Thou consecrate us, we beseech Thee; bless them, we supplicate Thee; and be with us all now and for ever, we implore Thee. Once again we chant the ever-refreshing, eternally resonant song of supplication and self-dedication, *Asathoma sat gamaya; thamasoma jyothir gamaya ; mrithyorma amritham gamaya; aviraveennayedhi Bndra yaththeydaJcshinarn mukham thena mampahi nithyam!* Not a moment vacant, not a wink of the eye aimless, not a beat of the heart purposeless, may we all enjoy the shelter of Thy protection, the sunshine of Thy affection and the light of Thy guidance! Hallowed be Thy name ! As we thank and praise Thee for those whom Thou hast protected and preserved unto us, we recall with saddened hearts on this occasion the dear ones whom Thou gavest and hast chosen to resume. Pardon, Thou God of clemency, the anguish that doth sin thus against Thy immortal love. Kindle in us the trust and assurance that in Thee those ever-dear ones are alive, though withdrawn from **before** the eye yet granted unto the heart. **And abundantly bless also all those that have, through**

these long years, gone out of this nest, full-fledged, into the world. Single or united, prosperous or ^struggling, they are ours; and our hearts go forth in devout throbbing unto them through all their vicissitudes. And oh, how can we adequately thank Thee for that heart into which Thou didst enter Thyself in order to inspire it to feel, and impel it to prove, that in Thy world an orphan is an anomaly and every child is a sweet darling for Thy sake? Bless that heart, sweeten it and enrich it more and more to be a fountain, not only of love and happiness unto this Home, but of stimulating and path-finding grace unto all kindred hearts. Let Thy love so spread forth all over, that henceforth ⁴orphan' may be an antiquated, half-forgotten term and there be found a home for each child of Thine. While Thou art the Home of the homeless, the Parent of the parentless, may no child be so used as to feel that in this limitless world of God there is no sheltering corner for it, but, rather, that in Thee and Thy universe there can be no waifs, no destitutes! Do Thou receive our grateful, reverential acknowledgments for Thy servants whom Thou hast brought here, dedicated to Thy will, pilgrims to Thy shrine, workers in Thy vineyard, to give expression to.

and count up, the movements of Thy love. We bless Thee for them. Do Thou bless them that, one and all, they may be drawn into closer communion with Thee and heartier co-operation with one another, ever toiling and ever trying to sow Thy love and harvest Thy righteousness—to the eye a delight, to the soul a benediction. Once again, with lowly prostrations we render thanks unto Thee and glorify Thy name. Blessed be Thou now and for ever!

Om ! Brahma! Kripahi! Kevalam !

Om ! Santliih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

Om ! Hariy Om !

LOVE AND SERVICE*.

(1925)

Thou art the God of Love and the God of Service. Being the God of Love, Thou art the God of Life. Being the God of Life, Thou art the God of Service. As the God of Love, Thou dost not shun even the lowliest and the humblest service that Thou, in Thy sovereign love, assignest unto Thyself to render. Thou art the God of Service, even as Thou art the God of Love—the love that rejoices to serve and the service that originates in love. It is Thy love that has called this vast realm of Life into being and that serveth in this realm with tireless interest. Thus Thou assumest unto Thyself innumerable forms and modes of loving service or service in love. Thou unifiest all creation in and through love and service, with the interlinking bond of love, the intertwining fellowship of service. This human

* At the Brahma Sam a, Cocanda, ou the ninth death-anniversary of Hr. P. Seeth&rawayya (4-1-25).

frame is one rich field of service, even because it is the offspring of Love, The human spirit with its marvellous adaptabilities is love's self-dedication to service, the' practice of service for the enrichment of love. And ever as the spirit reaches out to and greets its co-pilgrim spirit, love grasps love and testifies to itself through mutual service.

It is even this dispensation of love, this sacrament of service, that Thou hast designed and revealed in the Brahma Samaj. Our Ram Mohan enclosed in his heart the shrine of Thy love, spoke through his voice the oracle of Thy wisdom, performed with his life the *yagnam* of Thy service. It was Thy Love that possessed his soul and kindled in him the passion for lifelong service, regardless of circumstances and dauntless of consequences. It was Thy love that moved our Devendranath to tear himself away from luscious luxury and to find his joy in Thy holy service through love and devotion. It was Thy love, ever hungering for service, that, once again, worked wonders in our Keshub, as he uttered forth Thy gospel of everlasting Peace, of illumining Insight, of enrapturing Love, of World-unifying Catholicity, of soul-charming Symphony, through a Pratap Chandra, a Gour Govinda, a Bijoy Krishna, a Giatfet

Chandra, a Trailokyanadha—a glorious wreath of apostolic service offered at the shrine of holy love—It was Thy love, once more, that captured our revered Pandit Sastri, exiled him from home,, estranged him from the dearest and urged him on,, in quenchless zeal, to serve Thy own family of adoring: children all over the length and breadth of this land. It was Thy love, again, that in our midst transformed the enfeebled, asthmatic Veeresalingam, into the lion-hearted pioneer of progress and yoked all his energies to, ensured all his time for, and impressed all his resources into, the loving service of the neglected and the heart-broken. It was Thy love—the love that would not rest till it had rendered itself unto the glory of righteousness—that manifested itself in our ever-dear, ever-beloved, ever-cherished Bapaiya, the nectar of love, the aroma of service. Blessed be Thy name for these Thy boons! And as in a Trailokyanath beside a Keshub, so, once again, in a Seetharamayya beside a Bapaiya, Thy love incarnated itself, singing Thy praise and serving Thy household, love-enveloped and love-absorbed as he was. Him do we remember on this day—the 'three times three' sacred anniversary day; him do we xecollect, him do we reclaim, him do we unbosom

from the secure recesses of our affectionate and admiring hearts; and for him do we render the devoutest thanks unto Thee. Educated, not in the world's notion of scholarship, but in the Spirit's ways of insight; learned, not in the world's notion of book-lore, but in the Spirit's ways of heart-lore, he was truly one in whom Thy light dwelt and from whom Thy life flowed forth; and for him we render most heartfelt thanks unto Thee. He proved himself a true child of righteousness, never winking at, never fighting shy of, never even looking askance at, unrighteousness. To the fallen, as to the forlorn, he was a loving brother. To the downcast and the outcast he was a solacing companion, Them he lived and laboured for, through the vow of his heart, that immorality and unrighteousness were ever to be viewed as but the sickness of the soul to be treated with the sensitive tenderness of love and yet with the unfaltering firmness of righteousness. Aye, in Thy Kingdom of mercy and grace, none would he count as fallen beyond hope, none would he condemn as irretrievably abandoned, no miracle of redemption did he hold to be impossible unto the saving power of loving* service. Such was the faith that dwelt and dared

and wrought in this child of Love; and for him we render our most abounding thanks unto Thee. Rich past our calculation has Thy blessing of love in service continuously manifested itself in the Brahma Samaj ; and for all these gifts of grace we render our renewed thanks unto Thee.

Oh, do Thou keep fresh in our hearts the beloved memory of him for whom this day is sacred unto us; and grant that the inspiration of that memory may ever so shape and employ our lives as to bring us into a living experience of the blessedness of love and service. Vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, unto the Brahma Samaj, through the generations to come, an increasing measure of Thy dispensation of love and service, till in every instance to be a Brahmo is to be a child of love and a devotee of service—an adoring offspring of the God of Love, the Sovereign of Service. For Thou knowest, as Thou hast been unfolding to us, even through our feeble vision, that finally and effectively the triumph of love can be **only through** service and the glorification of service can be only by and in love. **Thou God of Love^ we would** love Thee, we **would** serve **Thy children in Thy name, and ao would worship Thee in the**

soul with love and with the body in service. Be
this twofold worship the full measure of the
interminable progress of our lives now and for
evermore ! Blessed be Thou and Thy name !

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih Om!

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THE MINISTRY OF SORROW

(1926)

Thou, the Eternal Companion and Co-pilgrim of our souls ! We tread the path appointed of Thee, our hands placed in Thine. Now we sigh our sorrows unto Thee; next we glimpse the radiance of Thy countenance. Yet all along the way, we need to feel the vivifying touch of Thy loving grace and to receive the sustaining solace of Thy tender solicitude for us. To whom can we open the secrets of our souls—the confession of our sin, the anguish of our penitence, the ground of our trust and the aspiration of our hope—except unto Thee? As comes the ray of joy, we feel it is the radiance of Thy holy Presence. And as envelopes the gloom of bereavement, we feel it is the shadow of Thy outstretched Arm. Thus in weal and in woe, in the cheering sunshine of what we call happiness and in the depressing darkness of what we name distress,

•On the occasion of the *adya trad&ha* of Koka Voeresalingam, second son o! Mr. K. V. Subbah Rao Naidu, Pithapuram (31—10—96).

Thou art with us. That is Thy grace; an/1 therein is the ministration of Thy providence. For this merc;y we render eternal thanks unto Thee.

Thou knowest the frailties of our flesh; and while we falter and tremble, Thou infusest into us a new life of trust and strength. We know not why these things come; but we know this, that Thou dost ordain them all. Yet, upset at first even by the intensity of our own attachments, we throb and gasp and melt into tears. These, Thou art. however, even ready to transform into refreshing, reviving and reinvigorating showers. Even out of our sighs Thou shapest the weak and dim faith into fresh forms of insight and sympathy. Do Thou, on this sorrowful and solemn occasion, likewise disclose Thy presence, as we dare not say "Thy purpose." Lift the veil of our own frail, purblind perplexities; and render Thy presence manifest, even because Thou art our dear, dear God and every one whom we hold dear is dear unto us as Thy gift. We dare not question Thy right to resume what Thou hast given. And we abhor the suspicion tnat Thou couldst be so exacting as to cancel what Thou hast onee vouchsafed. Thou resumest but to restore Thou seemingly withdrawest but to, Reserve. Do Thou, ia Thy mercy, reawaken and revivify tbria

confidence, this conviction, in us. How can he; nourished into the ample promise of adult life, vanish for ever? He for ever gone, hope vanishes; hope vanishing, faith fails; faith failing, Thou Thyself art distanced out and we are lost in the abyss of despair. Oh, save us from this disaster—this catastrophe, this death; reclaim us to faith and hope. Thou art ever true and loyal; and as the ever true and loyal God, Thou only transformest the perception of the eye into the vision of the soul. That dear darling—if he should vanish, if he should cease to be, our own selves would then be engulfed in death-like slumber. No; he cannot, he shall not, be withdrawn. The gift of One who knows only how to give and bless and knows not how to deprive and bereave, that dear boon to the heart, though screened from the eye, is enshrined in the soul; though lost to the embrace, he is nestled still in our love. Who can gainsay that the babe vacating the cradle becomes cradled a life-long babe in the heart—never to outgrow the endearing charms of the babe? It may be of Thy Divine ordinance that to surrender a darling in arms is to treasure a darling in the heart all one's days. Wonderful are Thy ways! Here are the brothers that did not correctly know the brother before, the

friends that failed adequately to appreciate the friend before—all mourning together **with** a new-born appreciation and regard, chastened, deepened and sanctified even by the ministry of sorrow. Is not death a great revealer? And for the heart-broken parents what comfort, what consolation, dost Thou provide ? For Thou, Thou alone, canst put into them the insight of that faith which can espy their dear darling child restored to the spirit even though withdrawn from the eye. May they find in the abiding memory and in the imperishable affection centered in the cherished darling of their souls, now veiled from the eye, a strong and constant incentive to sympathetic, fraternal participation in the like sorrows of those around ! And may even every creeper and plant which he fostered be endeared and hallowed with the recollection of their beloved child ! How we forget one another while in the sunshine of the even tenor of life ! But how our hearts draw close together into the bond of cordial fellowship, as sorrow enters as a startling visitant unto any one amongst us ! Then Thou teachest us to realise, as never before, the richness and the sacredness of lives drawn together **in** the sanctuary of common worship,. Oh, do **Thou train our eyes and illumine our souls to perceive**

that Thou dost restore the dear departed even to the eye in and through the dear ones still around *uta*. Why need we hesitate to believe that it is no* the relationship of the body but the kinship, aye, the identity, of the spirit that is of supreme worth *said* virtue? So may we see, despite and even through this terrible bereavement, that, in very truth love in all its experiences and expressions is, after all, imperishable and each single object of love abideth, magnified, perfected and glorified, in Thee ! Blessed, blessed be Thy name of Immortal Love !

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

IV

THE SOUL'S MOTHER-TONGUE. *

(1930)

Thou, our Divine Mother, so kind, so loving, so tender, so winning and so engaging ! Really, Thou art the Mother; and the first speech, the plain, homely and yet clear and true speech, is the mother-tongue, *Mathntbhasha*. In Religion inspiration is the mother-tongue, the *Mathrubhasha*, of the Divine Mother. Thy inspiration is, in the life of the Spirit, the *bhasha*, the language, in which Thou, the Divine Mother, speakest unto Thy children—the language of deep love, the language of rich blessing, the language of all-sufficing and all-sanctifying providence. . That language we can learn only from Thee, directly from Thee; and thus Thou dost Thyself take up the mother's sacred duty of teaching and illumining every soul as Thy child. Even as the world's fashions, the world's gains, the world's allurements take us from the mother-tongue to the blundering hali-coufusing, foreign jargon

* Opening prayer at a *Sanghat-Sabha* Pithapthiram, (2—2—80).

likewise, tradition, mediation, ritual, ceremony, symbolism and what not draw us away from the native vernacular of intimate personal talk with Thee, our Mother, in worship and communion, to the mystifying babel of ^vcreed and dogma, custom and hearsay. But Thou hast in Thy infinite mercy made it manifest to us that our true strength and real joy come from talking to Thee and being talked to by Thee, in study and meditation, in investigation and reflection, in the pledge of duty and the vow of virtue; when Thou speakest unto us in the mother-tongue of Divine inspiration. We have seen and enjoyed its value audits gladness; and we desire a[^]ain and again to come to Thee with the trust and eagerness of children to enjoy this direct talk with the soul's Mother. Do Thou speak and make us reverently listen to Thee and trustfully receive Thy teaching—Thine own direct, individual, personal inspiration, which is the light, the strength and the joy of our souls.

We cannot live upon reports and echoes ; we must perish in spirit, unless we are fed with this *Amrutam* of Thy truth with Thine own motherly hand. For this nursing at the bosom of the Mother, we come unto Thee again and again; and for this feeding direct from the holy spirit of the Mother,

we are here at this hour. Yearning, hungering, thirsting, we come unto Thee, our benign Mother. Will Thy love fail us; will Thy mother-heart reject us as strangers? However sullied, however tainted, however sore-filled, yet the child is the darling: and the mother's love takes up the child all the more eagerly and tenderly even for the very taint, for the very sores. We have known it; we have experienced it; time and again we have ourselves received this cleansing, healing love of the Mother. Thou dost take us up, passion-polluted and sin-stained as we are, and Thou dost purify and nourish us into Thy lovely children. For this direct, personal 'converse' witli Thee, our beloved, adored Mother, we now present ourselves before Thee. Speak to us and give unto us to hear Thee; teach us and open our souls to receive Thy teachings. Bend forth Thy light and grant that the light enter and dwell in us, that thus we be once again re-born the children of holy light and holy love. Bless us, we beseech Thee, as, with all the simple joyousness of children, we cast, ourselves into Thy arms. May we rest there; may we rejoice there; may 'we be blessed there! This is our humble prayer; do Thou mercifully vouchsafe it*

Oml Thath Sath!

V

THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

(1928)

HYMN—*Dinamaii sudinamu gada* (Telugu).

Om! Parabrahmaneynamah ! Our humble salutations, our reverent obeisances, we offer, unto Him, the inscrutable yet the manifest, the profound yet the clear, the exalted yet the accessible, the God of mysteries and marvels and yet the God of our familiar experience and personal fellowship. Unto Him we offer our salutations and obeisances* How wondrous are the ways in which He greets us with surprises of mercy, unsolicited favours, unexpected blessings and unforeseen graces! They are of Him, His own bountiful gifts. And of **all** His myriad blessings, the richest, sweetest, dearest, most sanctifying, is this gift of worship. He gives Himself unto each one of His adorers according to his needs and wants; and He responds to the prayers of every one that turns in trust **and**

•At Pithapuram Palace on the success of the main Estate-suit
•before the High Court, Madras (19-4-28).

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longing towards Him. Thus God, manifest everywhere and shining in the radiance of the myriad orbs, is more resplendant in the joyful and holy life that He, with His own spirit, kindles in the heart and the home. The orbs above may be bright; but true grandeur belongs to those hearts and homes wherein He dwells and reigns* We are here to adore and glorify Him for His numberless mercies and blessings. Hallowed, hallowed be His name !

Even in Thy three-fold self-revelation, we approach and realise Thee, the ageless and eternal One, abiding in Thy own all-inclusive perfection a* Truth and Wisdom and boundless Being and* again, manifesting Thyself in goodness and love through creation and, anon, resuming into Thyself, in undivided wholeness, the manifold contents of creation. Thau art our All-in-all. Our days are reckoned by Thee, Our lives are known to us only •as Thy self-manifestation. Applying Thyself «> the individual, yet gathering up all interests into a sanity of purpose, Thou sendest forth one continuous current of grace and goodness, bearty anft righteousness, to enrich and gladden *Thy* children.

On this special occasion, as we approach Thee through the happenings of the hour and the occurrences of the day, we render our hearts' deepest debt of gratitude for all Thou hast done for us of late. That which lowered on life as a threatening gloom, has disappeared as thin mist. And Thou hast shown to us that, wherever we are, Thou art our Home and in Thy affection we are at home everywhere. Trembling or resting, in the busy arena of the world or in the serene retreat of the soul, we are in Thy immediate presence and unfailing fellowship. How Thou takest us into the protection of almighty power and shapest our destiny with a far-sight outreaching our understanding! To trust in Thee is to be in line with all that is good. Do Thou bless us with renewed trust and rejuvenated hope, as we commend ourselves to Thy grace and care with redoubled confidence. Do Thou make it plain to us that Thy eye, wakeful, and watchful, is ever upon us; that thus all harm is warded off and all injustice is suppressed; that thus truth alone triumphs and goodness alone endures. May we be strong in the trust that clings to Thee as the Faithful God! We bless Thee **that Thou hast** once again brought home to **us the ancient evangel that Thou art the God of truth, of**

love, of righteousness. What is due to Thee from us but to strive after Thee, to do Thy will, to repose confidence in Thy goodness under all circumstances and so to fortify faith with new joy and new hope? God of grace, as we receive Thee for our own dear Lord, the God of our hearts and our home, we once again consecrate ourselves unto Thy service ; and we beseech Thee to accept our humble homage. With the sanctifying showers of Thy grace do Thou so refresh our hope and trust as to take us closer to Thee than ever before. Our hearts, our persons, our powers, our opportunities, our all, we dedicate once again unto Thee, making ourselves naught, void and null before Thee. Bless all that have been with us, to reveal how Thou art the God of {companionship and confraternity; and grant that they and we may be drawn into closer communion for love and service. We invoke Thy blessing upon every home and family in this dear land of ours and upon every object of Thy creation from the tiny worm to the mighty sun. Hallowed, hallowed, hallowed be Thy name !

The God of all truth guide us! *The God of all love cherish us! The God of all holiness

sanctify ns! The Ood of all supremacy possess
ns and make ns His own for ever and ever!

Om / Brahma Kripahi Kevalam!

Om ! SantMh ! Santhih ! Santhih !

Om! Harih Om!

VI
SADHANA AND SADHAK*
(1930)

Thou, the Fountain-head, the Inexhaustible Spring*, of life, of light, of love and of beauty ! It is the prime purpose of Thy creation so to train, so to discipline, so to develop, so to transfigure every spirit-child of Thine that, even as the child of the home, from its cradle to its full vigour of the adult, is tutored, nursed and literally fed with the parent's love-essence, even likewise Thou dost, every minute of every life, pour Thy spirit-essence into each soul. It is Thy divine design that every child of Thy creation should grow into the fullest amplitude of perfection in truth, in wisdom, in goodness, in love and in holiness. Thus Thou makest every heart the training-ground for Thy divine dispensation. Not here alone, not in a hundred other specific spots only, but in every home and in every heart, Thou dost set up Thy *sadhanasram*. What is *sadhana* **but**

* On the occasion of the inauguration of the Cocanada Sad ha nab ram under the Audhra Brahmadhurna Vrachara N dhi Trust (8—I—30.)

the steady self-unfolding of Thy spirit in the being and in the doing of each child of Thine ? Beginning as a little possibility, growing into an inspiring promise, maturing into a transporting joy, and eventually self-surrendering into the divine delight of Thy Wa, thus Thou dost build np every life. Not they alone that assume the taxing yet blessed life of conscious and complete self-dedication unto Thee and are hailed and honoured by the world as Thy messengers, but also the humble, lowly toiler in the drudgery of life is by Thee trained and reared into a living shrine of Thy Holy Spirit. The parent who literally starves herself or himself for the weal of the child ; the physician who accepts toil and faces danger in his care for the patient; the tiller that suffers elemental inclemencies in order to sow the seed and to gather the harvest for others to live upon; the rover across the rough tide who, apparently making a fortune for himself but in reality breasting the storm and even fronting death, carries the message of reciprocal good-will from land to land; the humble seeker of truth who, keeping the vigil of the night while the rest of the world is asleep, lifts his soul up to the stars as the eternal scripture of Thy wisdom; and the sorrowing mother that **hangs** in sobbing suspense over the struggling babe,

ready, cheerfully ready, to pour the flood of her own life into the bosom of her darling—all, all are Thy *sadhaks*. The builders that have built this very house, not for the wages they have earned, but as a secure abode for their human kith and kin—they, too, have been agents in Thy hand. Thus every life fulfils itself in Thee, moulded as it is passed through toil and trial and wrought into a receptacle of Thy holy grace. For this, how can we render adequate thanks unto Thee? What is human speech? The scientist calls it a vibration. The lover calls it a song. The devotee calls it a gospel. Likewise, what is this light, flooding in day after day? Its beams, which are, according to the scientist, radiant waves, reinfuse life into the groping and the awaiting. And, in very truth, these rays are bringers—every one of them is a harbinger—of the message of the Lord of love unto the receptive eye and the greeting heart. Beloved God, when dost Thou fail; or when dost Thou cease, when dost Thou stop, the outpouring of Thy strengthening, sanctifying, saving grace? Never. In every heart-beat there is the thrill of Thy *sadhana*. In every hand-shake of friendship there is the impact of Thy *sadhana*. In every word from the tongue of good-will there is the welcome of Thy *sadhana*.

Every instance of self-restraint that subdues anger and speaks peace is a testament of Thy *sadhana*. Every moment of intent pause over the wisdom of the ages, not for the base purpose of bread-earning lore, no, not even for the laudable purpose of informing the intellect, but for the holy purpose of the perpetual dispensation of God's truth from age to age—that is a golden grain of Thy *sadhana*. Thus Thou dost provide countless facilities, as thou dost take infinite pains, for our *sad/tana*. And even as for human purposes concentration is a pre-requisite to expansion and localisation the focus-point for universalisation, we seek to appraise this, Thy *sadhanasram*, as the concentration and the localisation for conveying Thy providence and for dispensing Thy grace—to the outer eye a mere house but to the inner heart a true temple, for routine life a snug abode but for the growth of the spirit an abiding call and challenge to further and yet further endeavours; not after Thee, but unto Thee and into Thee, to be Thine. He who is the true *sadhak*—he has no label, no stamp, save that of the Master and the Saviour. And it is vouchsafed unto every one thus to earn this golden badge of the Master's servant, the Saviour's suppliant. It is this *sadhana* that we humbly and earnestly,, reverently **and**

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prayerfully, beseech Thee to unfold and develop here day after day. Not the two or three alone that are housed here but every one unto whom the interests of the Spirit are of supreme value, shall turn his eye and apply his heart hither in the hope and with the trust that, as company for social purposes means the unfolding of latent capacities for fellowship, so company for spiritual purposes is meant to foster the sense of the Divine into an entrancing vision in the lives of Thy children. May this *mdhana* be a life-long training, a whole-time discipline, an all-realising—all-surrendering and yet all-accomplishing—dedication unto Thee • Yes; Thou hast been, as Thy servants have borne grateful testimony, abundantly merciful unto us. Thy mercy and love have been simply miraculously rich. But yet, not in the human measure of suicidal self-contentment but in the divine measure of insatiable hunger, may this growth of spirit—this *mdhana*—in this God-illuminated, God-vivified, God-indwelt *Asram*, be a limitless, endless, immortal process for one and all! As we grow into one another, as we expand and inweave into one another, may this consolidation, this unification, of the spirit through the vitalising practice of divine discipline, be vouchsafed unto us all even through the

instrument of this consecrated, spirit-revealing-Temple and Training-home which, as we believe, Thou hast brought us together to inaugurate on this sacred day of the ascension-anniversary of him who was cradled in *sadhana* and was perfected into the model *sadhak*! May this consecration reveal unto us that the Spirit that dwelt in him and made him an oracle of heavenly catholicity and harmony is still alive, will never be silent, but will for ever endure! Why should we falter or hesitate or even doubt when we have Thee, the Living God, for our Teacher, our Guide, our Exemplar? May that spirit of the *Brahmananda* dwell within each one that feels interest in, and regard for, this *Sadhanasram* ! Do Thou bless this place—rather, this Institution, wherever located—with a lasting and ever-growing life of true devotion ; that devotion to Thee which must be growing and expanding with Thy eternal years. Vouchsafe that inexhaustible, interminable inflow of Thy spirit into us that we may be filled 7 suffused, surcharged, with Thy divine grace. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

vn

SANTHI:

Serenity.

(1914)

While the world's strifes threaten to beat you down and the world's troubles to rage around you, stand serene in your inner spirit, and you will find that they cannot reach up to you. As in the physical so in the spiritual world, down below there may be a dark, furious gale, but at the mountain top there rests the calm of sunshine. With *the* serene soul, it is not the calculating calm which says, 'you keep yours and I keep mine and thus let us possess our souls in peace'—that can be got uttered by any well-turned machine: no; it is the far-sighted calm which declares, "let us not talk of 'mine' and 'thine', let us avow 'ours'—thus alone can I be at peace with you, and it is only by being at peace with you that I can be at peace with myself."

The man of serenity is always **filled with thankfulness**,—the **thankfulness of an intelligent appreciation of life**, the **thankfulness which declares, * how good is God that He has given ma**

both 'shine and shower', that He has endowed me with a sense of touch quicker and finer than a thermometer and livelier and tenderer than a flower, that He has vouchsafed to me eyes that find a feast all round and ears that catch a music everywhere." The serene spirit is at home, is happy, wherever it be. In the stream, for instance, with its sunny ripples and their merry murmur, it finds an ever available companion for joyous communion. You heedlessly throw a stone on the smooth, even flow of the current, and you destroy its innate calm and thereby dispel your own joy. On the other hand, stand by the brook with eyes and ears that drink in the sheen and the song; and you will realise that serenity is the only right attitude which the Author of your being has prescribed for you. Enter any grove and behave there Like a submissive hearer, and not as an aggressive hunter; and you will find the whole grove resonant with a choral chant that converts the spot into a shrine and induces in you the mood and the preparedness for a sabbath.

How significant of aU that is sweet and joyous, then, is that hallowed word, *santhi*, as it falls upon the Indian ear! Our God is *smithi-dhamam*, the Eternal Abode of Serenity! Blessed be His name

vni

MARRIAGE BENEDICTION.*

(1924).

Oh! Thou God of Love, Thou the Inspirer of Love, Thou the Sustainer of Love, Thine is the supreme sovereignty of Love; Thou art truly and verily the God of Love. And Love, in its own proper nature, can never be single and separate: Love must *go* forth to elicit love, must replenish itself in love, fulfil itself in love, bless itself in love. For the blessed ministrations of Love, from cradle to eternity, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. Even as Thy spirit of Love is manifest in this sacrament, we see verified on this occasion the sweetness and the sanctity of love; and for it we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. This marvellous manifestation of love coming to dwell with love, love delivering itself to love—this is the work and the victory of Thine own love. They whom the world holds to be &o

• At the Orphanage, Cocanada (9—10—24),

man's concern, no man's care, no man's interest—they have been here fostered hi Thy love from budding childhood to blooming youth. And this crowning alliance of holy love,—Thou in Thy love alone could design it, project it, secure it and sustain it; as time and again Thou hast made manifest Thy providence here in this joyous manner. For this we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. Fostered with parental care through love of Thy implanting, these dear ones have been led even by love of Thy stimulating to seek in each other the reciprocal response and enjoyment of love. And on this thrice-solemn occasion we feel truly sanctified by the thought and the feeling of this blessed union of love—once again an appeal and a testimony unto our doubting minds and wavering hearts that Love reigneth supreme in, and worketh **out** the lofty destiny of, every life. Thou, the God of Love, the tender **Care-taker** and the **watchful Guardian of** every soul, Thou dost convey unto us, through these wedded souls made **dear** by **Thee and unto Thee, a new hope, a new joy, a new benediction and, with it, a new invitation to yield ourselves, in trustful spirit, to the keeping of Thy All-protecting love.** For this enriching of our lives thus multiplied in love, thus made manifold

by love, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. And with folded hands, bowed heads, uplifted hearts and supplicating souls, we implore that Thy blessing ever rest with this couple, the guiding light of conjugal devotion ever shine upon their path, the sweet current of wedded love ever flow into their hearts, and thus a true spiritual union strike a new note of joy in their lives, that thereby the world may witness once again how Thou ever art the God of Love. Glory, glory, glory to Thee ! Blessed be Thou, now and for ever!

Om! Santhih ! Santhih ! Santhih !

IX

SREEKARA; SUBHAKARA

(1930)

Om! Sreekara! Subhakara!

Unto Him who eternally and universally pronounces the benediction of peace and prosperity; unto Him whose entire process of world-government and world-perfection is set to the one noble purpose of progress and prosperity, peace ever-enduring and bliss everlasting, unto Him we render our devout salutations on this truly peace-imparting, progress-proclaiming, bliss-vouchsafing occasion. As this dear band of choral and jubilant voices brings the message and offers the invitation to fold the hands before, and to gather close to, the *Sreekara* and the *Subhakara*, these voices only carry and convey His own personal welcome. With ceaseless and intent interest in the progress, prosperity and bliss of all creation, this *Sreekara*, this *Subhakara*—the Author and Accomplisher of all peace and all prosperity—has been verifying, in an ever-continued and ever-enriched progression,

• Closing prayer after Ushakeerthan in connection with the Central Celebrations, at Cocanada, of the Centenary of the Brahma Samaj Manjir
TrQRT-Deed by Rajah Ram Mohan Roy (25-1-30.)

the Divine design and delight of blessing all creation even by gathering every living being to His own bosom. It is a universal chorus that sings this morning song of reawakened sense and rekindled hope, bringing new life and new joy unto all beings. This message repeated dawn after dawn and ratified eve after eve, the dawn making the offer and the eve fulfilling the offer—this message has been from time immemorial and will, with heavenly assurance, be repeated and verified even unto time immortal. And this assurance is not only to the refreshed senses but also to the revived heart and reilluminated soul. The rhythm of the chant is taken up by the elements and the seasons; and every day, ay, every hour, marks time unto this cosmic rhythm. And to the rhythm all around, the heart responds even with its own rhythmic beat* Thus we are conceived and created, cradled and cherished, in the rhythmic joy of the benediction of the *Sreekara* and the *Suhhakara*. Let us then rejoice with the universe; let us, with mind and heart and soul and strength, throw ourselves, even as constituting the richest bliss of our lives, into this rapturous dance of Divine delight.

Oh Thou *Sreekara*, *Subhakara*, the Maker of the world's joy and bliss in life plentiful, in love

perennial, in bliss perpetual! We salute Thee and we tender our devout obeisances unto Thee on this truly blessed occasion; and we behold Thy bliss-bringing dispensation beaming from the rising sun, resonant in the joyous grove, nay, thrilling and vitalising in every fibre and nerve of our whole frame. For this dispensation of Thy divine grace that fulfils life in rejoicing in the Lord, we render our whole-hearted thanks unto Thee. Standing at the meeting-point, the mingling moment, of repose and reawakening, we behold Thee in Thy supreme, twin-self-expression of everlasting peace and ever-enduring energy—the peace that in the profundity of Thy *anandam* gathers in, every minute, the conflicts of the world and charms them into the trust and tranquility of the child; and the energy of Thy ever-abundant, life-imparting, love-generating spirit ceaselessly active and alert in momentarily sending up this ordered glory of creation from the profundity of Thy depths into selfless, self-donating service in love and in righteousness. At this consecrated meeting-moment of time and eternity, we unite in owning our implicit **trust** in Thee and in making our absolute surrender unto Thee, the past guaranteeing to the present **-that the trust thus reposed is of heavenly inspiration**

and the present discovering from the future in endless vistas the light advancing before us and converting the consecration and the surrender into a pilgrimage of joy and benediction. On this thrice-blessed occasion, we have no petitions to present, we have no wishes to voice, we have no desires to declare; we feel, through and through our whole being, this one urge, that Thou wantest us and we want Thee; and in this reciprocal yearning, we find alike the cause of creation and the bliss of our life. Our sole prayer, our single supplication, on this blessed occasion is that this divine impulse in us may grow and intensify into a passion possessing all our powers, permeating all our doings and presenting us before Thee with the pledge and the covenant, 'Thy will be done in us—Thy will that willeth for ever the eternal weal of the whole creation !' May that will be ours, to be pledged to devoted obedience and to be perfected through divine grace! May we be inspired even by Thy lieavenly example to subject and surrender ourselves to the reign of love ! And may we, in all we think, feel, say, desire and do willingly, cheerfully and devoutly submit ourselves to that rule of love! It is Thy love that manifests itself in this divine self-limitation which **we call**

visvam—this universe, when we vividly vision it. And grant, we beseech Thee, grant that it be Thy love again that will disclose unto us that Thy seeming limitation is but Thy eternal self-realisation and the world swinging in space and speeding through time is really Thy Divine love that thus pictures and presents itself to the eye and the heart of man in the marvels of creation and in the gifts of grace vouchsafed unto every adoring soul. Thou art *Sreekara* and *Subhakara*, because Thou art Love itself. Every minute lapped in Thy love, embraced by Thy love, rekindled into life by Thy love, every one of Thy creatures feels Thou art Parent-Love aye, Spouse-love, sanctifying and blessing; with returning love, with re-offered love. From Thee, in Thee and unto Thee is this procession of love. May we for ever, every minute of our being, consciously and rejoicingly join and participate in this procession of love; and this, not by the folding of the hand, not by the bowing of the head, no, not even by the prostrating of the soul, but by rendering the whole being sacred and sanctified through a joyous adherence to the law of Thy Love ! This we desire, because Thou hast taught us to acknowledge it as alike the ultimate goal and the eternal bliss of our lives. Oh, do

Thou, *Sreekara*, *Subhakara*, work in the soul of each one present here this great miracle that findeth its all in surrendering its all unto Love^ The delight of my senses, the joy of my heart, the bliss of my soul, this love is Thy own self-manifestation unto me, even me, the sinner. How supremely blessed it must be unto those favoured,, fortunate ones that could say, ⁱ Lord, we have done Thy will'! This day, once again, creeping,, crawling, sorrowing, anguishing, my heart approaches Thee and seeks to nestle itself in Thy universal heart of love; and thus cured of its* palsyng maladies, once again it receives and resumes its prayerful pulsation in this rhythm of universal love. Touch it, I implore Thee, with the heavenly touch of Thy sanctifying grace; and make me see and feel with the certainty of my own renewed experience that I have been restored to the love that I forfeited even through my wayward and wasteful abuse of the self. Thou dear One, how can I thank Thee and praise Thee with fitting words, with intensity and ardour adequate to the feeling in me, that Thou art the* ever-loving, never-ignoring God? These, Thy children—they are living witnesses unto me that

Thou art the loving God. Have they come up these steps merely to present to me the welcome presence of their physical being? Have they not ascended these altar-stairs to bring¹ me once again the gospel of Thy love? Through them Thou hast once again conveyed unto me the oracular voice that all is love, that to love is to live and that life in love is life immortal. For this message thus imparted, I render whole-hearted and profoundly grateful thanks unto Thee. And the love thus regenerated moves me to present unto Thee this petition of love that those dear ones ushered up here by love be the cherished darlings of Thy heart of love all their days, the young bounding with hope and the middle-aged strong with trust. May they all be enriched with the bounty and gladdened with the nectar of Thy Divine love! That they be filled with Thy love is unto me the fulfilment of Thy love in me; and I shall rejoice in Thee as I behold in Thee the God of love unto them all. I want them not alone in the secluded hour of contemplation; but I want them everywhere in the entire universe in the joyous movements of human aspiration and human fellowship. Now Thou nourishest me by myself as my Mother

of love; and then Thou earnest me into the fold of love as the Mother of all. May I supplicate Thee to vouchsafe unto me the grace of love to find the very fountain-source of my love in the love that Thou pourest upon all these, Thy children ! Thy love shared, partaken in, at the feast of the world's bliss, is truly *amritam*. For this holy fellowship in the spirit we render our most grateful thanks unto Thee, as we feel reawakened through this reunion. May this regenerated love and confraternity urge us once again to render unto Thee, with united hearts and souls, our humble offering of adoring love and renew with Thee once more the heavenly covenant of complete self-surrender unto Thy love ! We are gaining in thus giving ourselves; and therein lies Thy supremacy, Thy majesty, as the Lord of Love. Resuming apparently, Thou restorest abundantly. And in giving and gaining, we grow in mutual love, for which we are ever so deeply beholden unto Thee. Thou Lord of Love, transform us into the very quintessence of love in thought and word and deed, now and for ever. Make us unto one another a benediction of We that thus for ever we be knit together, united in and unto Thee, the *Sreekara* and

the *Subhakara*. Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Om! Brahma Kripaki Kevalam!

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih, Om!

X

SHELTER THE WEAK FROM THE STRONG.

(1915)

This is, so to speak, the social obligation of religion; to shelter the helpless from the aggressive, to protect the oppressed from the tyrannical, aye, to take every care of those upon whom the world bestows no thought. Every great religion enjoins it as a supreme duty to save the lowly and the neglected, the starving and the sorrowing, the bereaved and the sin-stricken, from the assaults of the rich and the strong, the proud and the self-righteous. And whichever religion ever sided with mere might and power, prestige and ambition, alike condemned itself and proved a fruitful source of endless woes. The spirit that is truly religious so shapes the thoughts and moulds the desires of man that he is habitually prompted to employ his heart and hands on the side of the weak **as against the strong.** **Is it** not an impressive fact, **though a seeming paradox,** that **strength shows**

itself to the best advantage when, and only when, it is enlisted in support of weakness? When those who are strong, those who are wise and those who are high-placed employ their strength, wisdom and position in the service, for the benefit, of the weak, the ignorant and the humble—when the strong help the weak, the wise tutor the ignorant and the high-placed lift up the humble—then, observes Maehiavelli, a republic may be said to be perfect. That is the spirit of true democracy.

XI
THE DIVINE MOTHER¹
(1920)

Thou art our dear and loving Parent in the truest sense. Thou art our ever beloved, cherished and honored Mother. With that sweetest and holiest relationship we feel drawn intimately and lastingly unto Thee. As the mother feedeth and fostereth her little babe from the substance of her very person, likewise dost Thou, the Divine Mother, feed and nourish our spirits with the very substance of Thy Holy person. Not in the language of poetry or of rhapsody, but in the plain, simple terms of real Truth, Thou fosterest us as Thy children. The Love, the Divine Love, the depths of which none can measure—'Thy love is the source and spring, the fountain and feeder, of the human race, indeed, of the whole creation. Such is the abundance of Thy love that amongst countless millions none is left wanting, not one slipped into neglect; the whole race, one and all,

• Opening prayer at *S-mgat*, Pithapuram (22-12-29).

being so directly and intimately known to Thee and so affectionately held dear by Thee. Our feelingless hearts, our graceless souls—they fail to realise how Thou art ever present and ever watchful as the Parent of every one of us. The food of our bodies is Thine ; the refreshment of our minds is Thine; the nutriment of our hearts is Thine; the sustenance of our souls is Thine—our all is Thine! And we come unto Thee hungering: and thirsting, hoping and trusting, that Thou wilt surely, out of the stores of Thy Spirit—of Thy truth, of Thy wisdom, of Thy love, of Thy righteousness—feed each one of us, that thus we might once again spring forth like new-born children fresh from the heart of the Mother. Keep out of us, we beseech Thee, every thought and every desire, unbecoming and unworthy of us, and draw us, in all the trust of children and all the devotion of adorers, to Thy holy Self, that thus we might receive the fullest blessing of Thy inspiring instruction on this occasion. We feel like children of one family, gathered around the one Parent, looking joyfully into the face of the Benign Mother and Holy Inspirer, drawing solace and strength, hope and joy, even from the heavenly look of our divine Parent and Preceptor.

May we be thus blessed with Thy presence! Do Thou, on this solemn and joyous occasion, render Thyself all the sweeter and dear unto us! This is our humble supplication. (Our feelings and thoughts, our desires and aspirations, all, we place before Thee, as our humblest tribute unto Thee; and do Thou, in Thy mercy and grace, accept and bless these as the tokens of our love! Do Thou once again renew and refresh in us the devout spirit, of Thy worshippers—thy adorers and glorifiers !

Blessed, blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

XII

SELF-CONQUEST.

(1912)

This is one great aim of religious discipline, as preparation for self-realisation. According to a well-known *sloka*, the self is the enemy of the self, and the self is the friend of the self; and self-conquest signifies the disciplining of the enemy-self into the friend-self. Man has been compared to a tower, opening both sky-ward and earth-ward. He is, apart from his physical senses, endowed with certain higher faculties, among which is the consciousness of, the power to perceive the inviolable distinction between, right and wrong. While the animals are led by instinct, man is moved by a sense of responsibility. And self-conquest implies and demands the rigorous use of this sense. There **are** some exceedingly fine specimens of humanity **in** noble-tempered individuals, with whom life is a **golden** harvest of love and service. **How depressingly different from these are those narrow, shrunk, distorted spirits that seem to exist only**

for self-aggrandisement. But the high-sonled men are they who daily illustrate the sublime paradox, 'What is kept is lost; what is given is gained.' Speaking of the marvel that the human heart attains fulness through self-spending, Newman utters the profound truths, 'when we serve, we rule; when we give, we have; when we surrender ourselves, we are victors!' This conquest of the self consists in the subjection of the lower, animal demands of the self to the higher, human dictates of the self. As Bacon suggests, man lies midway between God and beast; and the whole value of human life may be summed up as the ascent from beast to God. Buddha begging, with the bhikshu's bowl, in the streets of his own capital; Jesus praying, from the 'bitter cross' for his crucifiers—they are the world's noblest exemplars of self-conquest. Let the pure soul be intent on the heavenly pilgrimage, observes Sa'adi, diadem or dust makes little difference.

XIII

PATITAPAVANAMURTAYE NAIIAH! *..

(1929),

Oml Paramatmane Xamah; Oml Patitapavanamrlmje Xamah 1 Thou art our Parent, Protector, Preceptor, Purifier. Thy mercy, so profoundly deep and so limitlessly vast, reaches and blesses one and all. Thou bestowest equal attention and care upon all alike, be they rich or poor, strong or weak, high or humble, saintly or sinning'. Out of Thy pure grace Thou teachest the mind and guidest the steps of each one of us. It is Thy eternal purpose and design that every child of Thine should grow in truth, purity and goodness. With Thy sanctifying Spirit Thou awakenest in us the desire, the aspiration, to live honourable and worthy lives, as becoming Thy children. Thy inspiration alone can turn our hearts to lofty ideals and move our wills to noble endeavours. Thou, the God of Righteousness—Thou art righteous, not to judge and to condemn, but to compassionate and to save.

•Opening Prayer at the Kalarantula CODfrence at Visinagaratn (26.12-29),

Thy mother-heart feels and yearns for the misguided and the wayward. With a solicitude that never tires, Thou seekest to reclaim and restore them to Thy right and righteous ways. Unto Thy redeeming grace how impious it is to set limits ! Its dispensations are co-eval with Eternity and co-extensive with Infinity. This joyous occasion, too, is a gift of Thy grace. Thy heavenly Love alone has gathered us here today. It is the pure love of Thy imparting that makes us feel like sisters and brothers—happy children of one family. We tender unto Thee our reverent obeisances and our grateful salutations. Teach us to realise Thy holy Presence here. Shed upon us the light of Thy wisdom. Fill us with the love that will esteem and welcome every person present here as a sister or a brother. Guide us, we beseech Thee, in our deliberations and conclusions. Lead us along the right path—the path of purity, honour and of rectitude. Vouchsafe ample success to our dear Conference by graciously imparting new light to our minds, new strength to our consciences, and new resolves to our wills during these two days, and thereafter lovingly employing us in Thy good work of befriending and uplifting Thy neglected and down-cast children. As each soul is unutterably dear

unto Thee, may this Conference help to reveal to us the rich store of Thy love and grace that lies hid even in the Jowest and the least of Thy children gathered here ! May the most wilful amongst us here be moved to yearn for the peace and the blessing of love and service joyously rendered unto Thee ! May fresh hope, the hope of divine redemption and benediction, be kindled in even the utterly abject amongst us ! May this Conference serve to glorify Thee by making all these Thy children feel purer, stronger and heartier with Thy divine inspiration ! Blessed be Thy name ! Cm ! Santhih !

XIV
CHASTITY AND CELIBACY.
(1916)

⁴ Chaste as Diana' is treated as a classic phrase to denote ideal chastity ; Diana, an eternal virgin, being appraised as the model of speckless chastity. This idea was rendered acceptable to most minds by the wide-spread misconception that the celibate alone could be rightly adjudged to be quite chaste: Asceticism and monasticism championed this notion. An air of sanctity attached itself to the woman-shunning *sanyasin*. In the final upshot, man was fancied to be 'conceived in sin'. But as the human mind emerged from the medieval into the modern era, an emphatic protest had to be entered against this slander cast upon holy wedlock. In the hallowed name of the mother—the venerated authoress of one's own being, the saving truth had to be borne in on *ih&* human soul that the wife can be no less chaste than the virgin. Married life is not incompatible with pristine purity. If it is not the cowl that makes the monk, neither does its absence argue

the libertine. Ascetism, eastern or western, misses this truth. It is obvious that the cradle of mankind is laid in the family; and the growth and continuity of a healthy race depends on the sanctity of marriage. Prohibition of marriage can never be an ordinance of God. It is a profound truth, on the other hand, that God is the divine maker of all true marriages.—The weal or the woe, therefore, of the individual or of the race, the salvation or the perdition of the soul or the society, lies in marriage. Man and woman are constituted, through wedlock, into trustees of posterity. Duty to posterity, which means the transmission of *the gift of life* from generation to generation, is the high sanction for holy wedlock.

Strict fidelity to married life is a most onerous duty. At the same time it is also a most exquisite privilege. Its due discharge may strain one's strength; but it also blesses one's soul. In the cultivation of this heavenly virtue, continence as regards the physical frame alone falls far short of the ordained ideal. To be married indissolubly, in thought, in sentiment, aye, even in dream—that is the secret of that supernatural strength wielded by the *Pathivralha*, as proved in the death-daring Savitri. If another woman, said to surpass Eve a

thousandfold in beauty and grace, were to be substituted for her, yet he would desire and have Eve alone, so avows even the frail Adam. Divine Chastity demands votaries from both the sexes. Man approves himself only when man's *patnivratham* mates woman's *pativratyam*. Self-exemption is arrogance. And thus ^wedlock, no less than celibacy, shall honor and exemplify Chastity.

To serve this end, any proneness to harbour or express unchaste ideas shall be resolutely resisted. It is an idle fancy that chastity is only an extra accomplishment, not indispensable to a happy life. Sooner or later, by external rebuke or by internal smart, the Lotharios of the world are constrained to realise that chastity constitutes the pure essence of human happiness. Chastity is the basement of a dependable life, the corner-stone of a serviceable life, the cupola of an honourable life. It is not position, it is not pleasure, it is character, with its blessedness, that ought to be, and truly is, the end and fulfilment of human life. Is it not appalling, harrowing, excruciating to know that of all offence** that man is liable to commit, in chastity is the one crime which, in actual fact, involves, drags in, a co-criminal, a yoke-fellow in perdition? That is the horror, the hell, of this deadly sin. On the other

hand, those who, with hand clasping hand and heart embracing heart, ascend together the altar-stairs of love, enjoy the bliss of Heaven even on earth. If, as Mami prescribes, woman has to depend upon man, in all stages, for the sustenance of life, is not man likewise dependent, all along, upon woman for the sweetness of life: man the stem, woman the creeper; man the sap, woman the flower ?

Very aptly and happily poets have compared the union of man and woman to the confluence of two streams merging into one current. At the altar each conveys body, mind and heart to the other; there is no residuum left to be shared with a third party. The scriptural text says, * God is a jealous Q-od'—He will have the whole soul or none. The spouse, too, is a jealous person—claiming the whole heart or none. The glorification of the wedded life comes through that devotion of chastity, wherein fellowship, peace and love combine to make the marriage-bond divine.

XV

RAM MOHAN ROY ANNIVERSARY*.

(1929)

Thou, the Supreme Lord, Thou art the Ordainer of the destinies of nations and the ITarmoniser of the ideals of peoples. Thou art the guiding Light and the sustaining Strength along the path of human progress. Thou art the rejuvenating Faith and the resuseiating Hope of every country that is suffering an eclipse and seeking a bright day. Thus, Thou art the Inspirer, the Sustainer, the Fulfillcr and the Sanetifier of the aspirations of our race. In Thy measureless mercy and boundless grace, Thou dost, in all lands and at all times, reveal Thyself as the Divinity that shapes the ends of mankind. It is Thy eternal purpose that directs the whole process of creation towards the goal of a universal confraternity in the All-holy. This glorious gospel Thou dost reveal, from age to age, through a host of Thy chosen messengers—an

* Opening Prayer, at the Brahmopasaaa Mandir, Cocanada, on tha occasion of the Ram Mohan Boy Anniversary Celebration, on 27*9*29.

unbroken succession of prophets and philanthropists, for whom we render our deeply grateful thanks unto Thee. Thus, always and everywhere, there spring up witnesses to Thy Dispensation of Truth, Love and Righteousness. Indeed, human history, correctly construed, is one continuous narrative of the marvellous doings of Divine Grace for the perfection of humanity into the holy image of the Deity. For one such sure proof of this Thy divine delight in the salvation of man, for one such striking testimony to Thy limitless love and solicitude for us all, we are met here to render our reverent thanks unto Thee. Vouchsafe it unto us, Oh! Thou Indwelling Light, to understand the true greatness, to appraise the rich worth, of this man of Jlod, whom Thou didst, in Thy deep compassion for our dear country, ordain as the harbinger of a new age for India. Do Thou reveal unto us the secret of his strength—the faith, the love alid the hope with which he was inspired even by Thee—as, with tireless devotion, he laboured, all his days, in the cause of truth and justice, righteousness and harmony. Grant, we beseech Thee, that even in our humble lives, it may be given us to vision and reflect some of the glory that dwelt in him—that sanctification of the whole

being of the man with the vivid sense, the impressive reality, of ceaseless communion with God and complete consecration of his all to God. Moved by Thy Holy Spirit alone could he bring a new hope, convey a new message, impart a new strength, to his times and to posterity. With open minds, believing hearts and reverent souls, may we receive, on this solemn occasion, the noble message of the life of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy! Blessed be Thy name!

XVI
WEDDING PRAYER
(1929)

Om ! Parabrahmane namah ! Thou art *Mahesa*, the supreme, absolute and perfect Spirit; the Lord of creation, and the adored God of all To our prayerful and joyful hearts this is a dear occasion—so very solemn and happy, so exceedingly inspiring and gladdening. We bow down before Thee with the adoring obeisance of our soids. Truly and verily, Thou art our All-in-all. The whole creation proceeds out of Thee, abides in Thee, prospers in Thee and fulfils and perfects itself in Thee. In Thee all seekers of things pure, good and lovely find their bliss. Thou, the Eternal Self, art the selfless Creator of all; and we bow down before Thee and render our devout homage of praise and thanks unto Thee. With all the affection and devotion of a loving parent, Thou dost keep watch and ward over us, with Thy eternal arms

• At the Pithapuram.Maharajah's Palace, on the occasion- of the happy wedding of the Yuyarajah (22-8-29).

ever infolding us. In Thy providence Thou so shapest our days that sins are cleansed, frailties are remedied, truth is revealed and righteousness is imparted—all through Thy grace, Thou all-protecting and all-perfecting One, we render our grateful thanks unto Thee for creating in us the quest for truth, the longing for love and the resolve for righteousness. Under Thy inspiration and guidance is ever conducted the pilgrimage of our lives in truth, love and righteousness. All-compassionate and all-comforting, ever-affectionate and ever-attractive, through unstinting love and unfailing protection, Thou art the encompassing God, the embracing God, the inspiring God, the sanctifying God; and we thank and praise and glorify Thee, as our hearts are this day bright and joyous with this happiness which Thy love alone has provided for us. Thou, the fountain-head of all that is pure, good and holy, our hearts are, this day, all on a rapturous thrill with the purest and deepest sentiments of thankfulness and gratitude unto Thee. To a degree out-reaching our understanding or imagination, Thou hast been merciful unto us* This day, into which gather the prayers and the hopes, the anxious solicitude, and the supplicating expectation, of ever so many months **and years, thigr**

day is exceedingly dear unto us with its rich reminiscences. May this day, every moment of it, be illumined with Thy holy presence ! In all that we think and utter, desire and do, on this auspicious day, may we be blessed with the vivid sense and the glowing experience of Thy loving and holy company with and amidst us ! We are here, not seated on the bare ground of Nature's earth, but we are, as we sincerely believe, nestled upon the lap and within the embrace of Thee, our Divine Mother. Joyfully owning Thee as our Parent, humbly bowing before Thee as our Sovereign, ardently glorifying Thee as our Protector and Saviour, we adore Thee, we thank and praise and glorify Thee, as the Fulfiller of all our desires and the Exemplar of all our ideals and aspirations; and we beseech Thee to sanctify us with the holy sense that we are gathered here in Thy sacred presence, glorifying and rejoicing in Thee. Blessed be/Thy name now and for ever !

Unto me, so hopeless a sinner, so pitiable a reprobate, even unto me, Thou hast, in Thy marvellous mercy, vouchsafed this exalting and enrapturing experience of |the day. Mine is the grateful, praising, glorifying heart; and out of the deepest bases of my being emerges the offer of

humble salutations and reverent obeisances unto Thee. Inexpressibly profound is my soul's gratitude unto Thee at this thrice-happy hour. Count not, I pray Thee, my unworthiness but deign to accept this humble homage, and honour it with Thy benediction. It is an hour of supreme bliss in my life ; as now it is granted to me joyously to behold this manifestation of Thy priceless love and devoutly to praise and glorify Thee for it. Our darling—we prayed long for him ; we ardently implored Thee to grant him unto us. And, in Thy boundless mercy, Thou didst vouchsafe our imploring desire. He came to be the light of our eyes, the joy of our hearts, the fountain of our hopes, as the sure proof, the convincing witness, of Thy loving-kindness unto us. As he has grown, we have been grateful recipients of Thy increasing mercies. For all this, we render again our profoundest thanks unto Thee. And now, as the thrice-happy moment is come when he is to cross the solemn bound and step into the holy realm of wedded life, we quiver with the joy that unto us is vouchsafed this supreme blessing. He has been unto us an invaluable token of Thy mercy. May we be taught to receive it and to cherish it with all the intense affection that is proper unto so sacred a

gift! Shower Thy blessings upon him and upon that beloved one whom Thou, the God of unifying and perfecting love, hast ordained to be his life-long, indeed eternal, companion and co-pilgrim. She comes to us, she is welcomed of us, as a new joy, a fresh hope, an added grace. May this happy couple, Thy beloved children, grow, day after day, into ampler—richer, worthier—life, inspired by Thy Holy Spirit and blessed in each other with all the desires of their hearts fully satisfied and all the joys of the world abundantly provided, through mutual love and devotion ! And as we feast our eyes and cheer our hearts with their dear, delighting presence, may we ever remember Thee in them and render, with the fidelity of affection, all the peace and joy which Thou, in Thy mercy, shouldst grant us the valued opportunity of conveying to these dear ones! May they, like twin-lights, illumining this dear home, which is Thy rich gift and holy blessing unto us, shine with ever-growing love, true, pure, beneficent, gracious, divine ! Vouchsafe unto each one of us the spirit of true joy, sincere felicity and genuine affection, that we may bless Thee for and in these, Thy beloved ones. Unto me, how indescribably precious is this blessing, the value of which none, none but the feeling and loving heart,

can estimate! Dear, increasingly dear, has he been unto me from the day of his birth, aye, even in expectation. And now, the other child, his joy-maker and his love-partaker,—be she equally dear unto this humble, prayerful heart! Bless all those interested and participating in this joyous event of this happy home. And as Thou designest every home to be the abode of peace and happiness and consecratest it as a temple of purity and piety, so be this dear home the blessed abode of peace and happiness and a holy shrine of purity and piety! May the solemn and happy recollections of this day long dwell in our grateful hearts ! Blessed, blessed, blessed be Thou, now and for ever !

Oml Brahma Kripahi Kevalaml

XVII
ANANDASAGARA*.
(1929)

HYMN—*Anandasagaradu arugxtthenchey nedu* (Telugu).

Oh ! *Anandasayara ! Anandasayara!* The Deep profound, the Main measureless, of love and bliss! Our humble, reverent, grateful salutations unto Thee as Thou, in the inscrutable ways of Thy wisdom, preferest thus to manifest Thyself in the united and whole-hearted delight of Thy children. Here, with Thine invisible finger, Thou paintest the celestial charm of the rainbow; and a thousand glowing eyes, beaming faces and bounding hearts turn up and proclaim the divine glory of Him whose beauty and radiance are thus glimpsed forth across the entire firmament. There, from the mountain retreat, whither no human foot has yet strayed, emerges the shining and cheering silver-line of life-giving waters; and not merely with delighted hearts but with reverent souls, pilgrims from all quarters gather to glorify Him

* Closing prayer after Uahakeerthan on 67th Birth-day at Pithapuram

whose beauty and bounty, secretly stored in the heart of His own hills, well up into view and bring with them the dispensation of ceaseless love. Yonder, a tiny bud just peeps out into open light, and children with jubilant hearts gather around it in glee and gratitude, be it in unuttered word but in surging sentiment, to rejoice in its Author and Maker. It may be that the joy thus thrilling hearts that are otherwise occupied with the fleeting shows of the world, is a joy that looks not beyond the moment. But verily, even here Thou dost express and convey Thyself. Again the darling long-desired is ushered out from the mysterious maternal mansion, as a new hope and a fresh love; and kith and kin, friend and neighbour, hail the in-comer as a messenger of the Divinity that shapes the ends of all. In these and a myriad other aspects and expressions of Thy *anandam*, we daily and hourly witness the age-long and world-wide testament of the God of love and bliss. Thus, out of Thine own unsolicited, unexpected, indeed, surprising, overwhelming divine-delight .in love, Thou hast brought the whole universe into being. This world is, in utter truth, the very offspring of Love and Joy. And we love Thee as the God of Love and rejoice in Thee as

the God of Joy. Our responding love is our hearts' offering of reverent gratitude unto Thee, and our reacting joy is our soul's homage of devoted loyalty unto Thee. We bless and praise and glorify Thee as the God of *anandam*, of love and bliss.

It is Thy ordinance that in the normal occupations of our lives we should live and labour in the atmosphere of hope and trust in Thee. And yet lest we forget, lest we forget, Thou dost likewise intend and plan that in special moments of the impressive and inspiring inflow of Thy Love we should the more vividly realise Thy deeds of mercy and the more intensely rejoice in Thee as the Parent of Love. Life is granted to be enjoyed. Life is employed to gladden and, in gladdening, to rejoice. Our daily occupations are our realisation of Thy purpose, namely, that we are meant to earn gladness in gladdening others. But in these solemn, sacred moments we are powerfully drawn into the deeper experience of enjoying life by enjoying Thee and rejoicing in life by rejoicing in and with Thee. Thou art not only that *Ananda-sagara* whose benevolence underlies the entire voyage of life but also, and much more, Thou art that *Anandasagara* in whose reviving and sanctifying

waters we drop our occupations and engagements even in the enjoyment of immortal love {*amritam*). The birth-day kept with solemn and trustful, with adoring and grateful, hearts, is the day, not of the worship of Work, but of the worship of Love. For, Thou art vividly and impressively manifest unto us on the birth-day as that *Anandasagara* whose wisdom and grace are ever ready to reach out and to gather up, into a regenerated life, the scattered reminiscences of a year's Love and Bliss.

Humbly and reverently and gratefully I bow before Thee, on this recurring day of soul-felt thanksgiving, and own Thee not merely as the Author of life, as the Dispenser of goodness, as the Inspirer of wisdom and as the Guarantee of redemption through righteousness, but as the longed-for, the yearned-for, the keeidy, intensely, even anguishedly awaited one of the heart vvhich has been pining to be once again welded with its Original and wedded to its Lord. Do Thou, in Thine infinite grace, so engross me on this solemn day with the thought of Thee, with the desire for Thee, that it should be held not merely a repelling intrusion, but rank irreverence, if other thoughts, other wishes, and other desires should come

audaciously encroaching on, blasphemously transgressing into, holy ground. The heart, the soul, all the senses and susceptibilities, all the interests and engagements—may they all be shaped and sanctified into Thy adoration to-day; and, thus worshipping Thee in the innermost sanctuary of the soul, may even the sinner be recovered once again as the chosen child, the embraced spouse, of the Loving and Holy One ! And with this absorption in Thee, may it be vividly made manifest even unto my sin-veiled eye that, meant for Thee, I should be occupied with Thee all the day, and the whole concern, the entire purpose, of life is to devote every moment of each day unto Thee. So shall the days be strung together into a sacred rosary for Thy praise and Thy glory, and the truth which it has pleased Thee to disclose, though altogether unmerited, utterly unsolicited, on my part and wholly out of Thy grace—the living, sanctifying, heavenly truth of Brahmadharma—be once again brought home to me, rendered still dearer unto me, as the truth whose quintessence consists in so rendering the love-offering unto the Love-giver and Love-seeker that love alone shall be the fulfilment and the perfection of life* What

is life but Love issuing forth in resisters self-realisation—*IAie efdirttrtlefc** low of love¹* *kfrg**«tto of grace and goodness into the world 9 Wliat fa life bitt Love's self-benediction ** the htiman fa transfigured into the divine? Emanating frotn Thee as *Anan&asagam*, perennially progressing unto Thee as *Anandasagara*, eternally entering Sit◇ Thee as *Anandasagara*—out of Thee, Ymto Thee, in to Thee—oh Ocean of Love, life comes into beittg, flows into doing and fulfils in blessing, 'even a& Thy gift and Thy benediction. Blessed be Thou, the *Anandasagara* Wonderful, amazing? is the paradox of Thy purpose. Exalted, Thou descend into the depths of my degradation! iPure, Thou busiest Thyself in cleansing, indeed, in transforming, my impurity! Affluent, Thou choosest to become a mendicant knocking for my love at the lowjy door of my ginful heart! King of kings Thou dost employ Thyself even as the servant of servants! This is the bottomless, shoreless main of Thy love ttat contradictions cohere into the mutually completing and fulfilling compensations of life** teak, ttfе*a joy, life'* salvation. Thtm *rt nnto the perverse the confounding God, unto the donbting the convincing God, tinto the trusting die

confirming God and unto the loving the ever-companioning God. Blessed be Thy name! Blessed be Thy name! Do Thou vouchsafe unto me on this day, I implore Thee again and again, a new faith in Thy wisdom, a new trust in Thy goodness, a new covenant with Thy providence, aye, a new sacrament of holy wedlock with the" Spouse Divine. Blessed be Thy name that Thou hast brought together these, Thy children, my heart's own kith and kin, to render with me their united homage of thanks, of praise and glorification, even for a life so appallingly, even oppressively, imperfect and unfaithful and yet a life which Thou wouldst seem to have made it Thy purpose, as if it were the sole object of Thy citation, ever to keep in the protection of Thy love. This life, so wasted, so squandered, is yet unto Thee so dear! If Thou art not *Anandasagara*, what else art Thou unto the transgressor and the traitor? The sinner saved is the Saviour adored; the rebel reclaimed is the Lord exalted. And Thee as the Saviour glorified, Thee as the Lord homaged, of us all, we praise and adore on this solemn and joyous day. May it prove unto me particularly a day of new departure, of new resolve, of new loyalty, *pi*

new dedication, of new love unto the Lord!
Blessed be Thy name now and for ever!

Om! Brahma Kripahi Kevalam !

Om! Santhih! Santhih! Santhih!

Om! Harih Om !

THE END

