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ALTAR-STAIRS

A SEQUENCE OF SIXTY STUDIES IN THE LIFE AND LORE OF THE SPIRIT

BY

RAO SAHIB
DR. V. RAMAKRISHNA RAO,
M.A., L.T., PH.D.,
Retired Principal, Pittapur Rajah's College, Cocanada;
Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee Gold Medallist in Letters,
University of Calcutta

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in fervent homage and reverent gratitude.

V. R

PREFACE

Intended, in however limited a measure, to prove of service as steps to divinity, the series of studies gathered together in this volume are, for the most part, comprised of more or less systematic sketches of Spiritual Theism—its doctrine, discipline and development. The bulk of these sixty discourses originally appeared, from time to time, as occasional contributions to the columns of *The Indian Messenger*, the organ of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta. Some were brought out in *The Fellow-Worker* and the *Humanity* of Madras and the *Satyasamvardhani* of Rajahmundry—journals no longer in existence—as also *The Hindustan Review* of Allahabad and *The Modern Review* of Calcutta, besides educational magazines like the *Silver Jubilee Souvenir* of the South Indian Teachers' Union of Madras, *Mira* of Hyderabad (Sind) and *The Union Noble College Leader* and the *Educational India* of Masulipatam. A few are now placed before the public for the first time. Here and there, verbal emendations have been effected to suit the requirements of the present purpose.

It was after prolonged hesitancy and, still, not without considerable diffidence that the author could induce himself to be moved at all by an urgent plea, from different quarters, for the collation of these fugitive and fragmentary articles within the covers of a single volume. The palpably inchoate nature of both thought and sentiment and, likewise, the obtrusively meretricious qualities alike of expression and treatment have, at every step, administered no end of sharply arresting reproof even in course of execution of the too tardy task. Yet the perseverance in patent presumption despite the force of deterrent considerations is no whit rooted in an impudent ambition to meet aught of scarcity

or shortcoming in the existing output of Theistic literature at the present day. The only objective, supplying the sole apology, is related, rather, to the urge from within a beneficiary's grateful bosom to try and embody somewhat in condensed concreteness the appropriated essence of a glorious heritage remarkable at once for its theological and exegetical, devotional and disciplinary, historical and biographical, comparative and commemorative, enunciative and applicative treatises of no mean order. On the strength of the felt hope that there may still open out a tiny nook for a composite offering of the kind, this humble collection of essays—not quite a motley miscellany while accommodating, side by side, some of the aforesaid varieties—is now permitted to step into the glare of a wider, if not also a fairly less ephemeral, publicity than before. Back of it all lies just the compelling persuasion, borne in during hours of devout self-searching, that the true believer is he who, in all abjectness, holds himself prepared to act upon the trust that the free use of his 'gleam', ever so imperfect, cannot fail of a corresponding 'grace' of answer from the Mercy-Seat of the Most High. None could become more alive than is the author himself to the manifold defects of matter and manner that combine to blemish the present production. And it is too true that the meditations herein incorporated do no more than skirt the edge of the immensities and the intimacies that must comprehend all inner perception and experience as regards the deep things of the spirit. Nevertheless, if the ill-thrashed reflections of the following pages help to mediate to a single seeker of the bread of life even the scantiest grain of nutriment amid a heap of husk, therein shall accrue the supreme satisfaction of the amplest recompense for the taxing toils of an all too uninspired impotence. As for criticism, a confession may be naively ventured of the reassuring sense that, after all, the most adverse of judgments represents the estimate of but one other questful individual from his own angle of vision, anything extending further in that direction having only to be hailed with all the greater heartiness as so much evidence of increased currency for a work so honoured with honest comment. At all events, may it be given to the author earnestly to trust that his spiritual anæmia, sore malady as it is,

will not be found to have pitiably afflicted him with the 'itch of writing'—*cacoathes scribendi*, as it is called—but that here are, at their crudest, the feeble self-expressions of a penurious, prisoned soul aspiring, in its own way, to mount up to the rich, expansive horizons of practical idealism in faith and fellowship?

Upon him, personally, the 'beam in darkness' happens to have been shed primarily through the Dispensation of the Spirit envisaged in the Monotheistic Movement of Modern India known as the Brahma Samaj. Hence its principles and ideals, its claims and needs, come in, within this compass, for some share of direct attention as also a few of the radiant stars in the galaxy of its outstanding personalities. Nevertheless, denominational divisions apart and even in virtue of the catholic, dynamic obligations imposed by that unsectarian (nay, antisectarian) 'sect,' the approach, on principle, has been sought, throughout, to be made only to the vital issues of the higher life along the broad vistas of universal appeal grounded on common human nature. In several places, themes and texts, parallels and prototypes, will be found drawn unreservedly from the liberal stores of both East and West—especially, the Vedantism of the Upanishads and the Gita and the Unitarianism of latter-day developments. From the sequence in which they are set, one may perhaps be able readily to trace, through the detached musings, not only a pervasive unity of spirit but also a comprehensive continuity of subject embracing, if only suggestively, almost the entire gamut of the sublimest of interests from the being and character of God to the duty and destiny of man.

Such as they are, the contents of the volume must necessarily disclose, and can only bespeak sympathetic patience with, a large measure of inequality in usefulness arising, among other things, from inequality of merit, their composition covering by far an extensive range of time stretching from the current year back to the closing decade of last century. For room found, notwithstanding obvious features of comparative immaturity, for one or two purely juvenile productions dating back to the author's teens, what explanation, beyond their own topical importance by no means obsolete, may be forthcoming save the irrepressible

partiality of the fond parent for one and all of his or her offspring, weaklings of body or of mind not excluded? Again, will the serious-minded reader incline to demur to the intrusion, into an avowedly spiritual framework, of about half-a-dozen directly literary and educational pieces liable to be regarded as of restricted concern to 'academic' circles alone? Why; is not the inclusion sufficiently accounted for, if not by the good office of some element of variety in spicing the monotony of the fare, yet by that canon of synthetic philosophy which sees all life as one in the ultimate and reads in literature, that mighty instrument of culture, an interpretative transcript of life itself?

These 'altar-stairs,' then—hallowed be they with the dust of the feet of devout ones in all communions that so even unto them, piously consecrated albeit poorly constructed, may be ensured the blessedness of a place in the lowliest of levels along

'the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God'!

November 29th, 1936.

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CORRECTIONS*

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
37	30	far-off a	a far-off
38	13	of	of the
58	37	mot iv	motive
81	27	blessing	blessings
90	11	is,	it is,
122	40	partenal	parental
128	34	sacrifies	sacrifice
132	15	of	on
136	1	*dham*	*dam*
147	25	hamely	homely
186	9	wordly	worldly
188	39	*shathmá vrinuthá thenum*	*sháthmá vrinuthè thanoom*
193	9	up built	upbuilt
219	28	promontary	promontory
239	23	devecots	dovecots
245	23	Jaques,	Jacques,
258	24	protestors	protesters
265	17	devecotes	dovecotes
272	9	eys	eye
296	28	Brahmospasaka,	Brahmopasaka.
297	20	seme	some
320	21	'*Nava Kámáyá*	'*Navá Kámáya*
	22	*priya*	*priyá*
357	14	*jignásá*	*jignása*'
360	37	prayfulness,	prayerfulness,
378	21	andeduce	and educe
415	6	mote	moat,

* Obvious typographical errors in spelling, punctuation &c. excluded.

OM!

ALTAR-STAIRS

1

TOWARDS FUNDAMENTAL RELIGION*

1899

'One thought I have, my ample creed;
So deep it is and broad,
And equal to my every need,—
It is the thought of God.'

THIS thought of God—where is it rooted; how does it grow; what fruit may it bear? Is it doomed to fade away amid the uncongenial surroundings of advancing science and philosophy; or is it possessed of enough vitality to develop age after age as a perpetual blessing to those seeking its shelter? To these supreme issues the book before us addresses itself; and it endeavours, on strictly scientific principles, to build the great idea of God upon the normal experiences of our nature and thus to vindicate it as an abiding element in the universal human constitution. The author propitiates the scientific spirit of the age by basing his enquiry into religious truth wholly on facts established by human reason and experience. If, in some form or other, religion is, as history proves, a universal phenomenon of humanity; if man is marked out in creation for the religious sense in him, then, for its stability it must be given the lasting basis of a science; while, in influencing conduct, it becomes a practical art. Sacred as are all phases of religious thought and life, and superstitious,

* A prize-essay on R. A. Armstrong's *God and the Soul* (British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London).

doubtless, not a few, still none of them is either too sacred or too superstitious to be subjected to the tests of scientific knowledge. Therefore, from a comprehensive survey of the facts of existence as reported in mind and soul, Mr. Armstrong reasons out and justifies a Theistic belief—deep and broad enough to equal every human need—standing essentially for the principle of one Eternal, All-embracing Mind, infinite in Power and Wisdom, perfect in Holiness and Love, ruling the universe and holding moral relations with man.

Before reviewing the different answers to the question of the origin of our ideas concerning God's existence and character and the channels of His communion with mankind, a few words are due to the Agnostic school of thought, which acknowledges a sort of Deity but one shrouded in an infinite veil of impenetrable mystery that finite man may never hope to lift. Spencer's agnosticism *knows*, however, that the Unknowable is the Eternal and Infinite Causal Energy behind all phenomena, physical and psychical. Surely, this affords quite sufficient data for logical ascent to a positive knowledge of God by legitimately and necessarily reasoning from the character of the effects to that of the cause, seeing that its infinite nature need not perforce shut out all knowledge of it from a mind that, though finite, can yet recognise infinite space and time as inevitable forms of thought. An Intelligent First Cause once granted, the necessity of revelation comes to be grounded in that very idea of God. For, the end of creation can alone be His self-manifestation in intelligent minds so far as the finite can reproduce the infinite. Moreover, if man's love of truth is a fact—and what else does all the absorbing interest in scientific pursuits prove?—and if the First Cause is also a fact, even the Supreme Fact, life itself would be meaningless and empty without some intimate relation between the two. The limitation above enunciated implies, however, the soundness of some devout religious agnosticism in so far as our knowledge of God is necessarily confined to how He affects our consciousness. But so, too, is our apprehension of any object—say, a friend, the moon, a loaf of bread. Then, although to 'find out the depth of God', 'the end of the Almighty', must transcend human comprehension, God *is* still an object of knowledge like all else, the faculties of apprehension differing, of course, in the material and spiritual planes.

Recognising, thus, that God, to be God, must be a God of revelation, where and how does He reveal Himself? On this there opens a "far-reaching divergence in first principles" between the two prevailing views—one, the more popular, represented by Gladstone; the other, ably advocated in this book to the effect that religion is natural to man and yet revealed of God, the natural alone being the expression of the supernatural; so that true revelation is immediate and internal, not indirect and external, a lasting heritage of truth to all generations yet directly apprehensible and personally verifiable; there being "no Revelation, no Inspiration, no Spiritual Authority the seat of which lies in anything else than the Divine Word voiced in the common faculties of man." Following the author's reasonings, we recognise how, though the incoming Truth has always existed, the receiving mind, which cannot but pass through slow growth and expansion, makes revelation—the result of Divine and human coagency—necessarily personal and progressive.

But do we really disparage external media—Scripture or Prophet—when we regard their claim to be the appointed organs of infallible revelation as but a survival of the crude past in which impressions of the sense were more real than workings of the spirit? No, says Mr. Armstrong; the Bible, in descending from its exclusive pedestal of the only Word of God, is, like Pygmalion's statue, not dishonored but quickened with humanity's life and becomes a thrice-sacred Anthology to be used with reverence—intelligent, not idolatrous. Likewise, Jesus, stripped of the sable veils of metaphysical creeds, shines forth—the supreme son of God and the inspiring brother of man.

Our position, then, is that the existence and attributes of God can be logically established by an appeal to the common reason, conscience and emotion of the human race. In actual life, indeed, the true devotee is he who to the groan of crumbling creed, 'Believe no more,' returns the answer of the heart, 'I have felt.' Happy, therefore, is the reference to "those profoundly interesting groups of men" who claim to apprehend God in the soul 'as the bodily eye apprehends colour, as the bodily ear apprehends sound.'[1] No *seer* of God but has been a mystic: of *God-vision* mysticism is a

[1] Dr. Beard: Hibbert Lectures, 1883.

prerequisite. No doubt, it has its pitfalls—intellectually in pantheism, which confounds harmony of spirit with absorption of person; and morally in sentimentalism, where rank piety stifles purity and extravagant devotion ignores duty. But, all said, mysticism is the mark of spiritul mastery, as automatic action is the product of perfected experience. Hence, while the philosopher plods and proves, the mystic enjoys and exults. A noble prototype of healthy mysticism we are shown in him who, while claiming, 'I and my Father are one,' found peace yet in praying to that Father and meat in doing His will.

Nevertheless, 'the logical bridges of intellectual proofs'[1] are of great value; for, we often *think* ere we come to *see*. Hence the right of our common faculties to be received as safe guides to religious truth, as the customary objections to working from nature, in its largest sense, up to nature's God find a conclusive answer in the fact that knowledge in any department is impossible save on the assumption of the trustworthiness of our faculties. "All science starts with hypothesis." Faith, among others, in the senses, the avenues of the outer world; in memory, the register of past states of consciousness; in reason, the mainspring of all conviction, is practically the starting-point of science and philosophy. The difficulties raised by absolute sceptics unwilling to believe in the unproved veracity of our faculties and by orthodox religionists asserting the incapacity of sin-stricken, degenerate human nature to handle things divine, are such as affect *all* knowledge; and, proved or unproved, pure or perverse, to dethrone our natural faculties is to make conscious existence unthinkable. The two tests, therefore, of the truth of religious theories applied throughout are—(1) Are these theories in keeping with human nature—approved by the intellect as rational, sanctioned by the conscience as right and rejoiced in by the heart as loving; and (2) Do they *work*, or serve to make nobler and happier men and women? Here we can only commend the happy illustrations of "a mysterious machine" and "a mysterious volume."

We proceed to hear the witness to God borne by each of the three distinctly marked components of human nature—understanding, conscience and emotion.

[1] Prof. Upton: Hibbert Lectures, 1893.

I To predicate an adequate cause, known or unknown, to every experience is one of our prime notions, above proof but trustworthy; and the mind, bounded by this "ring-fence," continues unsatisfied until it traces the career of phenomena to some original will-force resembling Dr. Ward's 'influx of a man's mental volitions into his bodily acts.'[1] This inevitable association between cause and 'a choosing and disposing will'[2] is aptly illustrated in the steam-engine, whose locomotion, traced through a labyrinth of causes, remains unexplained except with reference to the will-action of the driver.[3] If an uncaused event is unthinkable, and a cause is something more than an unconditioned, invariable antecedent,[4] then, to the insuppressible question, 'What is the ground and basis of the sum-total of cosmic phenomena?', the only rational answer is an ever-energising Will-Power ceaselessly evolving the universe of the seen and the unseen. Again, the inconceivability of an infinite regress of causes and the law of the parsimony of causes necessitate a Self-existent, Uncaused Cause; for 'a true cause is one to which the reason not only moves, but in which it rests'.[5] This truth is pressed home with the query, "What about the start?", when noticing the "hitches in the evolutionary deduction"—the bottomless chasms Science winks at while watching the ascent of existence from plane to plane, from inorganic to organic, again to conscious and then to self-conscious. Does not the Darwinian theory itself start with three postulates essentially Theistic: (1) the presence of a power capable of producing the first life-germs; (2) these endowed with the property of producing their like; (3) and that, with minute variations? Again, the polytheism of "a republic of multitudinous Will-forces" is shown to be demolished by the unity-in-multiplicity principle of science, as, we may add, it is also by the philosophic certitude of the

[1] With the Deity, this 'influx' is self-manifestation in kindred consciousness of His own evolving in time and space.

[2] Dr. Martineau: *A Study of Religion.*

[3] Wright: *Grounds and Principles of Religion.*

[4] Mill's famous definition states the *when*, the sense of causality demands the *whence*, of phenomena.

[5] Prof. Flint: *Theism.*

oneness of the discerning consciousness. Then, as to the infinity and eternity of this Living Will behind mote and mountain, seed and star, these are inferred from the two pre-requisites of phenomena—infinite space and eternal time.

Far from weakening the above conclusions, the presence of natural laws immensely strengthens them. Laws are but methods of their Maker and can no more dislodge the enactive, executive Agency behind them than the time-table may supersede the engineer or the statute-book the Lord-Chancellor. As Mr. Armstrong says, phenomena are *explained*, not *caused*, by laws. Thus our innate sense of causality compels the conviction as to an absolute Will being the Basis of all monads of existence. The 'design argument' next reports the boundless Wisdom of God evidenced in the rational purposes of Nature. The usual objection that contrivance, denoting adoption of existing means, cannot be ascribed to the Creator's handiwork, forgets that design consists no less in making submissive, than in taming obstinate, material; and the real test lies in the complexity of the construction, and in the period and the processes of operation, of an organism. Thus judged, a plan infinitely complex, eternally extended and serenely smooth, is perfection itself—the poet's highest praise, the philosopher's profoundest study. Paley's hoary analogy from a watch is imperfect and misleading, representing God as an external artificer. Yet the teleological argument is rejuvenated by contemplating the Deity as "living and energising through every part and particle" of the World-organism. But of this, later. Here Mr. Armstrong might have advantageously borrowed from his honored master, Martineau, some of those marvellous instances throughout Nature of Selection, Combination and Gradation—three unmistakable marks of Intention.

The truths thus reached are, however, only the metaphysical aspects of God. They neither exhaust His nature nor satisfy our needs; "they do not actually carry us into the palace of religion, but they take us to the porch and lead us to knock at the door."

II Therefore, the inner chambers of human nature are opened and searched for further knowledge. Let us gather up the result.

The primary presentations of our consciousness are, we have seen, our highest certitudes. The dicta of individual consciousness are, indeed, open to be verified or rectified by the universal. One of these germ-ideas is the sense, rudimentary or refined, ever classifying impulses of the will into 'right' and 'wrong'—eternal distinctions 'which flow into every language and form the preamble of all law'[1]—unanalysable because radical; and inexpressible in terms of other experiences like pleasure or prudence. Compelling moral judgments upon others and, more directly, upon our own thoughts and actions, this internal moral sense or conscience, with its "quadruple phenomenon"[2] of exhortation and prohibition, approval and condemnation, is 'the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world'—independent of man, imperative on man and universal in man. The prevailing diversities of moral judgment among individuals, nations and ages, Mr. Armstrong says, result from "accidents of education, association, tradition and circumstance." To these may be added the influence of disposition on judgment, the difficulty of adapting general principles to particular cases and the tendency to conform to prevailing standards. Moreover, moral perceptions, like other innate faculties, vary because they grow with the growth of thought and sentiment. But, with all its accidental divergences, conscience ever commands an authority unattainable by canvassing prudence or coaxing pleasure. The 'Prudence and Pleasure Theory' can never satisfactorily explain the heroisms of History, such as that of the Maiden of Ephesus. Self-sacrifice, the key-note of heroism, is antithetical to expediency; while the feeling of satisfaction may be the supervening sequence, but never the impelling cause, of obedience to conscience. A philosophy starting with the egoistic 'Each for Himself' cannot legitimately reach the altruistic 'Each for All.'[3]

If man's moral nature, then, speaks with unique authority, often cutting right across the current of personal predilection or social inclination, whence is the Higher Law it reveals, and what the sanction to right conduct? Law

[1] Dr. Martineau.

[2] Mr. Armstrong: *Man's Knowledge of God.*

[3] Dr. Martineau.

presupposes a law-giver; and we are never obliged but to one other and higher than ourselves. Thus the avenue of our moral faculty leads to the throne of an All-holy Will, a good God reproducing in us what He Himself *is* boundlessly; and thus the one increasing purpose running through the ages is unmistakably the establishment of the perfect Kingdom of Righteousness through the self-reproductiveness of good and the self-destructiveness of evil.

The God of Nature in whom we discovered Creative Power and Designing Wisdom now becomes also the God of History, Conscience His voice and Righteousness His essence. The All-encompassing Divine Spirit 'works equally in the sod and in the soul.'[1] Law without is oracle within: 'physical' and 'spiritual' are but hemispheres of one orb of creation.

III If man's intellect apprehends, and his conscience reflects, a Supreme Will marked with Intelligence and Holiness, his emotions, translated by an innate sense of beauty, spring up to the sublimest truth conceivable, namely, 'God is Love.' This priceless sense of beauty, itself an intuition, is trained and transfigured by nature's poet-priests like Wordsworth. Emotions, thus sensitised, often receive the impress of a Divine Visitant so charmingly lovely, so exaltingly holy, as to leave behind a permanent benefice of sacred and blissful experiences. But such treatment of 'God as Love' comes home effectively, Mr. Armstrong himself admits, only to the high-souled few blessed with a clear sense of beauty; while it must be 'caviare to the general.' A less secluded route, perhaps, by which the Love-aspect of God may be approached is to appreciate love itself as the highest of the primary elements of human consciousness, to consider the conditions of its recognition in the universe and to indicate the necessity of exclaiming with the poet,

> 'I feel
> Love's sure effect, and being loved must love
> The Love, its cause, behind,—I can and do!'

As human affections flow in different directions and measures into the manifold relations of life—as self-sacrificing love, itself its own reward, is universally acknowledged the supremest

[1] Dr. Hedge: *Reason in Religion.*

motive of action—as the world's final judgment, which is but the world's history, is always in favour of the representatives of Love, the Christs, not the Cæsars, of the race—as Law, the highest watchword of Science, reveals a loving solicitude for ultimate welfare through the establishment of a permanent relationship between the essences of things—all these proclaim more potently than golden grain or radiant rainbow a Supreme Heart throbbing with Infinite Love for all; a Love which is the all-impelling motive, of which the end is Righteousness and the means Wisdom.

But here stares the world-old, world-wide enigma of the intrusion of evil into the scheme of a Perfect God. The dilemma, how God Almighty is helpless before evil or God All-loving tolerant of it, has perplexed sweet, sensitive souls from Aristotle to Mill. The prodigious extent to which pain and sin mar nature is undeniable. But it does not prove God callous or helpless, or man naturally perverse. 'God is Law'; and 'God is Love'. By the former, the Deity accepts the logical condition that contradictions are irreconcilable; by the latter, He prescribes stalwart character, scorning slothful ease, as the end of moral existence. God can do all except creating His equal; and in the economy of moral government, nothing is so strikingly parental as making Duty a rod unto the erring, a sign-board unto the faithful. Again, imperfectness of vision and impatience of results, two inalienable accompaniments of a creature of time and space, necessarily mistake the little arc of 'now' and 'here' for the complete circle of Divine dispensations. But, good as it is for man to dwell enthusiastically on the importance of his nook and his minute, he shall not have his fortune course along the straight-line of prosperity, unless he is prepared to make the circle of human destiny infinite. Further, if infallible guidance is but mechanical guidance,[1] peace is only 'want-begotten rest' unless born of virtue *consciously* condemning the wrong and choosing the right. Moreover, if it needs a prophet to interpret a prophet, the Divine plan is best surveyed from the Divine stand-point; and it is most significant that the most hopeful are invariably the most philanthropic. Once more, Divine impartiality, Dr. Martineau observes, consists, not in a dead level of life where

[1] Dr. Hedge.

genius is unknown and heroism unnecessary, but in an equitable adjustment of the measure of judgment to the means of accomplishment; and a wise and loving God who does not cast away a single soul but vouchsafes salvation alike to those in the Heaven of His companionship and those in His hospital of Hell, thus proves Himself inimitably impartial. Lastly, the very capacity to stand, at all costs, by the good and honor conscience—the boundary-line between man and the not-man—implies and ensures an escape from our inheritance of 'the ape and the tiger.' Excruciating though the practical consequences of evil, it is essentially but a dragon of the dark retiring before the advancing sun of righteousness—the growing son of God. Thus man's cradle is placed, not in the genesis of evil, but in the birth of good. 'Let there be Light' peopled chaos with stars; 'Let there be Right' crowned creation with man.

The conception of God herein propounded discloses interesting points of contact and divergence in relation to two other well-known systems of religious thought, Deism and Pantheism. All agree in linking the universe to a Divine Agency. Deism, however, prefixes this Causal Will to Creation at her start and, exiling Him after her birth-hour, leaves her under the guardianship of laws; while Pantheism practically destroys all distinctions between cause and effect by exhausting God in the Cosmos and denying Him any transcendent existence beyond His manifestation. Theism represents a golden medium, happily assimilating the distinctly Deistic and Pantheistic truths of Divine Transcendence and Immanence. The replacement of the machine-analogy by that of the Tree of Igdrasil by Carlyle, or of the watch-likeness by that of the flower by Fiske, illustrates this sublime truth, missed by Deism, that 'In God we live and move and have our being' or, as sang our *Rishis*, 'He is the Life of our lives, the Soul of our souls.' Again, the sharp line Mr. Armstrong draws, after Dr. Martineau, between Immanent Transcendence and Immanence alone marks off Theism from Pantheism. The vital questions of Freewill with moral responsibility and of God's Personality likewise distinguish them. Man must be granted some measure of independent selfhood; or morality loses its very ground and vitality. Thus, while the Universal Consciousness, doubtless, ever dwells in us, the sense of our otherness from God is no

transient phase of phenomenal life but the ever-abiding condition of spiritual progress through eternity.[1] And, time having only a relative existence, personal immortality follows from man's moral responsibility and his fitting into God's eternal programme. Mr. Armstrong, strangely enough, omits this subject. As to calling God a 'Person', he conclusively shows how, as self-consciousness, limited or otherwise, constitutes the essence of personality, 'infinite person,' far from being a contradiction in terms, conveys our highest possible conception of the Godhead—a position strengthened by Spencer's 'conviction that the choice is not between personality and something lower than personality but between personality and something higher.'

From our triune conception of God as Rational Thought in Nature, Righteous Law in History and Sovereign Love in the Soul—a conception clearly illustrated in the religious evolution of this country as Vedic, Vedantic and Pauranic Dispensations[2]—it follows that 'the Father in us' keeps constant touch with the higher zones of human life, making His sweet presence and His regenerating influence effectively felt in devout worship. The discovery of immutable law in the universe has, no doubt, considerably revised, and will further revise, men's notions of Prayer, its purpose and import. But Prayer will never lose its power to soothe and strengthen man, so long as 'Seek and ye shall find' remains an eternal commandment of God. As the sun's physical light enters not your room or your eye unless you throw open the window or the eye-lid, so Heaven's spiritual light is fully shed only upon the heart seeking it through purity and devotion. Also, the love that "craves communion with the beloved as the first need of life" draws us more and more to God—not to inform the All-knowing of our individual wants, or to solicit the favour of a broken law of nature, but for the very joy ineffable of direct, intimate intercourse with the Friend of friends. In the changed view of Prayer, Mr. Armstrong

[1] Mr. Armstrong surprisingly discounts Prof. Upton's view on this issue. He evidently misinterprets co-existence, as fusion, of persons. Surrendering the interaction of beings as inexplicable is unfortunate, when an all-unifying Immanence satisfactorily explains it. The Upanishads exemplify this as two birds on one branch.

[2] Keshub Chandra Sen: *Yoga.*

seems to hold all 'petitions' as obsolete, communion being the only rational form of worship. But, though petitioning an 'absentee God' of occasional providences for special material gifts may have to be replaced by seeking His abiding presence in the chambers of the heart, are there no blessings —eternal, spiritual gifts of wisdom, holiness and love—to seek and solicit? Even in the disposal of the material conditions of life, is it denied to the trusting son to supplicate the Loving Father for a spirit of reverent submission to His ordainments as far and away the best? Is 'In Thy wisdom make me wise' a wrong or vain attitude of mind? Nay; unreserved prayer is the soul's highest privilege; even the profoundest communion culminates in the devoutest supplication, Let Thy will be done!

Now, we gratefully lay down Mr. Armstrong's book with a deepened sense of the poet's faith,

'I want—am made for—and must have a God,
Ere I can be aught, do aught; no mere Name
Want but the True Thing, with what proves Its truth;
To wit, a relation from that Thing to me
Touching from head to foot;—which Touch I feel,
And with it take the rest, this Life of ours!'

2

RELIGION: ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS RESULTS 1897

That 'religion is a universal phenomenon of human nature' is a conclusion the truth of which is more and more clearly brought into light by the advances made at the present day in the comparative study of religions. Atheism, properly so called, is to be seen only in individuals and never among societies, though, of course, different views of religion, whether expressed or implied, are commonly held by diverse communities of believers. To some, religion constitutes a set creed with such and such articles of faith to subscribe to. To some, again, religion means conformity and good manners. Looked at from a wider moral point of view, religion comprises the strict performance of duty; but duty is not the sum-total, as it forms only a branch, of religion, though certainly an important branch of it. Again, the attempt to explain the religious sentiment in man as a product of the cellular glands in the brain when tickled by the emotions, fails to see that emotion, an invaluable essential in itself, is not however, the all-in-all of religion—that it forms the superstructure, and not the foundation, of God's temple in the heart. Religion, right religion, is always a threefold experience embracing the rational, emotional and volitional aspects, each a necessary adjunct to the rest. It is, properly speaking, the highest reverence for, and the fullest surrender to, the noblest ideal Reality one can think of, the nature of our God-conception being necessarily of a piece with our own nature. We clothe this 'noblest' with our ideas of whatever is true and good and lovable in ourselves projected to infinity and perfection; and the 'highest reverence' for this 'noblest' under the name of 'God' means implicit trust in Him with genuine devotion to His will and a total rejection of everything opposed to it. Religion, therefore, is primarily a personal concern, a matter of individual faith and conduct.

The characteristics of religion so construed may be broadly summed up in one word, love. Its first and foremost feature is a personal knowledge, and not a hearsay report, of God; what has been known in the West as 'Love the Lord thy God with all thy *mind*' and in the East as *Gnānam.*' Next, to concentrate the affections upon God is, in the West, to 'love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart*'; and this, in the East, is known as *Bhakti.* The God-loving devotee lives, moves and has his being always and everywhere in heaven; for, to him heaven is the constant companionship of his soul with the Divine Soul. The third characteristic, *Sēva* in the East, is 'loving the Lord thy God with all thy *strength*,' a worship of work which makes life one unbroken psalm sung to God. Lastly, absolute self-surrender to the All-engrossing One is *Vyrāgyam* in the East and 'loving the Lord thy God with all thy *soul*' in the West. Unto such blessed ones He is all sweetness; He is 'the Spouse Divine of the human soul'; He is nothing but *Mádhuryam.*

Now, as to the results of religion, they are condensed into one pregnant word, conversion, representing an endless course of progress in the spirit. The deepest sense of the abiding Presence of the Deity marks the first essential of true conversion. Unto such a heart, the whole universe is all instinct with God, the God witnessed and worshipped by Emerson in the rose of the field, the God whose temple Nanak found not in Mecca alone but wheresoever he turned his feet. The second great fruit of religion is an awing sense of the responsibility of life, such as moved Gautama of old. Next follows a pricking consciousness of sorrow for sin, an inward contrition of the heart, as enjoined by John the Baptist. A robustness of rectitude is another result of religions conversion, as shewn in the conduct of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore towards his creditors on the decease of his father, Prince Dwarakanath. Then, the last effect of a changed life, the very pink of it, is sacrifice and service; for, without these piety and devotion are but hypocrisy, and with these they mean a selfless character sweetened by an abidingly active love for man, such as has prompted many a Damien and many a Nightingale to suffer for suffering humanity.

3

THEISM *VERSUS* HUMANISM

1933

In May last, as many as four and thirty American notables of high renown, severally, in the fields of Science and Philosophy, Ethical Culture and Religion, including fourteen members of the Unitarian and one of the Universalist ministry, with one Jewish rabbi, issued, over their joint signatures, a concise and authoritative statement in exposition of the new Humanist Movement which had been gaining ground for some time in that Continent. The acknowledged preeminence of the promulgators, coupled with the indubitable paramountcy of the problem, at once directed widespread public attention to the Manifesto, its enunciations and implications as well as their far-reaching reactions upon the fundamentals of life. In the Liberal Religious Communion in England, *The Inquirer* threw open its columns to a vigorous controversy, concluded only a while ago, upon the vital issues involved. Among our own organs, *Navavidhan* reproduced the important document and also a brief criticism upon it from *The Christian Leader* of the Universalists. And *The Indian Messenger*, in an editorial note the other day, referred to the discussion in the American Unitarian journal, *The Christian Register*, upon the apologia of one of the signatories and offered a few pregnant remarks in support of the exposure alike of the 'reality' of the sensuous world of science apart from the thinking mind and of the 'realism' of a religion void of the idealisms of faith and hope. At this stage, it will perhaps not be out of place or out of date or other than useful and interesting, as food for reflection, to place before fellow-believers and others not in touch with the foreign journals a succinct synopsis—as faithful as may be, however bare and bald of necessity—of the discussion on both sides as carried on in the papers before us. The current trends of Western thought on the supremest concern of human pursuits, as indicated therein, will be attempted here to be summarised with a few supplementary observations.

In the first place, the Manifesto is one avowedly on the offensive—a challenge to Religion in the name of Religon. The signatories are not prepared to give up the word 'Religion' and call themselves Ethical Culturists. On the contrary, they are out to warn their generation as also all succeeding generations of the 'great danger of a final and, we believe, fatal identification' of the hoary term 'with doctrines and methods which have lost their significance.' They insist that the time has come to limit its use only to those processes that go to enrich life now and here. So this new American edition of Humanism sets itself up as Religious Humanism (though in a revised, restricted sense of the epithet), distinct from its other varieties—such as the Hedonistic Humanism of Aldous Huxley, the Classical of Irving Babbitt, the Romantic of Middleton Murray, or the Sensational of J. C. Powys. While English Humanism cares not to draw any support from Religion, American Humanism clings to the designation and waits upon the resources, if not the inspirations, of Religion after its own fashion. Again, whereas on the older side of the Atlantic the Movement is concerned more with individual self-expression, on the newer it lays more stress on social effort. This latter school of Humanism traces its origin to its sense of the historical failure of Religion and Science, in effect, to come together, whatever their reconcilableness in theory.

In one aspect of its conclusions, the drift of the discussion points to the common repudiation, by Theism and Humanism, of the starting-point of Orthodoxy—that is, morally and rationally, the original depravity and the inherent incompetency of man. There is also the Theist's admission, along with the Humanist, of the untenability of many an old attitude involved in the concept of God and the practice of Worship, in church life and personal behaviour. Of the fifteen theses nailed up in the Manifesto, several, in truth, report themselves as welcome echoes of the Liberal Gospel of Pure Theism. Such are man's inalienable kinship with the rest of creation as parts of nature and the offspring of a continuous process; his own make-up with its interests and experiences the only key to his understanding of Reality; the validity of a Promethean revolt against the supposititious sovereignty of a mighty Arm holding all human kind in thrall amid the relentless whirl of an all too plastic world; the non-

dualism of mind and body ; the moulding influence of environment and culture upon man ; the need for elimination from Religion of aught not humanly significant ; the goal of man's life the highest development of his powers ; the self-expressiblity of the religious emotions in a heightened sense of personal values and in a corporate endeavour towards social well-being ; the naturalness of the 'crises' of life and their efficacy as aids to advancement ; the duty of fostering the creative in man to deepen the joy of living ; and the necessity of radical changes in the economic and other sociological systems of the body politic. Between Theism and Humanism, the central point of affinity traceable in the natural order of things is in respect of the mutual adaptation of Truth on the objective and of the human mind on the subjective side. Both agree that, psychologically, the mind is endowed with the power to seek and find, to receive and appropriate, Truth ; and that, historically, whatever truth has come into the world has been due to the effort of man's faculties, thus ruling out spasmodic invasions of grace from another realm and recognising influences constantly operative in the normal course of events. So that, from both the angles, Truth in native loveliness is seen to stand on its own intrinsic merit and to need not the foreign aid of any crutch of extraneous authority. But Humanism declines to go further with Theism in the latter's perception of a Driving Force at the back of all belief and aspiration and in its correlation of the appeal of the inmost convictions to cosmic values in accounting for the incentive to social passion or, in other words, its recognition that every value has its origin in a Reality deeper than anything human—a Reality which makes every truth and every true standard of value not a human creation but a human discovery. Herein consists the acutest point of divergence. Humanism does not refine or even refine away God. It simply relinquishes Him, satisfied as it is that the God-idea, unless it be an emasculated one, constitutes a positive evil and that, granting the possibility of verities as yet undiscovered, a God-sanction for human life and human endeavour is something not yet established by discovery and therefore fit only to be dropped out of the reckoning. It does not want God ; and it will not have Him, committing itself as it does, in so many unmistakable words, to the radical conclusion that the days of Theism and

of Worship are gone for ever. Accordingly, on this ultimate issue, Humanism sets itself over against Theism on terms of exclusive antithesis, instead of being integrated to it as representing merely a difference in the distribution of emphasis under a scheme of inclusive harmony.

Of course, even on such a basis of clean-cut cleavage, it is to be conceded that Humanism has points to give of genuine and far-reaching validity. Its insistence on justice in things material calls not for deprecation as no better than materialistic secularism, since its appraisement of the worth of human life and its plea for social righteousness constitute the healthiest elements in its idealism. As for the charge against it of atheism, the defence available in its behalf is that to deny a thing is not, strictly, the equivalent of a denial of the reality which a new theory seeks to rationalise ; and consequently, Humanism can justly be ranked as Agnosticism, not rated as Atheism, which latter stands for the denial of God Himself and not the denial of a narrowly personal, inaccessibly transcendental God to make room for an Omnipersonal, All-immanent God like the God, say, of Spinoza or of Emerson. On this view, whatever its immediate and self-advertised sequel by way of extreme reaction, the Humanist attitude towards God requires to be construed broadly as one not so much of dogmatic negation as of questful silence. So may we enter sympathetically and hopefully into its claim to redefine, and its programme to repattern, Religion to itself as a spiritual consciousness of aim and effort to live an abundant life apart from the cultivation of God-consciousness. At all events, there is no underrating its worth, so reinforcing to ourselves, as a cure and a corrective in reference to the traditonal tenet that the Divine dwells above the skies or behind the veil instead of being ever in evidence in the flesh and blood of the concrete universal.

Now passing on from these highly refreshing and commendable features and turning to the other side of the shield, the new offshoot of practical anthroposophy in the atmosphere of religion is held convicted of its one and all too vitiating weakness by the united witness of history and experience, science and psychology. Even as an ethical movement, it can lay no pretensions to any monopoly of the enthusiasm of humanity. When its doctrines were set forth by Auguste Comte nearly a century ago, the name applied

to it was Positivism, although its later votaries came to prefer the appellation of Ethical Culture. Its present embodiment would perhaps be more appropriately christened as Spiritual Positivism than as Religious Humanism. Obviously, it chooses to employ the term 'Religion' in far too loose a meaning as virtual nihilism. And the retention of the word in the self-characterisation of the cult proves to be but the outcome of a sentimental desire through confusion of the main issue. Inasmuch as it expressly renounces Theism and, with it Worship, Prayer and what are called 'the uniquely religious emotions,' little, indeed, is left in our hands after we have parted with all that it rules out. Religion emptied or eviscerated of these contents were no more than a lifeless sack of skin no longer worthy of the name, however ceremoniously stuffed with any of the 'ideal substitutes for God' long since overhauled threadbare by Dr. Martineau. While recognising the 'quest for abiding values' as 'an inseparable feature of human life', it would blind itself to the ground and guarantee of those values—' the acknowledgment' (as stated by a Theistic writer) ' of an order of being higher than ourselves and yet akin to our own order of being.' The positive eschewal of the factor of Faith with its related exercises on the allegation that ' man has wasted his energy in striving for ends which are beyond attainment' cannot but be ascribed to a bad psychology unmindful of the regnant law that reach must always exceed grasp or, as we have it in the poet's dictum, ' Too low they build who build beneath the stars'. We are brought face to face with the parting of the ways, as we realise that while the fundamental of Humanism is the Dignity of Man, Divinity being manifest nowhere, that of Reformed Religion is Divinity manifest or to be manifest in and through all the children of men—'Immanuel'. Again, on the transcendental side, Humanism simply blinks the pertinent question, Can that which has brought man into being be itself less august than its own offspring ? Once more, it is prepared, of course, to swear by Science ; but it is incapable of resolving by itself the practical paradox between the astrophysical estimate of man as an entity of utter insignificance, of no more importance than a speck of dust, and the higher biological estimate of him as the lord of creation and the embodiment of values. Further, Humanism fails properly to perceive that no projection of

self is capable of inspiring reverence and love or sufficiently to weigh the import of such an aphoristic epigram as this of Emerson—

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

On this point of the need to rise above one's own stature for perfect self-realisation and of the conditions of such uplift, the Manifesto shrouds itself in vagueness, unprepared analytically to follow up its own proposition to its logical length. If, as it avers, 'Religion consists of those actions, purposes and experiences which are humanly significant', what exactly is to be made of that expression, 'humanly significant'? Is it 'significant' for the understanding of human beings as they are or as they ought to be? If the former, then, do not lying and lust, cruelty and cowardice, come in for a place as essentials of Religion? If the latter, does not the 'ought' imply something beyond actual experience? That the latter interpretation is the one intended but without its necessary implication, is clearly taken out of the pale of presumption by the subsequent assertion: 'Religious humanism considers the complete realisation of human personality to be the end of man's life'. Thus the word 'human' seems to be used here in two different senses—'human' and 'superhuman'. Throughout, it figures in many key-positions without steering clear of ambiguity between the *esse* and the *posse*. Above all and after all, with an earnest charge of '*Circumspice*' addressed to the eye, the mind and the heart, how may it be affirmed in so many words that the time is past for Theism? On the contrary, is it not nearer the mark to hold that the time for Theism is just beginning to dawn with a growing consensus among the greatest thinkers of the age in discarding their materialistic hypotheses one by one? And is it a correct, unexaggerated reading of the situation to maintain that in every sphere of human activity, the vital current is now set in the direction of a godless meliorism? Rather, from all points of the compass of knowledge, are not visions and voices from unseen realms manifest (in the face of this Manifesto) of a movement in the opposite direction of an Ever-Creative and Regulative Intelligence? As such, the ineffaceable fact, like the incurable consciousness, of God must reduce the label, 'Religious Humanism,' into a self-

contradiction under the new connotation. In so far as the Brotherhood of Man can find its vitalising root nowhere outside the Fatherhood of God, a cultus exclusively ethical without a religious basis, albeit under a religious banner, may not hope to afford the final, successful, satisfactory lead unto a wildered, wandering race out of the ancient moorings. Time will show it up in its true colours as but one more instance of the clumsy, insensate dogmatism of coated or misconceived materialism—atheism toppling over into naturalism. Here is homocentric reaction overcarried too far against forms of Religion and Revelation claiming to be independent of human experience and the corporate outlook. So long as man is man, the simple Theism of the Son of Man comprised of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man can never be outgrown. Nor is it without profound, permanent significance that the Comtean experiment of last century along this line missed the adorable God only to find in Ideal Womankind the consecrated object of its unescapable worship. Much sooner shall the tidal swell of the sea-wave be arrested under the moonlit sky or the inbreathing and outbreathing of the live lung be abandoned amid the encircling atmosphere.

Then, how to confront and conscribe for the glory of God and the good of man this latest assailant of the one and protagonist of the other, accoutred as it is partly in assumptions behind affirmations and in denials of certitudes? How else but by frankly admitting and assimilating its renewal of world-old responsibilities and calmly repudiating and rejecting its self-limitation as to eternal verities? If Theism sometimes exposes itself to the danger of running away with its mysticism into anti-rationalism or with its other-worldliness into anti-socialism, the sane and sober safeguard against such a liability lies in reminders from Rationalistic Theophilanthropy, not in reversions into Anti-mystic Atheism or Atheistic Humanism. If, in all conscience, the Theistic interpretation of life is, in itself, susceptible of a reiterated enforcement, as necessary, of the two equally dynamic and mutually correlated half-truths—the Divinity of Man and the Humanity of God, then, well may the soul be more than content to repose on the sweet old strain,

'One thought I have, my ample creed;
So deep it is and broad,

And equal to my every need,—
It is the thought of God.'

This review of the discussion may aptly close with the suggestive moral hinted at in the course of the controversy as derivable from two episodes turning round the name of the Prince of Humanists, Gautama the Enlightened. The arrogant monkey-man in the old Chinese classic, '*Shi Yen Ki*,' boasted of his qualifications to possess himself of the Kingdom of the Heavens. And to satisfy the conditions imposed by the Buddha of Mahayana Buddhism, he rose into space, reached the confines of Heaven and engraved his name on one of its five pillars in token of his successful ascent. 'But you never went out of *My* hand,' said Buddha. And, behold, He lifted one of His own fingers and showed the monkey-man his inscription thereon! Again, in days of yore, the Buddha of History started with his own Humanist Manifesto:

"Pray not! The darkness will not brighten! Ask
Naught from the silence; for it cannot speak!"

But as he found and announced, too, to the world, the Silence did speak to Buddha himself of 'a Power divine which moves for good and of 'the great Law.'

4

GROWTH IN THE IDEAS OF GOD AND WORSHIP 1898

Growth is natural. Every object in creation is born young ; and, as days and years go by, it becomes older and yet older. What is small at the point of its origin, time is bound gradually to render great, provided the environment also is favourable. And religion forms no exception to this universal rule of growth, progress, development. One can no more prevent men's thoughts of God expanding and becoming purer with every succeeding generation than one can impede the growth of the tiny acorn into the majestic oak out of a fertile soil, or of healthy childhood into the full bloom of manhood under the fostering care of Nature. So it is that the conception of God in one age differs from that in another, that He is not understood alike by all nations or by different members of the same nation, and that, even in the life of one individual, his religion varies at different stages.

The question arises, What is the real ground of this striking diversity of religious conceptions? Whence comes this susceptibility to change and, consequently, to progress, so remarkably disclosed in the history of the world's religions? The answer lies in the fact of the twofold nature of man, the animal and the spiritual. The Pauranic literature of our country abounds in allusions to perpetual hostilities between the *Suras* and the *Asuras* ; and we are often reminded that these are but symbolical representations of the constant warfare between the spiritual and the animal elements inherent in human nature. The records of the early Hebrews point to the same truth; for we read in their account of creation that the dust of the earth and the breath of the living God alike went to make up the being of man. Again, the Christian Apostle speaks of the willing spirit and the weak flesh as at constant war with each other. And the highest poetic genius of our day shadows forth this same conflict in the *Idylls of the King*. In fact, we are, one and all, not

unlike the fabled monsters of old, half angelic, half lion-like—a grotesque combination of the noblest and the divinest with the basest and the most bestial; a strange composite of heaven and earth. It is, then, most natural that according as the animal or the spiritual part of our nature predominates in us will our religion be of the animal, animal-like, or of the spirit, spiritual. This mode of man framing a God for himself after his own image—and the needs of his nature do always crave for one—is termed 'anthropomorphism', a word derived from Greek *anthropos*, man, and *morphe*, form. We read that in the Heroic Period of Greek History the belief prevailed universally that now and again the gods descended from the Olympic heights, took human form and fought hard on the battlefield till victory was secured on the favoured side. That period is, therefore, known as the Anthropomorphic Age in Greek Civilisation, an age which finds its apt parallel in the story of every civilised race.

We, who believe at the present day in the fundamental unity of God and man, as expressed in the familiar saying that God made man in His own image, may well ask ourselves: How far, and within what limits, if at all, does real religion admit of anthropomorphism or the principle of man picturing God to himself in the lineaments of his own nature? There does exist a set of thinkers who firmly maintain the absurdity of all anthropomorphism and demand a religious system entirely free or freed from every tinge of it. Can we go the whole length with these philosophers? No. We hold, on the other hand, that, so long as man is man, anthropomorphism, in some measure or other, is simply inevitable not only in religion but in every other concern of human life and thought. For, after all, what are the various religions of the world but different reports of man's spontaneous response to the inviting suggestions of nature and history? If 'an honest man is the noblest work of God,' the travesty of that sentiment by inversion of terms conveys no less a truth: 'An honest God is the noblest work of man.' 'As is the deity, so is the devotee;' but is it not equally true that 'as is the devotee, so is the deity' unto him? And so it has been facetiously observed that the god of the merchant will be a merchant, the god of the crusader a crusader, and the god of the cannibal a cannibal. No man has ever been able to leap out of his own shadow;

nor is it more possible for one to think or speak on any theme except in terms of one's own experiences. Why, I cannot help reading myself into my estimate of my friend's character, be the estimate never so honest. So in religion, what I am myself must needs colour my conception of what I hold God to be. All religions, then, are anthropomorphic, some more, some less—the ultimate difference being one of degree, though ranging in ascending gradations from the grossest and most grovelling superstition to the most refined and ennobling form of monotheism, according as anthropomorphism imports into its conception of God a magnified aspect of man's physical nature or the sublimed essence of the higher powers and possibilities in himself of reason, conscience and love.

In the childhood of the world, man had but few wants, and they were of the flesh. For, at that stage he hardly, or only dimly if at all, recognised the spiritual element in his constitution. He ate, drank and was satisfied; the stomach was then the base as well as the apex of existence. So we find that the objects of his worship were all material things—either those on which depended his daily livelihood, such as the sun, fire, *et cetera*, or those from which he apprehended constant danger to life, such as the sea with its sweeping floods and the forest serpent with its fatal bite. The motive for such worship, of course, was the removal of all obstacles to physical comfort and prolonged existence. And worship itself consisted for the most part in exchange, the worshipper offering to the worshipped what he thought it wanted, himself getting his needs satisfied in return. Hence propitiation through sacrifice constituted the essence of all devotion in the earliest types of religion. Little wonder, then, that certain savage tribes continue to this day literally to give a good thrashing to their idol-gods whenever the favours asked are not granted.

At a more advanced stage of culture and civilisation, man discerns the spiritual element in himself side by side with the physical, which latter he slowly learns to subordinate to the former. As he rises to realise the movements of a restless spirit within, ever governed by its own laws and urging its own demands, he finds that man does not live by bread alone and begins the conquest of the lower nature

that so the higher may be enthroned in due control over it. He comes to view everything from the high watch-tower of the spirit, until the one essential and immortal element of humanity is discovered to be spirit; God is purified into a Spirit, the supreme Father of all spirits; worship becomes spiritual; and the end of all religion, nay, of all existence is seen to be the growth of one's spiritual nature. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

It is such an exalted ideal of life that Theism holds out before the world. And we believe true patriotism cannot be actuated by a more glorious aim and object than to hasten the fulfilment of its mission, especially now and here, in the present degraded condition of our country. We also rejoice sincerely that, in declaring the simple yet sanctifying truth of the Unity of the Godhead, we bring no new tidings from a foreign shore, inasmuch as the noblest and most spiritual parts of our own national heritage are in entire consonance with our humble witness. What does the following interesting story from the *Kenopanishad* mean but an allegorical representation of the great principle, so loudly proclaimed by science and philosophy, that there is no god but the Spirit-God and he that worships Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth? In one of the ever-raging battles between the celestial gods and the infernal demons (referred to before), the former were helped by the Supreme God to triumph over the latter; but after the event, the gods became so much elated with pride that they thought the whole glory was all owing to themselves. Thereupon, the Almighty, knowing their self-inflation, surprised them with His presence in a unique form. Failing in the blindness of pride to recognise Him, they deputed one of their number, the god of Fire, to go and ascertain who the unknown Being was. He proceeded fast to that Presence and, being asked who he was, announced himself as the god of Fire, the origin of the Vedas. The Supreme Being again asked, "What power resides in so celebrated a person as thou art?" "I can burn to ashes all that exists in the world." The Lord then laid a straw before him and said, "Canst thou burn up this blade?" Though he exerted

all his power, the god of Fire could not so much as scald it; and he went his way, baulked and humiliated. Then the god of Wind was sent forth on the same errand; and questioned by the mysterious Appearance as to himself and his powers, he answered, "I pervade unlimited space, and I can upheave all that exists in the world." The old blade of grass was brought up; and however much he essayed to move it, it proved too heavy for the god of Wind, who, thereupon, retired crest-fallen to his abode. The celestials next sent the god of Atmosphere; but so soon as he approached the strange Appearance, lo! it was gone, vanished from his sight; and he beheld on the spot a woman arrayed in golden robes, even the goddess of Wisdom, who addressed him and said, "The adorable Vision you have vainly sought to know is the Supreme Being owing to whose victory you all are advanced to exaltation."

Now let us also learn of Wisdom the much-needed lesson that all things on the earth and in the heavens are constantly upheld and sustained by the Unseen One; that if the Sun sheds forth his genial warmth upon teeming creation, if timely showers of refreshing rain fertilise the earth, if the gentle breeze carries life and fragrance to every living organism, if the perennial spring of cool water wells up in the midst of an arid sahara, these ministers and purveyors of happiness serve their purposes, not of their own accord, but through the power and grace of Him who alone is the Almighty and the All-loving. Be it also remembered in all our struggles for the realisation of the higher life that we are, and can be, strong only in the strength of the Lord and that he who thinks he stands by himself should take heed lest he fall at any moment. Thus life with all its powers and privileges, in whatever channel flowing and from whichever quarter fed, is ultimately to be traced to the celestial heights of one inexhaustible Divine Fountain.

But in the process of the purification of our God-conception, as natural as it is necessary, we must remember carefully to conserve whatever is worthy and edifying in the older systems which we rightly seek to outgrow. This particular day * the whole Hindu nation has set apart from time immemorial for the worship of *Vighneswara*, the god of

* *Vinayakachaturdhi.*

obstacles. Unto us, humble advocates of the necessity and possibility of spiritual worship of the One True God, such an occasion of consecrated national idolatry must, indeed, be painful even to heart-rending. Our own duty, however, is just to guard watchfully against the subtler forms of idolatry that so often steal into our hearts and, at the same time, not to lose the spirit of the whole ceremony. We declare ourselves, not against prayer for the removal of obstacles, but against the object, the mode and the motive of *popular* worship. There can be no greater pleasure, privilege or profit open to man than *worship* itself—the thanksgiving and adoration due from the heart to the Giver of all good; the sore penitence over past unworthinesses to be followed by pious resolves for future fidelity; and the free, expectant attitude in which to seek Divine help. And the real obstacles to pray against are, not threats to personal ease and material advancement, but hindrances to the growth of our highest nature. Again, by the removal of such obstacles we mean, not that circumstances should be ordered for us in accordance with the dictation of our desires, but that we should be enabled to overcome whatsoever stands in the way of true progress. Why, can we not leave it to God to see what conduces to our well-being and see it with greater wisdom than we may pretend to? And may we not implicitly trust that He will Himself ordain what is best for us and that with greater love for us than we have for ourselves? Oh, how true it is, after all, that inward sin and selfishness are more dangerous enemies to our highest interest than outward surroundings and circumstances! Let us, therefore, with all the energy of our souls ever pray—pray without ceasing—for the spirit which, fearing nothing as an obstacle, accepts all 'obstacles' as opportunities of getting good and doing good that so "men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things.' Let all our aspirations and activities be ruled by the supreme end of fulfilling, each in his own sphere and measure, the will of Him who has sent us here. And when we have succeeded in turning our wills into confluence with His—for, they are ours to make them His, we shall be on the path to salvation. Here, again, we have the support of the Upanishads, which clearly teach that all misery is the inevitable result of the exercise of independent wills in opposition to the Divine and that the final goal for all is

the attainment of that bliss which comes of the unity-in-difference realised by an identification of the human and the Divine will without the absorption of the one individuality in the other. Then, when all rebelliousness in the will is put down, religion becomes to us, not merely a dry, metaphysical creed, or even overflowing devotion and enthusiasm, but the very breath and atmosphere of our life. As our physical organism is furnished with head, heart and lungs, so, says Keshub, is our spiritual constitution, too, with its own tripod of life. We seek God in the sanctuary of the head and there understand His truth and wisdom. We commune with Him in the temple of the heart with absorbing love. And we inhale through the breathing apparatus of the soul the very atmosphere of Divine holiness and righteousness. There is no function that the body performs so naturally and involuntarily, awake or asleep, and none on which its very life depends so vitally as the process of respiration. So let our inmost souls seek to breathe the Holy Spirit of God, not alone on one day in the year, but at all times and in all places, whether praying or working, eating or drinking, whether at the church or in the closet, on the street or in the school or factory. For, we must beware that, if not the pure, wholesome mountain-air of the Divine, we cannot help breathing the poisonous malaria of self or of the world's evil influences. Our idol must be the Lord God Almighty enshrined in "the upright heart and pure" within and in the wide universe without. Before the altar of that Divine Majesty, He enjoins us to offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, present the sweet-scented flowers of beneficent acts and righteous deeds, burn the rising incense of a holy and blameless life and chant the resonant hymns of pious thought and devout aspiration.

May the Giver of all good help us to strive in faith and hope and love—faith sustained by hope and manifested in love—to make Him the very Life of our lives, the Soul of our souls, that, in the words of Emerson, the spiritual may become to us the only real, even as it is the invisible !

5

'EKAMEVADWITHEEYAM'

1897

In the search after God, man discovers three aspects of the Divine Being, to each of which he stands related through a particular aspect of his own nature. He finds out God as the supreme First Cause of the whole of the visible and invisible universe. He perceives Him in the Infinite Ideal that the whole creation moves towards. And he lays hold on God as the Eternal Friend he may depend on at all times and in all circumstances. Thus man remains unsatisfied until he recognises the Lord of creation, from whom proceed all things, both great and small, for whom exist all things and in whom repose all things. The wearied intellect seeking for the ultimate Ground of the stupendous sum-total of phenomena it has learnt to designate as the universe; the panting heart longing for the Infinite Ideal of beauty, sublimity and grandeur; and the hungry soul casting wistful looks around for a gracious and immutable Friend amid the inexorable forces sweeping along in an apparently blind course—all, all parts and faculties of man—find their complete satisfaction in the discovery of God. It behoves us, then, to consider Him under these three aspects, confining the attention for the present to His causality.

It is natural for man to seek after a cause—a cause for everything that changes. And it is a matter of every-day-experience, and hence requiring no proof, that the phenomenal world around of colour, shape and sound, is susceptible of change and subject to mutation. Experience teaches us, and science has but to confirm the lesson, that "it is not now as it has been of yore, turn wheresoever we may, by night or day, the things which once were seen we now can see no more." Change is its name, mutability its characteristic. What, then, is the cause of this change and this series of events; what the underlying basis on which is built the edifice of this world; what the connecting link that binds one

phenomenon to another; and what the unifying principle that creates, preserves, permeates, sustains, embraces and upholds the unity of the world of experience as revealed in the rational unity of our own consciousness? What is it that gives a form and imparts a continuity to our consciousness itself? Form, especially form susceptible of change, cannot account for itself; change cannot be its own cause; events cannot explain themselves; the unity and continuity of finite things cannot be their own ground. Hence, all men in all ages, from polar savage to civilised Napoleon, have felt assured that the stars and planets that fill the boundless expanses of space must be the handiwork of a Divine and Omnipotent Author. We need not, in technical language, say with Kant that we can think only in the categorical forms of causation, or with Herbert Spencer that the existence of a First Cause is a necessity of thought. The plain common sense of mankind, no less than the soaring imagination of the poet or the probing intellect of the philosopher, has always realised the unaccountability of the phenomenal world without an underlying noumenon. Ask philosophy, interrogate science, enquire of poetry, turn in whichever direction you please; and you will find that this First Cause is the all-absorbing subject of study, inquiry and devotion. It is the subject-matter of metaphysical thought; its phenomena are the objects of scientific study and experiment; its beauty is the theme of the poet's song and the painter's brush.

The view of causation has undergone of late a remarkable modification; the old view, for so it may be called, having changed its whole front in the light of advancing science. Not that the modern conception was altogether unknown to the ancients any more than the ancient one is completely abandoned at the present day. Broadly speaking, the distinction does exist; and it is important to note it as a matter of fact. The ancient view held God as literally the *First* Cause, the final wherefore of a series of why's, standing at the head of the universe, imparting force to the cosmic process once for all, forging the first link in the chain of existences which, after the original impulse given them, gradually grew and were to grow out of one another in accordance with the laws impressed on the system of things as they first left the Divine Hand. This view, in its later deve-

lopments, has branched off into two forms—one ending in the submersion of the cause in the effect, a complete forsaking of the First Cause even as such, that is, the Naturalistic doctrine of the Reign of Law ; and the other shaping itself into the Deistic belief that God is at best a distant Being who, having once created the world and ordained certain laws according to which it must go on and on, has no more concern with it than the player on the foot-ball field has with the ball he has once kicked off ; a God separated from us by an immense length of time and a vast series of secondary causes ; a God that has gone into His long sabbath since the first and last act of creation and simply sees it move forward as a mere spectator. The other, and more modern, view of causation, on the other hand, looks upon all the so-called secondary causes as no more than so many phenomena, wrongly supposed to explain one another and thus to distance out their Maker from themselves. The revelations of modern science—the conservation of matter and of energy, the correlation and transmutability of physical forces, the universality of the laws of the physical and intellectual worlds,—these have established the unity of nature beyond all possibility of doubt. We now know that the smallest and commonest pebble that may be picked up at random by the wayside requires for its existence the operation of all the forces of nature as much as does the stupendous mountain range bounding India on the north; that the tiny icicle, no less than the awful avalanche, is the result of the same set of forces acting in the same manner; that the attraction which draws one speck of dust towards another is the same as that which keeps the heavenly bodies in their courses. "It is a mathematical fact," as Carlyle observes, "that the casting of this pebble from my hand alters the centre of gravity of the Universe." "The drop which thou shakest from thy wet hand rests not where it falls, but tomorrow thou findest it swept away; already on the wings of the North Wind, it is nearing the Tropic of Cancer."

And not only outward Nature, from which our illustrations have thus far been drawn, but also Humanity, with its subtler forces of muscle, brain and mysterious soul, is one, living in indissoluble kinship with that same Nature. The Law of Association, as real and important to the psychologist as the Law of Gravitation is to the physicist; the Law of the

Evolution of human mind and history, morals and religion, as much as that of the visible, tangible world—these establish the unity of human nature. That we all think under certain definite forms and conditions; that we seek for causes and categories; that we love, hate, admire and adore certain common ideals, differ however much we may in the discovery of intellectual truths; that we pity one another and sympathise one with another—are these less facts, less realities, than that a stone falls to the earth or that the caterpillar is metamorphosed into the butterfly? Our very vices, our lusts and hates, our envies and selfishnesses, our ambitions and vanities—these themselves are impossible without a common nature subject to the same set of common laws. Consider that one thing, 'sympathy'; and mark how it puts us in communion with the immeasurable all that surrounds us, that has gone before and that is to come hereafter. How do we understand one another; how do we remember; how do we connect different intuitions into one piece of knowledge; how do we compare, contrast and study, all alike under certain mental and moral, laws if we were not one with all? Thus are we from moment to moment not only upborne and carried on the flood of life and light—the light of knowledge—but also knit together into one complex whole—a glorious spectacle of unity amid diversity, as in the case of the outward, visible creation.

"In vain thou deniest it," says the great thinker and seer of the age whom we have already quoted, "thou *art* my Brother. Thy very Hatred, thy very Envy, those foolish Lies thou tellest of me in thy splenetic humour: what is all this but an inverted Sympathy? Were I a Steam-engine, wouldst thou take the trouble to tell lies of me? Not thou! I should grind all unheeded, whether badly or well." "Wondrous truly are the bonds that unite us one and all; whether by the soft binding of Love, or the iron chaining of Necessity, as we like to choose it." The written and verbal messages, paper and other packages, going out from a brother-man and coming in, are "a blood-circulation visible to the eye: but the finer nervous circulation, by which all things, the minutest that he does, minutely influence all men, and the very look of his face which blesses or curses whomso it lights on, and so generates ever new blessing or cursing—all this you cannot see but only imagine." Let thyself be once cut off from the rest of

the world; then, "thy Thoughts fall into no friendly ear or heart, thy Manufacture into no purchasing hand: thou art no longer a circulating venous-arterial Heart, that, taking and giving, circulatest through all Space and all Time: there has a Hole fallen out in the immeasurable, universal World-tissue, which must be darned-up again!" Also, "If now an existing generation of men stand so woven together, not less indissolubly does generation with generation." "Had there been no Moesogothic Ulfila, there had been no English Shakespeare." "Beautiful it is to understand and know that a Thought did never yet die; that as thou, the originator thereof, hast gathered it and created it from the whole Past, so thou wilt transmit it to the whole Future. It is thus that the Heroic Heart, the seeing Eye of the first times, still feels and sees in us of the latest; that the Wise Man stands ever encompassed, and spiritually embraced, by a cloud of witnesses and brothers; and there is a living, literal *Communion of Saints*, wide as the World itself, and as the History of the World." "So cunningly has Nature ordered it, that whatsoever man ought to obey, he cannot but obey. Before no faintest revelation of the Godlike did he ever stand irreverent; least of all, when the Godlike showed itself revealed in his fellow-man."

But how is all this possible? What knits men together? How does one generation thrive in living, loving communion with all the generations that have gone before and all those that are to come after? Why does not thought perish? What is that compelling reverence that bends us before the mighty Power of the World? It is here in the intellectual, moral and social world as it is in the physical. There is the conscious Energy of the First Cause living and circulating through all Nature inclusive of the human mind and human society. This Power creates, permeates and sustains all our souls in union with one another, casting us in similar moulds of thought and activity, subjecting us to laws that universally and uniformly act through us all, thus to constitute us into a brotherhood and make knowledge possible. It is this Power that moulds our lives, shaping our ends, rough-hew them how we will, and makes for righteousness, giving human history a moral tendency and drawing it to a beautiful and sublime consummation. It is plain, therefore, that there is only one Power that acts in the realm of mind, underlying our mental processes, making us self-conscious egos and uniting us into

one composite whole to work towards a definite end both individually and in aggregate and strive after a common ideal. And it has already been shown that there is one Power pervading the whole visible world, giving it existence, continuity, complexity and yet unity.

Now, are these two Powers different, distinct and dissimilar in nature and separate in existence? Or are they one and the same? The innumerable analogies between the processes of the mental world and those of the material lead us to the expectation that these worlds, however contrary to each other in nature and properties, are yet under the dominion of one and the same Intelligent Force. There is, for instance, in the world of mind, as above noted, the Law of Association corresponding to the Law of Gravitation in that of matter. In both, there is succession of phenomena in evidence. In both, there is uniformity prevalent. And in both, there is the same tendency towards a maintenance of the equilibrium of the whole against apparent displacements of parts and portions, coupled with the irresistible march of the same whole towards a definite end. In fact, both appear to be constructed on analogous, even identical, principles. The very fact that all our metaphors and similes to express and symbolise mental conceptions are drawn from the sense-world shows that it is the same Force that acts everywhere. And this expectation amounts to a certainty when we consider how the body is intimately connected with the mind; how physical processes give rise to spiritual processes and *vice versa*; how our consciousness develops, from a most rudimentary stage hardly distinguishable from mere irritability and sensitiveness, into what it is, by external influences working upon it, though it has its own laws and capacities to grow according to; how "out of vague sensation grows thought;" and how the very possibility of our understanding and interpreting Nature depends upon the simultaneous action of laws and processes in perfect harmony and unison with one other. The Power that works in our consciousness and forms the basis of our spiritual being must be the same with that which fills the sensible world and acts upon us by attraction, repulsion and vibration, those three forces into which the world of sense is reducible. Thus, in spite of unsurmounted and, for aught we know, insurmountable difficulties in tracing the connection

between mind and matter, between vibration and sensation, feeling or thought, we are irresistibly driven by the principle of analogy, by the constitution of our being, by the uniformity of Nature's laws and by the correlation of the physical and mental worlds, to a common Source for both of them ; which must be Conscious Reason. For, unconscious reason has no meaning ; and blind force producing spiritual processes, harmonious developments, conformity to ends and moral order, is simply inconceivable. There is, therefore, only One Grand, Eternal, Self-determining Energy producing all phenomena, causing all events, accounting for all changes, and explaining all laws and facts. There is nothing else beyond, behind or before it. For, it is itself beyond, behind and before everything we know or conceive of. It manifests itself in the visible and invisible worlds, and makes them, as it were, the two hemispheres of the universe, acting upon them from within and without so as to fit them into one organic whole with a glorious unity amidst multiplicity and even contrariety of forms and a beautiful adjustment of parts and balance of forces. It runs through the whole of this unity ; for it is the one sap of Life that courses through the tiniest atom as through the central orb round which we revolve. Throughout the whole of Nature, there is not an inch of space where this Power does not live, nor a moment of time when it does not act. What, in short, is Nature but the ever-renewed thrill and throb of this mighty Force which penetrates, combines, comprehends and sustains the unity and vitality of Creation ?

From the modern Theistic point of view of causation, as above indicated, this Cosmic Power functions as the connecting link between one phenomenon and another phenomenon, between one event and another event. According to this view, not only the first event of the world but also every event and every change that ever takes place is, in very truth, a manifestation of this self-same Power. Without its ever-present, ever-flowing, ever-renewing activity, there is not a single existence or a single phenomenon so much as possible. Take it away, let it cease to act but for one moment ; and the universe must melt into nothingness and leave not a rack behind. Our consciousness must be lost ; and we ourselves, like the baseless fabric of a vision with its cloud-capt towers and gorgeous palaces and solemn temples, must vanish together and altogether in just the twinkling of an eye. Viewed

from this standpoint, no one phenomenon is really the cause of another any more than night is the cause of day, two is the cause of three, or 'there' is the cause of 'here'. All facts stand related to, and, in reality, become facts only in relation to, that Fundamental and Absolute Unity of things known as God. The invariableness in the succession of phenomena is not to be mistaken for a chain of causation: it is only an image of the universal and uniform modes of Divine activity; a pledge, as it were, that the Divine Being admits us to a systematic knowledge of His nature, grants us entrance into His temple and takes us into His confidence as His children. Thus, while Science studies more and more the phenomena of the world and traces the uniformity and universality, the mutual adjustment and harmony, of its laws, Religion supplies the ground and guarantee of these laws and these phenomena. Without this ceaseless ground, which is God, and this guarantee, which is His uniformity, Science would be an impossibility ; for, there would be no mind to study and no phenomena to be studied.

This conception of causation, for one thing, borrows a suggestive analogy from the theories of Aryan ethnology. Whereas the old theory held that the different branches of the Aryan race sprang from one another and were finally traceable to a parent stock, the modern theory maintains that they spread out like waves in different directions all around a common centre of disturbance. Similarly, where the Deist recognised only the root, which lies far removed from the most exquisite parts of a tree, *viz.*, the flower and the fruit ; in other words, where he thought of God as only a distant Being, far-off a Ruler who had relegated the administration of the world to some laws and forces and Himself stood aloof unconcerned, the Theist traces the vital sap of the root constantly flowing into, and feeding, the fruit and the flower. It is an ever-present Power whose manifestations he beholds, an ever-energising Life whose activities he admires, an ever-advancing and regnant Personality with whose light the world is radiant, with whose praise the orbs are resonant, with whose animation the universe is instinct, with whose beauty all nature glows, with whose affection all hearts are warmed, by whose smile we are cheered and in whose Being we live and move and have our being. He is the ever-blazing Sun of Light of which creation is

an outflash; the infinite Fount of Love of which nature is a pulsation; the illimitable Ocean of Life on which floats and dances this spray of a universe. Literally, "this wide world is the sacred Temple of God"; really, the facts and phenomena of life are wavelets on that Boundless Main which has upheaved us hither; verily, no sparrow falls to the ground but has its purpose; truly, the very hairs of our heads are numbered. For, the conscious energy of God constitutes the basis o fall, working and weaving Himself out on the loom of time in endless motion, invigorating and renewing the perpetual growth and consistence of the universe. Creation, then, is not a far-off Divine event of the past but a continuous, persistent and living activity of endless present. Nothing is detached or separated from Him even for a moment; for, that very moment, it must vanish. Everything is always directly bound to His throne by the unbreakable chain of causation: every being is nestled in His bosom; and every life is held within the fold of His sweet though awful embrace.

Now, to recapitulate and put together the results of the enquiry. (1) Our search after a First Cause brings us face to face with Self-Conscious Reason as the ground, source and sustenance of all the facts and phenomena of which the universe is made up. Without the persistent activity of this Cause, there were nothing that could exist; there would be no moral or physical order; in fact, every phenomenon would be an utter impossibility. (2) This Universal Reason stands nearer to us than our bodies or even our inner selves; being the Life of all life and the Soul of all souls. (3) Creation is going on every moment; nay, creation and preservation are two conceptions of the same fact pertaining to the same time. (4) This First Cause is a Personal Being; for as much at least is implied in the conclusion that it is self-conscious Reason, the rational and satisfactory Ground of the sum-total of things. Not only do our intellects demand that this Cause should be such; but also our moral nature, æsthetic feelings and spiritual instincts require and expect it to be Personal, Righteous and Good. In fact, an Impersonal Cause, granting that such were conceivable at all, satisfies neither our ethical and spiritual needs nor our intellectual demands any more than a piece of clay can do. Causation without consciousness, action without volition—these are ideas wholly inconceivable, inasmuch as

they run counter to all experience and knowledge. (5) Lastly, the self-conscious Reason reached as the ultimate and universal ground of creation is, by its very nature, self-existent, eternal and infinite—the one only independent Reality. Hence, it excludes the existence of everything else for which such reality may be claimed. This is because there cannot be two, not to speak of more, eternal and infinite Realities underlying one and the same system of things. Accordingly, there is One Cause and many effects; One Reality and multiplex manifestations; One Author and the manifold universe; One Father and many children; One Teacher and many disciples; One Saviour and many saved. For there is only One God, One Law, One Love everywhere; One *Brahman*—*Ekamévádwitheeyam*—the eternal Ground and Essence of all things and beings now and for ever, here and hereafter.

6

'SUDDHAMAPAPAVIDDHAM'*

1897

As stated in the preceding article, our nature is so constituted as to apprehend God under three different aspects, namely, as the Abiding Ground and First Cause of the universe, as the grand Infinite Ideal and as the Great and Gracious Friend of all. An attempt has been made so far to show how the natural demand for an adequate Cause of cosmic phenomena must remain unsatisfied until the mind lays hold of a single yet all-sufficient Power and Intelligence to explain the origin and continued maintenance of the world of nature without and of the world of man within. Our past inquiry has sought to make it plain to us how material nature and human society bear upon them clear marks of indissoluble kinship based on common derivation—marks that are being more and more revealed by the advancing light of scientific research and philosophic investigation. Everywhere the ceaseless activity of the Divine Energy is being manifested and interpreted—in the scientist's formula of forces, in the poet's delight in dreams, in the artist's love of beauty, in the historian's motives of action. So that the prime, ultimate Source of the universe is not an absentee God who, after the first creative act, has banished Himself from its precincts to a far-off region to watch from there the reign of regent laws with but occasional miraculous interventions on His own part ; but an All-encompassing, Ever-immanent Agency inweaving itself into the panorama of the universe and evolving a process of continued creation or manifestation, of which growth and preservation are but other names. In fact, Science wants a God that is a constant Force and a conscious Intelligence immanent in every monad and ego of existence.

Nor should the distinction between God and Man be lost sight of. For, manifestation implies two beings, the being

* For a fresh treatment of this theme *vide* Nos. 14 and 15.

manifested and the being to whom the manifestation is presented. Again, Nature and God are not one and the same any more than an author's wisdom is the author himself. Even as, on the same canvas, the painter produces, side by side, pictures of objects in themselves far apart from one another and yet the quality of the observer's eye is such as to create the idea of one single landscape, so there is formed in us the impression of a serial sequence of cosmical events and phenomena. Nor can it be otherwise ; because, to our conditioned perception, it is all a relation of time and space ; while, with God, the contents of the manifestation are all of one moment and at one spot ; in fact, the Unconditioned is beyond the bounds of time and space. Of the Unlimited we must, therefore, posit priority in time, as well as causal precedence, over the limited. Hence the human soul is subsequent to, and an offspring of, the Divine. Now, when we speak of God as different from the 'changing phenomena of the universe, we realise Him as the underlying Truth in whom is no change. If, on the other hand, we regard the manifestation also as beginningless, we take a position which directly contravenes our own scientific conclusion that He is 'One only without a second.' '*Idamvá ágré naiva kinchidáseeth, sadéva soumyédamagra áseedékamévádwitheeyam.*'

It will now be our purpose, in studying God as the Source of Ethical Ideals, to consider whether or not the structure of the universe has been laid on moral foundations ; whether or not the 'one far off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves' is the perfection of character, the perpetual growth of the finite creature in ever-increasing likeness to the infinite Creator ; and, lastly, if the answers to these questions can alone be in the affirmative, whether or not they afford a solemn, unerring testimony to the Holiness and Righteousness of God.

The influences that awaken and sustain religious belief are manifold and vary in different individuals and communities at different times according to the level of civilised existence reached by them. In its earliest stage, the religious idea is suggested by the external world impressing itself upon the human consciousness through the ceaseless movements of the objects round about on the earth and in the heavens. The elemental worship originating thus in the observer ascrib-

ing to Nature a life like his own, comes gradually to be purified by the higher culture of reason and sentiment into the perception of a Mind that is the seat of power and the spring of phenomena. Always and everywhere in the history of religion, God is first discerned as Truth—the underlying Reality, the cementing Force, the interpreting Principle of all. And it is only subsequently, as man enlarges his conception of Nature and looks within himself, that he begins to recognise God as Holiness, the Source and Centre of the moral consciousness with its categorical imperative, and as Love, the Friend and Fulfiller of human longings unto perfection. It is, then, in the inner nature of man that God becomes fully revealed: it is in the deep recesses of his spirit that the Lord unveils Himself with all the charm of immediate, personal vision. And hence the hoary dictum that the Kingdom of God is within and not without; the true shekinah being man himself, the crowning-point of creation. The relation between God and man—each individual man—must needs be essentially different from that which holds between the Supreme Consciousness and all unthinking, unfeeling objects in creation. What, then, is the nature of the bond that knits us to God? What are our points of contact and communion with Him? In a word, what is God to us? Are we to regard Him but as an indifferent Onlooker, a distant Witness and an exacting Judge, or as a discerning Friend, a guiding Teacher, a forgiving Parent and an engaging Spouse? This is, above all, the most momentous issue relative to the essence of real religion, to a consideration of which it behoves us to address ourselves in a humble and devout spirit. And here we cannot keep too close a watch upon the purity of our thoughts and aspirations; for the pure in heart alone can see God.

The one, stupendous discovery of modern times which has thoroughly revolutionised the whole course of thought of the intellectual world, is the one we owe to Charles Darwin. Evolution, growth, development, expansion—these have passed into household words at the present day. The universe, we now know, is not the net result of a few days' fitful labour but the ever-shifting spectacle of unfoldment, along certain definite but widening lines, "from the evenly-diffused fluid world-stuff up to the myriads of spherical worlds, up again to

organised life-stuff, from that to consciousness, and from that to human beings with their ever-expanding mental and moral powers." And the main lesson of Science, we learn, is the reign of law, the sway of purpose, in this direction of things. There is but one scheme that runs through the world-organism, that links realm with realm and strings all successive generations together. If, accordingly, 'nothing walks with aimless feet,' what, so far as we can discern, is the goal towards which we and all around us seem to be constantly making? What is the nature of the purpose moving the ceaseless thrill of the Living Energy at the heart of the universe of which we form a part? What is the law inwrought into its very framework, the law which must needs be honoured and obeyed if we would remain approved members of the vast City of God? What is the rule to be satisfied, if we would retain our ground in the mighty struggle for life? What is the path we ought to tread, the line along which we ought to move, if we would not be left behind in the great, sacred pilgrimage of existence? This law, this rule, this path, we proceed to show, is a moral law, a righteous rule, an ethical path.

To begin with an illustration. During the second decade of this century, a little lad of four summers, the son of a happy New England farmer, was one day walking home from his father's humble farm. On the way, his attention was suddenly drawn to a small pond-hole by the roadside. He made up to the place and there found a spotted tortoise sunning itself at ease in the shallow water near the root of a tree. As boys of his age are wont to do out of thoughtless sport, he lifted up the stick in his little baby hand to strike the innocent creature; when, lo, making right against the current of his spontaneity, he heard a voice ringing, "It is wrong," in sure though speechless tones. This chiding voice took him aback; and before he could fully recover from surprise, the tortoise made itself scarce. The boy straightway hurried home, related the incident to his dear mother and asked her what that strange voice was. Said the good mother, wiping a tear from her eye with her apron, " Some men call it conscience; but I prefer to call it the Voice of God in the soul of man. If you litsen and obey it, then, it will speak clearer and clearer and always guide you right; but if you turn a deaf ear, or disobey,

then, it will fade out little by little and leave you all in the dark and without a guide. Your life depends on your heeding this little voice." Years passed ; and the boy grew—grew to be a preacher of life-giving truth. Those were the days of the fiercest conflict over the nefarious institution of Slavery. On this question our hero could have but one opinion ; so, into the abolitionist camp he threw himself, heart and soul, as preacher, lecturer and writer. One day, there was going to be a prodigious public meeting organised by those whose interest lay in man's property in man. There this friend of the 'nigger' race burned with the passionate yearning to present himself. Comrades and kinsmen remonstrated with him and even confined him in a room at the time to guard him against the risks of a public appearance. But he made good his escape and was, in a moment, in the midst of that dense mass of tumultuous elements. Speaker after speaker strode up to the platform and poured his invective in the most scorching terms upon the enemies of existing order and upsetters of divine statutes! So they propped up their cause (or contention) with all manner of specious arguments, challenging the abolitionists at the end of each fling to speak out for themselves if yet they had a say at all. Our right valiant champion of liberty—with what bounding delight he then sprang up to the platform! And as he opened his lips gently yet powerfully to answer the 'irrefutable' arguments on the other side, the uproarious mob broke out into 'Kill him! Kill him!' But came forth from him the awful burst of intrepid truth, 'Yes, kill me if you can;' and he went on battering down one and all of their excuses for the time-honoured evil. Not a hand was laid upon him; for who was there of the assembled thousands but felt the force of a Higher Voice behind that of the defenceless adversary? Again, when, after a time, this man of men received in Florence the final summons of death, the last word on his lips to a friend was: "I have something to tell you. There are two Theodore Parkers now; one is dying here in Italy, the other I have planted in America. He will live there and continue my work." What, now, are the main features of the moral law that we find remarkably illustrated in these episodes from the life of one of the New World apostles of rational righteousness?

The first memorable incident, that of the inner warning of Conscience to Parker in his baby suits, points to how the Merlin-gleam of the rule of conduct is not the peculiar possession of a select few but the common property of the whole human race, little ones not excluded. Next, the solemn avowal as to 'the other Theodore Parker planted in America' just visualises the eternal, ever-enduring validity of that law of righteousness with which the Theodore Parker who laid down his mortal life in Florence struggled to bring into line the ideas and institutions of the land of his birth, nay, of the whole world. The moral law, then, is universal and eternal; it is there, present in all men and in all ages.

But here the question arises: Does not experience in some cases give the lie direct to this broad enough statement, seeing that, even among the same people at the same time, the most conflicting moral judgments are not uncommon? To the dwellers in our country, the concremation of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands was nothing opposed to the laws of morality; nor was it other than a most sacred duty to mangle and mutilate their own bodies under the car of Jagannath. The African cannibal, as he ate his fill of human flesh, suffered from no gnawing sense of unrighteous indulgence. Nor need it be doubted that it was originally with a devout consciousness of pious duty devolving upon the faithful follower of the Cross to see to the due destruction of heresy that the good monk, St. Dominic, set on foot, and his devoted adherents kept up, that Court of Inquisition which has now deservedly passed into a byword of scorn. Further, when young men's debating societies discuss whether it is ever right to tell a lie or to put an end to the acute pain of a suffering animal by speedily despatching it from life, the suffrages are, not unoften, found pretty evenly divided. Nevertheless, despite such anomalies and disparities of view which we fully admit as facts in the sphere of the practical application of moral principles, there still is an essential unity underlying all those judgments, however divergent they may appear and in whatever form and measure the moral sense may find formulated expression. As, in the physical world, atom to atom cannot be united save by the force of mutual attraction, so one element of the social fabric cannot coexist with another element, soul cannot cooperate

with soul, unless there abides genuineness about the attachment in trust subsisting between them. What is it that keeps together a gang of robbers and enables them to hold their own in the togetherness of their unholy career, if not a recognition of equity and equality at least among themselves? Wolves could not hunt in packs except on the real, though unexpressed, understanding that they should not attack one another during the chase. Go deep enough into the heart of things; and you will perforce find that its central core is made of nothing but the soundest stuff. Only, one man towers high in respect of honesty in social relations; another makes himself remarkable for conjugal fidelity; a third becomes noteworthy through passive harmlessness; and so on almost infinitely along the scale. What, strictly speaking, lies at the root of the assassin's bloody intent but an intense solicitude either to improve his own lot and that of his wife and children or to gratify a dearly-loved friend bent on avengement or, it may be, to shelter a fugitive fellow-man—all, impulses not unworthy in themselves but rendered so only by want of mutual adjustment and proper satisfaction? To take another example, the keen conflict between meat-eating and vegetarianism, is it not, after all, due to one party concentrating its thought upon the duty of promoting the normal health and growth of the human body and the other being more keenly sensitive to the cruelty of taking away a life no man can give? In such cases, conscience is only concerned in, and responsible for, enjoining carefulness for the self and forbidding cruelty to all sentient existences. Besides, there is another issue of great moment which must not be overlooked in judging of conflicting moral verdicts. It is this. All that is maintained here is simply that the inner sense is only so far operative as to intimate that certain springs of action are good and certain other springs of action bad. Beyond persistently asserting the sanctity of duty, it lies outside the province of moral intuition to define the particular course of conduct to be followed aimdst a number of perplexing complications. Hence, however misled in their judgments, the living martyrs of conscience never reprove themselves for having run away with any mirage of misconception but, even after the realisation of their own error, rather strive with all their might and main the more strictly and implicitly to obey the inner voice, while, of course, they also place themselves

more freely open to correct conviction and work with greater vigour and watchfulness to discover truth. The more one sets at naught the utterances of the inner monitor, the more, as the practical piety of the simple American mother did perceive, will the light fade out little by little and leave one all in the dark and without a guide. Furthermore, the law of evolution, above referred to, serves to explain a vast number of differences of opinion on right and wrong as also to point out a principal feature of the moral consciousness. For, though the first expounders of this law confined its operation exclusively to the physical world, it does govern no less certainly all the other spheres of existence. So it is that, in our day, many a hideous practice and institution has come to be improved off the face of the globe which formerly commanded all but universal homage and unhesitating allegiance. All in all, it is after this mould that Nature is made; and it is in this manner that the grand epic of Man's salvation is being writ. Stern Nature refuses to assimilate truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, alike; but she must, sooner or later, cast out the false and immoral elements and digest only the true and moral essence of all efforts and movements, individual or collective.

This thought leads us to another characteristic of the moral law illustrated by the second episode in Theodore Parker's life. We have seen how the truth or, what is only another phase of it, the righteousness, that inhered in his cause cowed down the entire body of his opponents with an authority against which there was no appeal; so that the involuntary check they received from the unseen proved too much for their indignant passion to shoot down that sworn enemy of vested interests. As such, we may fairly ask, what obligation is there, on the principle even of altruistic hedonism, for one to merge one's own interests in the common good of the many? If I am strong of muscle and in a position to take care of myself, why should I feel aught of compunction in despoiling my neighbour of his property, though the general prevalence of such a practice would surely tend to the prejudice of a great many other and weaker members of the community? How, on this basis, are we to account for our instinctive appreciation of the moral splendour of philanthropy and martyrdom of every type?

No; great men are great inasmuch as they obey the law of righteousness absolutely for its own sake; and small men are great in so far as they own great men as their moral superiors and models. The peace of conscience is not merely a matter of pleasure or profit, of gain or good, for self or society. And the power behind the moral urge is a Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness both in and around us.

So, declares the author of *Heroes and Hero-Worship* concerning the Founder of Islam: "He does not, like a Bentham, a Paley, take Right and Wrong, and calculate the profit and loss, ultimate pleasure of the one and of the other; and summing all up by addition and subtraction into a net result, ask you, whether on the whole the Right does not preponderate considerably? No, it is not *better* to do the one than the other; the one is to the other as life is to death,—as Heaven is to Hell". Also, "Good and Evil are the two polar elements of this creation, on which it all turns; these two differ not by *preferability* of one to the other, but by incompatibility absolute and infinite". Again, in the following powerful passage from *Past and Present*, he sets forth how Righteousness alone will thrive in this world, how its Law will avenge itself sooner or later and how all apparent contradictions and confusions must also tend ultimately towards an eternal centre of right and nobleness and of that only: "Oceans of horse hair, continents of parchment, and learned-sergeant eloquence, were it continued till the learned tongue wore itself small in the indefatigable learned mouth, cannot make unjust just. The grand question still remains, was the judgment just? If unjust, it will not and cannot get harbour for itself, or continue to have footing in this Universe, which was made by other than One Unjust. Enforce it by never such statuting, three readings, royal assents; blow it to the four winds with all manner of quilted trumpeters and pursuivants, in the rear of them never so many gibbets and hangmen, it will not stand, it cannot stand. From all souls of men, from all ends of Nature, from the Throne of God above, there are voices bidding it: Away, away! Does it take no warning; does it stand, strong in its three readings, in its gibbets, and artillery parks? The more woe is to it, the frightfuller woe. It will continue

standing, for its day, for its year, for its century, doing evil all the while; but it has one enemy who is Almighty: dissolution, explosion, and the everlasting Laws of Nature incessantly advance towards it; and the deeper its rooting, more obstinate its continuing, the deeper also and huger will its ruin and overturn be.

"In this God's world, with its wild whirling eddies and mad foam-oceans, where men and nations perish as if without law, and judgment for an unjust thing is sternly delayed, dost thou think that there is therefore no justice? It is what the fool hath said in his heart. It is what the wise, in all times, were wise because they denied, and knew for ever not to be. I tell thee again, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find here below: the just thing, the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing; and infinite bonfires visibly waiting ahead of thee, to blaze centuries long for thy victory on behalf of it,—I would advise thee to call halt, to fling down thy baton, and say 'In God's name, No!' Thy 'Success'? Poor devil, what will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded; no, not though bonfires blazed from North to South, and bells rang, and editors wrote leading-articles, and the just thing lay trampled out of sight, to all mortal eyes an abolished and annihiliated thing. Success? In a few years, thou wilt be dead and dark,—all cold, eyeless, deaf; no blaze of bonfires, ding-dong of bells or leading-articles visible or audible to thee again at all for ever: What kind of success is that?—"

Righteousness, then, is the only reality in this universe; and moral consciousness is no mere myth or manufacture. Also, to the irrepressible question as to its source and sanction, there can be but one answer, namely, that the same Causal Will that has called forth the universe into manifestation is also the Ideal Righteousness that has impressed itself upon man. It is the infinite Righteousness of God that constitutes the enduring ground and the unifying principle of all moral dispensations; that holds personal relations with one and all of His moral creatures; that, accordingly, communicates itself from measure to measure even to us, His erring children, and, what is more, moves ever by our side to plead with us and, by the might of His own Power and Love, re-

claim us, vile sinners, to His paths, which are the paths of peace and pleasantness.

There be some who, if they do not openly deride religion, do yet discount its work as love's labour lost and are content to esteem morality alone as the highest goal of our race, themselves seeking to attain to it with sincerity and singleness of purpose. They hopefully point to good men and true who, though not possessed by belief in a Living God, still present exemplary characters. Now, all honour to them and, let us add, all glory and gratitude unto Him who sheds His light upon all, whether they know or know not the Hand that feeds them! The Theist, however, cannot part company with the Life of his life and the Soul of his soul, because God to him is a Fact he can no more deny or disregard than his own existence or his aspirations after unattained good or the incapacity of his unaided effort to attain it. He knows himself fastened to the Heavenly Throne by the triple cord of Rational Thought, Righteous Law and Perfect Love; and holds that God will work out through eternity the salvation of his race—with Righteousness for its end, Love for its motive and Truth for its means.

But, as is patent in the nature of things, the conditions of God's government of the material and moral kingdoms vary essentially in their character. Mechanical compulsion in the physical world; instinctive impulsion in the animal; pleading persuasion in the human—this is the story of Divine dealings. And what we are destined for as conscious, moral beings created in His own image is that we should all bring ourselves to say to Him, 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine', and thus find our highest duty and delight, our most abiding heaven and happiness, in willing submission unto Him for the glorification of His name and the establishment of His Kingdom for ever and ever.

Now, let us pause to look back upon the field so far traversed and take a brief survey of the things we have seen and examined. (1) Our search after a First Cause for ourselves and the universe in which we live leads us to an Infinite Power and Wisdom, which, as Causal Will, has been constantly engaged in making explicit to the self-conscious centres of human souls what before was implicit in itself. (2) This manifestation of the Divine is conducted along definite

lines, thus showing that 'through the ages one increasing purpose runs' which must accomplish itself in the end. (3) Turning our attention to an order of other than physical facts, we recognise in ourselves the strange reality of a 'quadruple phenomenon' in the instinctive prohibitions and commands, condemnations and approbations, of an inner sense whensoever the will sets out to exercise itself. (4) The law now and again announcing itself through this voice is perceived in all men and during all ages, and always breaks in upon our own inclinations with authority; so much so that it bears all the characteristics of a communication from outside our own selves. (5) All men amongst all communities have an inborn consciousness of right and wrong and of the supremacy of the one over the other; though they possess, too, the power of wilfully withholding allegiance to 'Duty' and may even differ mutually as to whether particular actions are worthy or unworthy. (6) This conflict, however, between moral judgments represents only the result of over-attention paid to one or more of the springs of action to the exclusion of others. And the moral standard is not so much varying as growing from generation to generation with the higher culture of thought and sentiment. (7) The injunctions of conscience are not self-imposed commands issued by ourselves with an eye to convenience or comfort; for history proves that oftentimes conscience is roused and sets itself up against all ease, impelling heroes to deeds which, far from enhancing pleasure, only bring down unescapable fire and sword upon them; so that ''tis only noble to be good.' (8) In harmony with our highest needs, conscience can alone be interpreted as the voice of God in the soul of man, by which He speaks forth His will; the window through which the Divine Light shines upon human wills from behind. (9) Despite all apparent aberration from righteousness and notwithstanding all temporary triumph of unrighteousness, the ultimate vindication of the prime law of the universe is a certainty, nay, the only certainty, amid its fleeting shadows; for, 'what was good shall be good, with for evil so much good more', and righteousness, which is itself the very nature of the All-Holy, comprises the only safe and worthy rule of conduct for man. (10) Lastly, the Personal Being ever energising in the universe as Rational Thought, Righteous Law and Perfect Love—the last of these an aspect which it

still remains for us to dwell upon at length in our next—stands intimately related to all His creatures, whom He seeks to win into voluntary submission to Himself. As the Supreme Source of all ideals, He is not only the indwelling Revealer of the high standard of our calling but also the constant Sustainer of all aspiring and faithful endeavours after its attainment on the part of His children.

"Holy as Thou, O Lord, is none!
Thy holiness is all Thine own;
A drop of that unbounded sea
Is ours, a drop derived from Thee.

"And when Thy purity we share,
Only Thy glory we declare;
And humbled into nothing own,
Holy and pure is God alone."

7

'BRAHMA KRIPAHI KEVALAM'

1897

What has been attempted in the two previous articles is to trace in outline the self-revelation of God in two distinctly marked spheres of human nature. The growing intellect, once set in motion, starts irrepressibly in search of a supreme Causal Ground to account for the vast and varied phenomena of the universe, both seen and unseen—a search which it cannot abandon in peace before an all-embracing, ever-immanent, conscious Power and Intelligence is reached and recognised as its Indwelling Life. So, too, in its progressive march, the moral consciousness comes with increasing clearness to behold the majestic vision, and catch the masterful voice, of a Universal Director of the ethical ideals of all generations. Thus, in the excursion along the intellectual and moral lines of our mysterious being, we witness an Infinite Energy ever operative at the centre of Nature and, amidst apparent disturbances and occasional deviations, impelling it towards the eternal goal of the glorious perfection of righteousness. Marvellous beyond words as are these truths of the All-wise Power and the All-pure Holiness of God, and inexpressibly calculated as they are to affect with the deepest sense of admiration and humility, yet their exclusive contemplation must tend to paralyse with the tremor of awe-struck wonder and weigh down with the despair of servile dependence. These aspects, however, do not exhaust the whole Divine nature, as they cannot satisfy all human needs. The common constitution of humanity has still a third, and, in fact, the widest, avenue leading to its inner chambers—the emotional side, which is ever susceptible to the slightest breath of the affections and which, when pursued, throws upon the path the illumination of Divine Love. The understanding, the conscience and the emotions, though commonly spoken of as so many partitioned-off compartments in the human soul, are, in truth, but different facets of the same diamond

and resemble the three principal beams which inseparably blend into the white ray of light. And a conception of God which, however profuse the glow of the other colours, does not embody the gleaming reflections of the last-named faculty of the emotions, cannot but remain an incomplete and charmless picture to be gazed at with distant admiration and approval but not embraced in the fond endearment of personal attraction. Hence, no system of religious thought extant but has, in some shape or other, more or less vividly shadowed forth this sweetest and sublimest of Divine attributes, *viz.*, that God is a God of Love.

We proceed to enlarge upon this Love-aspect of the Godhead—to set forth the essence of genuine love with its distinctive characteristics; to inquire if any traces of it are visible in the world within and without and, if so, in what departments of existence and to what extent; to discover the conditions that necessarily favour, and the hindrances that commonly cloud, its discernment; and, lastly, to estimate the immense support the story of Science lends to this vital article of religious belief that the Divine Heart throbs with infinite Love for all, a Love which is the supreme motive, as Righteousness is the final end, and Wisdom the appropriate means, of the endless march of evolution.

Let us, at the outset, in order not only to keep clear of long-established but ill-devised tracks but also to lay firm hold of the clue to a new-marked path, bear carefully in mind these profound words of Prof. C. B. Upton from his Hibbert Lectures: "If the belief that God is Love were reached as an induction from the study of nature and history, then, of course, to take this belief as a clue when we have to deal with the stern reality of Natural and Moral Evil would be mere reasoning in a circle.....The belief that Love belongs to the essence of God's nature is, in general, based on the principle, which each religious mind verifies for itself, that man most truly realises his own higher nature when his conduct is at the free disposal of rational, self-forgetful love; and the mind spontaneously infers, and feels itself justified in inferring, that the principle which speaks with the highest authority in the individual consciousness is alike the principle which is dominant in the universe." Our task, accordingly, will be confined in the main to helping our minds to realise

for themselves this basic principle that the affections constitute the highest springs of human conduct.

That there abounds much of beauty in the material world as also not a little of happiness in the life of man, will be readily acknowledged on all hands, although the darker side of the picture is also there to stare in the face the veriest tyro in the school of experience. The splendours of the vast picture-gallery of Nature—such as the marvels of the midnight heavens; the magic charms of golden grain and radiant rainbow; the sweet effulgence of sun and moon; the lovely landscape of lofty hills, smiling fields and stretching seas; the fresh fragrace of the wayside flower; and the recurring round of the seasons, each with its train of delights— these make up the environment of the human spirit, constantly awakening in it a thrill of peace and love through its inborn sensitiveness to beauty. Again, in our own individual and social constitution, the pleasures of life, like the sense of gratification at the exercise of the powers of body and mind, the joys of memory and of hope, the happiness of home—these and many more than we can name comprise, in fact, but broken lights of the countless blessings lit up by a benignant Hand along the path of existence. As it has been noticed that the moral sense in man assumes divers forms in different relationships as chastity, honesty, justice, harmlessness; so the sentiment of love, innate in the human breast and kindled into a blaze by the outer world, courses in a variety of directions in differing measures of volume and, out of the fulness of its strength, stretches even beyond the grave to shed its unfading light upon the sphere of the departed. In the home, it shows itself in the merged existence of husband and wife, in the mother's overflowing tenderness, in the father's anxious provision and in the child's tranquil trust. In the social circle, the mutual services of friends, the consecrated labours of the patriot and the self-inflicted privations of the philanthropist amply evidence the extensions of that spirit of love which holds such happy sway over the hearth as only properly constituted families are privileged to know.

What, then, do we gather of the nature of love from these and like common instances furnished by the course of everyday life? That the affections single out personal beings like ourselves for their objects; that they form a primary element in the constitution of nature, human as well as

subhuman; and that their sole aim is to communicate the highest possible good, an aim the fulfilment of which constitutes its own cherished reward, seeing that everywhere they that love well are thankful to love better. The essence of love, therefore, is the emotion which attends the conscious realisation of a deep sense of oneness of nature between its subject and object. And two marked characteristics always stand out as its predominant features, *viz.*, firstly, that love thinks of, and strives for, the highest good of the object loved, and not of itself; and, secondly, that its devotion to the object loved is so exclusively intense as to shut out the least thought of a second object, the first alone sufficing to fill it with the satisfaction of all in all. Thus, unselfish and concentred feeling is seen to be the sure mark of a spirit of a real affection.

And this spirit presents an ascending scale in the order of its refinement. First, there is a *human* love which, though unable to endure the sight of woe or the shriek of wretchedness, is yet constrained to reach forth the arm of sympathy and cannot, unlike the Priest and the Levite of old, pass by on the other side. A higher order of affection is the *imaginative or æsthetic* love which attaches itself to objects in proportion as they are winsome: the sweet sensation of supernal joy awakened by the marvels of nature and the miracles of art sanctified into beatific visions by Nature's poet-priests to whom 'the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' Then, there is a *moral* love which watches with breathless interest the issues of the deep drama of human character and is ever ready with its wreath of reverence for the consecrated memory of saints and martyrs—heroes of all times and climes who have wrought their lives into unfailing allegiance to truth and righteousness and sealed it with their blood. Lastly, the highest kind of emotion man is susceptible of is what may be termed a *divine* love which, in fact, covers and combines, dignifies and sweetens, all the rest and is evoked not only by the merits of the past or the needs of the present but also by the possibilities of the future. The springs of love well up in commiseration at the sight or contemplation of suffering, in admiration at that of beauty, and, again, in approbation at that of goodness; while its most profound and universal impulses—different from the convulsions of compassion, the trances of trans-

port or the judgments of justice—extend over the expanse of eternity and behold in today's abandoned sinner of earth tomorrow's attested saint of heaven.

So that, in the meanest of us, there lies implanted a germ of love which, under the fostering influence of the noblest culture, is destined, as it is able, to grow up to the heights of all humanity and even to the infinite beyond. This is a condition of perfect manhood the attainment of which spells the realisation of our highest nature. And, in the long run, the illumined page of history is reserved only for those whose lives, 'loyal to the royal' in them, prove their ascent to royalty divine—and not for any of those of mere royal descent,

> "High though his titles, proud his name,
> Boundless his wealth as wish can claim";

for,

> "Despite those titles, power and pelf,
> The wretch concentred all in self,
> Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
> And, doubly dying, shall go down
> To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
> Unwept, unhonour'd and unsung."

The world's history is only the world's judgment; and its ultimate verdict, we thus realise, is always in favour of the representatives of love—the Christs, not the Cæsars, of the race—those who, like the Buddhistic Priyadasin of ancient India or the Stoic Emperor-Saint of mediæval Rome, convert thrones into pulpits and make shrines of palaces; and not tyrants whose hearts are adamant, whose power is poison and whose hands are fangs.

So we see that absolutely disinterested affections of the most elevated type form part of the natural furniture of the normally constituted human being. How these affections have developed is a historico-philosophic problem. That they have come into existence is a certain revelation of the constitution and character we have to deal with. That the whole human race is alike responsive to the whispers of unselfish love and that, as such, young and old, high and low, wise and ignorant, are all fashioned after the self-same image, and the same inscription of love lies deep engraved on the tablets of all

human hearts, is a truth loudly proclaimed by the countless stories of golden deeds with which abound the written and remembered records of reverence, not to speak of the untold instances of splendid self-sacrifice which in all ages have escaped the near sight of man. Here is one very touching incident of the kind, which it will do the heart good to dwell upon. An Alpine peasant and his wife, once in a season of the hardest wintry weather, went to attend a party and left their home in charge of two boys aged six and four respectively. On their return, the parents found the bodies of the children lying frozen in the snow before the door. The lads, it appeared, had gone out to play, and the front door had become so frozen up that they could not force it open. Examining the frozen bodies, what did the heavy-hearted parents discover but that the elder child had doffed his own bark-shoes and drawn them over the smaller, felt-clad feet of his young brother in order to protect him from the cold, leaving himself barefooted? The younger child's body, with his finger in his mouth and his tears frozen on his cheeks, was locked in the embrace of the elder. What a thrice-marvellous manifestation of self-denying love this in a stripling of but six summers! How came he by that nobly tender heart far beyond the work, the purpose or even the imagining of his parents? Surely, he was not the author of his heart; nor, in strict reality, were his earthly parents either. What we said, then, of moral consciousness before applies with equal force to this sentiment of genuine love, *viz.*, that it is independent of man, instinctive and universal in man. As the Seer of Chelsea puts it, our very hate is but inverted love ready to be poured out on others even because they are our own brother-men and never directed towards a material object, say, a steam-engine, which has for us no interest of common kinship. "In vain thou deniest it, thou *art* my Brother"; and Love is the only loadstar of human conduct, be the voyaging bark in proper position or overturned. Though, perhaps, the philosopher's puzzle, Love is the poet's deepest intuition, the preacher's sweetest message, the philanthropist's powerfullest mot iv and the artist's strongest stimulus.

Next, what are the conditions requisite to a clear apprehension of this supreme truth that Love is the regnant principle of the universe? But why say, 'of the *universe*', whereas, indeed, we can do but little in the way of exploring

any individual world save this comparatively little ball of earth on which we are set? "Since in its physical relations the whole outspread heaven is the seat of a perfect order and harmony, since every star is visibly governed by the same physical laws as our own small planet, therefore it is probable, and may be assumed, that the higher and more complex purposes traceable in the ordering of our own world extend in general to myriads of worlds besides." If, then, the universe has been made and is being maintained in perfect love, what accounts for our frequent failure to recognise this central fact of facts? Carlyle repeatedly urges what experience largely testifies to—that the key to the proper understanding of anything is to study it under the conditions to which it is subject; in other words, "inseeing sympathy" is the only 'open sesame' to right knowledge; indeed, the fox could not track the abode of the geese, did not the pursuer possess like instincts with the prey. So that the Divine system is best surveyed from the Divine standpoint; and a correct interpretation of the slow-evolving process of the ages by a creature of time and space necessarily requires that we should be prepared to make the circle of human destiny infinite, if we would see the 'one increasing purpose' course along the straight-line of prosperity. '*Sub specie eternitatis.*' Impatience for results, so natural to an observer set within the bounds of time; and imperfectness of vision, quite incidental to the limitations of incomplete knowledge—these are the two great obstructions that hide the full, immediate view of the operations of Infinite Love carried on around under the direction of Perfect Wisdom and for the sake of Supreme Righteousness. The grand lesson to learn in all humility before attempting to spell out the love-mystery of the universe is that we must live love within to see it without.

> "Be Noble! and the Nobleness that lies
> In other men, sleeping, but never dead,—
> Will rise in majesty to meet thine own."

Now, to turn to the unmistakable witness which advancing Science bears to the Heart of Love at the centre of Nature. The strongest indication of real Love, it seems to us, is afforded by the prevalence of Law throughout the universe. As 'Love is the fulfilling of the Law,' so Law, rightly construed, is but the expression of Love. The sceptre of Law

holds universal sway: it has already brought under one dominion, and literally made a *universe* of, all the unnumbered systems upon systems that inhabit the boundless expanses of space; and, day after day, fresh territory is being reduced to subjection and forced into obedience, now the land of language, again the sphere of society, and anon the realm of religion. Consider separately the characteristics of Love and those of Law; and it will be observed that the one corresponds precisely to, and finds proper satisfaction in, the other. As Love, exclusively absorbed in the object loved, tends only to what is promotive of the happiness of that object for all time and in all concerns; so Law, which bears on it the marks of uniformity and universality, must needs approve itself as the best possible method of Love by virtue of its unbroken applicability to all times and in all concerns. While the current fallacies of tradition assert that the workings of Love are to be discerned only in fitful demonstrations and spasmodic interpositions, the truth is that the very perpetuity of providence is apt to throw into the background the Source of a benevolence primarily designed and constantly purveyed by an All-knowing Power that is above all occasional suspensions and reparations of the original plan. Thus it becomes clear that the daily recurrence of the ordered rising and setting of the sun bears a far weightier testimony to the Providence overruling creation than could any fable of the regular sequence of day and night being for once miraculously interchanged or of their proper duration being likewise overstepped. It is of the tokens of this Power of never-failing beneficence that the poet asks:

> "Say! which imports more plenitude of power,
> Or nature's Law to fix, or to repeal?
> Or make a sun, or stop his mid-career?"

Not the signs and wonders, then, of the remote past, the dim, distorted reflections of which reach down to us along the corridors of time and tradition, but the ever-present, normal wonders of the course and constitution of things before our very eyes, must convey the most convincing evidence of the Love of our Maker for His children. Again, the conditions essential to the recognition of Love may be found to be identical with those that help the discovery of Law. A perfectness of vision that takes in not only the broken segment of 'now' and 'here' but the whole sweep of eternity and infini-

tude; and a consequent spirit of patience as to results, proceeding from the known to the unknown—these are as inevitable to the discernment of progressively selfrealising Love as to the discovery, by slow experiment, of all-inclusive Law. Also, as only a heart of love can perceive around it the reflection of the Heart of the All-Loving, so to detect system in the universe is possible alone for a mind possessed of systematising capacity. Whoever did not see an apple fall to the ground before Newton's day? Yet it was reserved only for his rare, methodising mind to receive the flash of the stupendous law of gravitation. We have stated that Love, by its nature, must be *personal*; so that, the essence of personality being self-consciousness, the supreme function of Love is seen to consist in the attachment of one centre of consciousness to another centre of consciousness by means of 'silver links and silken ties'—an attachment most strongly established only by Law, which reveals fond solicitude for final welfare through the institution of a permanent relationship between the essences of things. Law, then, is nothing but a bliss-diffusing instrument in the hands of Love. The same truth is also recognised when we ponder how, the aim of Love being that happiness which consists in harmony with surroundings, the persistent operations of never-failing Law, everywhere manifest in the universe, indicate the best possible means by which that end can be attained with ease and certainty. Such is the growing testimony borne to the fact of the regency of Love by the discovery of the reign of Law.

The accomplishment of the Divine purpose of creation is effected in diverse and sometimes seemingly opposite ways but always in accordance with the dictation of Love. That the progress of the world is increasingly assured through the enlargement of human sympathies; that epoch-making changes have been realised in the history of the race by the instrumentality of renewed revolts in the world's heart; that persecution in all planes and tyranny of every type have been suppressed not so much by force of logical argument as by dint of pity for the victims—all these testify to the ever-pulsating Heart of the Ruler of the Universe. Who but a Loving Power could have wrought such expansions in the human heart from age to age? Again, consider this—how the ceaseless showers of blessings perpetually descending upon us infinitely beyond the measure of our most extravagant de-

sires, do, at the same time, transcend by far our highest deserts. In fact, if we did not estimate our own deserts ourselves on a too extravagant scale of self-importance, we should find that those deserts amounted virtually to nothing. Hence it is both sound philosophy and practical wisdom to apprehend that "the Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator. Nay, unless my Algebra deceive me, Unity itself divided by *Zero* will give *Infinity*. Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the whole world under thy feet."

Lastly, there abides a profound meaning in the honor paid by votaries of diverse sects to the memories of all good men, whatever the form of their religion or no-religion, who have toiled hard to lighten the burden of the world's miseries and wipe the stain of its sins. Here is proof positive that "all true men that live, or that ever lived," are "soldiers of the same army, enlisted under Heaven's captaincy," though under a "mere difference of uniform," "to do battle against the same enemy,—the empire of Darkness and Wrong" and that, therefore, the world's heart has risen, is rising, and will rise, against the limitations imposed upon the mercy of God by the narrow dogmatism of ages. The Divine Love is universal; the Divine Providence is alike general and special; and for time and through eternity, God is the same Everlasting Maker and Master, Protector and Preserver, Savior and Sanctifier. As the value of life increases in proportion as we realise the conditions of the laws of fixity or security, growth or progress, and peace or satisfaction, the supreme Law of Life becomes the Law of Love, making all, maintaining all and moving all out of the fulness of the purest affection. Thus, God, the First Cause, who is the basis of existence; God, the Grandest Ideal, who is the basis of progress, is also God, the Supreme Love, who is the basis of bliss. There is no higher truth, then, than this of the unfailing friendship of the Universal Soul for one and all of His offspring; and no sweeter joy than that His constant attitude towards them is far from the indifference of the commandant to the individual destinies of the soldiers on the battlefield. Rather, it borrows an analogy, however faint, from the musician's concern in every one of the several keys of his piano, where the harmony between each and all is alone

the source of stirring symphonies. Part and parcel of this grand universe, we are neither intruders nor interlopers. Its overruling Divinity is ceaselessly at work, shaping all our ends in perfect love, rough-hew them how we may.

To conclude. So far as it is given to the finite to apprehend the Infinite, we reach our complete conception of God through His threefold manifestation of Himself in the universe in which He is ever immanent, though, of necessity, far transcending its limited conditions. We realise the intimate connection of our individual personalities with the Oversoul, whose voice in the Reason, the Conscience and the Emotions proclaims Him the Rational Thought, the Righteous Law and the Supreme Love of which the whole universe forms a sacred record with Science as its magic key. God is the Universal Consciousness that uniformly underlies the manifold of finite phenomena and unifies them into one organic whole. He is the Ethical Ideal that perpetually lights up the ever-spreading horizon of human progress. He is, again, the Almighty Heart, in the infinite expanses of which there is provided a blissful chamber for every one of His children. And this last-mentioned aspect of the Godhead is, indeed, the very life-breath of all real religion. 'God is Love'—All-Love, Love Alone : '*Brahma Kripâhi Kèvalam*'. This be for evermore the last word upon the Everlasting Reality.

" O love, surpassing thought,
So bright, so grand, so clear, so true, so glorious ;
Love infinite, love tender, love unsought,
Love changeless, love rejoicing, love victorious ;
And this great love for us in boundless store :
God's everlasting love ! What would we more !"

8

'MAMA THEJOMSASAMBHAVAM'

1932

Jnanam BEFORE *Bhakti*

Worship has been suggestively called the nourishment of the soul, the invigorating tonic in all its weaknesses and the curative remedy for all its maladies. Blessed are they that habitually resort to worship with the instinctive urge of the child running up to the mother's bosom as the one refuge from all the pangs of hunger and all the frets of fear. But, for us, children of a larger growth, is it not normally necessary that 'we *know* in whom we trust' before we can hope to realise the fullest efficacy of trustful worship? Impelling instinct apart, even the little one is not without some knowledge, born of experience, of unfailing motherly love. An essential prerequisite to devotion is a knowledge of the Object of devotion as also of the obligation entailed by that knowledge. One has rightly to know in order truly to love. That *jnanam* must precede *bhakti* is thus made clear in the psychology of the *Gita*: '*Aham sarvasya prabhavó, mattah sarvam pravartatè; iti matvá bhajantè mám budhá bhávasamanvitáh.*' The enlightened to whom it is given to perceive God as All-in-all, the prime Source and the moving Force of all—they take to His worship, as they alone can, with all the possible fervour of faith. Without this enlightenment of *paravidya*, the emotion of worship is bound to remain but shallow, superficial and merely sentimental. Except after and through this divine cognition, worship cannot properly be worship with the whole being—that is, 'with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strengh, and with all thy mind.'

Hence, at the threshold of religious life—aye, of life itself, there must needs arise the enquiry as to the

of things. This, indeed, has been the age-long sphinx-riddle of the universe, 'the burthen of the mystery', 'the weary and the heavy weight of all this unintelligible world.' The challenge comes, primarily and preeminently, from the grand manifestations or *vibhûtis* and the striking contrarieties or *dvandvas* of nature and human life. Arresting, in the extreme, to the primitive mind and not less to the civilised spirit, were and are such phenomena as sun and star, river and mountain, cave and cataract, lightning and thunder, calm and storm, ebb and flow, night and day, flower and forest, childhood's benignity, womanhood's beauty and manhood's power of body, mind and heart, pain and pleasure, life and death—'all the mighty world of eye and ear', of mind and conscience. The questing spirit cannot shake off the haunting, irrepressible sense of cause. Nothing, it is persuaded, is self-caused or causeless; there is no sum in mathematics, however much of a conundrum, but has its answer, though not readily apparent from it or appended to it. And a cause, to be a cause, must be an adequate cause, whether known or unknown, near or remote.

Here we enter the realm of the interrelation of Science, Philosophy and Religion. Science interrogates, investigates and analyses. Philosophy collates, compares and synthesises. And Religion accounts for, sublimates and sanctifies Accordingly, Science shades into Philosophy as it begins to generalise upon the reign of law and the unity of nature. The line of progression comes to be from the sciences to Science, from laws to Law. Again, Philosophy runs into, and merges in, Religion when all is traced and referred to the All-in-all with the *Magnificat* hymn of praise and glorification. This time the advance is from religions to Religion—from the 'isms' that body forth the varieties of conceptions of the Divine to the fundamental, underlying sense of the Infinite, as Max Muller defined the result of his studies in Comparative Religion. Thus is reached the meeting-point of the Philosophy of Science and the Philosophy of Religion. And thus it is that, on the practical side, all Science begins with wonder, the wonder of ignorance, and ends, too, with wonder, the wonder of adoration.

The goal of Science, then, is found, through Philosophy, in Religion with the first apprehension of

God, The Source

of all—the one Cause behind the manifold of causes, the prime Cause beneath all secondary causes, the efficient Cause amid all material causes, the uncaused Cause of all derivative causes. He is best conceived in the twofold traditional manner: first, as Primal Light—*Tèjas* or *Prakâsa*; next, as Vital Life—*Rasam* or *Prâna*. About God, the Light of lights, the Light that lighteth every self and every object that cometh into the world, the *Upanishad* makes the objective declaration, '*Na tatra sûryó bhâti, na chandra târakam, némâ vidyutò bhânti, kutò yamagnih? Tam èva bhântam anubhâti sarvam, tasya bhâsâ sarvam idam vibhâti*'; 'and it adds, too, the subjective description,' *Chakshushaschakshuh*' (the Eye of the eye) *et cetera*. The echo and epitome of this teaching as to the central, causal Light of all cosmic glories is, as given in the *Gita* verse, '*Yad yad vibhûti mut sattvam sreemad ûrjitamèva vâ; tattadèvâvagaccha tvam mama téjomsasambhavam.*' Like, wise, of God as the quintessential, all-animating Principle of existence, the *Upanishad* proclaims, '*Rasó vai sah*', and asks, '*Kóhyèvânyât, kah prânyât yadèsha âkâsa ânandó nasyât?*' And this analogue of the life-giving sap, the *Gita* embodies in the concrete imagery of '*Urdhwamûlam adhassâkham asvattham prâhuravyayam,*' recalling the significant Scandinavian symbol of the Tree of Igdrasil.

It is noteworthy how this theory of

Emanation, Not Creation,

envisaged, in the pronouncement, '*Mama tèjómsasambhavam*', is at once of scientific validity and spiritual value as indicating three important corollaries. Firstly, whether viewed as the Light of lights or as the Life of life, God is nowhere to be located in the sum-total of things with a 'Lo here' or a 'Lo there'. As Light and as Life, He is intracosmic—necessarily all-pervasive and perennially all-sustaining. The electric current is at no point self-subsistent but must needs be perpetually fed from the power-house. And while the heart remains the fount of the life-blood, the life itself must perforce be immanent throughout in every corpuscle. As such, mediæval fancies, say, like that of the pineal gland as the sanctum of the spiritual principle in man, have long since found their rightful place in

the limbo of the odd and the ludicrous. Secondly, the manifestation of the creative energy of the Godhead has to be recognised as far from an event in the past finished once for all in the long long-ago of dim antiquity. Rather, intimately touching every point oftime, space and process, it must evermore project itself into the 'present perfect continuous'. It is never 'Finis' but always the end of one volume after another. Thus growth cannot but be construed as slow creation. Miracles, in the true, abiding sense, come to be discerned only in the normal wonders of the world. And the supernatural is seen to reflect itself in and through the natural alone. Thirdly, the universe as the very self-emanation of Divine Splendour transmutes the grossness of all materialism into the mystic meaning of the purest idealism. As witness the ultimate of Positive Science itself, even the electron of today is admittedly not describable otherwise than as a centre of force. And whoever will undertake to define your vitamin, while everybody waxes wise over its food-value? (1) God, then, is not to be located or localised in the universe. (2) Neither is He separable from the universe. (3) Nor, in fact, is He strictly definable *per se* except as the Self-sufficient Source and Spring of all energy, which is nothing if not spiritual in the last analysis.

Now, it is clear how, in relation to the Supreme Reality, the psychological as well as the chronological sequence of approach is that of apprehension, assimilation and, then, annunciation with argumentation. As in intellectual learning, so in spiritual life, there are

THE THREE R'S

—revelation, realisation and ratiocination represented, respectively, by the national institutes of *sruti prasthâna, smriti prasthâna* and *nyâya prasthâna*. The *jnânam* essential to *bhakti* as an invariable antecedent and an indispensable aid, has its obverse and reverse, each to each, in what God reveals and what man discovers—those two aspects between which St. Augustine observed he saw no difference whatsoever. Consequently, the discipline of worship for realisation by the devotee is, of necessity, postponed to the disclosure and demonstration—in fact, the donation of the Deity by the Deity. With one, for instance, like Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, if quite avisible quiver would pass through the whole of his sen-

sitive frame, converting him literally into a ' quaker', over the first Divine attribute of '*Sat*' in the solemn hour of devotions, it was even because of the prior interpenetration of his consciousness with that revolutionising certitude, '*Isávàsyamidam sarvam,*' which had proved to be the very *tárakamantram* of his regenerate life. It is in consonance with this law of human nature that, in the *Gita* treatment, *Bhakti-yoga* is made to take its place only after *Vibhûti-yoga* and *Visvarûpa-sandarsana-yoga*, the relation between these last being that the theoretical affirmation in the one is followed up with practical presentation in the other as in every well-organised lesson in Science. As for ratiocination or reasoned-out exposition, so different from the logomachy of the logic-chopping machine, that, in its turn, in order to carry with it anything like clarity and conviction, can alone be inspired by, and subsequent to, realised experience, even as the realised experience has to be inspired by, and subsequent to, the revealed vision. And thus we have in due order the *Upanishads*, the *Gitá* and the *Brahma Sûtras*. So far as the *Gitá* as a manual of discipline and devotion is concerned, Arjuna's solicitation for a recountal of the Divine *vibhûtis*, Sree Krishna's descant in response summed up in '*Yad yad vibhûtimatsattvam' et cetera*, Arjuna's supplication for the boon of the Vision Beatific, Sree Krishna's manifestation of the Concrete Universal in all its infinite fulness and richness, Arjuna's ecstatic enjoyment of the impact of its graces and grandeurs and, later, his awe-whelmed suit for relief by its recession and, finally, Sree Krishna's complying resumption of the common place shape of secularity—how remrakably these several steps find aclose parallel, under different* conditions, in the impressive story of the mystic experience of a

*Writing of this article on its first appearance in *The Indian Messenger*, Dewan Bahadur Dr. Sir Brahmarshi R. Venkata Ratnam was kind enough to indicate the following differences in a comment by letter to the writer :—" The ' Vision ' seems to me to have influenced the two souls (Arjuna and the Blind Nun) to apprehend two different consequences—lest *he* should miss the Lord *in* the work-a-day world, lest *she* should miss the Lord *on account of* the world—lest *he* should be haunted by the cosmic majesty and be oblivious of the ' normal wonders', lest *she* should find the shekinah screened by the glowing veil—he seeking fulfilment in life's readjustment to life's environment, she seeking fulfilment in life's seclusion from life's attractions."

mediæval nun born blind in the Catholic communion! She was seated, of an evening, on one of the Wicklow Hills with the pious founder of her convent in Ireland. To her were described by this companion in glowing terms all the beauties of nature spread around—the green valleys and the silver streams below—and the purple mountains beyond melting into the azure sky above. Then exclaimed the sightless listener, 'Sister, pray to God to work a miracle and give me sight, that I may see it all and glorify Him.' The prayer went up; and the miracle was wrought. The unsealed eyes saw the Unseen; and the ravished soul enjoyed the entrancing Glory. The nun, all in transport, fell to weeping and trembling. She sank on her knees before St. Bridget and said, 'I beseech thee once more, pray that my sight be taken away from me; for I fear I may forget the being of God amidst the beauty of the world.' St. Bridget prayed again. God heard the prayer; and the nun's sight was taken away from her. They both lifted their voices and magnified the might, majesty and mercy of the Lord.

Upon the infinitely profound, intensely practical doctrine of '*Mama tèjòmsasambhavam*' in regard to every constituent of every order of creation so-called, all literature, indeed, is resonant with orphic melodies. The poet-prophets celebrate

THE CLOUD OF WITNESS

in varying accents at every turn. What a radiant reflex of the Apocalypse of Nature is the familiar stanza from Addison—

> 'The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky,
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim'!

How transcendent the pregnant dictum of Wordsworth, 'Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our Home'! Once more, in what superb strains the illumining vision in which 'we see into the life of things' sounds glorified as the happy harbinger of the blessed realisation enshrined in the famous song seraphic—

> 'And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns

And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things'!

9

'ANYANI BHOOTHANI MATHRAM UPAJEEVANTHI'

1936

'I am that I am'. Through the ages, this most absolute of affirmatives has reverberated 'down the ringing grooves of change'. All over, its echo has been caught by every quickened ear in the secret chambers within as along the whispering galleries without. East and West, its reiterance is upon every lip touched with the living coal. Into the shortest compass the most profound as well as the most primal of propositions is packed—here by the ancient *rishi* in *'Isávásyamidam sarvam'* and there by Emerson, his modern counterpart, in 'God *is*'. Of this supreme certitude the ultimate basis is discovered, throughout, as consisting in the indissolubly individualised consciousness, 'Because I am, therefore He needs must be'. Likewise, at the other end follows the necessary corollary, 'Because He is, therefore alone am I'. Accordingly, the vital inter-connection between the Self-subsistent and the relatively existent is what is expressively summed up in the formula, *'Anyáni bhoothání máthrám upajeevanthi'*, concerning every element and every entity out of the multimanifold of the universe. This averment, in completing a predication of unrestricted applicablility, stands preceded by the answer to an inquiry natural enough in behalf of the one only among the countless orders of creation capable of cognising or recognising the unseen Author of all: 'If He is, what all is He unto me?' That answer embodies itself comprehensively in the fourfold aphorism, *'Eshásya paramágatht rèshásya paramásampath, èshósya paramólokah, èshósya parama ánandah.'*

And how? Protection and possessions, habitation and happiness—these seem to comprise the

of human ambition. As such, God can come home to man as God, only in the measure in which he realises in Him and Him alone the fulfilment of each of these resurgent desires and recurring demands of human nature. Nothing short of a God of such wide-extended and deep-descended satisfactions must have been meant by Browning, when that poet-philosopher of modernism in the Occident declared,

'I have always had one lodestar; now,
As I look back, I see that I have wasted
Or progressed as I looked towards that star—
A need, a trust, a yearning after God.'

The same questionings as to the inherent character of an all-sufficing God occupied our own spiritual forbears of a far, far older time in hoary Orient. And it is their well-wrought-out answer to the eternal query about the meaning of God unto man, individual and collective, here and hereafter, that Yâgnyavalkya formulated in the sublime verse above cited. As the far-reaching conclusion of the inquiry in *Brihadâranyaka*, God is set out before the questing soul as being, and seeking to be identified as being, at once its Supreme Refuge, its Supreme Treasure, its Supreme Sphere and its Supreme Bliss.

As points of view and of contact vary infinitely from stage to stage, 'the Nameless of the hundred names' acquires and justifies His hundred names and more in the light of the growing faculties of our inner perception as well as the changing circumstances of our outer condition. So far, then, as it may be given to us to grasp it, what spiritual significance attaches to each aspect of the quadruple capacity in which God is figured forth in the Upanishadic verse? How far does the picture, as a whole, really embrace the entire area of human interest and aspiration? And is there traceable through the sequence of its factors anything like an appropriate scale of ascent instead of a random conglomerate of qualities or qualifications posited about the Deity?

To begin with, God is envisaged, first, as the

Paramagathi,

the Supereme Refuge, of the soul. The attention here is instantly fixed upon the part played by fear in the affairs of

life from start to finish; so much so that man stands evermore in dire need of deliverance from haunting dread, if not from confronting danger. On one side stares the grim necessity to be saved, at every turn, from the might and machination of open enemies amid the endless tangle of plot and counterplot. On another side, not unoften, looms the strange yet sore need to be saved, too, from friends—not only subtle antagonists masked as professed allies but also genuine comates likely to turn at any moment into unwitting or ill-advised instruments of unintended hurt. 'Ah, dear, you have killed me!' was Prof. Tyndall's last effusion of breath the instant he quaffed the poisoned potion mistakenly handed him from the laboratory by his own devoted consort against a touch of indisposition. Further, with increasing progress in the life of the spirit, there grows the ever-present occasion for the self to be saved from itself, that is, to encounter and overthrow the 'six internal foes', none so formidable, the self being its own worst enemy as also its own best friend. In respect, then, of these varieties of inevitable strife, as strength fails and strategy succumbs and self-reliance is reduced to desperate impotence, man's extremity is translated into God's opportunity in the toughest grapple with hostile forces overt or covert, material or spiritual. The sequel of ready relief and effective rescue immediately succeeding the realised futility of personal effort and the unqualified surrender of the sore-tried self to 'a Power not ourselves'—this is what shines typically glorified through the famous allegoric episode of Gajendra. Last of all, in an intensely real sense, it behoves the soul to be saved even from God Himself—God in the sternest 'mood' of Rudra, the Terrific, manifest beyond control, beyond even endurance, in nature's cataclysms and in life's catastrophes, not the least among them being that 'last scene of all' in death 'that ends this strange eventful history'. Like those victories, these are escapes nowise possible of accomplishment except in and through God Himself visioned and clung to as Siva, the Benignant, despite all appearances to the contrary. '*Bhayánám bhayam, bheeshanam bheeshanánám*' is properly followed up at once with the tranquillising recollection, '*Gathihpráninám*'. For, there is no fleeing away from God unless it be unto Himself. 'If I turn away to Heaven, Thou art there; to Hell, Thou art there; to the farthest ends of the earth, Thou art there.' Thus, the

sole, sovereign antidote to fear of all kinds is compounded out of 'the fear of the Lord,' which forms 'the beginning of wisdom' culminating in the enlightened love of the Goodness centred at the heart of things—the love that finally 'casteth away all fear'. So urges the seer-sage, 'Cast all thy cares on God: that anchor holds'. When, so to put it, the soul has literally 'learnt by heart' and luminously interprets by homage under all trials and tribulations its one and only *thárakamanthram*, '*Anyadhásaranam násthi, thwamèva saranam mama*', then, the One nearer than the nearest proves Himself the Supreme Refuge—in sickness its balmy comfort, as in health its blithesome vigour; in adversity its serene contentment, as in prosperity its grateful jubilation; in darkness its suppliant expectancy, as in light its inflowing radiance; in iniquity its rainbow arch of redemptive hope, as in grace its present paradise of beatitude; aye, in eternity its perpetuity of pilgrimage toward perfection, as in time its very '*bhavámbódhipótham*'.

'*Eshásya paramágathih*': therefore, in the striking symbology of our great national epic, rightly does Arjuna choose, for life's 'holy war', the solitary support of Sree Krishna in unwavering preference to the mighty hordes in the other scale of the balance. '*Eshásya paramágathih*': therefore, in the inspiring records of sacred biography, justly does Mahammad admonish his fugitive comrade that, in crises of onslaught by overpowering odds of persecution for righteousness' sake, one with God is always in the majority. '*Eshásya paramágathih*': therefore, faced with the painfullest tragedy of desolating disaster, calmly has every trustful child and heir of the Immortal sung away all affright and anguish in the cheery tune of faith triumphant—

'No, no, it is not dying,
To go unto our God;
The glowing earth forsaking,
Our journey homeward taking
Along the starry road.'

Next, before the soul made alive to its own destitution in the extreme, God is held out as its

Paramasampath,

its Supreme Treasure, perfectly within reach and absolutely proof against depletion or deterioration. This, in some res-

pects, marks a clear advance upon the earlier predication. Between God apprehended as *Paramágathi* and God appraised as *Paramasampath*, there stretches all the distance that separates the negative from the positive phase of experience. While the former confers only immunity from peril, the latter ensures enjoyment in proprietorship. Again, whereas the one is apt to infuse a lowly sense of dependence as an object of protection, the other dignifies with the consciousness of 'the magic of property'. Lastly, while the relationship in the one is only coextensive with danger and helplessness, beginning and ending therewith, the ownness in the other is, at least comparatively, a matter of unbroken continuity.

Consequently, in the phrasing borrowed from earthly evaluations, the devotee's possession of the Deity has been described as a 'pearl of great price', nay, even as 'unsearchable riches'. The price is thus not only immense but simply immeasurable. This finds exemplification even in worldly transactions. For, there it sometimes happens that the possessor of a precious stone, not sensible of its genuine worth, is only too glad to relieve himself of his burden for a phenomenally paltry price; but the purchaser at his hands, being a more discriminating expert in the line, is able later to realise from it quite a fabulous sum for himself. And, after all, what is there more patent or in more frequent evidence here below than the fickleness of fortune? The Crœsuses of earth are but creatures of a breath. The richest of stores in no time melts into naught like snow before the rising sun. The securest of safeguards baulks hoarder and heir alike all unawares. The longest lease of life for affluence in the world's goods is seldom seen to exceed a generation or two. And, what is passing strange, the vaster the stocks, the heavier the risks attendant; the safer the deposits, the subtler the dangers aroused. Far otherwise in every way is the case with God appropriated as Heavenly Treasure.

'*Eshàsya paramàsampath*': hence pointedly enjoins Jesus, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal'. '*Eshàsya paramàsampath*': hence pithily avers Keshub in reference to the faithful followers of that injunction: 'The loving trust in God is

like their pro-note and their ready cash'. *'Eshásya paramá-ampath'*: hence significantly, in fine, does even verbal etymology derive all true *aiswaryam* from, and define it as preeminently the possession and enjoyment of *Iswara*, all else counting for transient tinsel and superfluous stuff if not also a stolid stumbling-block.

So, within the strict meaning of the term 'renunciation'. the main issue easily settles itself as to the relative values of the austerity abjuring the world that is of Mammon and that foregoing the wealth that is in God. In the story of mystic Islam, the Fakir makes his appearance at the *divánkhána* of the Padshaw. He is pompously received and profusely loaded with honours, accosted and belauded as a singular man of renunciation. That is by way of the homage worldliness is always eager to pay to godliness. But, as the Nazarene once remonstrated, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God', even so the Dervish makes answer, gently disowning the holy title by cleverly turning the tables upon the Emperor: 'Nay, nay; what have I renounced, after all, compared with Your Imperial Majesty? I have renounced only the passing; you, however, the permanent. I have renounced but the accidental; you, indeed, the authentic. Yours, therefore, I trow, is the truer, the heavier, the more praiseworthy renunciation'. The irony strikes home. It straightway operates as an eye-opener. Old things are forthwith seen in a new light, the search-light of the spirit. And the result is 'conversion', one more accession to the bead-roll of the Janakas and the Marcus Aureliuses of regal humanity. Accordingly, God alone being the ever-open, the all-pervading opulence throughout the universe, secreted in the darkness of no hiding-place and confined in the narrowness of no preserve, unto Him is the soul sought to be led, there to find the only effective remedy for the hectic fever of grabbing covetousness at others' expense: *'Isávásya-midam sarvam, yathkincha jagathyám jagath; thèìna thyakthèna bhunjeedhà; mágridhakkasyaswiddhanam.'*

Yagnyavalkya's third great affirmation about God in relation to man, he enshrines in one word—

Paramalókam

or the Supreme Sphere. As *Paramásampath* has been seen to carry the ideal conception a step further beyond *Paramá-*

gathi, so does *Paramalókam* point to a higher flight or, as you please, a deeper insight than *Paramasampath*. Firstly, possessions are not indispensable always any more than protection, being largely of the nature of luxuries capable of being outgrown without detriment, even with advantage. On the contrary, in the extended sense of the word, a habitat of some description or other will ever remain a sheer necessity on the established principle of 'No environment, no organism'. Secondly, while possessions without a suitable abode must fail to be sufficiently enjoyable or enduring and may prove to be encumbering and burdensome, a snug dwelling, void though of property, is bound to afford solid satisfaction in a measure by itself. A common experience in point is the known longing of the penniless pauper for at least a hovel of his own wherein to support life in quiet company with the hardships of his lot, 'his best riches, ignorance of wealth', and, similarly, of the man of limited means intent sooner on planting a homestead than on making a fortune for himself. Thirdly, whereas, so far as it goes, the yearning attended with the striving for riches constitutes a trait peculiar only to the human being, the building instinct, at work whether in the skill of a nest or in the splendour of a Notre-Dame, discloses itself as something shared in common by the whole animate world, the tiniest bird being given to thieving gay trinkets solely for decking her 'handiwork'. And fourthly, while our effects are often far, far removed from ourselves by lodgment, say, in some unseen Bank across impassable wastes and waters, our environment must remain always an inseparable accompaniment, however extraneous-looking. So the little child, spirited away with its father in a railway journey to a distant latitude, steps out from the compartment, casts its look aloft and shouts forth in wonderment, 'Papa, papa, just see our sky come along with us all the way and all the while from over home!'

This being so, how overmastering, how transfiguring, it must be to have the transcendent truth borne in upon the inmost self that the Infinite is not merely like a *gruham* unto each one of us on a petty scale but our own veriest *lókam* on the illimitable scale of all the immensities—the entire sphere of our very existence, of our every movement, of our imperceptibly constant growth and of our renovatingly repeated repose! All inbreathings and outbreathings, all heart-beats

and eye-winks, all footfalls and racings, all flashes of genius and 'strokes of rectitude', all exercises and engagements, are discerned to be prepetually pursued in Him in whose bosom we abide. If '*Suvisâlamidamviswam*' is no other than '*pavithram Brahmamandiram*,' it follows as the unique prerogative of the spiritual ego in man to claim with legitimate pride that he 'inhabits' that Brahman who indwells this *Brahmamandiram*. The Divine, then, is to the human what the main is to the sponge and to the fish sprung out of it, sustained by it and subsisting in it. An apter analogue in every way is that marvel of marvels—the 'unborn' babe living, moving and being bred in the magic mansion of the mother's womb from moment to moment.

Now, howsoever the analytical mind may treat of organism and environment as separate or separable factors for purposes of a study in mutual reactions, the bottom fact is there—that the two intrinsically belong together in mystic unity. To understand the little flower in the crannied wall, 'root and all, and all in all,' should be, quite scientifically and not simply imaginatively, to know, through and through, the entirety of that universe of which the cranny and its nursling are really integral, though apparently insignificant, parts. It were even to 'know what God and man is'. Such is the interminable, inextricable interweaving of Carlyle's 'organic filaments' right through. Hence, it is noteworthy how, here in particular as nowhere else, Science vindicates herself as the true handmaid of Religion. The *leela* of the Supreme as *Paramâgathi* and as *Paramasampath* may admit of being realised by simple human experience without the learned light of research into all besetting riddles. It is not so, however, with Him as *Paramalôkam*. For, what is Science if not a progressive and reverent revelation of the mystery wrapped up in every precious little bit of this *Paramalôkam*?

'*Eshôsya paramôlôkah*': so, out of this fundamental note issues the Pauline chorus, 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being', with the added overtone that, at the same time, He, too, lives in us, moves in us, and has His being in us—He

> 'Whose *dwelling* is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and *in the mind of man*'.

For, is it not equally correct to hold that the sunken bark lies in 'the vasty deep' and that 'the vasty deep', again, lies in the sunken bark—taking care, of course, to construe the latter dictum qualitatively instead of quantitatively? *'Eshósya paramólókah'*: so, the genuine *sanyási* goes self-approved as one who forswears the possessions of the earth with attachments to limited localities and swears nobly by the golden rule of the free citizenship of the world in the name of the All-container, the 'Hold-all', as it were, of creation. *'Eshósya paramólókah'*: so rings Guru Nanak's admonitory challenge to the Moslem priest at Mecca shocked into rude violence on finding him asleep with his feet toward the holy Kaaba: 'Ay, freely shift these my feet, as you will, in any direction where Allah is not'.

Finally, the climax is soundly and systematically reached in the fourth declaration as to God—that, above all and for evermore, He is the soul's

Parama Anandam

or Supreme Bliss. The crowning culmination indicated covers the all-inclusive fact that, as man lives *by* Him as *Paramágathi*, *upon* Him as *Paramasampath* and *in* Him as *Paramalòkam*, so does man *live Him* as *Parama ánandam*. No mere rhetorical turn is this but the barest truth of truths, inasmuch as God is at once Life, the Bread of Life, Life Eternal and, through these, also the Joy of Life; and upon the craving for each of them rests whatever of need there ever arises for, with whatever of peace there ever accrues from, effective protection, substantial possessions and congenial environment.

For one thing, at the start, life sundered from God or, in other words, emptied of the God-sense were not life at all. It simply lingers by sufferance, even languishes in self-delusion in the midst of fictitious vitality, self-starved as it is into real inanity symbolised by such fatuous phenomena as a tree without fruit, a tank without water, an eye without vision, a word without meaning, a song without melody. The only decent and deserved judgment it calls down upon itself, self-condemned, should be, 'Why cumbereth it the ground?' In fact, it is loudly decried on all hands as tantamount to 'living death'—an awful oxymoron none the less appalling for stalking about here, there, everywhere. But

even as the self-consecrated Christian defines life to himself in the epigram of the Apostle, 'For me to live is Christ', the true-spirited Theist lays down for himself a still larger and loftier definition with unspeakably so much more of sweet reasonableness in it, to wit, 'For me to live is God'. Next, if God is Life and Life Abundant, He becomes Himself also the Bread of Life. The 'daily bread', both material and spiritual, that the believer beseeches and receives at His all-purveying hands 'this day', 'this day', and so on, day unto day, must be recognised, in the true spirit of 'Grace before meat', as vitally transubstantiating itself into the God who is always in the making within His own begotten ones. 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him'. Furthermore, being Life Himself, God is, *per se*, Life Eternal. Hence, He is not only the ultimate proof—ground and guarantee—of human immortality but the very substance of that immortality; and 'heaven' is just the time-honoured synonym for timeless, unintermittent companionship and communion with the Spirit-God.

'The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven:
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.'

So closes Emerson's *Brahma* in epitome-like expression of the quintessence of all Upanishadic and Gita teaching. In consequence, '*Mrithyórmámritham gamaya*' reports itself as the sublimest supplication conceived by the finite-infinite or the infinite-finite in man. Thus, God as Life, God as Growth in Life and God as Growth into Everlasting Life—these confluents merge and mingle together to swell the tributary tides of their several joys into the conjoint ocean-river of God as the Joy of joys.

The Vedantic scheme of psycho-spiritual analysis makes it clear how this Joy of joys not only underlies but overruns all other interests and, that way, makes good its heaven-born title for the premier place in the whole gamut. Bread nurtures life: that is *annamayam*. Life thrives as more life: that is *prânamayam*. Life manifests principally in thought-life: that is *manómayam*. Thought-life matures into mystic wisdom: that is *vijnânamayam*. And mystic wisdom fructifies in bliss pure and simple: that is *ânandamayam*. Accord-

ingly, fold within fold, through the five *kósams* or sheaths in which it is enclosed, the self at last reaches on to the inmost core of that creative, protective, resumptive Bliss which is celebrated in the verse, '*Anandádhyèva khalvimánibhoothání jáyanthè ánandèna játhání jeevanthi, ánandam prayanthyabhisamvisanthi.*'

Thus, and thus, the last word is now before us and with us. '*Eshósya parama ánandah*': then, if it is more than an extravagant naturalist's poetic creed that 'every flower enjoys the air it breathes', how much more should man, the prettiest and purest flower in creation, rejoice with all his strength in the Prime Source of 'joy in widest commonalty spread'? '*Eshósya parama ánandah*': then, the joy of the Lord is our strength; and there be no saving gospel beyond 'Enter thou into the joy of the Lord', 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice!' '*Eshósya parama ánandah*': then, once tasted, this Bliss Supreme fails never to fulfil the positive promise of Narada's *Bhakti Sutra* as to its making one perfect, deathless and satisfied—'*Yallabdhvá pumán siddhóbhavathi, amrithóbhavathi, thripthóbhavathi.*' Then, no longer fall flat upon us as mere misapplied rhapsodies those pregnant parables of Prahlada upon the differential calculus in Nature's charms which begin with how, once for all, for the inebriate bee the *mádhuryam* of '*mandáramakaranda*' spells contemning aversion to the complete redundance of '*madanam.*' Then, better still because of freedom from the ascetic taint of the cramping cloister, 'all other joys and blessing are,' according to Stopford Brooke's healthful imagery, 'like rivers that stream into the ocean, borne into and accomplished in that sea of happiness.' '*Eshósya parama ánandah*': then, even were other felicities denied, deferred or disrupted, why, even then the soul should know no chant save—

'Tis joy enough, my All in all,
At Thy dear feet to lie:
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,
And none can higher fly.'

And now, to bring to a hurried

CONCLUSION

the prolonged train of musings upon this 'All in all' unto all and His paramount place in the economy of existence and evolution. The outlook opened by the sacred verse under

study—how vast and wide, enough to take in the entire horizon of life's appetites, aspirations and activities from end to end! Such a 'thought of God' must stand good for all time as itself an 'ample creed', because

> 'So deep it is and broad,
> And equal to my every need'.

Is it self-preservation against counteracting forces, or self-enrichment through unfailing resources, or self-determination amid inevitable surroundings, or self-enjoyment in unalloyed blessedness? Not one of these objectives is possibly effectuated for the self by the self. On the contrary, holds the *rishi* about them all, they are alone compassed by, nay, consist only in, the realisation of the Self of the self as, respectively, its one and its own *Paramágathi*, *Paramasampath*, *Paramalókam* and *Paramadnandam*. That is 'a Presence not to be put by', perpetually energising for individual as well as universal behoof through all the divers channels of being. In thinking, 'I think Thy thoughts after Thee over again.' In feeling, I demonstrate how

> 'He breathed forth His spirit
> Into the slumbering dust, and upright
> standing, it laid its
> Hand on its heart and felt it was warm
> with a flame out of heaven.'

In willing, too, 'the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works'. Thus every single trace of my forthputtings, varied and countless on the sensuous and the supersensuous plane, is no other than an immediate reflex of His own personal pursuits and processes. *'Sróthrasya sróthram, manasá manó yadváchóhavácham, savupránasya pránah, chakshushas chakshuh'*.

So,

> 'Whilst upper life the slender rill
> Of human sense doth overfill',

not less valid than

> 'Where is He? say, ye works of His—
> Vain thought! where is He not?'

should be the kindred meditation, 'What is He? say, ye ways of mine:—Vain thought! what is He not?' In the singular number and in the superlative degree, He is, unto

the soul, at once the mainstay of its well-being, the mine of its bounty, the mileau of its upgrowth and the mannah of its enjoyment. He is its hiding-cove, its banking-house, its dwelling-place and its revel-chamber. He is its tutelary 'demon,' its treasure-trove, its home-haunt and its joy-fount. In Him is its soundest welfare, its securest wealth, its widest world and its soberest wassail. And, as implied by the last link in each of these chains, He is the synthesis and summation, the sanction and sanctification, of all species of happiness. Precisely on this account, as runs the illumining and heartening evangel in its integrations and implications, is it literally and eternally true that '*Ethasyaivánandasya anyáni bhoothání máthrám upajeevanthi.*'

10

'ATMANASTU KAMAYA'

1933

The true spiritual ideal is the ideal of

PREETHI AND SEVA

—Love and, with Love, Service in perpetuity. On this cardinal principle of the higher, holier life all faiths find themselves in perfect accord through prophet and through scripture alike. Its antithesis in the monkish, monastic ideal of anti-social asceticism is rightly understood only as an aberration by way of reaction against the tendency, not uncommon, to that over-attachment which gives the heart away, a sordid boon. Between them both, there subsists what may be called a see-saw relationship with reference to temperament and to circumstance. At all events, the out-look of absolute detachment marks the *mediaeval* stage, whether in the East or in the West. It is by no means *modern*. Nor is it even *ancient* in the least.

In the consideration of the two divers viewpoints compendiously contrasted by the terms, 'the cloister' and 'the hearth,' the Dispensation of the Brahma Samaj—that offspring and embodiment of

THE MODERN SPIRIT

—enforces its own much-needed, imperative message in no uncertain tones. Its supreme insistence upon 'the one thing needful' has, from the beginning, been in evidence. Among early attestations there is Raj Narayan Bose's characterisation of it as 'the Religion of Love.' We have, later, the closing articles of the Brahmic faith in the epitome of Keshub's day: *'Preethih paramasádhanam; Svárdhanásasthu vairàgyam'*—Love is the supreme discipline; (and) the extinction of selfishness is (true) Renunciation. The juxtaposition, for the sake of correlation, of these two tenets is not without a profound significance of its own more positive

than the coordination of '*sangavarjitthah*' and '*nirvairassarvabhootèshu*' in the *Gita*. While the '*paramasádhanam*' lies in *preethi* with *svárdhanásam*, *vairágyam* of the genuine brand has nothing at all to do with *preethinásam*. Not hate, not even unconcern or neutrality, but love—the love of love, the hate of hate—this is the last word.

Firstly, in point of validity, love is enjoined as nothing short of the *supreme* discipline. It stands superlative as embracing and ennobling, outtopping and outlasting, all other disciplines. No mere temporary shift to be shed or tentative expedient to be set aside after any stage of spiritual development, however advanced, it never proves itself superfluous or its votaries 'suckled in a creed outworn.' The rung of the ladder by which you have risen may be flung away after the ascent. So may the scaffolding be dismantled when once the edifice has been completed. But to abrogate love at any point in the heavenly voyage is worse than to burn the boat after the shore is reached : it is to sink the bark while yet, as ever, upon the shoreless main. Love must remain a permanent acquisition of the soul, even as it constitutes the one perfect accessory to the *summum bonum* of life. It never can afford to suffer any interdict like 'Thus far and no further.' The progression, then, is not from love to less and still less of love and finally to lovelessness itself. That would spell a veritable, woeful decline from the tropical through the temperate into the frigid zone in the life of the spirit which stands for the energy of love. Such conditions, in themselves morbid, are, after all, induced by the confused counsel of unnaturalness, howsoever sought to be justified by the loftiest of sanities—all in the name of the colourless abstraction of a transcendental *advaitism*. Hushed for ever be the cry of 'Progress, progress' where there is no progress but the reverse of progress ! To unfurl the flag of 'Forward ho !' and yet march backward under it from love to no love—this involves a regular reversal of right experience with a solemn travesty of simple terms. It calls to mind an ignorant old drill-master's self-contradictory direction—'Put back your right foot six inches to the front ' It smacks of the curious anomaly about the age of Polonius which Hamlet finds advancing rearward like the crab. In fact, as avers Mrs. Browning, they *never* loved who say they loved *once*. Above all, do we not reduce to a meaningless nullity the sacred charge of Jesus

to be 'perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' unless we are, without ceasing, to grow in love so as to be like unto Him of whom we declare, '*Brahma Kripáhi Kèvalam*'? How sadly, by the way, the full point of this sweet Brahmic motto is missed in construing it as 'God's mercy alone availeth,' its real import being 'God is Mercy alone'! Love, then, is the one evergreen of Eden upon Earth, the fadeless flower of Elysium here below. Hence, from love to more and more love, to wider and wider love, to purer and purer love—this alone becomes the elect, eligible course for the ever-aspiring excelsior spirit in its Alpine ascent of the life divine.

Secondly, in respect of quality, according to the formula of psycho-chemical composition, *preethi*, to be *paramasádhanam*, requires to be all unalloyed love, that is, with no amalgam of any species and any degree of selfishness. It cannot be love *plus* self-interest, be the latter ever so enlightened in nature or ever so infinitesimal in proportion. All wheat and no tare; all rose and no thorn—such is the consummation devoutly to be wished. And here the contrast between the two types of love, selfish and selfless, is that aptly illustrated by the story of two women's rival claims for the motherhood of a common babe. The one is readily prepared, with a vendetta, to have it cut in twain if she cannot secure it all for herself. The other importunately surrenders, with a shudder, the entirety of her own right rather than allow the brutal bisection. Herein is love *cum* renunciation! And such love—thank God—is never out of date, never out of place, never out of proportion.

Turning, next, to the

ANCIENT TEACHING

of the *Rishis*, how one-sided is the view that they stress the metaphysical attributes, the *svaroopalakshanas*, to the exclusion of the moral attributes, the *thatasthalakshanas*, of the Godhead and, as a practical corollary, prescribe only the cultivation of enlightened contemplation in seclusion without the fruition of the ministering affections in society! Side by side with the *Jnana* and *Dhyana Yogas*, they by no means omit to inculcate *Prèma* and *Karma* in the pure, proper acceptation of the terms. Upon this vital theme, what could be more explicit or emphatic than the orphic song of Yagnyavalkya to Maitreyi opening with '*Navá arèy*'? The content as

well as the context of the descant in the *Brihadâranyaka* colloquy leaves no doubt as to the substantial Brahmaism of the Rishis in this regard. It is a householder of the highest spiritual attainment holding converse with his consort of no mean order of inner susceptibilities. And that, to what end and to what effect? It is in answer to the eager enquiry about the assured means of obtaining immortality. And it is all in enforcement of the lesson of love as that very means—love with the widest range and out of the loftiest motive.

In the first place, the whole round of human relations and interests centred in the home is brought within this reach. Husband and wife, sons and property, Brahmana and Kshatriya, the worlds and the gods, the Vedas and the elements—in fine, all, all—are severally dear, dear through love 'in widest commonalty spread.' According to the comprehensive clause at the close, the rule of love is the universal rule of '*Sarvam priyam bhavati*' with no exceptions or exclusions, no eliminations or effacements. Thus it covers, too, love for the unloving and, again, for the unlovely. The first injunction finds its ringing echo in the Sermon on the Mount: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." And why and wherefore? "That ye may be the children of your Father"—that is, in His image and after His pattern. The second borrows its typical example from a story about Jesus himself. Moving along with his disciples, he comes across the rotten carcass of a street dog by the wayside. They are instantly shocked at the abomination; and they step aside with closed nostrils. He is entranced by the soul of beauty in things ugly; and he exclaims: 'Behold pearls are not whiter than his teeth!' So, in the swarthy Negro skin the eye of love sees even 'God's image cut in ebony.' Likewise, our own problem of 'untouchables' ceases to be a problem directly they are seen to be such only by a vicious 'transferred epithet'. The genteel twit, 'There is a fool at the end of my stick,' followed by the cool query of the 'retort courteous', 'At which end, myLord?'—has it not a moral to point here?

In the second place, the right motive of love is clearly set out both in the negative and in the positive. Each object of love, individually, is dear, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the *Atman*. '*Atmanastu kámáyá*': everything, every

being, is dear solely and wholly for the sake of the *Atman*—not the little, limited ego but the Spirit Supreme, the Spirit Universal. Herein is the *ne plus ultra* of all ethical impulse and emotion, even as Tennyson's *Ancient Sage* reminds us how all 'Force is from the heights.' Hereby all lowly springs of affectional regard are, once and for ever, put out of court as of the earth, earthy. 'Do you forget I am the daughter of your King?' asks Princess Louisa in a haughty altercation with her governess. And out comes the answer of answers to this daughter of Louis XIV of France, 'Do you forget I am a daughter of your God?' So, of himself Cowper asserts :

'But higher far my proud pretension' rise—
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.'

Solemn reverberations these of the stupendous affirmation of the Upanishad, '*Amritasyaputrâh*'.

Far-reaching, indeed, are the practical

IMPLICATIONS

involved in this transvaluation of values. (1) Live and love; love and live. Life without love is a vine devoid of vitality. (2) Nurture *nishkâma prèma* as the root of *nishkâma karma*, which is the fruit. To aim at this, heedless of that, were futility itself. (3) As you love not for the beloved's sake, love not for your own sake, love not for the world's sake by custom and in conformity ; but love in the name of the Lord alone and whisper unto Him, '*Hithâya lôkasyya tavapriyârdham.*' (4) When you love, look not for reciprocation, as you look for no recompense. Be prepared evermore for storms and volcanoes, eclipses and erosions, in the spiritual as in the natural sphere. (5) Loving for God's sake, count not the cost of love. No cost can be too heavy in a contract with the Most High. For, 'what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul' of love? (6) Contemn no task as beneath your exalted self. Sing, rather—

"All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean.
Which with this tincture (for Thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean."

(7) Pursuing righteous ends as dear for His sake, cast all your cares on God : that anchor holds. For, God fulfils Himself in many ways; and 'in His own good time' is the eternal

guarantee of the triumph of all truth and truth alone. (8) While others love you, witness in it an offering unto the God of love and pass it on with *'Nârâyanârpanamasthu.'* (9) Wherever love is at work, read in it a token of His own loving-kindness through a human channel or a fleshly instrument, a vindication of His providence proving the world no mere iron-wall against which to knock the bruised head at every point. (10) Lastly, hold fast not only to the truth that one and all are dear for the sake of God but equally or more to its converse which makes God dear for the sake of, through His gift in, one and all.

Religion, accordingly, is religion only inasmuch as, and in so far as, it binds all unto each and each unto all and hitches the waggon of the individualised self to all the stars round about the domestic hearth, the social ring, the human pale and all the zones of nature. Truce, then, to the whole brood of dry egoism and dreary asceticism, damp cynicism and dark scepticism fiercely at war with the salutary, shining altruisms of Spiritual Theism! Not alone 'Light, more light!' but also 'Love, more love!' be the soul's supplication without ceasing! That, in a word, makes all the difference between Paracelsus then and Paracelsus now. Supreme as is the standard of its efficacy, infinite as is the sweep of its expansion, universal as is the scope of its exercise, Love may never be outgrown as obsolete in its obligations, while it chastens out all taint of earth and glows and grows consecrated as a grace from Heaven even unto the glory of the God of Heaven. In Pauline phrasing, as Charity 'seeketh not her own,' so 'Charity faileth not.' Well might the Laureate of Love hymn forth the paramountcy of its power 'in heart-affluence rich':

'Love took up the harp of Life
and smote on all the chords with might,
Smote the chord of self that,
trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.'

11

'MA MAHIMSEEH'

1933

Whom the Lord cherisheth, He chasteneth. Such is the paradox of Providence. Yet therein lies the ultimate clue to the right understanding, if not to the complete solution, of the haunting problem of evil so-called.

The doubter has his own straight line of argument: man suffers; therefore, God is indifferent, if not callous or even cruel. On the other hand, the believer, as he spells out the mystic alphabet of pain from the sibyl leaf of inner experience, simply reverses the propositions and rests persuaded that God, being what He is, is far from unconcerned or ruthless, and, hence, if man suffers, it is, of a truth, for his own final behoof. Since the days of the *Rishis*, the burden of the prayer of the enlightened human heart has been: "*Om pithá nósi; pithá nó bódhi; namasthèsthu; má máhimseeh*". (Thou art our Father; like unto a father do Thou teach us; we bow down to Thee; oh, do Thou cause us no hurt.)

What is the import, and what the inter-relation, of these simple human pleas? God's Fatherhood of Man is the starting-point. God the Father as Teacher, corresponding to the counterpart in God the Mother as Preserver, is the next step forward. The recognition of the Supreme Fatherhood and of the Infinite Teachership brings the child-spirit down upon the knees of submissive and docile obeisance. And up rises the filial supplication, apparently for the outer averting of all injury, but truly for the gift of the inner capacity to realise, even under the utmost stress and strain, that there is not the least little place for injury as such in the educational scheme of the Divine Household. That is the one lesson the trustful, teachable soul implores to be taught by the all-loving Father and the all-wise Teacher of spirits.

It is so significant that, while the lower orders of creation suffer for themselves, man alone is capable of suffering

for others as well as for himself. Also, whereas they practically know no assuagement, he commands, for his part, the ministrations of sympathy, the consolations of philosophy and, above all, the comforts of faith. Only imaginatively is it held in their case that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; but unto him is given by reflection and experience to recognise how sweet are the uses of adversity and even to declare with unshakable confidence and resignation, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him'. So that their ills are afforded no more than natural means of alleviation, if any; whilst for him are reserved the springs of spiritual succour even to the joyous transmutation of the galling cross into a glorious crown—a welcome aid to higher realisation. Thus a maimed Epictetus rises superior to his tribulation and rejoices over the freer, nobler utilities of physical disablement so far as to exult that he can the more intently sit up and magnify his Maker. In such clear differences as these between the sub-human and the human, one discerns the marks of God's Fatherhood of Man in an especial sense, impelling the solicitation to be taught that evil at His hands is but good in the making, bad being good in the egg and good being bad on the wing.

Our familiar experience in the spheres of human art, of sub-human natural history and of the rotation of the natural seasons, has substantially the same optimistic tale to tell. For, they all point the sublime moral that sorrow and suffering are intrinsically part and parcel of Nature's own programme of beneficence and that, in the purposive processes of progressive evolution, cherishing and chastening go inseparably together as motive and method, intent and operation. In the domain of the crafts, for instance, the potter beats and batters, cuts end scrapes, presses hard and whirls round, the poor, plastic clay upon the circling wheel. Lo, it cries, '*Má máhimseeh*'; but comes the soft answer in very act, 'Fear not: behold, I make of thee a choice urn of superb form and use'. The smelter passes the idle ore through the fierce flames of the fiery furnace. It heaves the red-hot sigh, '*Má máhimseeh*,' and receives the response of the mint, 'Why, wouldst thou not be purged of thy dross and exalted into a fit receptacle of value with the imprint of a crowned head upon thy face?' The violinist subjects the stiff chords of his tuneful instrument to untold

excruciations of twist and tension. And unto their plaintive wail, '*Má máhimseeh*,' his satisfying solace comes, 'Ah, how else to ring celestial symphonies out of the grossness of your earth-born metal ?' So is it, too, with the sore-stricken drum sounding as a very organ of harmony in the hands of the expert drummer. The dishevelled tangle of loose-hanging threads on one side of the tapestry yet upon the loom, sets up its own sad scream, '*Má máhimseeh*,' only to elicit the deft weaver's reassuring admonition, 'Oh, why not possess thyself awhile in patience for the finished fabric to prove thy indispensability ?' Again, how bitterly the good surgeon's operation-theatre resounds with the piercing shriek, '*Má máhimseeh*,' as the cutting scalpel plies hard at all the 'foreign matter' of excrescence and hindrance in the ailing body ! And how properly it is met with the gentle whisper of assurance in deed, ' Else no healing' ! In his recountal, the other day of the touching story of a blind old man struck in the eye by a white melon unwittingly flung against it by a lad at play hard by, the strange yet welcome result turning out, however, to be a sudden restoration of the long-lost sight, has not Sadhu Vaswanji brought home to us how the scales of ignorance and illusion cannot fall off but with inevitable pain ? The poor man begins to bleed profusely in the sightless eye-ball, but soon exclaims, 'Oh, I see the light !' So, like the eye, the heart must needs bleed to vision reality. Likewise, in the scale of biological upgrowth, ponder how the hard shell of the egg has to burst of necessity in order to bring out the living chick; and also what painful transformations are incidential to the reappearance of the unsightly caterpillar with all the charm of the blooming butterfly. Lastly, as to the cycle of the seasons, ask of bleak winter its why and wherefore, and hearken to its adequate answer, 'Else no spring, the drapery of which I weave in silence upon my dreary loom.' Concerning, too, the round of the days, repeat the query to the darksome night, and note its ready reply, 'Otherwise no recurring morrow but only the unrelieved oppression of an endless *aurora borealis*; aye, even as it is, let Blanco White depose for me how night reveals no less than light.'

Purification, beautification and utility-creation—such, then, is the triple process of Art, which at best approves itself but as a proximate copy of Nature—Nature with her

own triune law evermore of purgation into purer forms, evolution into higher states and compensation for loss here by gain there. Just witness this last-named principle at work in relation to the senses:

"Dark night that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense."

So, in the not always apparent antithesis between *prèya* and *srèya*, may not physical or material loss ultimately find more than justification in and as so much of spiritual gain through quite a variety of happenings and experiences?

To the still, sad music of humanity's cry, '*Má máhimseeh*', there ever rings forth this sweet response from high Heaven: 'Be still and know that I am God, the Father-God; and learn, as I teach father-like, the far-off interest of tears—those showers that alone fertilise your world'. The golden harvest to be thus reaped is represented by the world-wide, age-long genealogy of five sacred S's. Is it not, everywhere and everywhen, a fact of history, individual and corporate, that Suffering begat Sympathy, Sympathy begat Sacrifice, Sacrifice begat Service, and, finally, Service begat Solidarity? Even so we reach the true Brotherhood of Sorrow by virtue of that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin. For sorrow melts and fuses, as joy fails to do. In joy, you are only too prone to forget your God and disregard your brother-man. In sorrow, you are led with instinctive spontaneity to turn to the one and flow into the other. The last word, accordingly, is: 'Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice'—rejoice in gratefulness alike for dry and drizzle, shine and shower. Earth needs, not one uniform weather, but all weathers equally in succession, for its productiveness. Flood and thunderbolt, earthquake and volcano, are by no means cataclysms of absolute cruelty. For even their devastations do subserve, in the long run, a really salutary purpose in the economy of nature. God, then, is the good God of all weathers, of all seasons and of all vicissitudes—of ebb and flow, of light and shade, of hill and dale, of flower and frost. The supreme Sire is also the Master-Artist. And inasmuch as 'an honest man is the noblest work of God', the finest of fine arts in this self-

assumed charge of His can be naught but the perfecting of the individual soul by all indispensable means and methods—what Emerson proclaims as the grand objective of the entire cosmic course. If the presence of sorrow is an inscrutable mystery in this transcendent design, the indubitable ministration of sorrow is, at least, no less a miracle. From the standpoint of the spiritual efficacies which alone count, tender-hearted Cowper draws solace out of the sober reflection,

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown."

And broken-hearted Wordsworth sums up his own witness in the positive testimony,

"A deep sorrow hath humanised my heart."

On the negative side, adversity has been aptly appraised as the salt of life which keeps it from corruption. All in all, lives of great men all remind us of this profound, this central truth that the beatitudes trace their birth-place evermore to the lips of the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We are thus in a position to appreciate the balmy words of a helpful exponent of the Mahayana Theistic type of anti-pessimistic Buddhism under the title of 'The Religion of the Samurai': "How can we suppose that we, the children of Buddha, are put at the mercy of petty troubles or intended to be crushed by obstacles?" In the light of the universal dictionary of deeper devotions, the plea for the warding off of woes, '*Má máhimseeh*', translates itself, unto the 'Father of all, in every age, in every clime adored', into an appeal for the boon of the clear conviction and the continued consciousness that the good is not always the pleasant, and the glory of law inexorable is, in truth, the grace of love inalienable. Glory, then, to God in the highest—the knowing, loving Father who teacheth us how, after all, disappointments are His appointments unexpected and distresses are His caresses unnoticed! Peace on earth—not necessarily the peace of plenty and prosperity without pain or privation; but the peace of serene trust and resignation, hap what hap! And goodwill among men—not, indeed, the 'greeting where no kindness is'; but the fraternal fellowship of soul-and-shoulder participation in sorrow more than in joy!

12

'VISWAROOPASANDARSANAM'

ITS THREEFOLD INTENT AND IMPORT

1936

In the course of the *Mahabhárata*, the celebrated episode of *Viswaroopasandarsanam* recurs thrice over, the person, the place and the purpose concerned varying in the three instances according to the context. While the story of the Vision Beatific popularised by the eleventh chapter of the *Gita* stands out the most conspicuous of all, the narratives of the other two occasions as well, taken alongside of it, will be found with profit to present a complete apocalypse of vital values in the vicissitudes of the higher life. The purveyance of such spiritual efficacy represents not the least important among the approved titles stamping the hoary Epic with customary appraisal as verily the Fifth of the Vedas.

The Vision is severally figured forth to Duryodhana, to Arjuna and to Udanka. The venue takes us, successively, to the Audience-chamber of the Kaurava Court, to the Battle-field of Kurukshetra and to a Sage's Shelter in the vicinity of the Yadava Capital. As for the particular time, the first supervenes upon the plot of the quartet of evil geniuses for the capture and castigation of the Ambassador of Peace in *Udyogaparvam*; the second precedes, and prepares for, the commencement of the fierce fight among the royal fratricides arrayed in readiness on either side; and the third, as related in *Aswamèdhaparvam*, occurs on the Divine Charioteer's way back to Dwaraka at the close of the bloody contest. Touching the question, at whose instance the Vision manifests itself each time, the earliest is noted as a case of what may be termed *suo moto*, while the last two are elicited by the specific supplication of the respective witnesses. The situation, firstly, is one of outrageous revolt contemplated against the Personality of the Divine; it is, secondly, one of demoralising distrust

on the part of the human self towards its own province and potency in the face of the tenderest of ties; and it is, thirdly, one of distraught misgivings in the humane-hearted, righteous-minded hater of blood-thirsty Mars as to the ways of Divine government in the affairs of the universe. As such, the anticipant frustration of dark designs against Deity in defiance of the universal laws of reverence and even of hospitality; the inspiring revelation of a higher law of destiny and a holier call to duty than those of earth; and the harmonising reconciliation of the inviolable moral law with all apparent cross-currents and contradictions—these constitute the varied objectives in turn. And how perfectly the purpose is fulfilled in each case! In the first, the staggering impact of Awe drives home the stupendous warning that the whole order of things in the Cosmos is against the malignancies of the evil-doer and shall ultimately overpower him, of necessity, out of his own self-sufficiency despite the serried phalanx of numbers with no end of underground machinations on his side; in the second, the invigorating inflow of Aid from the Invisible, now verified as the All-Real, discovers, underneath the translucent if tempestuous billows of the phenomenal, the rock-bottom truth that the whole order of things is evermore with the devoted votary of *swadharma* and shall needs uphold him constantly out of the fathomless depths of weakness and waywardness; and in the third, the tranquillising spectacle of Assurance lays at rest, once and for all, every spectre-like sense of disquieting riddle and enigma and inspires the orphic song of optimist trust:

> "God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world".

And then, how singularly striking the fruitful effect that closely follows each manifestation—the crushing discomfiture of vice and wickedness in villainy; the powerful stimulation of heart and will into passionless action in absolute detachment from consequence; and the instantaneous dissolution of all trace of doubt and disbelief in the soul's alembic through the chemic omnipotence of the Oversoul of Providence! Of course, as may well be expected, the resultant reaction upon each subject of the supernal experience is seen to draw the line clearly between the concepts of *máya* and *mahima* as besetting the same phenomenon: the malefactor interprets it to himself as but one more instance of magic

might in Krishna, the Charlatan of infinite strategies, whereas the noble-natured ones, for their part, acclaim it even as a fresh witness to the eternal glory of Bhagavan, the God-in-man here below. While the content of the Vision remains identical in the three contexts as comprising the very plenitude of the vast and varied richness of the Concrete Universal with naught apart or asunder, the seeing eye brings with it the density of constitutional *thamóguna* in the first, the lapse from rightful *rajóguna* by force of misapplied *sattwaguna* in the second, and the failure of faith for the time being sapping the serenity of assimilated *sattwaguna* in the third. Thus, King Duryodhana resisting, while yet open, all possible means of preventing the war; Prince Arjuna renouncing, at the nick of time, every plighted pledge to carry the arms of war to victory for the vindication of right; and Rishi Udanka resenting, as the gravest of derelictions, the final omission of the Lord to ward off the devastating curse of the war—these furnish, each in his own way, the immediate occasion for the self-revelation of the Divine Presence and Power blindly regarded for the moment as safely impotent, sternly inhuman or sorely inefficient.

Now, are not the three positions here set out significantly typical of three distinctive aspects in man's moral and spiritual crisis and, thereby, also in God's unfailing resource in the fulness of His own being as more than equal to every need to lift 'the weary weight of all this unintelligible world'? Yes, indeed. Oh well for the soul if God comes home, even now and here as ever before, with somewhat of the impressive splendour of His *Viswaroopasandarsanam* whenever we think lightly of Him, whenever also we think low of ourselves and whenever, again, we think laxly of the world-order! Oh well for the soul to be permitted to feel that the Highest comes borne in as the Nighest whenever we believe too much in ourselves, whenever also we believe too little in ourselves and whenever, again, we believe too much in appearances! Oh well for the soul to be quickened into aliveness to the Transcendent-Immanent whenever we presume to set up as materialistic controllers of things through brute-force as against soul-force, whenever also we deteriorate into moral weaklings under the dominance of puzzling casuistry and whenever, again, we degenerate into virtual usurpers of the Judgment-seat to arraign the Omniscient at the bar of human sense! Oh

well for the soul to be confounded, corrected or convinced by God Himself, as the case may be, whenever, in relation to Him, we turn rebels by an assertion of self or cowards amid a conflict of duties or, again, censors even out of a well-meaning impulse! If only the inner eye is awake and alert enough to see, *Viswaroopasandarsanam* lours and looms, not far off, in order to smite with its visitation the Duryodhana in us obsessed with the ambition of Satan, 'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven'; to sustain by its beatification the Arjuna in us depressed with the deadweight of St. Paul, 'What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I'; and to reassure through its transvaluation of values the Udanka in us proposing after Alphonso of Castile some signal corrections in the proof-sheets of the Author of the universe. On lines like these would *Viswaroopasandarsanam* respectively fulfil its threefold intent and import through the demonstration of Divine Awe as '*Bhayánámbhayam bheeshanambheeshanánám*', of Divine Aid as '*Gathihpráninám*' and, lastly, of Divine Assurance as '*Pávanam pávanánám*'—and that under all conditions and circumstances.

13

'*ACHINTHYABHEDABHEDAM*':

'A MOTHER TO A BABY'

1936

"Where were you, Baby?
Where were you, dear?
Even I have known you
Only a year.

"You were born, Baby,
When I was born.
Twelve months ago you
Left me forlorn.

"Why did you leave me,
Heart of my heart?
Then I was all of you,
Now but a part.

"You lived while I lived,
We two were one.
We two are two now
While the days run."

Here is the major part of a fine little lyric on Childhood that latter-day English literature owes to Mary Coleridge, a great-niece of the renowned poet of that family, herself reputed to be 'all poet and three-quarters saint'. How exquisitely tender its expression of the most intimate feelings of motherhood! How much of added interest, by the way, it acquires, too, from the curious circumstance that, after all, it is a maiden's muse that speaks and the baby addressed is of the class of Old Bachelor, quaint Charles Lamb's 'dream children'! Altogether, so sweetly and thoroughly human in sentiment, the poem is bound to come home to every bosom as a precious vehicle of the purest and loftiest idealism lighting up the inmost relationship that knits the individual to the Universal Self.

The spiritual philosophy herein implicit may be readily and usefully grasped only as we lay firm hold of the unique character of motherhood itself in the economy of life, domestic or social. The mother ! There abides none or nought else to be set beside her. To her, beyond cavil, belongs the exclusive seat of primacy all the world over, as it has done all the ages through. Hence, in the scheme of apotheosis which recognises and reveres a very *prathyakshadaivatham* in each of life's allies and associates, the formula of '*Máthridèvóbhava*', fitly takes precedence over all other forms of soul-obeisance — '*Pithridèvóbhava*', '*Achâryadèvóbhava*', '*Athidhidèvóbhava*' and the like. Hence, again, it is not for nothing that the following familiar paean of grateful piety adopts the particular sequence it does in its varied apprehension of Deity in terms of humanity :—

'*Thwamèva máthácha, pithá thwamèva;*
Thwamèva bandhuscha, sakhá thwamèva;
Thwamèva vidyá, dravinam thwamèva;
Thwamèva sarvam, mama dèvadèva.'

Of the different appellations thus assigned to the Godhead with all the fond fervour of true-hearted emotion, it is 'Mother' that takes the lead in the expression of personal interrelation, as 'Father' completes the immediate round of parenthood, 'Kin' reflects the wider range of home affinities, and 'Friend' evaluates the acquired asset of extraneous affection ; while the impersonal aspect is represented, first, by 'Knowledge' and, next, by 'Riches' as being the customary conversion value of 'Knowledge'; and, finally, the all-embracing 'All-in-all' brings up the rear with supreme sufficingness. Accordingly, as between the two correlates that set up the Parenthood of God over against the Orphanhood of Man, the palm of priority is affirmed as due alone to that in Him which bears and brings up, feeds and fosters—not to that which protects and purveys, governs and guides. Even in ordinary usage, the very concept of motherhood stands rightly identified with an unrivalled overflow of the deepest springs of love through the unnumbered, unremembered acts, aye, agonies, little and large, that are ceaselessly at work for the securest upbringing of the darling from wink to wink with a spontaneity of selflessness all its own. In fact, the peculiar preeminence of the maternal bond properly stretches back to

conditions antecedent to that natal hour which marks the starting-point of such tireless devotion and service. Thus it is that the period covered, with all its promising processes, by that state of gestation and commonly distinguished by the epithet 'interesting' proves as well to be one inspiring in the extreme, however viewed. That wonder of wonders, the world of the womb—is it not literally a microcosm no less mysterious and magnificent than the macrocosm into which the stranger guest steps, in due course, as into Francis Thompson's 'no strange land' and is received with a provident hospitality as remarkable on one side as the quick adaptability on the other? The later sphere, of course, is infinitely vaster in the scale of its immensity. But is the earlier any the less complex or arresting by reason of its obvious narrowness of compass and its apparent simplicity of structure as well as function? Again, by itself, is not that interior globe a phenomenal marvel by virtue of inevitable immediacy as between the container and the contained or, rather, the sustainer and the sustained? Furthermore, how rich and rare are the preordainings constantly evidenced there as to continuance of nutriment and freedom of movement for the yet-to-be born—the former through effortless imbibing according to unvoiced need; and the latter by way of an assured index to growing vitality though with far too limited a tether! Yet, when all is said and done, what analysis of filaments can do more than touch the outermost fringe of that subtle something which can only be denoted as the organic web that first weaves the twain into oneness and next equally strikingly evolves a duality out of that unity? The child complacently or even heedlessly repulsed from approach to holiness may well prompt in any elder brother of the race a sage admonition like 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Also, the child cruelly or, at least, inscrutably bereft of its mother may aptly call forth from all quarters a generous stream of humane sympathy as the fittest object of pity in this wide world. On the other hand, who but a mother with her priceless prize of a cherub passed on from the womb within to the breast without can rightfully qualify her ejaculation of joy with a touch of sadness over the blended life transformed into a sundered existence such as we note in the delicate strains of the wistful poem before us?

Matthew Arnold's mythical piece on *The Forsaken Merman* sets forth the recurrent pathos with which semi-human, semi-sub-human and hence preternatural children are led to yearn vainly after their human mother who has, once for all, deserted them for her own self-fulfilment in the natural, human sphere and occupations. Mary Coleridge's present poem furnishes somewhat its counterpart on a wholly natural because out-and-out human plane—an echo of the soft if weird repinings of the mother-heart over her baby's disseverance from her even in and through the welcome event of birth and for the sake of self-realisation in the larger element it is meant for. Still more, and here we get to the central core of our theme, it serves, by its poetic rendering of the distinctive features of the period of promise between conception and confinement, to symbolise and suggest the natural-supernatural truth of unity-in-difference between God the Mother and Man the Child. As such, the babe in the womb, because then 'we two were one'—and not so much the child in the home or even on the lap, since 'we two are two now' —provides, here below, the closest conceivable image and emblem of the supreme, supernal reality of that mystic tie which twines the soul and the Oversoul together. It so beautifully exemplifies and impressively accentuates the basic principle underlying the relationship of the ego to its Source and Refuge—'*Yathóvá imáni bhoothání jáyanthè, yènajáthánijeevanthi, yathprayanthyabhisanvisanthi*'—namely, the principle of oneness in substance with derivativeness yet dependence in selfhood and, consequently, with distinction without division or dissociation. "Heart of my heart" : so says mammy to baby ; and so it were well and wise for every child of a larger growth to learn to hear the Mother of mothers say unto himself or herself as also to reciprocate the same greeting with equal import. Likewise,

" You were born, Baby,
When I was born" :

so mammy to baby ; and so it were meet and proper to recognise that even more so perforce was every son of man born in beginningless time in the ideality of the Divine 'conception'. For, even as regards the usual computation of the moment of actual 'birth' so called, does there not prevail, for the matter of that, ever so much of variance ranging from the emergence of the head to the delivery of the entire body

from out of its initial abode ? So, marching a step further back in the ideality, our poetess declares at the end—

" Every maid born, love,
Womanly, mild,
Is in herself, love,
Mother and child".

Once more,

" We two are two now
While the days run".

So the finite-imperfect to the passing-phenomenal ; but says the Eternal-Divine to the immortal-human, 'Let the days run out their course ; thou shalt outrun and outlive them with Me and in Me, time without end—ourselves evermore one in two and two in one.' Blessed are they who consciously discern that in Him they live and move and have their being even through the inviolacy of the invisible umbilical cord of the spirit ! What profounder significance, then, should the replacement of 'Father' by 'Mother' impart to the cardinal declaration of Jesus, 'I and my Father are one' !

Thus enabled by a most intimate and concrete object-lesson from the temporally materialised miniature of the eternal, spiritual *Brahmalókam* of the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* to realise to ourselves the truth of the co-existence of the Absolute and the conditioned as also the subsistence of the latter through and upon the former, as taught in the Rig-Vedic verse of the *Upanishads* opening with '*Dwásuparná sayujá sakháyá samánam vriksham*', we are, at the same time, helped to recapture the fundamental fact of an essential unity betwixt them—a unity which is not supposititious or colourless, as the difference itself is not illusory or impermanent ; a unity necessarily arrived at by the logic of comprehension to correct and complete that of exclusion and consistently accounting for, and sanctifying, all our variegated concerns of knowledge and love, movement and action ; a unity which, through its practical implications, moral and spiritual, impels many a Plotinus to affirm that 'God is not external to any one'. And thus, in closing, we reproduce, with somewhat of clearer insight, Pandit Sitanath Tattwabhushan's weighty words in elucidation of '*Achinthyabhèdábhèdam*' as India's synthetic reading of the Ultimate Reality long anterior in time to, and far ampler in expression than, the

Hegelianism of the West. "As, on the one hand", he observes, "the differences are inexplicable except in relation to the Unity, so is the Unity an unmeaning abstraction apart from the differences which it unites and explains"; and again, "It sees that the Infinite is not the finite and the One not the many; but it also sees that the finite and the Infinite, the One and the many, are mutually related so that the one without the other is not a concrete reality but an abstraction".

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14

'VISUDDHASATTVAM'

1933

Concerning "the wisdom that is from above", the Apostle of the Gospel qualifies it as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy". Thus, when truly of Heaven heavenly, *jnánam* is identified with *visuddham* by the epithet, 'pure'; with *sántam* by the attributes, 'peaceable, gentle'; with *sivam* by the characteristics, 'easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits'; and with *dhruvam* and *nirvikáram* by the properties, 'without variance, without hypocrisy.' It is noteworthy how, in this enumeration of the integral aspects of *jnánam*, the premier place is assigned specifically to *visuddham*, which, under the name of purity of heart, the Apostle's Master himself singles out as the one condition of eligibility for the Vision of the Divine. The Buddhist Dispensation, too, in its own way traces the attainment of *nirvána* to the acquisition, or rather the assimilation, of true enlightenment and, by that means, to the purification of the inmost self. These central ideas are found gathered up in a far elder age by the hoary *Rishi* of the *Mundakópanishad* in his declaration of *visuddhasattvam* as of prime importance with *jnánam* for its antecedent and *darsanasiddhi* for its consequent: '*Jnánaprasádèna visuddhasattvastatastu-tam pasyatè nishkalam dhyáyamánah.*'

Accordingly, its 'whence' being understood to be true wisdom or enlightenment and its 'wherefore' nothing short of the Vision Beatific, the 'what' of this preeminently essential state of *visuddhasattvam* is made a matter of the utmost moment to the earnest seeker after realisation. Obviously, the concept, so transcendent, is one to be divined rather than defined—apprehended by the spirit, not analysed by the understanding. Yet a few outline touches as to both setting and substance may not go without a degree of practical helpfulness to ourselves as humble *sádhakás*.

In the first place, the *jnánam* at the fount must be recognised to be quite other than any 'bookful blockhead's lumbered lore.' It goes immeasurably deeper than the shaft of the scientist or the peep of the philosopher and wider than the survey of the historian or even the sweep of the humanist. In the next place, the *visuddham* springing from it must be seen to spread over the entire field of the human constitution, thus giving it its own distinctness in footing as compared with any of the other conditions described as its collaterals. For, *sántam* pertains but to the temper as serenity, *sivam* to the heart as goodness and *dhruvam* to the will as constancy; while *nirvikáram* sums up this trio of graces as freedom from the stress of unrest, the sordidness of self-love and the suppleness of volition. *Visuddham*, on the contrary, belongs to the soul itself in the full comprehensiveness of its utmost dimensions. As such, does it not interpret itself strictly as something not merely coincident with what Jesus perhaps signified when he said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'? At any rate, is not St. Paul more expressive and nearer to the mark in his emphasis upon that 'holiness without which no man can see the Lord'? Then, if, by support also from etymology, 'holiness' is the word most acceptable as the working equivalent of *visuddham*, it, of course, has its duality of phases to present, the negative and the positive, as in the supplication—

"The gross adhesive loathsomeness of sin
Give me to see!—Yet oh! far more, far more
That beautiful Purity which the saints adore
In a consummate Paradise within the veil."

Here is a holiness immaculate which comprises and, at the same time, transcends all other excellences human or divine. It stands filiated to Henry Drummond's 'greatest thing in the world' in so far as, ceasing to play the caterer for the appetites and serving as the deliverer from the animal in us,

"Love interceding kneels in fear,
Lest to the pure th' unholy draw too near".

It connotes, in essence, the awe and reverence of a devout passion for the Best and the Beautifullest in an abiding spirit of self-denial and self-surrender purged of the least taint of worldliness, of voluptuousness and—subtlest sin of all—of self-

righteousness. It confers, in effect, a spiritual insight which, swallowing up all imperfect knowledge, 'penetrateth Heaven and Hell', according to Thomas A Kempis. Also, upon its rock-bottom base is grounded the intensity of all soul-force—unspeakably vaster than 'the strength of ten'—which transfigures the seer into the hero and translates the hero into the martyr. Hence is discoverable all the wealth of suggestive significance wrapped up in the mystical legend of 'The Holy Grail'. Not to the practical commonplace Sir Bors; not to the noisy, volatile Sir Gawain; not to the noble but secretly guilt-scorched Sir Lancelot; not even to the pure but proudly pure Sir Percivale; but only to Sir Galahad, the beau-ideal of loving self-denial, lowly self-effacement and lofty self-consecration, is it given to reach and realise the supernal summit of that stainless holiness before which glows the enduring, haunting vision of Heaven's unveiled splendour even upon the twilight levels of earth. And that is precisely because of a double-edged principle of spiritual optics. Firstly, only holiness sees holiness, as the fleckless mirror alone is capable of a vivid reflection of the object before it. Secondly, holiness sees only holiness, according to the law of '*Yadbhávam tadbhavati*' or since, as we have it particularised in Pauline phrasing, 'to the pure all things are pure'. So it is that, to the eye of holiness evermore engaged in hallowing all seeming grossness of being and visualising all potential energy of perfection, 'there is but one Temple in the world; and that Temple is the Body of Man' (Novalis); and 'the life of a soul is sacred in every stage of its existence.' (Mazzini). So it is that the formula of adoration in use in the Brahma Samaj sets *Suddhamapápaviddham* to bring up the rear as the very crowning glory of the Divine Perfection. So it is that God the Saviour comes home to humanity as the solicitous Sanctifier of souls through eternity, by no means the unconcerned Abandoner of frailty to its own self-effort at emancipation or the ultra-judicial (really pseudo-judicial) Redeemer of indebtedness in acceptance of vicarious liquidation at any one point of time. So it is that Hell itself has been happily christened as the healing Hospital of God where Love is the Senior Apothecary for treatment into wholeness, haleness, holiness. And so it is that the *patitapávana* in the All-Parent sets its seal of guarantee to the '*amritasyaputráh*' of a race that 'never is but always to be blest'.

Now we perceive how richly laden with dynamic value is the picture of 'moral wisdom', its offices and operations, drawn in eloquent colours by John James Taylor (the predecessor of Martineau in the Principalship of Manchester College). Of its two elements interrelated as noted above, this eminent teacher observes: "Holiness restrains, love impels. Holiness curbs and guides our inferior appetites and passions, subjects them to reason and conscience, and confines them within the limits which the governing law of the universe obviously prescribes. From the root of holiness the purest love will spring, stirring all our natural impulses and spontaneous affections into sweet and genial action, filling our hearts with the holy sympathies of home and friendship and virtuous attachment, inspiring us with a lofty enthusiasm for all that is glorious and beautiful and urging us to put forth all our energies in the defence, assertion and encouragement of whatever is just and upright, noble, pure and true". It is of the ideal thus incarnated in individual consciousness that the prophet of old proclaimed, 'My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished'. It is of it, too, in reference to national conscience, that the statesman of a generation ago affirmed, 'Righteousness alone exalteth a nation'.

Thus, 'down the ringing grooves of change,' from out of a beginningless Behind, there sounds the solemn summons, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy'. Thus with his whole being in all its inmost parts suffused with true *visuddhasattvam*—itself alike the dower of *jnánam* and the donor of *prathyakshadarsanam* of the *nishkalam* through *dhyánam*—shall it be vouchsafed unto the sinner to be baptised in the waters of cleansing and chastened into the saint. And thus, touched with the live coal, shall the accepted spirit keep alive, as on the vestal heart's secret altar, the pentecostal flame of a quenchless aspiration after holiness in adoration of the All-Holy. This, verily, is the one, inviolable obligation laid upon the Theist by his own creed, the first article of which, according to Miss Cobbe, is 'I believe in God the Holy Ghost', the second 'I believe in God the Holy Ghost' and the third 'I believe in God the Holy Ghost'.

"Holy! Holy! Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in Power, in Love, and Purity".

15

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION*

1900

To find justification for trust in God and the Religious Life, and find it in the strictly scientific, because universally and immediately verifiable, facts of common human nature, is the avowed object of the book before us. This inquiry into the fundamentals of Religion, its sources and contents, starts with a discussion of the initial question, how far our natural faculties avail as safe guides in the investigation of truth. After showing by an appeal to experience that, in the last analysis, these simple, primary powers of man—the physical senses, on one side, and the spiritual perceptions, on the other—are, indeed, our only available, inalienable and trustworthy monitors, the author proceeds to elaborate severally the arguments for a Theistic faith based upon the witness of the Understanding, the Conscience and the Emotions. First comes a description of how the Understanding, with its innate sense of 'cause', demands a living Cause behind phenomena—an ever-energising and all-embracing Will-Power responsible for the whole universe and each of its countless happenings. Next follows what we are here particularly concerned with—an exposition of how Conscience, with its sense of 'right', leads to the perception of a supreme Fountain of Righteousness, the Source and Support of all ethical ideals. Lastly, our intuitive sensibility to Nature's loveliness is shown to reveal a universal Heart of infinite Love. Thus the picture is completed of the threefold conception of God as Rational Power, Righteous Perfection and Spiritual Love.

The idea of God as Righteousness far surpasses in interest that of God as Power, which, as Mr. Armstrong observes, though tremendous, is not lovable in itself. Also, the former partakes more of the essence of the theme, in so far as Ethics

* A Prize-Essay in the light of R. A. Armstrong's *God and the Soul* (British and Foreign Unitarian Association, London).

precedes and points to Religion, while Religion without Ethics must, at best, render the human world 'susceptible', as Dr. Martineau tellingly puts it, 'of government only as a menagerie.' Mr. Armstrong, accordingy, shows himself imbued with a vivid consciousness of the paramountcy of this phase of his subject, the cardinal issue in his master's Theistic philosophy the light of which has so vastly illumined the entire path of his own thinking. Our study of this portion—to our mind, the most impressive and convincing part—of the whole book will comprise an analysis of Conscience or the Moral Sense, its reality, functions, characteristics and source.

The Reality of Conscience

That, within certain limits, we are all possessed of freedom of will is a fact which, despite every manner of fatalistic outlook, does receive positive and perennial confirmation no less from the lives of speculative necessitarians than from those of others. In this exercise of will, however, we do not, as originating centres, view with equal regard the different directions taken by our thoughts and actions. We classify our volitions into what we call 'right' and 'wrong'; and, with Carlyle, we discover as between those two classes an 'incompatibility absolute and infinite'. The doings and dealings of our fellow-men, past or present, never commend themselves alike to our internal sense but we must sit upon them and pronounce them either noble or base. The dying attitude of Jesus on the cross towards those very malefactors who are quenching the light of life in him, every one feels, is unspeakably more worthy than the conduct of Judas towards his chosen master. Even in regard to this covetous seller of holy innocence, a thrill of redeeming relief comes upon us as we go on to note how, ere long, 'he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself'. This sense in us, apprehending such transcendent distinctions in the behaviour of others, assumes greater strength and clearness when judging of our own personal motives and movements. I cannot hurt, or seek to hurt, my neighbour but there must supervene in myself an overwhelming sense of self-reprobation. Nor can I do a good turn, ever so humble, to a needy brother-man but a voice within whispers 'Well done!' in supernal accents. This voice, the voice of the moral sense belonging to the category of primary intuitions, stands above the grasp of gross 'demonstration' but abides,

none the less, as a reality the best evidence of which is only to be sought in instances of its operation copiously supplied to the inner self by the universal consciousness of mankind. Hence, says Mr. Armstrong, "If you have the moral sense, you know what I mean before I begin to explain; but if you had it not, no explanation in the world could give you the smallest inkling of what it means". Apposite examples then follow of what, in his other little treatise, *Man's Knowledge of God*, he has called the 'quadruple phenomenon' of Conscience in the aspects of exhortation and prohibition, approval and rebuke.

The Characteristics of Conscience

We proceed to observe the distinguishing features of the sovereign law thus announced and acknowledged by an inner oracle which always prompts or warns, ratifies or condemns. While on this section, it will be for us to measure also, so far as we may, the soundness of those adverse theories which seek to dethrone Conscience by an entire overturning of its basis.

First, we turn to an illustration elsewhere used by Mr. Armstrong and once before dilated upon in this volume*—the episode of the spotted tortoise from the child-life of a New World apostle of rational righteousness. This remarkable incident of the timely monition of Conscience to Theodore Parker as a lad of but four summers—does it not show how the moral law asserts itself alike in young and old, high and low, great and small; a universal principle actively energising in all individuals and amongst all communities, though in varying degrees yet essentially to the same end; the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world? Again, to borrow from the same life-story, what is meant by that dying declaration, 'the other Theodore Parker planted in America' who 'will live there and continue my work', if not the ceaseless, timeless operation of the law of righteousness with which the hero-humanist who laid down his life in Florence strove to bring into harmony the ideas and institutions of the land of his birth? The moral law is no mere provincialism of this planet even; nor is it a limited enactment for any single age.

Vide p. 43 *et seq.*

At this point has to be met a "seemingly formidable argument" against the declared uniformity of the rule of right. Asks the critic: Is there not disagreement between man and man on vital questions of morality; what connection may we possibly trace between the ethical code, if he had one, of the barbarian of ages ago and that of the civilised man of today; does not the moral standard shift from generation to generation all down the course of history; even in our own day, how many casuistical problems are there not, hovering on the border-line between right and wrong and defying all effort towards a common consensus of opinion? Yes; these anomalies and disparities, we grant, are facts beyond dispute. But one outweighing consideration at the outset is that, because men's morality takes protean shapes and exhibits itself in more or less restricted circles according to inner temperament and outer environment, superficial observers naturally fail to recognise the amount of silent moral force at work underneath. By morals, moreover, the generality of men understand but good manners and conformity which, if they miss in their neighbours to any extent, they are only too apt to pronounce (or denounce) them as absolute aliens to morality. Again, it cannot be too clearly recognised that evil itself is but an accident—the result of the practical predominance of one motive of action over another, each worthy in itself; the deliberate surrender of the will to a lower, in disregard of a higher, law of conduct. Furthermore, there is the question of the proper limits of Conscience, the one issue in Mr. Armstrong's main explanation of conflicting moral deliverances which has aroused serious criticism even to the effect that his position practically 'gives away the authority of Conscience altogether.' The charge, doubtless, is well-founded in so far as Conscience, apart from other natural faculties, furnishes no infallible arbiter in moral disputes. But it suffices to claim for Conscience that, when they are brought into juxtaposition, it serves to declare authoritatively that certain springs of action are more obligatory, because more worthy, than others. While the moral intuition persistently asserts the sanctity of Duty, the application of its promptings to a particular act or, rather, the sifting of the complicated elements of a case, belongs to the intellectual judgment just as well as a student brings all his thinking powers to bear upon the solution of his mathematical pro-

blem. What wonder, then, that, in these siftings, errors of judgment are possible and sometimes even plentiful under the stress of involved and intricate issues for deliberation? When, after such deliberation, a particular line of action has been fixed upon as intrinsically more meritorious than another, then Conscience steps in and issues the imperial fiat that, in actual practice, the higher or what is understood as the higher ought to supersede the lower at all costs. So that it is, by no means, a bitter sense of moral unworthiness that follows the discovery of the error but, what is comparatively of infinitely less consequence, a passing regret at the unavoidable mishap of a weak judgment to be followed, perhaps, by an increase of watch fulnessand of openness to correction in future. For, did we ever read of sufferers for Conscience, however misguided in their convictions, wishing with wailings, when awakened to their unhappy delusions, that they had not heeded what for the time being was the trumpet-call of Duty? How inexpressibly more blessed it is to hearken to the authoritative bidding of Conscience and even take the wrong step from a sense of irrepressible obligation than altogether to muffle that sacred oracle out of a haunting suspicion that, after all, it may prove an imposing cheat or a misleading ignoramus! In fine, as between 'remorse' and 'repentance', the one is nothing against the other; and what is intellectual disproportion beside a stifled conscience? Then, let not apparent divergences of moral sanction shake our trust in the supreme capacity of Conscience to serve always as 'a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path', 'a rod to check the erring and reprove.' The divergences are, as above suggested, but "accidents of education, association, tradition and circumstance"; the bogey of moral evil thus becoming the incidental by-product of concentration of thought upon one to the exclusion of another, and of obedience of will to a lower in the face of a higher, canon of conduct. Mr. Armstrong cites the questions of vivisection and slavery (!) as instances of casuistical problems to be so faced.

"Other facts of vast importance" that seem to make against the view of the universality of Conscience are next met in the light of the great law we owe to Darwin. If, by a process of growth, the tiny acorn develops into the mighty oak and the ugly caterpillar is metamorphosed into the lovely butterfly and the minutest protoplasmic cell is evolved into the

most complex of organisms, is it not an equally real fact that man's moral as well as mental powers are open to perpetual expansion and purification ? As we read that the now perfect organ of the physical eye was once no more than a sensitive membrane-speck beaten upon by the rays of the sun, so the moral sense has been in receipt of greater and greater illumination age by age and rising from lower springs of action to higher and yet higher ones. Nothing, therefore, is more natural and in keeping with the revelations of science than that the ethical judgments of one generation are constantly overthrown by the deeper insights of a succeeding generation. Watch how, in the growth of communities, morality is, surely though slowly, advancing stage after stage—how the world is gradually surrendering the old canon of statesmanship that war and bloodshed were the only proper umpires of international justice; how, even in countries which still unhappily persist in resorting to artillery arbitration on questions of territorial and other rights, the use of dynamite and the employment of cunning tactics have come to revolt the better and nobler section of humanity; how the growing sense of the inviolable sacredness of life now urges the demand that prisoners of war shall not suffer summary destruction but be preserved with every care for restoration to their countries on the settlement of differences; how, in commercial and like enterprises, larger cooperations are made possible than of old; how, in social relationships, purity in private morals is gaining ground as the prime requisite for public leadership and popular recognition; how, even in individual status, legislatures have agreed to esteem one blameless till one is proved to be otherwise; and, again, how, in the treatment of culprits, the darkness of the dungeon and the severity of the penal settlement are being outvoted as unworthy rivals to the chastening influences and the tender humanities of the asylum and the reformatory—watch all this; and you will realise with what vitality a moral ideal springing up anew at one pole of this universe propagates itself to the other, and a righteous principle primarily received into one lofty soul percolates to the lowly mass of mankind, the hidden treasure of the few thus becoming the current coin of the many. Rightly understood, therefore, the moral standard is not so much *varying* as *growing* from generation to generation with the higher culture of thought and sentiment. So may we rise

above all sense of confused despair to a thrill of thankful satisfaction in the face of the now hideous savageries typified by Mr. Armstrong's example of the exposure of children among the Greeks of antiquity. Evolution in ethics thus more than leaves untouched its universality and eternality as well as its other features to be presently noticed, namely, its authority and its derivativeness; for, as Mr. Armstrong tersely remarks, "an endowment may be given, yet given gradually only."

A fresh chapter, again, in the life of Theodore Parker may be employed to illustrate the two further characteristics of the moral law. At one of the anti-abolition meetings in the days of the stormy contest over slavery, while speaker after speaker went on hurling no end of damning invectives against the enemies of the existing order as upsetters of divine statutes, the right valiant champion of the 'nigger' race rose to brave them in opposition. The infuriated mob first broke out into cries of 'Kill him! Kill him!' 'Yes, kill me if you can,' said Parker in awful accents. And as he proceeded to shred, one by one, the unabashed excuses of vested interest for the time-honoured iniquity, not a hand was laid on him. For, in the midst of that dense mass of tumultuous elements, who was there but felt the compelling force of an unseen power behind the unprotected wight? And they dispersed, convicted if not converted, confused if not convinced. This is so, because the moral law is not of man's framing and cannot, with impunity, be now followed and now flouted as caprice or convenience dictates the one or the other course. It stands altogether independent of his inclinations or interests and addresses itself to him as the imperative mandate of a supreme dictator and not in the pleading tones of a humble supplicant. In short, it 'commands and does not canvass.' It is this categorical quality of the ethical law that renders it impossible safely to upset the decalogue—that divine handwriting on the living page of the human heart; that heavenly hieroglyphic to be spelt out with the golden key of a growing conscience into a revelation of the sum-total of human duties.

But, as against the view here maintained, with the Intuitionists, that right and wrong, as primary conceptions, form part of the natural furniture of man, not derived from

any reasonings of his but appealing to a special faculty in him, the opposite set of thinkers, known as Hedonists, seeks to dissolve the moral sense into a mere measure of usefulness either to one's self or to the community at large. Moral conduct, they hold, is worthy of pursuit, since it is 'paying' in that it conduces to happiness in the long run. They recognise no sanctified authority in the behests of the moral sense apart from the spur of self-interest and the bait of prospective, if not present, happiness. All appeal, therefore, is from yourself to yourself; and the calculations of prudence are the only test of the intrinsic worth or expediency of conduct. But, as says our author, "Prudence and morality may coincide. But they are not the same thing" any more than 'brown' and 'square' stand for one and the same idea while the same box may be both brown and square. Honesty, no doubt, is the best policy. Yet, "'Tis only *noble* to be good', in the words of Tennyson. The attainment, again, not exclusively of selfish ends but of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' is the ground on which sanction is accorded to virtue by latter-day Hedonists. All the same, it may fairly be asked on what compulsion must the egoistic 'all for one' yield place to the communistic 'each for all'. Seek however we may to argue ourselves out of the obligations of Duty, the fact remains that we do, and cannot but, commend altruism as inherently worthier than self-aggrandisement. The feeling of 'ought' is unique and irresolvable into factors of prudence or pleasure, as Huxley himself, by no means partial to any association of Ethics with Religion, has had to admit in his Romanes Lecture. Were bees, he observes, susceptible of more than the mere rudiments of consciousness, a thoughtful member of the hive-corporation gifted with a turn for ethical philosophy 'must needs profess himself an intuitive moralist of the purest water'. That is because, in Huxley's own words, 'the devotion of the workers to a life of ceaseless toil for a mere subsistence wage cannot be accounted for either by enlightened selfishness or by any other set of utilitarian motives', 'since these bees begin to work without experience or reflection, as they emerge from the cell in which they are hatched. Plainly, an eternal and immutable principle innate in each bee can alone account for the phenomenon'. If moral consciousness were exhausted by the longing for personal ease or popular applause, if it were nothing save an inherited tendency leading us to do as

our fathers did, how can you insist, as few people fail to insist, upon the sacrifice of self-interest for the common weal? What explanation is available of all the heroisms of history and of our instinctive admiration for them? Here, on the battlefield, a Sidney graciously takes off the revivifying cup of drinking-water from his parched lip and cheerfully hands it to a more droughty soldier close by, saying, 'Thy need is greater than mine'. There, into the arena, a Telemachus flings himself to be torn to pieces by howling lions before the frenzied passion for exciting pleasure that so his blood may wash away the gladiatorial abomination from the 'Mistress of the World'. Again, nearer home, in this our land of many sorrows, a Vidyasagar spends himself out for the wronged widow amid the fiery darts of nation-wide denunciation. Thus gleams the page of history, strewn with golden deeds of self-denial, of benevolence, of moral courage. And what were all history, stripped clean of such glories of obedience to Conscience, but a dismal tombstone over the grovelling worms of unhallowed ambition? Does not the romance of fact as well as of fiction speak of many a hardened criminal intrepidly pushing himself forward into the glare of publicity to divulge his own undetected misdeeds and demand the averted retribution that is his due—all for the sake of peace of conscience, when nothing could have been easier and safer than tongue-tied silence with 'Mum's the word' for evermore? Which class of recorded actions is it that, of itself, impresses and interests us most? Is it the tyrannies of despots, the treacheries of traitors and the wiles of worldlings; or is it the self-sacrifices of philanthropists, the privations of patriots and the sincerities of the spiritual-minded? Whom does posterity love to cherish in grateful memory—Nero or Marcus Aurelius, Ephialtes or Themistocles, Herod or John the Baptist? The patriot who lays down his life for the liberation of the fatherland from the galling yoke of a foreigner or from the deadweight of internal evil custom; the preacher who speaks the known word of God and goodness to a stolid, stubborn or savage community of the children of men; the philanthropist who, with a bleeding hurt, toils sleeplessly for the despised and the down-trodden of every clime; nay, the scientist who, for the discovery of physical truth, wears out his life under the slow-consuming fire and poison of the laboratory—these, whether their names blaze forth in the bead-roll of fame or pass unheeded in

obscurity like 'many a gem of purest ray serene' in 'the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean', these will ever stand damning witnesses against all profit-and-loss philosophy. Here we can only commend Mr. Armstrong's able exposure, after Dr. Ward, of the "splendid inconsistency" of Mill when, in virtual demolition of his own 'hay-balance' theory, the great Utilitarian dialectic sternly announces his preference of eternal torment over the worship of a God other than moral. If virtue were but the touchstone of utility, why, we ask, should a compromise of conscience be so indignantly condemned even at the risk of unending perdition?

The Source of Conscience

If, as we have so far endeavoured to point out, the moral sense inborn in humankind is always commissioned to reveal a law which is universal and eternal, imperative on man and independent of man, are we not constrained by the constitution of our being to ask for the prime source of the law thus recognised? Our sense of causality urges the demand for an efficient cause in respect of each variety of phenomena. Is there not, then, a cause to assign to this supreme phenomenon, to wit, the law of right, seeing that no law can set up as its own sanction but there must be an enforcing as well as enacting power behind? Aye; and this 'Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness' we designate as God. Also, because "it is inconceivable that God should weave into a man's soul a moral sense which does not answer to His own nature", we are led to the conclusion that, whatever the inscrutable mysteries of His nature, our God must be a moral God—not, indeed, that His morality, like ours, is the mark of triumph over temptation but the self-determined essence of His being.

"A shorter and quicker path" to the recognition of the 'personality' of God as the God of Righteousness is indicated by the attribute of obligation pertaining to the moral sense. For, we are never 'obliged' but to one other and higher than ourselves. "If I owe, I owe some one. If I am bound, I am bound to some one." And likewise is it with every phase of the moral consciousness.

So that, altogether, the only adequate account that can be given of Conscience is comprised in the pious American mother's description of it as 'the voice of God in the soul of

man", and that of Duty in the inspired English poet's apostrophe to it as the 'stern daughter' of that voice of God.

The Oneness of Right and Might in God

Having so far sought an origin for the 'primary' ideas of our nature on the moral as on the intellectual side and discovered an Infinite Will in the intimations of Conscience as in the implications of Causality, it remains to add that we have here not two divers Beings but one and the same Deity—an issue which happens to be wholly passed over in Mr. Armstrong's treatment of the subject. Inasmuch as man presents a unity of the natural and the spiritual in the same 'person', the two elements being so interfused that it is impossible to refer them to different sources; inasmuch, again, as these elements are keenly susceptible of interaction, the external world striking into life that whole gamut of moral motives which Conscience ranges in order; and, lastly, inasmuch as the physical sphere, to a large extent, administers the retribution and enforces the discipline of the moral law, we perforce perceive how they both fit into one plan; how 'might' and 'right' are hemispheres of but one orb of creation; how the God of Science is also the God of History; how He who unceasingly marshals and mobilises myriads of stars upon the field of the heavenly firmament and swings in a whirl the unnumbered particles of a grain of sand or a drop of water does also, with equal uniformity though under different conditions, impel the selfless martyr to embrace the ravenous claws of persecution and the humble householder to eke out for his own the bread of honest toil; and how the Author of the sun and the sea is, likewise, the Father of a Jesus and a Buddha.

So we close with a deepened sense of the sublime truth, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts', as also of the ordained destiny of our race to 'be perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect.'

16

GOD THE TEMPTER

1933

Thanks to Marie Corelli, the present generation has come to be fairly familiarised with the idea of 'the Sorrows of Satan'. Then, why not also accept and pursue the counterpart conception of 'the Seductions of God'? As the Arch-Fiend himself is not proof against redemptive susceptibilities to good, is it anything altogether profane to read the doings and dealings of the Almighty in terms of artful designs and devices to strengthen His own dominion over the minds and hearts and souls of men?

Words, after all, do duty and acquire significance practically according to the use they are put to in varying contexts. To employ the appellation of 'tempter' in reference to the Godhead is assuredly to 'ameliorate' the word itself. It can give rise to no question whatever as to any possible degeneracy or deterioration thereby in the Divine nature. No intrinsic reason is apparent why the overtures of 'temptation' should be suffered to form the sole monopoly of the Powers of Evil. Far from this, it becomes spiritually helpful to accustom ourselves to the view-point that not a moment of our lives passes but we are beset with the bewitching charms of a Deity who is out to claim us and our all as if it were His all-in-all. Nor is this outlook an utterly novel, while it is not an uncouth, aberration from the common mode of treatment. '*Jagannmóhana*' (the Captivator of the Universe) is no rare designation as applied to the Object of all adoration in the devotional lore of our land as also in the ghazels of Islamic Sufi-ism, couched in the erotic strain. We recall the '*vyámóham*' exercised by 'the Spouse Divine of the human soul' upon a Mirabai, as upon a Madame Guyon, and envisaged, too, by the Preacher of the Parable of the Bridegroom. In fact, everywhere the written as well as unwritten stories of preeminence in spirit loom before us as a cloud of witnesses to

the resistless lures of the Lord. If Eurylochus runs smitten with the 'heard melodies' of the Circean coterie, Ulysses stands serene even because of his peculiar sensitiveness to the 'unheard melodies' of a celestial choir led by that Supreme Singer whose song-snatches are the outswelling vibrations of an endless creation.

Assorted according to sources and objectives, temptations report themselves as of three kinds. There is, first, the species which emanates from below and around; next, that from within; and, lastly, that from above. The first covers the secret wiles of the world incited by the powers of darkness therein and aptly figured forth by the hissings of the subtile serpent underneath. The second comprises the sly onslaughts of the six well-known internal foes (*anthassathrûs*). Subjective thus in character, these are rendered far more deadly than any out of the objective category above noted. The third represents the manifold of inducements from on high tending to more than overcome all other allurements by counter attractions and thus to establish their own positive sway. Hereby, the traditional triad of the Devil, the World and the Flesh is met on its own ground with 'temptation' as foil to 'temptation.' To put the whole thing in another light: the world around, resting so much on the world below, strives to grip the soul and enslave it to itself through the sinister workings of environment, that is, in the name of association, friendship and other social ties. In its turn, the world within seeks to withdraw the soul into itself as both centre and circumference, cutting off all forthgoings into the outer world in love or uprisings into the higher in devotion. So grabbing and grasping is it that it would fain take all and give or give up nothing. Why, even on the spiritual plane, it would set up the soul with all its frailties as its own ordainer, governor and redeemer. Hence, as the world around and below imprints the stamp of the materialism of the Publican, the world within impresses the mark of the self-righteousness of the Pharisee. But, then, the world above discloses God as the Dispenser of those conditions which address themselves to the soul, not in malice as temptations to assail and vanquish it, but in mercy as trials to shake and strengthen it and as counter temptations to wean and ward it from temptations. In short, as there is a 'descendentalism,' so there is also a 'transcendentalism' in temptation so-called.

Upon the upward, heavenward incitements of beauty and bliss in the supersensible sphere, referred to as the third group of temptations, and their divers forms, inherent qualities and far-reaching effects, a stimulating hint is conveyed by J. W. Chadwick of the Unitarian ministry in the New World of last century. He writes: "Whatever our temptations from beneath, we are so tempted from above, tempted of God in all the wonderful and happy ordering of His natural and human world, that only by the most miserable neglect of our temptations to the higher and the highest things can we fail of making such a choice as shall not only make this mortal life what it should be in spiritual power and grace but at the same time make our assurance of another life more strong and our entrance on its mystery such as theirs who, coming amongst friends of loftiest nature, find themselves untroubled and at home."

For one thing, apart from all *deus ex machina* miracles of conquest and annexation on His part, nay, more fully and far more constantly in the normal display of His cosmic 'wiles', 'all the wonderful and happy ordering of His natural and human world' is pointed to as the exhaustless armoury of God's own shafts and darts. This, in a word, just comprehends all the engrossments of the ineffable *máyá* and *leela* of the Vedantic and the Vaishnavic system. The rainbow in the horizon, the star in the firmament, the flower in the field; the babe in the cradle, the ministering angel in the home, the valiant hero in the victories of peace no less renowned than those of war; the genial smiles of good cheer, the little unremembered acts of kindness, the radiations of social righteousness—all these tokens and myriads more of like charm, inspiring the fairy tales of science and the golden deeds of history, form the means, instruments and agencies of the Universal Tempter's ministry of temptation unto His own offspring. An all too pale reflection of this Divine ministry is the poet's picture of the Village Pastor in relation to his flock:

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Be it noted that, in the nature of things, the partenal temptation taking shape in fond endearment—and the spell

of such solicitation whoever is a stranger to ?—is something more active in self-expression than is indicated about the spectating and satisfied mother-bird in the *Rig-Vedic* and, after it, in the *Mundaka* and *Svètâsvatara* Upanishadic verse, "*Thayóranyah pippalam svádvathyanasnan nanyóbhichákaseethi.*" Say, are not the darlings of Divinity everywhere and everywhen encompassed with quite an unbroken ring of aggressively tempting endearments ? And is this not because God is not simply the Witness of *Karma* but also the Wielder of *Karuna* ? Oh, the meshes of God—they are the intricate marvels in the make-up of this superb wonderland of creation ! The traps of God—they are the gladsome surprises of a providence inconceivably beyond human ken ! The baits of God—they are the sublime beatitudes in the gospel of every redeemer of the race ! The snares of God—they are the silent instigations goading the will to pursue more than heaven 'what conscience dictates to be done' ! And the witcheries of God—they are even the proferred pledges of an elysium of immortality for every child of man !

Yes ; God is God to us in that He is the one, perpetual, overmastering Tempter of tempters unto His own benignant ends. True, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.' Nevertheless, there does exist so much of suggestive parallelism between the processes of His attack upon, and capture of, souls and those commonly associated with the decoy and the kidnapper. (1) The Tempter remains unseen and only from behind the veil puts forth the blandishments of attraction. (2) As He is invisible, so is He insidious in worming His way into the citadel. (3) That way He grows to be irresistible from more to more. (4) He also makes it simply inscrutable how He has finally gained such a hold upon you. And (5) this established dominance of His means in effect the almost unconscious, yet all too real, abrogation of every vestige of independence on your part ; so much so that 'magnetic' and 'mesmeric' are perhaps the only epithets available to describe this strange, surpassing influence. Consequently, as in the enchantment of the Gopis of Brindavan by the Flute of Sree Krishna, to look upon Him is to love Him ; and to love Him is to forget oneself so far as to render up every shred of self-conscious ' modesty ' unto Him. The ancients, like the Theosophists of today, accepted the serpent-coil as the mystic symbol of the sum of things—

head and tail, beginning and end, conjoined into one in the circuit. Well may the Supreme Controller of this Cosmos be imaged as the Snake-Charmer of all existences and entities. Again, as *Natarâja* plies His dithyrambic dance time without end, He enraptures, too, His whole creation—sun and star, mount and monad, human hearts and angelic hosts—all, all, into a like dance with the morning-song of '*Fiat lux*' and in tune with the cadence of His foot-fall. The chasing 'Hound of Heaven' is perceived, from the other end of the line, as the captivating Tempter out of Hell. If Devildom laid its hand upon the Son of Man in the wilderness and sorely tried him with the triple temptation of political, economic and spiritual aggrandisement, Divinity was there, also, to tempt him away from it all with His own contrary offers and assurances. And so the tempted learnt to glory in what he did *not* get of secular power, material pelf or spiritual pomp. Having grappled with the temptations of the Devil and laid them low by the superior might of the temptations of the Deity, the 'world-victor's victor' (the subjugator of Satan) uttered forth his exultation in accents of otherworldly compensation: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth'. 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.' Or, again, as in the Upanishad: '*Isâvâsyamidam sarvam yathkincha jagathyâm jagath; thèna thyakthèna bhunjeedhâ mâgridhah kasyasviddhanam.*' What glorious reparations in the universe-indwelling God set off against all deprivations in the ignoble scramble at the world's ware-houses of covetousness! Such is the play and counter-play of the forces of temptation pulling downward and temptation pulling upward. 'Evil, be thou my good,' says he who is successfully tempted of the machinations of Mara the Devil. 'Good, be thou my only goal, whatever betide of evil,' sings he who is effectually wooed and won by the Destroyer of Demons. As Carlyle's 'Promethean, prophetic' chapter on 'the Everlasting Yea' teaches us, in the confusion of the contest between 'the God-given mandate, *Work thou in well-doing*,' and 'the clay-given mandate, *Eat thou and be filled*', the whole drama of the Holy War, so to speak, of temptation *versus* temptation must needs be enacted 'before the better Influence can become the upper'. Then, ye

multitudes of foreign enticements, tarry not before the native loveliness of the Only-Fair and the All-Fascinating; but fall flat, as ye must, upon everyone endued with an eye for beauty and a heart for love.

'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' This, in fine, is the secret, the epitome, of the philosophy of 'God the Tempter.' What engaging vistas of elevated thinking and feeling do not open themselves up even from the farthest fringes of this thrice-enthralling theme! "Sweeter than Day-spring to the ship-wrecked in Novazembla; ah, like the mother's voice to the little child that strays bewildered, weeping, in unknown tumults; like soft streamings of celestial music to my too exasperated heart, came that Evangel."

17

THE PARADOX OF PERFECTION

1935

It is a world of sharp comparisons we live in—comparisons at every turn between yesterday and today, epoch and epoch, in regard to time ; between here and there, clime and clime, in respect of space ; between object and object, self and self, as well as nation and nation, in reference to entities. Here lies imbedded the radix of the living interest centring round everything of 'Far away and Long ago', the stimulating incentive behind all adventure upon the track of antiquarian research and foreign exploration. Of the allied lure of the present, around and afar, one significant instance is the amount of scientific curiosity about the conditions of life, if any, upon the sister-planet of Mars as compared with this globe. In the eighteenth century, Johnson's story of *Rasselas* and Goldsmith's self-recital in *The Traveller* furnished apt examples of artistic imagination at work in this direction in the field of Western literature. It fell, next, to the succeeding century to be preeminently occupied with the philosophical aspect of this problem of comparisons on a scientific basis and in the light of verified facts, to set about a systematic study in contrasts between the actual, the world as it was, and the possible or the desirable, the world as it might or should be. As science at first increasingly disclosed chasms and contradictions more far-reaching than any open to the ordinary experience of the uninitiated, it was reserved also for science itself, with the aid of the universal key of evolution, to reconcile, or point the way to reconcile, the imperfections revealed by its own investigations. Thus, in the grapple with the Great Enigma, science was met with science, like thorn employed to pluck out thorn, as witness Dr. Martineau's glowing recountal of Prof. Helmholtz's technical indictment of the human eye on the barely 'optical' side followed up with effective self-confutation on the strictly 'physiological'. Along such

routes waits to be reached the full realisation of 'the far-off interest of tears' held in deposit, as it were, by such awful and, for the time being, extremely staggering and harrowing cataclysms of nature as the fire, flood and earthquake devastations that have recently swept over vast areas. Even as the quest in the physical and biological spheres turns upon how to trace the ends of perfection through the meshes of imperfection, the main or the underlying problem in its larger bearings for the spiritual-minded student of life as a whole is seen to consist in this—namely, how to harmonise the limitations of creation, known and unknown, with the absoluteness of the Creator, 'unknown and unknowable', and how to live, or at least strive to live, the perfect life in a palpably imperfect world of sin and shortcoming.

Upon this besetting paradox of perfection, the philosopher-poet of the past century effectively brings home, in a fine little poem entitled *Rephan*, the vital value of the saving lesson alike of objective science and subjective experience. In that masterpiece of sound spiritual insight and imagination, Browning limns forth an ideal orb of the celestial regions, Rephan by name, where all is just as it should be—*comme il faut*, as goes the phrase. In its 'perfect' state of society, there is no change and no growth ; nothing begins or ends; no winter sets in, and hence no spring is known ; and the process of the suns brings neither hope nor fear. What then? One of its angel-denizens finds this placid round of 'perfect' existence so oppressively irksome that he contrives to flee to earth out of curiosity to see how mortals live here below. He hears the ringing tones of a voice thus addressing itself to him :

> "Wouldst thou strive, not rest ;
> burn, not smoulder ; win by contest,
> no longer be content with wealth
> which is but death ;
> Thou hast outlived Rephan,
> thou art beyond that sphere.
> Here is a happy place for thee ;
> thy place is Earth".

So, while purblind man indulges in morbid repinings that this, his present habitat of Earth, is intolerably far from worthy of habitation and gives himself over to feverish longings for a perfect Heaven of effortless peace and pleasantness,

his celestial counterpart is enabled by fancy-overruling sight to perceive even in this imperfect world of ours a more congenial—in fact, the only fitting—abode and arena for his own awakened spirit. By what is known as the indirect method of demonstration, it is made concretely clear how, from the correct point of view of man as the crown of created beings and the measure of all things, a once-for-all ready-made perfectness in the scene and the surroundings must turn out to be anything but compatible with, and conducive to, his peculiar prerogative of perfectibility.

Now, to face the issue by framing query against query somewhat after the manner of the knowing ones of old, how were it possible at all, one is led to ask, to aspire and endeavour after the really perfect life except in an imperfect world? Under any different conditions, where would be the slightest scope for the beatitudes of the soul? Of a truth, the assured blessedness of the poor and the meek in spirit should be nowhere in an order of things with no burden pressing upon the bosom and the shoulder; likewise, that of the man of genuine fellow-feeling in the entire absence of want and woe round about; of the man of long-suffering forgiveness where none was liable to act wrongly or hurtfully; of the gentle lover of foes where there was not one enemy; of the sober-spirited peace-maker with no conflict of arms or disputation of tongues to rend the air, of the tender-hearted mourner with nothing to grieve over; or of the high-souled man hungering and thirsting after righteousness in despite of revilement and persecution for its sake, if he was already filled. In fine, how should any beam of radiance shoot forth from that crowning diadem of man's nature which is designated as sympathy, nay, how could he ever come to wear that precious jewel in his heart, if all men's dwelling were fixed right through in an emporium or an *el dorado* of plenty and prosperity, of health and happiness, calling for no struggle, no sacrifies, no service at all? And how should the least occasion open out for anything like the olive branch of *Udyógaparvam* or the song celestial of the *Bhagavad Gita*, were there no Kauravas over against the Pandavas?

Furthermore, as to the fundamental question, why could not the Creator have fashioned out man himself, to begin with, as a perfectly finished handiwork so as to admit of, so

as to stand in need of, no more development in nature? Here, frankly, is a cloud of confusion obscuring the very import and implications of perfection itself in the ethico-spiritual purview. Inasmuch as, for the lower orders of creation which have not to grow in character, this Earth in actuality is already a Rephan in ideality, the above interrogatory simply reduces itself to the much plainer form, why is the human not created, too, just like the sub-human? Why; because, in one word, man should then cease to be the finite-infinite being that he is in all uniqueness—finite *in esse* and, at the same time, infinite *in posse*. If, in the nature of things, he can be subject to nothing like a taint of 'original sin', no more can he be endowed with aught of immaculate perfection costing no moral effort and exposed to no moral lapse. That were literally to trot him out a 'faultily faultless' mummy upon the arduous stage transformed into a mere mummery scene. On the other hand, as it is, the disclaimer of Jesus in point of 'goodness' applies with stronger validity to the comprehensive chart of being and of character denoted by the term 'perfection'. "Why callest thou me good?," said he, "There is none good but one, that is, God." Just so, from out the heart of the world as also the self of man—its noblest offspring and its richest heir, there properly sounds forth the perpetual accent of admonition unto the doubting pessimist of a cynic malcontent: 'Why demandest thou a universe and a humanity *born* perfect in all absoluteness and above all evolution? There is none perfect but one, that is, the All-infinite and the Ever-unconditioned.' Again, the very laws of thought—do they not require, broadly speaking, that as creation means manifestation, so manifestation implies limitation in sheer inevitableness? If so, does it not altogether suffice, and more than suffice, that the spiritual organism we call the real man and his physico-social environment are so constituted as happily to be fitted, one to the other, in harmonic correlation? Thanks to the impelling, inspiring urge of 'divine discontent' implanted in the one and the evocative, educative property stored up in the other, the satisfactory conditions of this mutual adaptation are and will continue to be favourable here to its full play until 'transplanted human worth' shall find itself in that 'Better Land' 'beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb' which eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor heart conceived of. Having

regard to its right objective as the school of the soul and the nursery of the heart—far other than a vanity fair, a pleasure park or a penal settlement, this wondrous world of ours, such as it is, cannot fail to commend itself to the discerning mind as, indeed, perfectly planned already in its own way by Eternal Wisdom and Everlasting Love. As to 'hitches', apparent or otherwise, Dr. Martineau straightway clinches the whole argument in his surpassingly perceptive and luminous vein, when he enunciates the pithy epigram, "A world which no evil could invade were a world which no character could inhabit." And, all in all, in the poet's phrasing,

"that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Does the dreamer of 'perfection', so-called, still kick against the pricks here below and cry out for a utopian Rephan up in Cloudland in lieu of the present raw material of a prospective perfect world, one to be more and more and evermore evolved out of imperfection? Then, so far as the distinctive essence of his own nature is concerned, he but repudiates it in and by unconsciously degrading himself into an utter lotus-eater and complacently panting, also, just for that veritable hell which a master-satirist like Bernard Shaw archly defines as 'the place of content and respectability.' Even from the lower, narrower standpoint of happiness-hunting hedonism, there is enough meaning in the varying verdict pronounced by the onlooking *sanyásin* while witnessing now the vexatious worries of domestic life and now the tender ministrations of a devoted spouse which successively fall to the lot of the *samsári* in the story. So, it has been said, two men look out, each with his pair of eyes, through the self-same chink in the wall: one beholds only the sordidness of the intervening mud; the other descries the magnificence of the outstretched sky, though but a bit thereof. Ponder, too, that other anecdote of a simple-minded house-owner sorely dissatisfied with his dwelling and advertising through an adept agent for a more decent substitute, finally to covet his own, unawares, in the coloured glamour of newspaper puffery. Consequently, it must approve itself as the better part of wisdom to chasten and discipline oneself into that taste and temper of the spirit which would, not sporadically and spasmodically only, but steadily and systematically, discover in this engaging world

of God not something to feel sick of and flee away from upon the wings of sensitive piety in quest of a new earth and a new heaven. Viewed from the readjusted angle, this earth itself is bound to shine forth a new earth, aye, the only real heaven on this side of 'crossing the bar.' Sree Krishna, be it noted, did not abstract Arjuna away from Kurukshetra when together face to face with the crucial issue of the 'stern daughter of the voice of God'; but he made that very ground the chosen venue of the vision beatific—the apocalypse of the new in the old, of the sacred in the secular. Sakyamuni, be it remembered, attained and inculcated the *Buddhanirvâna* of *sânti* only in the midst and through the impact of, not away from, 'the shocks of doom' in the recurrent dual shape of *jara* and *mara*. It was but whilst tending his sheep in the verdant field that Moses sensed his God in the burning bush. And Jesus, too, be it recalled, found or planted the Mount of Transfiguration not outside but in the heart of the Palestine of the pharisee and the publican. Then, in the net result, while man has not yet accomplished the ugly feat of an abnormal leap out of his own shadow, that is, out of a haunting sense of imperfection in himself and outside himself coupled with a restless hankering after ideal perfection, the imperfections of self, society and nature not only interpose no baneful bar along the path of real progress but avail as its beneficial prerequisites and promoters in the pilgrim course.

It is substantially upon this view of the interrelation between imperfectness and perfectibility—a view so transforming in the light of ultimate values and, hence, so reassuring in the face of present perplexities—that the poet-critic of life declares the unimpeachability of the existing order of things: "Whatever is, is best." It is upon this view that the oracle of the optimistic outlook locates in the absolute reality of an overruling Providence the all too adequate warrant for the immunity of the world from openness to indictment:

> "God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world."

It is upon this view that the same potent voice, rising to the crescendo of prophetic strain, announces the fulfilment of the imperfections of the temporal in the prospective consummations of the eternal:

"On the earth, the broken arcs;
in the heaven, the perfect round."

It is upon this view that the apostle of the gospel proclaims the glory of the complete illumination and the vision beatific of the hereafter in succession to the glimpses of 'darkness visible' in the now and the here: "Now I see in part as through a glass darkly; but then I shall see face to face" It is upon this view that even the bard of sad disbelief admonishes away every misapprehension of futility about the strenuous endeavour of the imperfect after the perfect:

"Say not the struggle nought availeth."

It is upon this view that the singer of 'the larger hope' hails the instrumentality of transgression in the attainment of triumph:

"Men may rise of stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things."

It is upon this view that every man of sorrows and acquainted with grief acknowledges the beneficent ministry of trial and tribulation, adversity and anguish, in the economy of spiritual discipline:

"Not loss to learn the script of Pain—
Not loss, but gain."

It is upon this view that every inheritor of inalienable immortality vindicates the law of the dissolution of mortal clay: "Death is only the end of that existence which dies each day,...the birth of that which dies no more." It is upon this view that every mystic heart magnifies what the inner eye perceives of the eternal passion of vicarious martyrdom:

"All through life I see a cross
Where sons of God yield up their breath."

Finally, it is upon this, and this view alone, that the elect minstrel of *Brâhmadharma* echoes the ever-sounding colloquy between the real and the ideal: "Art Thou far from me, oh fruit?" "I am hidden well in thy heart, oh flower." And so,

"O world, as God has made it! All's beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?"

18

EARTH CRAMMED WITH HEAVEN

1911

"Earth's crammed with heaven". So sings the sweetest female voice of the Victorian era. And that is the tale of Science; the conclusion, also, of Philosophy—a reaffirmation of the grand old verity, the dear old experience, of the ages. In it the *rishi* lived; of it the psalmist sang, and the prophet spake. Only the vision of the ancients becomes now the discovery of the moderns—a revelation all the same: what is beheld, what is discovered, is ever what is revealed. So receive we 'the light reflected as a light bestowed'. Here, then, name it how we may, here is living religion.

Science has crammed earth with heaven. Lord Byron sees in "Science

> But an exchange of ignorance for that
> Which is another kind of ignorance".

True, indeed, as we ponder "how far the unknown transcends the what we know". In the pride of her younger days, Science presumed it was an all-seeing eye she had opened. Soon dazzled, however, by the very glare of the light before her, she has by now, in the humility of growing knowledge, come to clear her vision and know her place. If she cannot understand what the flower in the crannied wall is, root and all, and all in all, neither is the primrose by the river's brim any longer to her a yellow primrose and nothing more. Not all-seeing, then; nor by any means stone-blind either! And what sees she, so far as she may? Concerned with but things and their aspects, she has not, even within that range, to loose her plummet far below the surface to strike upon energy and purpose. Her analysis, gross or subtle, of objects subtle or gross brings her face to face with the one fact of force at every turn—each atom a centre, an arena, a focus of force and each process an unfolding of purpose. The world, far from ex-

plaining itself, leads the mind above and beyond itself—evermore unto a Source inconceivably close to, nay, within the stupendous whole, its multiplex parts and their intricate relations. Astronomy and the other inorganic sciences with their report of regularity and harmony, Biology and the other organic sciences with their story of adaptation and adjustment —what are these but the Statute-books of the Reign of law, too inflexibly 'established', as Portia would say, to suffer the least little 'wresting' and too comprehensively operative to exclude the smallest-looking minutæ? And Law, to our human mind at least, is void of meaning save as the *modus operandi* of a Mind informing its actions. How marvellous the disclosures, made and still to be made to our age, of the omnipresence of "Creative Power, Directive Mind and Ultimate Purpose" in the "World of Life" by the telescopes and microscopes and we know not what other 'scopes' of Science! An assertion this, back of which, it will be seen, lies the latest authority of no less an investigator than Alfred Russell Wallace. And this is how Huxley finally expresses himself: "Looking at the matter from the most rigidly scientific point of view, the assumption that amidst the myriads of worlds scattered through endless space there can be no intelligence as much greater than man's as his is greater than a black-beetle's, no being endowed with power of influencing the course of nature as much greater than his as his is greater than a snail's, seems to me not merely baseless but impertinent". This Intelligent Reality, *Sath chith*, christened by Religion as 'Heaven'—how all-permeating alike through the mighty and the minute, remote and near, within and without! The whole, wide world a living, palpitating manifestation of Divine Life—Life not exhaustively divided up among all separate existences; not more immanent in one than in another; not confined here nor excluded there but concentred at every point as though that were all in all and yet overflowing the parts as well as the whole, which is surely more than their sum-total! Science, thus a veritable beam indarkness, reveals the far-retreating God of extra-cosmic repose in His true lineaments as the Ever-regent God of intra-cosmic rule, enthroned over every inch of His boundless realm.

Philosophy, also, has crammed earth with heaven. The movement of mind from multitudinism to monism and, more directly, from materialism to idealism is demanded with vast-

ly greater force by the workings of the human spirit than by the happenings in external nature. As the sciences of nature trace the correlation between object and object, the science of mind, the premier science dealing with the fundamental principles of all special sciences, scans the coalescence of subject and object. "The philosophical conception of the relative", writes Walter Pater, "has been developed in modern times through the influence of the sciences of observation". Of course so in reference to modern times and the Western world. Far otherwise was it with the wise men of the East. To them, at the very start, the self was both subject and object and its very being was thinkable only as relative to an Infinite Background, *átmaprathyaya* being essentially one with *Brahmaprathyaya*. Not with open eyes did they mount from Nature up to Nature's God; but with closed eyes—closed for inward gaze—did they pierce through the sheaths of the soul to the In-Soul—by far a securer, serener, more proximate, because primary, route. And then the In-Soul revealed Itself as the Over-Soul: first discovered in the innermost recesses, It at once discovered Itself in the outermost retreats. In fact, the bond which binds Philosophy to Religion is evermore this, that it shows how our consciousness is a negative which involves a positive, its sense of a limit being at the same time a proof that it is already beyond it. Thus the finite, the particular, is overarched by, rather, inlaid with, the Infinite, the Universal, not in one corner alone but over the whole range of reality explicit or implicit. For, as India's savant, Dr. Brajendranath Seal, said the other day to the Universal Races Congress, the Universal, dynamically speaking, "is not to be figured as the crest of an advancing wave occupying but one place at any moment and leaving all behind a dead level". The *Sath chith* of Science becomes the *Sathyam jnánamanantham* of Philosophy; and every thing and every being come to be contemplated solely as they are in Him or are modes of His attributes. Also, inasmuch as truly to know is to love and to become, as we cease to know, so we cease to love or to assimilate, any object outside the Supreme, thus sublimating Philosophy into Religion as in the theosophy of the *rishis*.

In the wake of Science and Philosophy, as, indeed, prior to all Science and Philosophy, Experience has crammed earth with heaven, as witness song and scripture. Heaven is; therefore is Earth too, the ample shrine of Heaven: '*Suvisálami-*

dham viswam pavithram Brahma mandiram'. As surely as that they possess no reality apart from God, so surely do Nature and Man derive their reality from Him as the inherently self-manifesting Substance of all. And here, in so far as the view of the Concrete Universal is assimilated, this Ultimate Reality is perceived to be, in the words of John Caird, "not an empty abstraction from which all content has been evaporated" but ' a being which embraces in its concrete unity the whole inexhaustible wealth of the finite world". How else, amidst this seemingly empty dream, are we to rest assured that "Life is real, life is earnest; and the grave is not its goal"? It is alone a Heaven-crammed earth that claims every bit of ground as part of a 'Paradise' never 'lost' ; that shoots forth every thorn as the sign-post of a Love never blunted; that lights up every star as the lamp of a Light never dimmed; that decks out every flower as the vase of a Beauty never faded. It was alone on a Heaven-crammed earth that a Jesus could exclaim of a rotten carcass, "Pearls are not whiter than her teeth" ; that a Wordsworth could sing of "the meanest flower that blows" that it "can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"; that a Coleridge could declare of "all things both great and small" that "the dear God who loveth us, He made and loveth all"; that a Browning could assure a doubting age that "God's in His Heaven— all's right with the world" ; that in our own race a Nanak could challenge a locality-worshipping generation to turn his feet to where the Mecca of the Most High was not. The omnipresence, nay, the unipresence, so to speak, of the Deity thus transfigures the dark human body into "God's image cut in ebony" and glorifies in the reprobate sinner of today the regenerate saint of tomorrow. Thence individual, domestic, social life derives its duty; thence the fine arts their beauty ; thence history and literature their utility ; thence the races and cultures their unity; thence, also, the scriptures and prophets their sanctity. As we find our earth crammed with Heaven, we rebuke the age-long query, "Where art Thou?", with the answer, "Vain thought, where art Thou not?" Then we repeat with Milton the bolder, loftier query, "What if Earth be but the Shadow of Heaven?" Then we re-echo Emerson's transcendent message, "We grope after the spiritual by describing it as the *invisible*. The true meaning of *spiritual* is *real*." Then, lastly, we glimpse the meaning of Sister Nivedita's musings (no longer musings

to her!) upon the Hereafter : "Not to change one's place—for since this is not matter, it can have no place—but to sink deeper and deeper into that condition of being more and more divested of the *imagination* of body." With our Heavenly Kingdom implanted in our earthly existence and ever growing out beyond it, we realise the spiritual significance of the following conversation, closely after the strain of Mrs. Hemans's *Better Land*, in that refreshing novel, *The Gladiators*, by George Melville. "Where is it", asked Esca, on whom the idea of a spiritual existence innate from its very organisation in every intelligent being did not now dawn for the first time, "Is it here, or there? below, or above? in the stars, or the elements? I know the world in which I live ; I can see it, can hear it, can feel it; but that other world, *where* is it?" "Where is it?", repeated Calchas, "Where are the dearest wishes of your heart, the noblest thoughts of your mind? Where are your loves, your hopes, your affections, above all, your memories? Where is the whole better part of your nature? Your remorse for evil, your aspirations after good, your speculations on the future, your convictions of the reality of the past? Where these are, *there* is this other world. You cannot see it, you cannot hear it ; yet you know that it must be. Is any man's happiness complete? Is any man's misery when it reaches him so overwhelming as it seemed at a distance? And why is it not? Because something tells him that the present segment is but a small segment in the complete circle of a soul's existence. And the circle, you have not lived in Rome without learning, is the symbol of infinity."

Is not the key unto this open secret of the universe enshrined in that sacred verse of the *Isópanishad*: '*Isávásyamitham sarvam yathkincha jagathyámjagath*', which has made a modern Maharshi of our own Devendranath? Verily then,

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God".

Aye, every spot an Eden ; every soul a Shekinah ; every truth a Logos; every creature an Immanuel ; every act a Eucharist; every life an Evangel ; every event an Apocalypse—as Carlyle would add, "here or nowhere, couldst thou only see!" For,

"Only he who sees takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round it and pluck black-berries."

19

THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY

1935

The pattern prayer of the Prophet of Nazareth groups together a trio of substantives at the close and connects them with the several preceding clauses by means of the causal conjunction. For the systematic seeker after light, the question arises: What may be the distinctive connotation of each of these terms, and what their organic relation as between one and another, and which of the said clauses rest specifically upon each one of them and how? In proportion to the clearness and cogency of the answer found shall accrue the capacity to enter into the heart and soul of that model of a litany which Jesus commended to his disciples with the injunction, 'After this manner therefore pray ye', and which continues resounding to this day upon the faithful lips of Christendom.

'Kingdom,' 'power,' 'glory'—these suggest at once the familiar idea of the monarchical form of government in human polity. Particularly so, having regard to the historical background in the august Roman Empire of the day. Yet, while the first of the terms occurs also once before in the symphony of the whole supplication, the key-note struck at the outset in 'Our Father' is that of the concept of the *pater familias*. Thus, in respect of the Deity, here is a beautiful and benignant blend of the father in relation to his children in the home and of the sovereign in relation to his subjects in the state. God is the King; but He is also the Father: He is the father-like King and the king-like Father. Again, the continued use, throughout, of the plural concerning the suppliant emphasises the universality of this Fatherhood and this Sovereignty on the side of the Divine. So that, even when offered by the individual away from the congregation, the prayer must carry with it a vivid sense of the oneness of the entire human family before the Father of spirits, the

King of kings. Thus we are presented with two allied circumstances as interpretative aids to shed their own side-light upon the scope and significance of each of the factors in the supporting statement at the end, as of each of the petitions going before.

In human vocabulary, shortly put, 'kingdom' by itself represents the sphere of authority ; 'power' the exercise of that authority ; and 'glory' the fame and honour built upon that authority. Among the rulers of earth, it is only in signal instances that the three possessions, more or less, go hand in hand, power prevailing effectively through the length and breadth of the kingdom and being accompanied impressively with the trail of glory. No kingdom, no power, no glory—this sums up the position of the bulk of us, ordinary, nondescript mortals, in reference to any part of this wide-extended globe, and even of one like King Canute with regard to particular parts thereof, as he wisely brings home to his foolish sycophants. Again, there may be kingdom but without power and without glory, as where the king is, by way of concession to hoary tradition, no more than an ornamental figure-head hemmed in by the strongest of constitutional checks, or a far-off absentee and therefore an unknown and negligible quantity, or when, as King Arthur laments in the melancholy strain of his last moments,

> " Authority forgets a dying king,
> Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
> That bow'd the will."

Next, there may be kingdom devoid of glory but armed with such power as fact and fancy, intermingled, may confer in a Juan Fernandez to actuate the proud pretension—

> " I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute ;
> From the centre all round to the sea,
> I am Lord of the fowl and the brute"—

soon followed, however, by the wistful longing,

> " Better dwell in the midst of alarams
> Than reign in this horrible place."

Then, there may be kingdom with real power but with the opposite of true glory, as witness the role of the world's despots and tyrants who have wielded absolute sway in different

times and divers climes, after all, to hand down their names to posterity as by-words of scorn and infamy. Lastly, though not 'of the earth, earthy,' there may be power as well as glory with not a rood of terrestrial kingdom, as illustrated in heroes and martyrs, sages and saints, aureoled in the celestial splendour of soul-force and soul-force alone. Over against all such human limitations by permutation and combination, the unique plenitude of God's being and attributes as All-in-all in the richness of the concrete universal is what is devoutly brought out in the unqualified acknowledgment, '*Thine* is the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, for ever.'

Now, it is to be noted in what manner, each to each—though not respectively, yet in an altered sequence—the three positive averments at the close relate themselves to the three pious optatives at the commencement; 'Thine is the kingdom', therefore, 'Thy kingdom come!' 'Thine is the power'; therefore, 'Thy will be done!' 'Thine is the glory'; therefore, 'Hallowed be Thy name!' As to the deviation from the mechanical order in these correlations, that is sufficiently accounted for by the heart's outpourings not coursing invariably along the strict channels of formal exactitude. Further, on the surface, such linking up of the subjunctive of wish with the indicative of fact in each particular regard does look strange, no doubt, in so far as the wish sounds like a wish just for what is stated there as already a recognised actuality, a *fait accompli*. But the key to the explanation of this apparent anomaly or superfluity is furnished by the distinction shadowed forth between 'heaven' and 'earth,' first, in the opening apostrophe, 'Our Father which art in heaven,' and, next, in the modifying adjunct to the central one among the wishes, 'in earth, as it is in heaven'—anadjunct implicitly applicable to the other two as well. For, what makes always the essence of the contrast between heaven and earth in the abstract, non-regional sense? Is it not what Shakespeare had in mind in the characterisation of the honest man: 'His heart as far from fraud as Heaven from Earth'? If so, here is no other intent than a self-reminder in the Presence-chamber of the Unseen that God, evermore the transcendent Fact of the infinite ideal, must more and more become also God the immanent Fact of the finite actual in self and society—aye, in society only through self. Hence, in effect, it just amounts to this: May the children of men learn

willingly to strive, as they alone can, to render unto God, in and around themselves, all the things that are God's, indefeasibly His own due by a 'divine right' primary and non-derivative! And the very last word-sentence, namely, 'Amen!', denotes exactly the stress of the whole soul upon the devotee's reverent sympathy with his Deity, so to speak, and a solemn resolve upon, with an assenting assurance of, cooperation towards that supreme, cosmic consummation, the

> "one, far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves".

Accordingly, it is this import of the Lord's Prayer that is outlined, briefly yet expressively, by the Lord's Apostle in the words, "Of Him, through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be glory for ever!"

And what of the quadruple petition intervening between prologue and epilogue and investing the whole with the character of a 'prayer' proper? Does it ground itself upon 'Thine is the kingdom,' 'or 'Thine is the power,' or 'Thine is the glory'? This is determined by the content of the imploration itself and its congruity with the idea wrapped up in one or another of the three terms in question. "Give us this day our daily bread" is a trustful appeal to Love for refreshment, not alone of the perishable body, but, more, of the deathless spirit, considering that "man shall not live by bread alone." "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" is an aspiring approach to Love and Holiness for restitution, for redemption and for regeneration—it being recollected the while from self-scrutiny

> "That, in the course of justice, none of us
> Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy";

again, it being understood by linguistic research that the original Aramaic in the one perplexing clause is better rendered by 'Let us not fall into temptation' than by 'Lead us not into temptation'; and, once more, it being realised in the light of spiritual psychology that at-one-ment by penitence in the human and forgiveness in the Divine is a condition precedent to effective fortification against further transgression. As such, any plea unto a fostering and forgiving God, a saving

and sanctifying God, can derive inspiration and expect ratification only from an awakened consciousness of the ineffable 'glory' of the Godhead in the proper acceptation of the word. In the eye of vulgar man, not unoften, glory is vainglorious-ness, another name for pomp and circumstance. On the other hand, a far loftier and purer conception identifies glory with grace in God-like men and, infinitely more so, in God Himself, the all-pervading, the all-purveying, the all-preserving and the all-purifying One. That is why, even among the powers and principalities of the earth, the verdict of history as well as the voice of conscience declares that

"The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame than shedding seas of gore."

That is why no heavier discount has ever been placed upon merciless power than in

"O it is excellent
To have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant."

That is why no grander appraisement of mercy overruling power and redounding to glory has anywhere been sounded than that

"'Tis mightier than the mightiest ; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway ;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings."

That is why, in the revaluations of the Sufi, the *Jalál* of Divine majesty stands thrown into the shade only by, or, rather, harmonised into happy unity with, the *Jamál* of Divine mercy. Surely, therefore, the glory acclaimed in ' Thine is the glory ' reports itself even as the glory of eternal beneficence in sacrifice and service, the twin-born of that gratuitous loving-kindness which constitutes the noblest prerogative of genuine power.

On these lines, the final avowal, 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever', concentrates a canticle of praise envisaging a full-orbed climax in adoration of the Most High as the all-residing, the all-reigning, the all-reple-

nishing, the all-renovating King and Father, Father and King, all in one. Thus to mount up in the ascending scale in the moment of the soul's uplift to the Footstool of Grace is, by no means, to indulge in interested adulation but, in all spontaneity, to be steeped in what Carlyle defines as 'infinite admiration', its natural fruit being the ennoblement of the worshipper but not by way of commercial return for the exaltation of the worshipped. And amid the numerous echoes of parallelism in thought and sentiment that must suggest themselves as between the different parts of the Lord's Prayer and kindred universal prayers, including our own sweetly and scientifically spiritual form of Brahmic worship, one incidental variation in the former will be observed to consist in an interchange of positions in the case of the triple 'benediction' and the threefold 'adoration,' while the intimate 'invocation' and the personal 'supplication' retain each its own appropriate place. How refreshing, altogether, such a thrice-blessed hallelujah offered up from the depths of starving, straying, struggling humanity unto the triune God of Power, Love and Righteousness—

"Infinite Ideality,
Immeasurable Reality,
Infinite Personality"!

20

ASPECTS OF IDEALISM IN LIFE AND LITERATURE

1913

To
All Lovers Of Life, Light And Love
"Intent To Trace The Ideal Path Of Right,"
Pure-Living,
High-Thinking
And Well-Doing.

"Idealise away!...
You're welcome, nay, you're wise!"
—*Browning.*

The story goes that Michael Angelo, the famous Italian artist of the Renaissance, was one day passing along the street; and, as his eye casually fell upon a block of stone lying neglected by the wayside, he pointed to it and said, 'Send it to me, I see an angel's face in it'. The stone, accordingly, was taken over to the studio; the master's chisel was sedulously applied to it; and, lo and behold, there were soon wrought upon it the beautiful lineaments of a denizen of heaven. So to the piercing vision of genius were opened out possibilities hidden from the vulgar gaze; and the rough boulder, apparently unpromising and altogether unheeded, became converted into the choice material of a concretised dream of divine loveliness. What one discerns, another may not perceive with equal clearness and directness: the present always falls infinitely short of the prospective; and yet, alike in things great and small, the ideal is there to be evolved only out of the actual.

The relation between the ideal and the real—the ideal in the real and the real amid the ideal—in this lies the pith of

all true philosophy, the essence of all higher experience. In so far as we untwine this necessary relation and dissever the one from the other, either we suffer ourselves to be carried off our feet or the world becomes too much with us. Either way, we render ourselves ineligible to estimate the correct values of things. Not the idealist, not the realist, but the idealist-realist is alone qualified for the supreme task of illustrating the ideal to himself and interpreting the real to others. The gross realist accepts the world's prevailing values at par. The abstract idealist rejects them at cent per cent discount. The idealist-realist or the practical idealist, on the other hand, neither wholly acquiesces in current values nor entirely annuls all values, but finds satisfaction only in a constant revaluation of the real in terms of the ideal—in fact, not merely a revaluation but a transvaluation of values. The realist is confined in, and content with, the world of things that are, as they are; the idealist contemns it and casts it off as a mass of so much unworthy dross; while the idealist-realist, with his feet upon the sod and his eyes upon the stars, lifts the common from the commonplace and sublimes it all with a 'light that never was on sea or land'. The realist recks not to rise above the dust; the idealist dares not to descend down the clouds; whereas the idealist-realist, even because he combines in himself the twofold capacity, commands at once the motive and the means for the achievement of both. This interfusion of the ideal and the real or, more properly, the transfusion of the real into the ideal, leads the worldly as well as the otherworldly to exclaim of the practical idealist—in scorn, not out of reverence—'His ways are not as our ways, neither are our thoughts his thoughts.' And, truly so. In the world yet not of the world, to him alone is it given to get the best out of the world by putting his own best into the world. To him, ceaselessly intent, or day or night, upon realising the ideal and idealising the real, the actual offers not only the counterpart but the earnest of the ideal; the imperfect becomes not the negative of the perfect—not that which is not perfect, much less that which is incapable of perfection—but verily the perfect itself in the making. Thus a Michael Angelo beholds in the roughness of an unhewn stone the comeliness of a celestial countenance; and a greater than he declares the general dictum that the stone rejected of the builders becomes the cornerstone of the edifice.

Is this, then, a saying to adorn a tale only and not to point a moral? How strange, yet solemnly significant, its truth—a key to the mystery of 'all this unintelligible world,' a hint upon the adjustment of all this life's complex relations! How far-reaching the applications of this principle to life individual, life national and life international, if only we pause awhile and ponder the responsibility for all the rejected but not truly rejectable stones so rich with importance in the economy of the Divine Architect! To carve out of apparently coarse rubble what eventually justify themselves as corner-stones and key-stones is the high privilege of the practical idealist; and in which walk of life has he not his representative type? True idealism can dare and do what sheer realism can only despair of, if it may even so much as dream of it. As ideas rule the world, idealism stands the *primum mobile* of existence; and the roll, not of the world's thinkers alone, but of its workers also, is made up of lofty idealists and not of lowly realists. For, true idealism is soul-illumination as well as will-energy; mere realism is darkness of vision and despondency of volition. The one is dynamic, the other static; to borrow the distinction drawn by Heine between romanticism and classicism in literature, the one is infinite, the other finite, in outlook.

In this connection, it is remarkable how closely the standpoint of realistic idealism is represented, on the literary side, by what is known as the romantic revival movement—a movement vastly broader, in fact, than its purely literary compass. Transcendentalism in philosophy, mysticism in religion, romanticism in poetry—these are three facets of one Kohinoor from the *Thrirèni* confluence of Franco-German-Anglican streams, the prime legacy of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. They reflect alike the same 'renascence of wonder' which, in the words of the great high-priest of nineteenth century romanticism,

> "hath among least things
> An undersense of greatest";

the same "beauty of promise"

> "which sets
> (As at some moments might not be unfelt
> Among the bowers of Paradise itself)
> The budding rose above the rose full blown";

and the same 'excelsior' strenuousness of aspiration which proves

"how on earth
Man, if he do but live within the light
Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad
His being armed with strength that cannot fail."

In fine, that is no true idealism which fails to make of the idealist "a sensitive being, a *creative* soul". And no greater service may be rendered to the cause of idealism than to rescue it from the besetting taint of passive, unpractical mysticism; as, on the other hand, the peril to be warded off in realism lies in its tendency to degenerate into abject, egoistic cynicism. In the happy commingling of these two elements, the idealistic and the realistic, freed each from its own peculiar incubus, you witness the source of all the marvellous plenitude of productiveness round about as it answers exactly to the *purusha* and *prakriti* functions, the *nirguna* and *saguna* aspects, in the process of cosmic evolution. It cannot, therefore, be too strongly enforced that idealism, as thus understood, forms the active spring of all origination and originality, whether in art or in religion. He is no artist worth the name in whom there burns not the Promethean spark of idealism, such as the ploughman-poet of Ayrshire longed for as "a' the learning I desire" that

"My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart."

Above all, the Author of all being *is* the Highest of idealists, as also the Greatest of realists, even by virtue of that ineffable idealism, that impulse or *leela* of eternal generation, which, in the perpetual panorama of Divine self-expression, figures forth the Ever-Transcendental as the All-Immanental. Hence "the human cry" voiced thus by Tennyson:

"Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!—
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!"

And, be it noted, this idealistic urge in Creation itself touches us at precisely the same points as the romantic spirit in art and literature. It reaches us as *Sathyam-Sivam-Sundaram*—*Sathyam* through our intellectual, *Sivam* through our ethical,

and *Sundaram* through our æsthetic, consciousness—a tri-coloured image reflected on the plane of poetry in Wordsworth's perception of Truth—"the sentiment of Being", Shelley's exultation in Goodness—"the breath of life", and Keats's ecstacy over Beauty—"a joy for ever". This crowning consummation of idealism, attained through the equation of Truth and Beauty and the identity of both with Goodness, brings home as a reality of actual experience what should otherwise remain but a logical abstraction. So that none but a genuine idealist can follow the Gospel of Work according to the Sage of Chelsea and "produce, produce; were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product, produce it in God's name!" Again, considering the place of idealism in the scheme of things, whoever would have the nooks and corners of his existence flooded full with its fertilising waters must yield to no relaxation in keeping fresh and pure the sacred springs of Truth, Goodness and Beauty aforesaid and in deepening and widening evermore the channels of their outflow. Call it culture, discipline or *sádhana*, *this* is the one thing needful, the sole office and occupation of such as would not lose their own souls even to gain the whole world. To suffer the springs or the channels to be insidiously choked up by growing insensibility is nothing less than to dry up the fountain and leave life but a dreary waste in the result. The realist who has given his heart away—a sordid boon! may, with his prudential calculus, late and soon, getting and spending, afford, if he find it profitable for the time being, to disregard in practice the claims of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. But this the idealist of the type herein appreciated cannot bear to do; for he knows, as he alone can know, that under no circumstances is any truce possible for him with untruth, vice or vileness. Hence it imperatively behoves us to cultivate with diligence the sense of Truth, the sensibility to Goodness and the susceptibility to Beauty which form the native plant of our human constitution. No man but is endued with some innate measure of idealism; and youth being preeminently the period of idealism with its transparency and optimism, its buoyancy and adventure, the problem of life resolves itself into the problem of how to preserve unfaded the spirit of youth or, in other words, how to perfume the experience of age with the idealism of youth.

"Wintry age
Impends ; the frost will gather round my heart ;
If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead !"

So it is that all the great men intent upon this problem have ever suffered little children to come unto them, nay, have themselves sought their contact and communion ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Need it be added that to idealise life is quite other than to possess ideals in life ? Ideals, set ideals, are good, and they are needed ; and poor, indeed, beyond words were life devoid of these. But the idealising temper is all in all. It is that which not only furnishes ever fresh ideals but also bears down all impediments in the way to their attainment. Ideals are conscious aims looming above in the horizon ; the idealising temper is almost a constitutional trait lifting one above one-self with everything around and hitching one's waggon to the very stars—'patines of bright gold' in the firmament of the soul. Like the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling, it doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven, and girdle round with one rainbow-belt the varied contents of life, even this humdrum life of ours in the work-a-day world. Accordingly,

"the vulgar forms of present things,
The actual world of our familiar days,"

undergo, through its exercise, a transfiguration which, every moment, demands and dictates what has been called a trans-valuation of values. Says Walter Raleigh of this type of idea-list, the Wordsworthian mystic : "He does not look beyond this world, but gazes intently on what is presented to him, and if his quest fail, looks still nearer and closer. In the earth under his boot-soles, in the garments that cling closest to him, and if not there, in the beatings of his heart, he tries to find the secret. Heaven is not for him a far place, nor eternity a long time. Here or nowhere, now or never, the soul of all things is to be found." Very apt words these, and roundly put.

This being so, it becomes obvious how while idealism is the fruitful mother of ideals, not all ideals are justified of idealism—certainly not, at any rate, that of abstraction from the world. For, the key-note of all idealism sound at the core is, not the detachment of the self, nor the dissolution of the

not-self, but the spiritualisation of the not-self and its identification with the self in unity-through-difference. Such, as Emerson tells us, was the idealism of Plato, whose "balanced soul" wrought out a happy synthesis between "the infinitude of the Asiatic soul and the defining, result-loving, machine-making, surface-seeking, opera-going Europe." Later monkish mediævalism apart, such, too, was preeminently the idealism of the *rishis* and *yogis* of the *Upanishads*, the *Janakas* and *Yagnyavalkyas* of our own spiritual ancestry. And if, once more, the real and the ideal, "according well, may make one music as before", it must be by setting the Æolian harp of the finite 'in tune with the Infinite.' If, once again, our art is to paint the true picture of life, let us beware and see to it that we keep untainted by our side and invariably lay under contribution, in the words of the Seer of Concord, "the two vases, one of ether and one of pigment."

In the transvaluation of values by the idealist, there is no object too mean, no being too hopeless: all, all is magnificence, as all is mystery; at the same time, all is certitude, as all is progression. In the positive utterance of the Idealist of Optimism sweeping all doubt and distrust before it in the swelling majesty of its very movement, "the evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound." And as even now "eternity affirms the conception of an hour," truth becomes stranger than fiction; "Jove nods to Jove from behind each one of us"; and behold! every flower shines forth at once a fairy—every star a shekinah—every spot a sanctuary—every child a cherub—every 'tear' an 'amulet'—every sound of nature a strain of hosanna—every event of life a testament of providence—and finally, in Swami Rama Thirtha's words, every day a New Year's Day, every eve a Christmas Eve! Cowper's 'dull matter' becomes woven on 'the roaring loom of Time' into Goethe's 'living, visible garment of God.' Every sphere of man's thought and action becomes delved into a channel through which flows the Universal Mind—

> "As full, as perfect in vile man that mourns
> As the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

That is the message of even so mechanical and matter-of-fact a realist as Pope. And how is the gulf bridged athwart these apparent contrarieties of condition between sinner and saint? We turn to the matchless lines of the Idealist of Evolution in

which, speaking of "Faith beyond the forms of Faith," 'the Ancient Sage' declares:

> "She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,
> She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,
> She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,
> She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
> She hears the lark within the songless egg,
> She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage!'"

Consequently, that endless 'reclassification' and 'reassessment' which rules out all 'permanent settlement' in the domain of idealism knows no 'depressed classes' of humanity too depressed to be elevated, no abandoned sinners too far abandoned to be reclaimed. On the other hand, the scum of society are already themselves so far saved as to become the saviours of mankind; and the very rubbish of the earth is seen only as the raw material of the more than royal robes of the lilies of the field. To crown all, with the fading of that ever-evanescing line between the *esse* and the *posse*, humanity becomes transubstantiated into divinity, as divinity itself comes to be translated into humanity—man the manifestation of God, and God the Perfection of man. Thus the *jeevâthma* avers '*Aham Brahmâsmi*'; and the Son (not the Saviour!) announces, 'I and my Father are one.' Such the universal doctrine and the eternal sacrament of the Eucharist in the Catholic Church of Idealism.

If, then, I am a true idealist as a teacher of youth, my pupil becomes to me, not a mere plastic piece of clay in my hands, but the inheritor and improver even now of the modest estate of my mind, a fellow-pupil with me at the feet of the Master of all wisdom. Likewise, if you are a genuine idealist in the relation of a householder, you no longer find at home the ready gratifier of your animal appetites or the secure steward of your domestic economy but "the woman-soul that leadeth you upward and on," even as Faust is led into heaven by the very woman he has wronged, the glorified Margaret. Again, the politician "with a heart alive like Memnon's lyre" to the quickening touch of idealism cannot be, as in that Elizabethan definition given in *The Duchess of Malfi*, "a quilted anvil for the Devil"; but he must exalt himself, by the only 'divine right' of 'the people's will', as the faithful trustee of their liberties after the Victorian traditions of a Bright who

held fast to the maxim that righteousness alone exalteth a nation and a Gladstone who kept the soul alive in the public life of Britain. Similarly, the minister of religion throbbing with a heart pregnant with the celestial fire of idealism fulfils himself in that holiest of vocations, not as an official oracle from a veiled God unto His blind seekers, nor an authorised arbiter between an offended Deity and His condemned children, but as a living witness to a Gospel that is universal and a Grace that is individual. Lastly, the poet mounted upon the Parnassian peak of idealism stands distanced out from the versifier in the valley—at best, "the idle singer of an empty day"—and, there, becomes endowed with both "the vision and the faculty divine" which make him at once the dreamer of dreams and the singer of songs. And such the songs he sings that to him alone applies the old claim about making the songs of a nation, no matter whoever should frame her laws.

Indeed, it is poetry, perhaps, more than any of the other arts, that links into one orb the two hemispheres of the ideal and the actual—the one the source of its inspiration, the other the field of its influence. Whoever, for instance, from the point of view of its purity or of its efficacy, can lower or limit down that idealism which, in no dilettante spirit or doctrinaire style, breathes, and breathes with wonderful effect of animation, through the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley or the prose-poetry of Carlyle and Emerson? Poet-philosophers are these, one and all, in whom poetry and philosophy meet and merge at the angle of idealism. Thus, Julius Hare's judgment that "poetry is philosophy, and philosophy is poetry" is made good in the light of Henry Jones's valid conception of idealism as "that particular form of philosophy which is most in touch with our modern life and most akin to the poetry in which that life has found its best expression."

In the case, especially, of Shelley, 'sun-treader', as he is called by Browning, his profound admirer—Shelley the idealist *par excellence*, though commonly charged with shadowy insubstantiality, is it not true that, if he was a 'changeling from the land of fairy', he was, at the same time, the child of such a concrete, convulsive movement as the French Revolution? Nay, what was his one theme throughout, if not the Revolution itself set to music—*Queen Mab* declaring its principles, albeit with the unripeness of an iconoclast; *The Revolt of Islam* setting forth the sacrificial struggles incident

to them ; and *Prometheus Unbound* sounding the final pæan of their triumph in the deliverance of the enchained human spirit? Surely, Shelley's idealism was, as true idealism cannot but be, always practical in its own way : rather, his was too intensely practical. His whole life, full of the wild 'storm and turbulence' of his own West Wind, was one grim effort of fanatic heroism consistently to translate all his idealism into practicality. One may recognise a picture of Shelley himself in his own superb description of

> "a poet hidden
> In the light of thought,
> Singing hymns unbidden,
> Till the world is wrought
> To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not."

Indeed, with all his 'egregious practical energy', so called, Shelley is his own 'Defence of Poetry' incarnate—the poetry that "strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb." 'Beautiful' beyond question but 'ineffectual' by no means, whether in the conduct of his life or in the influence of his teaching, is this 'angel'; and not altogether 'in vain' did he beat 'in the void his luminous wings'. In Shelley, no doubt, you see the spirit that etherealised, almost volatilised, all sense-impressions and rose on its wings to the Invisible, like his own Skylark soaring as it sings and still singing as it soars. Nevertheless and, in fact, through that very circumstance, did he not toil with all his might to objectify the inward 'Merlin's gleam' he caught of a renovated humanity? That is what makes him essentially the poet of the assured future in the living present. Hark how he celebrates the millennium in which "Hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates":

> "The world's great age begins anew,
> The golden years return,
> The earth doth like a snake renew
> Her winter weeds outworn :
> Heaven smiles, and faith and empires gleam
> Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.
>
> "A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
> From waves serener far;

A new Peneus rolls its fountains
Against the morning star;
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

"A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies;
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore."

One thing to be observed is that, as the ideal must be realised in the actual, so the realisation is rightly held to embrace, not the individual alone, but the entire race—a note which Wordsworth, that other minstrel of "joy in widest commonalty spread," also strikes in ringing tones:

"Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind."

For, so far as the Western world is concerned, the conception of *man* as against *men*—the unity and solidarity of the race, overstepping the self, the family, the tribe and the nation—constituted the main lesson of the French Revolution to the idealists of that generation. In fact, in no age has the true idealist consented to look to the self and leave his kind alone or to concentrate upon one sphere, to the exclusion of the other spheres, of life. To him humanity is one, life is one. Rooted as he knows himself to be in the primal elements of common human nature, he owns for the rule of his growth this inviolable law of spiritual biology, namely, 'I am a man, and what is dear to any man cannot but be dear to me; also, what is dear to me must be far from perfectly dear even to me, while there remains one other man to whom it has yet to be made dear. I cannot choose but realise myself, if at all, in and through my wife and children, my friends and neighbours, my co-citizens and fellow-countrymen, my brother-men and sister-women.'

It is worthy of note how the *Bhagavad Gita* and Wordsworth's *Excursion* furnish highly suggestive parallels in their teaching on this subject of the higher life of idealism, its practical relations and social obligations. Arjuna, in his *vishádayógam* on the field of Kurukshetra, cowers before the

categorical imperative of the higher social duty, bound down as he is by the transitory ties of kinship and deterred by dread of the immediate result of bloodshed through his supposed personal agency. The Solitary, in his 'despondency' bred by the so-called afflictions of private life and the apparent failure of movements of public hope, renounces human fellowship and divine faith and retires into seclusion and scepticism. Then, both for Arjuna and for the Solitary, the lost paradise of duty and society is regained by almost the same course of steps—firstly, *viswaroopasandarsanayógam* in the one case and 'the apocalypse of Nature' in the other; and, secondly, close upon the vision beatific, the revelation of the Law Divine, as unto Moses upon the Mount of Sinai. Sri Krishna urges the denial of death as against the fear of the sin of murder and of the loss of kinsmen, detachment from the consequence of action as against the sway of the passion of effects, and the immersion of the self in the Higher Self as against the independence of the soul.

'*Avinási thu thadwiddhi yéna sarvamidam thatham*
Viná samavyayasyásya nakaschith karthumarhathi.'
'*Mathkarmakrun mathparumó mathbhakthassangavarjithah*
Nirvairassarvabhoothéshu yassamámèthi Pándava.'

So, too, in the churchyard among the mountains, the Wanderer and the Pastor, in their turn, meet the requirements of the case before them by expounding the exquisitely-ordered interrelation between Nature and Man and between Man and Man and by inculcating, through 'the short and simple annals of the poor,' the lessons of trustful resignation and social intercourse in words like these:

"The man—
Who, in this spirit, communes with the forms
Of Nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy."

Again,

"One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good."

Once more,

"Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass
Through shades and silent rest to endless joy."

Thus it would be no less easy than tempting to multiply passages of close parallelism which show how the corrective to despondency in both instances is drawn from the self-same source of idealism, "the heart within the heart." And, but for its indubitably smaller canvas and lighter colour, we might even go so far, perhaps, as to designate Wordsworth's philosophical poem as the Western replica of the *Song Celestial*. Prophet of Nature,

"The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being"—

celebrant of Duty, 'Stern Daughter of the Voice of God'—realist with 'the eye of a field-geologist'—idealist compelled often, even as a boy, 'to grasp at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism'—what words can appraise the worth of Wordsworth's message to Modern India, verily

"a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring and reprove"?

Literary illustration along this line, confined to the paramount primates among the Neo-Romantics with a distinctive life-philosophy of their own, should scarcely miss out Keats—less the poet-philosopher than the painter-poet, with his "Oh for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!" and despite his " great end
Of poesy, that it should be a friend
To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of men"—

and Byron, too—that 'chief traitor in the Romantic camp,' more the subtle sentimentalist than the spiritual idealist even in his 'language of another world,' learnt in Nature's 'familiar face,' his passion for 'the gentle savage of the wild' and his worship of the 'Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind.' Our thoughts, then, on idealism and how the ideal ever moves in advance, luring on the actual behind, and the actual gropes its way forward with a succession of risings and fallings towards the ideal, may fitly conclude with those lines of allegory, as precious as precocious, which we owe to Coleridge, 'the subtle-souled psychologist,' 'of imagination all compact', than whom no other metaphysical thinker of the age attained a firmer grasp of the interrelation between the actual and the ideal:

"On the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 't was some fairy place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
That far outstripp'd the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind;
For he, alas! is blind;
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last."

So the actual is blind by itself: it sees, if at all, through a glass darkly. But when that which is perfect in us is come, it is able to see vividly and walk confidently by the light of the ideal. For, everywhere idealism begets the vision of light; light begets the word of hope; and hope begets the enthusiasm of humanity. Dream, declaration and deed thus follow—all as the progeny of idealism. In his self-expression, the idealist reproduces himself, first, in the seer, whose eye sees the 'dream' visualised before it; next, in the prophet, whose lip pours forth the 'declaration' to the world; and, lastly, in the reformer, whose hand remoulds the 'deed' of his environment. Hence it is that, by a natural law of limitation which leaves the dream larger, and the deed more particular, than the declaration, the reformer comes to be national in his methods, while he must be universal in his aims. The true reformer, then, is he who strives evermore to idealise the

conditions of life, personal, domestic and social, intellectual, æsthetic, moral and spiritual, in relation to the peculiar genius and culture of his race but always with an eye to the broadening vistas of the universal. Many are called, but few are chosen; many are the builders, but few the architects; and manifold the materials, both among the old and the new, rejected by the realism of the builders but all too highly prized—wisely conserved or valiantly welcomed—by the idealism of the architects! Can we, therefore, too diligently assimilate the spirit of "the devout Mussalman who picks up and carefully preserves every scrap of paper on which words are written, because the scrap may perchance contain the name of Allah"? Thus the saying that the stone rejected of the builders becomes the corner-stone of the edifice embodies a beautiful sentence-parable on the theme of the actual and the ideal and carries in it an unspeakable encouragement as well as a terrible warning. Blessed are they that make its lesson their own and need not the warning but benefit by the encouragement! For, after all, that is the part of idealism in life reflected in, and reinforced by, all the idealism in literature, using the terms, of course, in their larger meaning.

To sum up, in closing, the practical implications of these terms. If it is idealism that detects the soul of good in things evil and reconciles the troubled spirit to the appointments of life; if it is idealism that discloses the promise and potency of the least little elements of society and braces up the downcast spirit with the Larger Hope; if it is idealism that whispers, 'Fear not the future, weep not for the past,' and impels the conservative spirit towards the goal of vaster progress in the time to come, 'winning the ears to dare be now glorious and great and calm'; then, it must be conceded that no subject is more intimately connected with the cause and the cure of Mother India's degeneracy. As idealism has ebbed away from the practical life of the nation, it has spelled that disappearance of the large outlook and the liberal temper and that dominance of fatalism and inertness which sadly form the all too patent marks of present-day Hindu life. Too prompt to proclaim the sublime idealism of our past, we have grown too slow to own the crass realism of our present But the lamentable fact remains that we have succeeded in making ourselves no less materialistic than the people of the West are assumed to be, but only without their redeeming features.

As it is, nought but the wings of a healthy idealism can put into us that spring and elasticity which we lack in life. An appeal this which goes or ought to go home, in particular, to youth, who form our band of hope and who must understand betimes that liberal education is only another name for cultivated idealism.

Again, if literature is singled out as the vesture or the vehicle of idealism, it is not simply because every student has to do with literature who may not be fortunate enough to bring the other forms of art as well within his reach; but chiefly because, as a formative force embodying the ideal in words, it is distinctly a more direct and suggestive, plastic and permanent, organ of unseen beauty and unheard harmony than the creations of wood, stone, paint or breath. For, as aptly pointed out by Shelley, "language is arbitrarily produced by the imagination, and has relation to thoughts alone; but all other materials, instruments and conditions of art have relations among each other which limit and interpose between conception and expression." All true art is designed, not by any means to photograph the realistic, but certainly to foreshadow the idealistic. Those 'plans and charts,' little or large, so busily and perpetually shaped, not alone by the 'six years' darling of a pigmy size', as the famous Ode on Immortality would have it, but equally also by adult men, who are, after all, but children of a larger growth—what are all those designs and devices, if not so many 'fragments from our *dream* of human life'? It is but hollow cant that conveys praise in the common phrases, 'true to life', 'true to nature', since, after all, exact reproduction is something foreign to life and nature. Even otherwise, is it, for instance, the reproduction of heard melodies and not, rather, the adumbration of far sweeter melodies unheard that makes music carry us to the very edge of the infinite? But less impalpable, more enduring and susceptible of more varied and delicate combinations, than passing sound is the witchery of recorded words, the lure of literature, handed down through the generations in the magic casement of books—the 'Kings' Treasuries' of Ruskin. Is there less truth, then, in Wordsworth's indictment that "to be incapable of a feeling for poetry.....is to be without love of human nature and reverence for God" than in Shakespeare's verdict of fitness for "treasons, stratagems and spoils" against

"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds"?

Nay, not so, if poetry is indeed 'the beauty and finer spirit of all knowledge.' How subtle, therefore, the symbolism which conceives of the goddess of music as also the goddess of letters; and, again, how sound the wisdom which ranks the production of a poem as among the *sapthasanthánás*—in fact, the most immortal and immortalising of all offspring! We engage in the pursuit of literature to little purpose, unless we seek in it the fountain and feeder of idealism; and only thus do we come to recognise a Kalidasa, a Dante and a Shakespeare as among earth's truest benefactors—the very 'makers' of the race in the deepest sense; 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world,' as Shelley, their kinsman, would christen them.

Thus to fuse and fashion life, literature, art and all unto the noblest ends of ideal being—"this is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!" For, in the spirit of that modernism which is to consecrate the altar of the Church of the Spirit, howsoever named, the better mind and heart of all the children of men from pole to pole, this is even the fruition of *religion in every-day life* out of the fulness of the Concrete Universal!

21

'THOUGHTFULNESS OF HEART'

1935

Here is an arresting phrase from the writings of an eminent Unitarian teacher and minister of the last generation. One wonders how fully, how sweetly, the gracious virtue enfolded in it must have suffused, by endeavour as well as by endowment, the personal temper of the author from whose mint issued this remarkable coin. Dr. H. W. Crosskey was no mere rhetorician indulging, for its own sake, in the luxury of fantastic figures and fashions of speech by way of transferred epithet and interchanged attribute. Rather was it an inspired moment when a whole set of inherent, if not altogether intended, implications became embodied together in this orginal form. The more you ponder its vital significance with seriousness, the deeper you penetrate with profit into the very core of all true growth and greatness.

Observe, first, the exact wording—'thoughtfulness of heart'. It is not 'a thought or the thoughts of the heart,' nor any 'thinking of or by the heart.' The reference is not to one or more of particular, isolated acts of reflection and ratiocination. Neither is it to the general process of cogitation and cognition. The stress laid is upon a habitual trait forming part and parcel of the inner furniture, and evidencing itself in the outer conduct, of the individual. Next, note how the portfolio of this thinking business, pursuable with purposive continuity or recurrence so as to consolidate it into normal use and wont, is here shifted away from the customary quarter. The activities of thought as also their concomitant or resultant in the quality of thoughtfulness have been too often associated with the organ of the mind—so often, indeed, as to provoke the comment, 'Common is the commonplace'. But what of this new type of thoughtfulness, the thoughtfulness of the *heart*, in the face of the familiar identification of the heart with the fount of feeling instead of with the seat of

intellection? Is there in the modified conception before us nought but a quaint misapplication of the recognised principle of psychology and a queer confusion of the current terminology of common parlance?

Of course, the expression, 'thoughtfulness of heart,' sounds all too new even to oddness. Nevertheless, the idea at the back of it is old enough, as old, in fact, as man's first perception of the essential distinction between knowledge and wisdom, *jnâna* and *vijnâna*. It belongs to the realm of that higher psychology which lays down that out of the heart are all the issues of life. And, down the ages, it has sung itself 'to one clear harp in divers tones' through untold master-voices among the mystically-minded children of men. To cite just a few notable examples from the literature of the spirit. The story of ancient Israel tells of a prince who came to the throne when yet green in his youth and of the dream in which the All-good appeared to him and asked what he desired. The answer rendered was: 'Give Thy servant an *understanding heart*, that I may discern between good and evil'. Now, inasmuch as human civilisation strictly started with such discernment, this supplication of Solomon, linking conscience or the moral sense on to the 'heart,' approves itself as the wisest prayer ever offered by a young man or even by the oldest of sages. For, it fastens the attention upon the one thing needful, without which intellectual education, howsoever stimulating, is bound not only to prove futile for the upbuilding of a better world out of the materials of personal character but, what is worse, to succeed, as the Duke of Wellington put it, in but making clever devils of men. Turning to modern times, we hear the thunder-clap of Carlyle burst in to cleave off the 'logic-chopping machine' and the 'vulpine intellect' from the heart which 'sees farther than the head'. And, recalling somewhat the drift of the Narada-Sanatkumara colloquy of our own hoary Upanishad, Browning's illuminating portrayal of the subjective evolution of his Paracelsus goes to illustrate how infinitely superior in potency the loveliness of spiritualised love in the heart to the lure of secularised lore in the head for the real satisfaction of human longings. Thus and thus is enforced on all sides the suggestive lesson that, in the comprehensive import of the term, the feeling heart not simply feels but, therein and thereby, also 'sees' and 'understands', thinks and knows, in the most

authentic of senses and the most far-reaching of ways; so much so that its competency in these respects must be placed alone in the superlative degree. There is seeing and seeing; there is understanding and understanding; there is thinking and thinking. To take proper note of these varieties is to realise how, if sight belongs to the eye and foresight pertains to the head, it is nothing less than insight that develops in the heart.

As such, a few important aspects of contrast emerge, in point of what has been called the 'thoughtfulness' of each, as between the fore-looking mind and the in-seeing heart. And these are aspects which certainly deepen the conviction that the heart apprehends reality more correctly, completely and effectively than the mind, even because it does it differently. First, toiling reason can but grapple with the positive conceptions of the scientist in the quest after truth. But the discernments of the sensitive heart touch the profounder levels of discoveries clothed in the language of the child, the poet and the saint by the freest play of plain, unsophisticated, sympathetic imagination. As tersely enunciated by Plotinus, the old-world philosopher of mysticism, the law here in force is that "Like is known only by like; and the condition of all knowledge is that the subject should become like the object." Next, the knowledge gained by the plodding investigations of the mind is but of a secondary and instrumental character, accessory to the obtaining of further knowledge. On the contrary, that based on the pure intuitions of the heart is of the primary and ultimate kind. Further, the one is, for the most part, technical and analytical, relative to special interests only; whereas the other carries with it synthetic values of general applicability to the diversified departments of life. Lastly, the one seldom ranges beyond the vain and vexatious ring of hair-splitting speculation or secluded lucubration. But the other is nothing if not intensely practical unto the end of the moulding of personality upon the whirling wheel of circumstance and under the vivifying impact of intercourse. Accordingly, it becomes, by far, more imperative that the warp and woof of a kindly, imaginative emotion should systematically inweave itself into the colourless fabric of the mind than that the white light of reason should irradiate the hidden chambers of the heart. So urged John James Taylor, a powerful centre of quickening influence as an elder-day presid-

ing preceptor of the English Unitarians' Seminary of the soul: "It is not extent of power, but the rectitude of its exercise; not intellect, but spiritual-mindedness; not what the world calls cleverness, but simple fidelity to duty; not the resources of a highly-disciplined and richly-stored understanding, but the sweetness and purity of the affections of the heart, which point most clearly and steadily to a higher life in God beyond the veil now drawn between visible and invisible things."

And what is the testimony, too, of ethicospiritual biography? In fine, even this: that, in the redemptive economy of the soul and its self-realisation, 'thoughtfulness of heart' emphasises and exemplifies itself as alone 'the way, the truth and the life' on the human side—that is, apart from, and antecedent to, 'the grace of Grace'. Writ large in luminous letters, it shines upon every emblazoned page of the world's record of the golden deeds of goodness and the more than golden lives of godliness. So, out of the writhing agony of the paragon of Elizabethan Knighthood upon Zutphen's bloody field, it is timely, self-abnegating thoughtfulness of heart that sends forth the ringing echo of generous tones, 'Thy need is greater than mine.' So, from 'the glimmering gloom' of Scutari's nursing hospital, it is, again, wide-spread, self-consecrating thoughtfulness of heart that, day in and day out, casts upon 'the darkening walls' the kissed shadow of the Victorian 'type of good, heroic womanhood.' Nearer home, four-square against callous custom, 'procuress to hell', it is dynamic thoughtfulness of heart in the extreme that alike inspires and compasses such Herculean feats of humanity as the quenching of the *sati's* lurid flames or the wiping of the child-widow's harrowing tears. And the principle holds good in regard to 'little, unremembered acts of kindness' smuggled in without number into private intercourse no less than to the vast, chronicled achievements of philanthropic service on a nation-wide scale. There it is—thoughtfulness of heart, the only adequate explanation of all beneficent pieties and beatific sanctities, manifested whether in single, specific acts or in sustained, life-long careers and perfected by that persevering steadfastness which constitutes the backbone of productive self-discipline

Such being the proven efficacy of thoughtfulness of heart in the conduct of life, the particular context in which the rich-

laden phrase is introduced by the good author may be noted at this point as an index to the endless possibilities opened out in the manifold of domestic and social relations even along the humble byways of humdrum life, as along the romantic highways of heroic life. "When we," says he, "entertain a friend certain to leave us on the morrow for a long, far-away journey, how anxious we are to make him feel the full warmth of our affection! No sign by which we can show our love, however slight and trifling, is willingly forgotten. When we remember that, although it has become a familiar custom—an ordinary matter of course—to be in each other's company, we may yet be parted tomorrow, are we not warned that there ought to be more diligence of love, more thoughtfulness of heart in our daily intercourse?"

How helpfully handy, then, comes this 'thoughtfulness of heart' to you and to me, the all-embracing watch-word of personal *sádhan*, the all-sufficing rule of self-improvement! Shall we accept it as the seed of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in our eternal Eden to yield us its abundance in 'the fruits of the spirit'? Shall we adopt it as the formula of creative evolution for all the graces of character summed up in the charming word, magnanimity? Shall we appoint it as the alert counsel in charge of the appeal, at every turn, from Philip drunk to Philip sober? Shall we plant it before us as the mirror of our secret deformities and above us as the lodestar of our sacred adventures? Shall we set it up as the sleepless sentinel to sound betimes the warning-note, 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation'? Shall we find in it the cypher key to all 'heart-affluence rich'—slow to anger, quick to forgive and yet quicker to forget; in no haste to misunderstand and, more still, in no humour to misrepresent; vigilant in tender regard for all susceptibilities; with a breadth of outlook not only providing for, but prompting, a tolerant recognition of the possible validity of divergent views and versions; evincing an easy preparedness and capacity to put oneself in another's skin and scan situations and issues with his pair of eyes; alive to the decencies of shunning every vestige of self-seeking in rank or repute at others' expense, while 'in honour preferring one another'; eager in solicitude to share crushing burdens and succour out of besetting snares? Shall we locate in it the power-house of strength for the outstretched hand of loving service active against the self-absorption of

'that inward eye which is the soul of bliss'? Shall we read and re-read in it an epitome at once of St. Paul's famous glorification of charity and Cardinal Newman's exquisite delineation of gentlemanliness—aye, of the finest of passages wrought by the magic pen of any 'human-divine man' upon the evangel of practical idealism? If so we will, may daily renewals be ours of the disciplinary vow, the *sádhanamanthram*, to be administered by it amid inward searchingsof self through all uprisings and downsittings, outgoings and incomings! So shall the nearness of the Kindom of Heaven become a reality of experience, as the reprobate spirit begins to 'repent', that is, in the literal sense, to *think* (as well as to *see* and to *understand*) *again* or differently—no longer amiss because otherwise than with the heart but aright with the *heart*.

22

SPEECHFULNESS OF HEART

1935

The only authentic type of *anushtánism* in religion is that attested by the translation or transcription of faith into life through unfailing constancy, above all else, in intimate communion with the Living God. This at once places practical spiritual experience poles apart from all theoretical, theological assent, however well-grounded and unreserved, to any or all of the cardinal articles of 'belief' about His being and His attributes and even about personal relationship to Him as the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, not the quest after, nor the attainment of, religious knowledge by dint of devoted study and research; not good works, though in the name of the Creator and for the behoof of His creatures, in the widening categories of home, neighbourhood, community, nationality and humanity; not cultivated fellowship nor even realised unity with God-like spirits of the past and the present—none of these, be the life-value of each by itself or of all together what it may, constitutes the real soul, the quintessence, of religion. Primarily and preeminently, it is companionship and converse with the Divine under all conditions that forms the *sanctum sanctorum* of inner life, all other factors being but so many ante-chambers and vestibules, aisles and side-apartments. Hence the emphasis incessantly laid upon worship by one like Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, as when he observed to Pandit Sivanath Sastri: "Don't you see a Sakta is one who worships Sakti; a Saiva is one who worships Siva; a Vaishnava is one who worships Vishnu. Similarly, a Brahmo is one who worships Brahma. Our right to the name 'Brahmo' arises from the fact of our being the worshippers of the Supreme Being."

Though apparently indicative only of the movement of the human towards the Divine, 'worship' properly stands for the complete idea of their mutual *rapport* more plainly denot-

ed by that other term, 'communion'. Even so, over and above its restricted application in common usage, the word 'prayer' also acquires an extended signification identifying it with the two aforesaid expressions. In this connotatively larger, scientifically securer sense, "Religion," it has been said, "is no more possible without prayer than poetry without language, or music without atmosphere." Herein is envisaged the radical contradistinction between *lakshya* and *upalakshya*, between primary and secondary ends or constituents, if not also between essentials and non-essentials, in the supreme art as well as in the subsidiary arts of life By way of illustration, the attention is implicitly turned upon how sublimities of import, subtleties of prosody, sorceries of figures of speech and like resources of rhetoric have their place but as accidental adornments, not as the *sine qua non*, of poesy; and, likewise, all musical appliances, howsoever refined and diversified—even the faculty of voice, never so fascinatingly sweet and fastidiously schooled—furnish no more than accessory accompaniments to melody. And it is explicitly pointed out how, on the other hand, the bed-rock phenomenon of language in the one case and of atmosphere in the other—both standing miracles in the respective domains of man and nature—alone supplies the inevitably fundamental and perpetual requisite of plinth and pillar alike for the superb structure of a distinctive 'palace of art' from end to end. Such, too, in a way is the relation, say, between the staple item of food and the several other differing courses in a rich and well-ordered table of *menu*. That is how Carlyle's dictum, 'No prayer, no religion', puts the whole thing in a nutshell, concerning the one indispensable element in the life of the spirit. Not the *Brahmajnáni*, not the *Brahmavádin*, not the *Brahmasèvak*, not the *Brahmanyasangi*, but the *Brahmasádhak* in the *Brahmópásak* approves himself, in the last judgment of subjective and objective *yóga* experience, as the good and faithful soul in whom *Brahman*, as *Bhagaván*, is well pleased. And that is by virtue of such a one fully qualifying alone for entry into the joy of the Lord—even the present paradise of beatitude in and through *Brahmánandarasapán*.

Thus and to this end, as in human, so in human-divine inter-relations, the self-expression of the heart becomes an inherent and compelling necessity pure and simple. It is a

profound psychological maxim, coming home to every beating heart, that is seized and set out in the subjoined citation about the conditions or credentials of dynamic reality in every species of mutual affinity, attachment and association worth the name: "Men often think, 'They love us and we know it; we love them and they know it.' Nay, but it is not enough to have the love and do the duty *in silence*. We live not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of those we love. Out of the mouth—it is the *spoken* word that feeds. It is the kindness *offered* that furnishes the house." (W. C. Gannett) The self-utterance of the affections being, therefore, the only positive pledge of their growth, nay, of their very maintenance, to some appreciable purpose, the neglect of that paramount exercise, on any account whatever, in the daily round of engagements cannot but lead to growing apathy and aloofness and eventuate in virtual estrangement and disseverance. Consequently, in the nature of things, only in ever-renewed contact and communication with the Spirit-God lies locked (or locketed) the sole secret of the sustained vitality and vigour of the religious spirit as also the sovereign safeguard against its gradual atrophy in effect into negation itself. Little wonder that many a genuine believer is clearly seen, if he does not also frankly find himself, sliding ultimately into settled unbelief merely through the insidious influence, sure if slow, of the besetting peril in question. Avaunt, then, every trace of anything like unreflecting inertness or temporising tardiness consciously and unconsciously suffered, now and again, to interfere at all with that strenuous upkeep of *rapprochement* with the Unseen which absolutely depends upon systematic self-recital unto the receptive ear of the All-Confessor and the All-Comforter! For, as the gravity of the situation in all its magnitude is nowhere more impressively summed up than in the solemn warning-note sounded in the closing epigram of the Unitarian teacher, John Hamilton Thom, first quoted above, "In the dumb heart it (that is, religion) invariably dies."

This is, in short, what makes all the difference between the speechful and the speechless heart, seeing that to muffle the most vital of the organs is to stifle it with fateful consequences. As "wisdom is justified of her children", there are those amongst them who lay soulful stress upon the central core of our common human constitution as comprised in 'the

thoughtful heart,' 'the seeing, far-seeing or in-seeing heart' and, again, 'the understanding heart.' To these is here suggestively added the pregnant concept of 'the speechful heart.' This speechfulness of heart may, as it often does, assume divers forms through a manifold or a complex of instrumental auxiliaries, such as the nod of the head, the tear of the eye, the uplift of the brow, the curl of the lip, the shake of the head, the motion of the finger, the leap of the foot and, not necessarily or exclusively, the word of the tongue. In fact, none of the said modes of manifestation of the inner sentiment and emotion need be in evidence in the least degree. Yet although attended with naught of outward token, vocal or otherwise, the heart can speak, as speak it must, in effective, inward communings so as even to render apparent 'silence' more eloquent than actual 'speech'. And failing *this* urgent satisfaction, the decay of the springs of responsive reciprocity is bound to prove simply a question of time. The underlying principle of this prognosis in terms of certitude is what looms specifically embodied, under familiar imagery, in the sage counsel of caution handed down from of old: "If you have a friend, see to it that you visit him often; unless constantly trodden, the road must needs get overgrown with grass in no time and the bushes choke it up as well without let or hindrance."

What then? The discerning seeker of purposive, practical wisdom is finally presented with this truth of truths relative to the why and the how of prayer as comprehending the heart's intercourse with the heart's abiding Indweller—namely, that, in one word, speechfulness of heart is life and speechlessness of heart nothing short of death in the economy of the body spiritual. As such, *apropos* of the two complementary hemispheres of the full orb of spiritual realisation, the all too necessary counterpart to the imploration of the open ear, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth," is to be found in the injunction based upon the warrant of Divine accessibility,

> "Speak to Him thou: for He hears, and spirit with
> Spirit can meet."

And the *raison dêtre* of a diligent avoidance of dumbness in this regard is to be traced to the immutable law of love itself—a law turning here, by no means, on any need for the enlight-

enment or impulsion of the all-knowing, all-loving Deity but rightly reflecting the imperativeness of the innate craving for self-demonstration in the ever-dependent, ever-faithful devotee. Again, this rule, in reference to the 'One only without a second', 'a Presence not to be put by,' who verily is nothing if not closer "than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet," prescribes heart-to-heart communion, aye, confabulation, as the only possible and satisfying channel of intercourse. In that wise, it enforces itself through the celebrant of *The Higher Pantheism* in the Western world of the modern day, as it remarkably did even through the exponent of Absolute Monism so-called in the Eastern sphere of mediæval times by providing scope enough for the splendid spontaneity of the irrepressible outpourings of *Sivânandalahari*. As against the self-witholding, speechless heart with its inescapable dangers, it is too true of the self-unfolding, speechful heart with its insuppressible demands that it ensures the flourishing expansion of life from growth to growth by taking salutary heed of the substance of the dual monition, 'Pray without ceasing' and 'Worship Him in spirit and in truth.' In fine, it is these ever-to-be-repeated articulations of heart—at once universally utterable and intelligible, obligatory and congenial, because eternally standardised by Nature's enactment beyond variation—that, in the homely persuasiveness of his penetrating originality, Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen so exquisitely dignified as 'the native vernacular of the heart.' Hark, there it sounds—the heart's mother-tongue of all the children of men—in the clear, charming simplicity of its unique naturalness, nobly exalted above the Babel of all the alien dialects of credal and ceremonial convention concretised and consecrated by varying tradition.

So now, my good heart, let me ask, canst thou too vigilantly beware of the awful penalty attaching to dereliction in respect of that 'natural law in the spiritual world' which unmistakably ordains that if "the soul is dead that slumbers," no less doomed is the heart that smites itself dumb on any score whether of fancied futility or superfluity, coveted ease or exclusiveness, ingrained indifference or humility? Oh, rather, wisely put thou away all misconceived notions of uselessness and needlessness; roundly shake off the last, lingering vestige of insensate indolence and complacent dilatoriness; and stoutly overthrow every internal obstacle of temper-

amental coyness and self-abased timorousness. Yes; and with the utmost degree of filial freedom, in unquestioning trustfulness out of the clamant urge from the deeps of the 'heart within' towards the 'God overhead,' speak to Him thou unintermittently in all the flitting moods and tenses of the spirit. Speak to Him thou serenely through all the kaleidoscopic changes and chances of fickle fortune. Speak to Him thou in assiduous 'asides' amid all absorbing preoccupations of body and of mind. Speak to Him thou in fervent praise and prayer, blissfully 'alone to the Alone' and infinitely more so in happy unison with the mystic chorus of sister-and-brother-voices vibrant about the Altar of Grace through the immensities of a boundless universe. Speak to Him thou freely, now and evermore; for He hears, as none else may, if it be but the softest outbreathings of subdued heart-whispers within His own elect audience-chamber of majesty and mercy interfused.

23

THE SUNFLOWER OF THE SOUL

1936

If 'tongues in trees' is no mere rhetorical turn of riotous fancy, the sunflower with its peculiar property embodies in itself a living lesson of supreme import for the conduct of life upon the highest of levels. It offers, at the outset, a striking contrast to that other sensitive plant known as 'touch-me-not', so symbolic of overwrought aliveness to untouchability along all lines—of caste in relation to the *anthyaja*, of colour in reference to the negro, of culture as between the 'classes' and the 'masses' and, like-wise, as regards all types of pharisaical character as well as artificial rank, conventional habits and credal beliefs. Next, the positive principle suggested by the practical parable of the sunflower shows how, as and whereas, in the botanical phenomenon, the flower turns round along with the great luminary of the heavens in its westering course on one single side, its spiritual counterpart in the human soul moves about towards the central Sun of all creation on a multiplicity of sides. This is because the all-penetrating Presence of God, not localisable anywhere while being the one Reality everywhere, is Itself at work evermore wheeling about in all directions and through all objects; and hence, by force of nature, the soul sets itself towards and points to the Oversoul in all those varied directions and through all those divers objects. So Nanak challenged his accusers at Mecca to shift his feet, if they could, to any side of the planet they chose where the Unseen One was not. So Prahlada, earlier still, sensed nothing short of Deity in the gross materiality of a masonry block. So Plato, in the long ago and the far away, visioned in the son of man a very 'god in exile'. So Emerson, in these latter-days, beheld even Jove nodding to Jove from behind each one of us, as he also took off his hat in awe and reverence before the garden-rose. So Lamb glorified 'God's image cut in ebony'

in the Ethiopian's 'human face divine'. So Carlyle witnessed in every salutation to every man in the street an obeisance rendered to the God-in-man all over. And so Gandhiji, after Kabir, hails the '*Harijan*', the man of God, in the outcaste of a pariah. Such is the distinctive characteristic of sunflowerism with its bearings on the higher zones of the spirit.

Now, in the first place, it is not strictly the flower that turns by itself toward and with the sun. Rather is it the beam-fingers of the sun that really reach out to it, touch it with a tender caress and turn it on with a magic spell like and yet unlike the magnet responsible for the resistless pull of the scattered filings up to itself. Just so, the impact of God upon the soul—at all points physical, mental, emotional and volitional, as also at all times perpetual and perennial—is to be found operating, in very truth, beneath and behind all apparent leanings of the soul itself toward Him. So that, ultimately, the surface fact of individuality is, by no means, to be confounded with anything of the nature of absolute independence. For, all in all, our wills are ours not only to make them His but just because He is already there in them constantly to make them ours in the first instance. Why, even as to the inevitable incidents of mundane mortality, the inscrutable process of decline and disappearance in the case of any of our loved ones from his or her accustomed place by force of a Will invisible yet irresistible rules out every breath of the repining sigh, 'Oh for the touch of a vanished hand!' For, the vanishing is only from before the eye of flesh into the horizon of the realm of spirit; and, lo and behold, the sloping down is ever the prelude to a scaling up again. So that here is one more of the recurring 'intimations of immortality' itself: the soul-flower sinks into the grave but to rise over again to the altitude of resurrected life by an equal inflow of potency from its own Eternal Sun. In the second place, as an implication of the above, it is not merely attraction exerted, whether upon the flower or upon the soul, as from a distance but the closest regulation of movement by direct and intimate manipulation, as it were, even like the shaping out of the potter's clay upon the wheel. Every Moses who walks with his God does so effectually not otherwise than by the adaptation of every footfall of his to every forward step of the Divine. Thirdly, consequent on this circumstance, the soul's movements, thus adjusted and at-

tuned, come to afford a sure enough index to the prime, prior movements of God Himself upon His infinitely vaster scale, as the pose of the sunflower at any particular instant helps to indicate as well the point attained in the progression of the sun by that time. Is not that the unerring way God-like men function as path-finders to God? Again, the God of eternity energising upon the *leelabhoomi* of time with unswerving precision, the proper evaluation of time-sense, all too awing in its exactions, renders that consciousness so sublimely transcendental in itself that *Kálam* has been apotheosised in our national spiritual outlook as '*Náráyanaswaroopam.*' Whoever, then, conforms with religious scrupulousness to the strict rule of punctuality even in the engagements of the work-a-day world reproduces an impressive trait of the Supreme Being manifested in the stupendousness of His cosmic career. Man being the only time-measuring creature here below, his practical regard for time requirements becomes at once sublimated into reverence of spirit for, and community of self-expression with, that '*Akálapurusha*' in whom time merges into eternity and eternity issues into time through unending cycles. Was it not something of the profound mystery of relationship between the sunflower and the sun as translated into spiritual terms that found expression, as between the human in time and the Divine in eternity, when, for instance, the uneventful daily routine of Kant was carried on with clock-work exactitude so that the journeyman-labourers of Konigsberg regulated their movements by winding up the jobs in hand just at the moment he was sighted sallying out upon his outdoor walks; or when Emerson was seen never to deviate from the pale of punctuality by so much as a hair's breadth on either side in all his manifold engagements through the United States; or, again, when Martineau would be found systematically mounting up the stairs of Essex Hall in London on every New Year's Day to pay down his annual subscription on the counter of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association even at a far advanced age as year succeeded year? Fourthly and lastly, as one sunflower subtly assimilates itself to another sunflower in movement, both describing the same curve right through and occupying the same angle at any one point of time by virtue of common susceptibility to the lead of a common sun, so a reflex of that mutual floral sympathy is just what makes itself discernible in the

fellow-feeling of one soul towards another for the sake of—in other words, under the self-same influence of—the directing God of both. Therein lies enfolded the secret of the fulfilment of the fervent supplication, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." So does every sunflower address itself, in act, to the sun it obeys; and so does the devoutly besought parity of social attitude demonstrate itself, in effect, amongst the whole series of its sister-flowers. That is how, with developing sensitiveness of sympathy, the joys and sorrows of one react also upon another among the votaries of God, inducing identical responsiveness to outer impulses and experiences, as when *Bhakta* Bijoy Krishna Goswami could not help visibly thrilling through his whole frame at sight of the unclothed *sannyásins* shivering with midwinter cold in the *Kumbhamèla* concourses at Prayag. Thus is evidenced the occult truth of the dear dictum, "The seekers of the light are one."

Accordingly, in proportion to the growing measure of soul-sensitiveness, the sunflower in man's diviner nature comes spontaneously, as though by reflex action, to exhibit the vital marks of communion through contact, through controlment and through correspondence in relation to the supreme Sun of the spiritual firmament and, again, of community through coordination, through companionship and through coparcenary with reference to all sister souls here below. So far as mutual interactions on this latter plane are concerned, while our fellow-men will, of course, be slow to believe as we believe, the sunflowerism maturing within ourselves is bound to make itself felt in more wholesome influences by impelling them to live as we live and even to believe as we live. For, after all,

> "Nor knowest thou what argument
> Thy life unto thy brother's creed hath lent."

Then, receptiveness, responsiveness, reflectiveness and reciprocity—in these be discovered the quadruple quality of the soul intent on being nothing if not a very sunflower in faithfulness to God and, for His sake, to all His other children as well. And from the depths of the sunflower-soul thus attempered, let the pealing paeon ring evermore so as vividly to recall the spiritual Sun of eternity through His impressive symbol in the material sun of time—

"Thou art but as a word of his speech,
Thou art but as a wave of his hand;
Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
'Twixt tide and tide on his beach;
Thou art less than a spark of his fire,
Or a moment's mood of his soul:
Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of his choir
That chant the chant of the Whole."

24

THE HUMAN LIMPET

1936

In a highly refreshing work entitled *Religion and Life* * and dedicated "To the just of all creeds and of none", Mr. R. Russell, a freethinking Theist full of originality as of catholicity, passes, with characteristic crispness of style, a deprecatory judgment upon the ways of the bulk of our race. "In the moral ocean", he declares, "too many of us are limpets". What exactly he purposes to bring home thereby, it will be profitable to contemplate, so far as we may enter into the heart of that pithily pregnant verdict on the practical side of life's movements and moorings.

The ocean ! Ponder, first, how varying are the degrees of delight administered by this single, this stupendous phenomenon of nature. The land-locked man of the interior—what would he not give for just a glimpse of the vast expanse of the main? Even as he stands by the shore and looks out upon the fresh-forming silver foam and the roaring, rolling opal billows and further ahead to the utmost reach of his eager ken, he fills inwardly with an ineffable sense of the solemn joyousness of a spectacle all too imposing. Let him step forward a little into direct, actual touch so far as to feel the breakers gently kiss his tingling feet now and again; and at once the enjoyment grows all the keener. A few paces deeper down to allow the surging tide to sweep round about the greater part of the frame, himself unmoved the while ; and there enters in an added access of unknown happiness. Next, one unreserved plunge for all the limbs, head and all, at some fixed spot lower down ; and, lo, still more of intensified exhilaration ! Lastly, let the spirited wight stretch himself at length and launch out to swim along and across to his heart's content, now diving adown, now floating aloft, both self and sea manifesting the freest of

* Longmans, Green and Co.

movements in sustained cooperation; and, behold, the very acme of animated bliss! Thus stands it with man on the physical plane in proportion as it is given to him to respond with intimate sensitiveness to the 'chiding' invitation evermore extended to his pilgrim soul:

"Am I not always here, thy summer home?
Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?
My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?
Was ever building like my terraces?
Was ever couch magnificent as mine?"

Thus, drawn aside though for a brief while and in a limited measure, the habitual denizen of earth is initiated into the mystic meaning of what it is to live and move and have one's being in the plenitude of the watery world, incessantly imbibing the nutriment and the ministration self-announced in the further strains of Emerson's muse—

'full of food, the nourisher of kinds,
Purger of earth, and medicine of men;
Creating a sweet climate by my breath,
Washing out harms and griefs from memory,
And, in my mathematic ebb and flow,
Giving a hint of that which changes not."

Now, consider, by way of contrast in respect of the triune conception of living, moving and having one's being, how it fares with the native products and creatures of the ocean itself. To the former category belongs, say, the sponge; to the latter, the limpet above referred to. As between these, what contrarieties mark them off beneath apparent conditions of similarity! Both are born in the ocean; yet it is more accurate to say the former is born of it, being no other than its own froth gradually solidified. Both, too, are bred by the ocean; but in the one case, it is on the lines of inorganic accretion, while, in the other, it is through the organic process of food assimilation. Both, again, ranged at large through the vasty deep at one time; however, whereas the one still continues, as it must and will, the other has long since ceased so to do. For, the aquatic creature in question, it is biologically understood, once had a vertebra and roamed up and down in its boundless sphere without let or hindrance. In course of time, to save trouble, the roving organism fastened itself to a

rock and developed lowly contentment with what little pabulum the swift current might bring within its reach by chance. In dire effect, it lost its vertebra for ever and, along with this, its very power of progress as well. So that, on the one hand, the sponge moves and has its being in the element concerned, while a stretch of metaphor alone may describe it as also living in it. On the other, the limpet moves not any longer but merely lives and has its being therein, its own self-inflicted limitation having eventually reduced that life and that being into no more than a bare existence—all on account of forfeiture, through surrender, of the primal requisite for fulness of life, namely, freedom of adventure coupled with adequacy of sustenance, the latter necessarily contingent upon the former. Altogether, in the gruesome light of its own natural history, how stangely unlike itself must be the limpet-mollusc of to-day—far from a faithful picture of the aforesaid triple alliance of life, movement and possession of being intact in one particular element! For such an object-lesson fairly complete in itself, we must, therefore, turn, nearer home, to the wondrous indweller of an immensely smaller but, perhaps, in every way more mysterious sphere than any of the seas or oceans known to geography—to wit, the yet-to-be-born babe in the circumscribed mansion of the maternal matrix, all the more a marvel of marvels on that account. There, too, the moment any absence of movement on the part of the live content and charge of the womb comes to be suspected, there arises grave occasion to apprehend the very cessation of the vital function within.

What follow, then, as the spiritual implications of this fundamental and far-reaching principle? If the Concord Seer discerned in the ocean's 'mathematic ebb and flow' 'a hint of that which changes not,' its ever-beckoning lure for the spirit of universal man from afar and, still more, its all-sufficing hospitality to the untold myriads of entities thriving in its own bosom constitute, likewise on the grandest of scales here below, an all too eloquent symbol of the vital relationship that subsists, without ceasing, between the human and the Divine. If the Saint of the Spirit Supreme gave expression to the profoundest of all truths, the one only truth of truths, when he wrote, 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being,' the perpetual beatitude of the conscious realisation of that truth becomes no longer a matter of theoretic knowledge in more or less nearness upon the shores, or even of partial contact

through occasional association with the tides, but only of absolute immersion and active adventure of self in the very recesses, of that invisible Ocean of Infinity for which language has reserved the loftiest of names as God. Aye, it is unspeakably more—not merely a one-sided pose and play on the part of man but truly a mutual infoldment and interplay in dynamic action and reaction between man and his All-in-all. Within that eternal *Máthrugarbhagólam*—how natural yet supernatural!—if so we may designate it as perchance the nearest conceivable image of the realities of an inalienable relationship of immediacy and unity-in-difference, it is ours for evermore consciously to reside and range, recuperate and revel, amid the *magnificat* crescendo of '*Yaihóvá imáni bhoothání jáyanthè, yèna játhání jeevanthi.....thadbrahma.*' And for the soul to forego any, or one in the wake of another, of these blessed birthrights is verily to blind itself to the lurid lesson, and be overtaken by the piteous plight, of the limpet that is—immobile, invertebrate, impoverished—as compared with the limpet that was. Common usage according to the dictionaries may confine the figurnative connotation of this specific term to one who tenaciously clings to office, as in the employ of the State. But, as seen above, it surely bears a wider and fuller signification in the negative aspects of deprivation and disability induced by self-stultification in the name of effortless ease and snug slothfulness. As such, what, after all, is he but a limpet in human form who goes and, whether unreflectively or deliberately, rivets himself stolidly to a fancied rock of secure shelter—be it a church-rock, a creed-rock, a code-rock or a censor-rock, a scripture-rock or a saviour-rock, there being, indeed, more 'rocks' of the kind than old St. Peter in the troubled waters of the spirit? How else is he to be expressively characterised who, either by slow degrees or once and for all, suffers himself, in consequence, to abrogate that ethico-spiritual backbone which heralds the very insignia of his regality as the only erect being in all creation? And where is another equally appropriate appellation that he merits who, knowingly or unknowingly, pauperises himself, by way of further effect, relinquishing in favour of the paltry if handy fare of chartered pools and embanked channels even the entire wealth of the bread of life, invigorating because varied enough cast upon the liberal waters at all points of the compass? Here, then, is one more Parable from Nature in concrete con-

firmation of the maxims : 'No man became a saint in his sleep'; no pains, no gains; no exercise, no growth ; no ration, no refreshment ; no progression, no progress ; no discipline, no development—even atrophy alone as the bitter fruit of disuse. So the modern *rishi* already quoted from—

"owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year"—

breathes out his eagle-winged aspiration,

" God ! I will not be an owl,
I will sum me in the Capitol,"

and therein points to the unique prerogative of the high calling of normal human nature as against that baleful refusal of the inundating opulence of opportunities with the resultant forfeiture of the inherent dower of faculties which has rendered the perverted sea-limpet by far worse off than the proverbial well-frog. And so shall every son of man who would not miss the mark of an all-round, progressive-spirited pilgrim toward perfection in self-fulfilment learn the wisdom of strenuously striving to keep

'for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone'—

nay, also of Love and Liberty, Piety and Purity, Faith and Fellowship and hence not only 'alone' but companioned as well.

25

THOUGHTS ON *BHAKTI-YOGA**

1911

On the first publication of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt's *Bhakti-Yoga* in Bengali, the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* wrote of it thus in February, 1893: "We are exceedingly sorry that the subject-matter of this book is not quite suited to the columns of this journal, or we would have given an analysis of the whole thing as it has been embodied in the work before us." We owe it to Babu Gunada Charan Sen, M.A., B.L., of Calcutta that the highly appreciated volume is now brought within

* *Bhakti-Yoga* or Culture of Devotion. By Aswini Kumar Dutt Rendered into English by Gunada Charan Sen, M.A.,B.L., Vakil, High Court, Calcutta. Published by Phanindra Nath Pal, B.A., the Oriental Works, Bhowanipore, Calcutta, 1911.

This review called forth the following acknowledgment:--

Boat 'Dakua'
P. O. Galachipa.
Feb. 11 '12.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am so much obliged to you for your very kind notice of my book, the *Bhakti Yoga*, and the beautiful sketch you have given of it in the columns of the "Indian Messenger". My "*Karma Yoga*" is not yet finished. I am sorry I cannot write on as the doctors don't allow me to do so.

Your letter and your contribution to the "Messenger" have been of so much interest to me that I hope you will pardon me if I ask to know something about yourself. If you have no objection, an account of yourself will immensely oblige,

Yours Sincerely,
ASWINI KUMAR DATTA

reach of a wider section of the Indian public through a carefully prepared English rendering. The translation itself has had the benefit of a thorough revision by the author of the original and affords a fair index to the intrinsic worth of the Bengali production, notwithstanding the limitations incidental to the exposition of Indian spiritual teaching in English, particularly on a subject like *Bhakti*. Here is no philosophical explication of the relation between the human and the Divine on the affectional side ; the book does not deal with the bases of belief either but addresses itself throughout to the one practical end of "the training of young men to a life of Devotion"—young men like the students of the Brajamohun Institution who first listened to it in a series of lectures in 1887-88. As such, it is calculated to meet the needs of the spiritually-inclined, though not of the sceptical-minded. The treatment of the "culture of devotion" is enriched by the bringing together of negative maxims and positive precepts helpful to self-discipline into a life of piety ; and illustrations by means of apt anecdotes are also copiously interspersed to bring home the varieties of spiritual experience. The moulds of thought and feeling adopted and the terminology employed as also the texts and examples cited are, except for occasional references to Christian and Mahammadan saints and traditions, almost wholly from Hindu sources ranging from *Nárada Bhakti Sutrás, Sreemad Bhágavatam* and the *Bhagavad Gita* down to the hymnology of the New Dispensation and the Sadharan Brahma Samaj.

An anthology of devotion compiled on such lines cannot but be refreshing; and the good author, by virtue of his own temperament and training, has brought to his task every qualification needed to make the work extremely edifying to devotees of all types, young and old, learned and unlearned, liberal and conservative. Himself an intensely pious, saintly soul, Babu Aswini Kumar combines the advantage of a firm hold upon the traditional national consciousness and an intimate communion with modern progressive thought. His own personal relations with the Brahma Samaj, with Sree Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Pandit Bijoy Krishna Goswami, not to mention the several other *bhaktas* and *yogis* referred to in his book to whom, wherever found, he would constantly repair for enlightenment—these have wrought a development which must surely render him an interesting personality and

his book a valuable treatise for such of our Theistic brethren outside Bengal as would witness for themselves the outflowering of Vaishnavic fervour upon the soil of rationalistic liberalism. While, therefore, its Bengalee readers have long been familiar with the original volume in their own vernacular, it will, we hope, prove of some profit to non-Bengalee friends to be introduced to its English edition (only recently made accessible to us) by a short study of its contents, more a recapitulation than a review. A presentation of this nature will be found at least appropriate to the scope of this journal,* unlike in the case of the *Amrita Bazaar Patrika*.

First, a word as to the outlook of the writer. A perusal of the book strongly impresses upon us the truth of Theodore Parker's dictum, 'As many men, so many theologies; but religion is one'. Upon this basal unity of religion the author takes his stand. Amid all conflicting differences of doctrine and dogma and even apparently divergent systems of discipline and devotion, he is led to perceive how true religion, in its essence, is the same in all sects, even as the ultimate destination of all rivers, be their course strait or tortuous, is the great ocean; or as it is the same substance, 'water', that is given different names by men speaking different tongues who draw it at different staircases round a common tank; or, again, as, in the view of one risen high above the common level, the entire landscape stretches forth like one vast plain owned by the same master with no ridges in between. So, says our author, "Surely that One Being is the goal of all, and surely the faculty that comprehends Him (would not 'apprehend' have been a better rendering in English?) is the same in all." To educate this faculty, to feed and foster it, stands out as the supreme end of life to which all systems of culture furnish but more or less efficient means.

Here follows at the outset a short discourse on "What is Devotion?" Applying to the Deity as the Object of attachment the definition of Bhakti given in *Nárada Bhaktisutras*, '*Sátvasmin parama prèmarupa*,' two types of it are distinguished, a lower and a higher—the one *vydhi* (following the law), *hythuki* (founded on a motive) and *gouni* (secondary); and the other *rágáthmika* (spontaneous), *ahythuki* (motive-

* *The Indian Messenger.*

less) and *mukhya* (primary). *Hythukeebhakti*, according to the nature of the object sought, is classified into: (1) darkened or deluded devotion, *thamasi*, as in the bands of dacoits formerly known to worship the goddess *Káli* before starting out on marauding expeditions or those who still invoke their favourite deity's blessing on false law-suits and like devices for the spoliation of others; (2) passionate or egotistic devotion, *rajasi*, the motive behind being the attainment of material benefits, wordly prosperity *et cetera* without invasion of the rights of others; and (3) pure or enlightened devotion, *satwiki*, which still is moved by a motive, though the refined motive of a hankering for heavenly bliss. Again, the condition of the devotee in this same *hythukeebhakti* makes him either: (a) an *ártha*, the distressed imploring deliverance out of a specific trouble; or (b) a *jigjnási*, the inquirer with no love of God to start with but anxious to know the truth about Him and His doings; or (c) an *ardhárdhi*, the supplicant desirous of a definite boon such as children, fame or wealth. So that growth in spirit-life consists in progress through and out of the lower zones of *Bhakti* into higher and yet higher zones until that blessedness in love is reached and realised in which no thanks are breathed and no request proffered but, transcending the imperfect offices of prayer and praise, the mind itself becomes a thanksgiving to the Power that made it. As it came to be with Wordsworth and his Wanderer, so was it from the beginning with our own Prahlada, instanced as the beautiful type of a devotee whose devotion is devotion for its own sake. "I once", says Babu Aswini Kumar, "asked Paramahamsa Kamaraja Swami of Hardwar, 'What is it you ask from God?' 'What have I to pray for,' said he, 'but that my soul may ever cling to Him?" Thus, 'I love, because I love' sums up the psychology of selfless, spontaneous devotion symbolised and shadowed forth in the mother's relation to her child. Then again, how the high hour of visitation from the Living God avails sometimes to transform *hythuki* into *ahythukeebhakti* is finely exemplified in Dhruva, who began his devotions in the hope of obtaining a kingdom to outrival his step-brother but at length, after years of deep meditation and on the appearance of the Lord with an invitation to solicit a boon, only broke forth into the exclamation, 'But now that I have got *Thee*, I seek no boon.'

The next chapter—and the division of the entire subject into chapters stands as a new feature in the translation, marking, no doubt, an improvement in the arrangement—is taken up with a discussion of the "qualifications for the attainment of *bhakti*." An echo from the voices of world-prophets through the corridors of time, the broad statement is here laid down that the question of age or caste or rank or learning or worldly avocation may not enter into the sphere of devotion at all. The cultivation of piety is not to be postponed to old age: for one has ever and anon to reckon with the uncertainty of life; and irreligious youth and manhood are surely not the fittest conditions even for making the most of the pursuit of learning and happiness, the ends generally regarded as proper to those stages, while, again, the heart left fallow in the beginning is only too apt to become hardened by sordid contact with the world by the time one finds 'leisure' enough for spiritual concerns. As for caste, the *Sándilyasutra* has declared in ringing tones the eligibility of all, never so despised, to the higher life, '*anindyayonyadhikriyathè*'; and in his acceptance of the hearty hospitality and the familiar friendship of the Chandalas, Guhaka and Sabari, Sree Ramachandra has demonstrated the alchemy of love which converts birth into the mere accident of an accident. If, then, let it be added, in His eyes all are equal, Brahmins and Chandalas, how may it be otherwise as between His own true votaries? Thus spirituality and the supremacy of birth are incompatible with each other: the deepest ground and the surest guarantee of human brotherhood come to lie alone in the recognition of Divine impartiality. Rank and riches, too, far from being necessary requisites to faith and virtue, have always been rightly adjudged rather as hindrances whose utter insignificance is brought out in the sweet fellowship of Sree Krishna with the poor but pious Vidura. Nor is learning by itself of much moment; for, what lore of books did Ramakrishna Paramahamsa profess or possess in our own day? "God is our Father, and whoever requires the study of Science to address his father?" Lastly, true *Bhakti* calls for, and culminates in, not the renunciation of the world but participation in the affairs of life as nothing lower than the *leela* of the Lord. *Samsára* sheds its snares, nay, spreads its sanctities, before him who sees the Divinity that shapes our ends in and through its tasks and trials. So did Rajarshi Janaka incul-

cate to Sukadeva, by means of the walk through the city with the oil-can undisturbed upon his head, the lesson of *yoga* latterly taught over again by Mrs. Browning in her picture of the woman who

> "singeth at her spinning-wheel
> A pleasant chant, ballad or barcarole.'

In this connection is related a touching incident about the late venerated Brahmo leader, Ramtanu Lahiri's remarkable spirit of resignation. 'What claim have I upon a free gift?' was just his sense of a sore affliction in the untimely death of a son of rich promise. And here is another experience of perfect submission to the decrees of the Unseen, a key to reconcilement with the world and its 'shocks of doom.' "I have known another gentleman whose son was lying on death-bed, and his wife was weeping. 'Look here,' says he to his wife, 'the death of this fair son pains me not half so much as the tears of unbelief that fill your eyes.' What the aspirant after spiritual life, then, has to learn to relinquish are not earthly associations but selfish attachments: '*Swárdhanásasthu vyrágyam*'. Aye, let it be borne in mind that, if the 'concrete' phases of the universe are verily the necessary expression and complement of the life of the Most High, no more can man live his own little life in abstraction therefrom. Is the *Sagunanirguna virátpurusha* a mere magnified monk, after all, that we should make it our business to strive to flee after Him the shadow of the world? On the other hand, as observed by Aswini Babu, "it would be finding fault with the Author of this earth, if you think He has left no opening for a man here to attain to a godly life."

We cannot do more than barely allude to the memorable instances of the Lord's saving grace detailed in Chap. III. Such are the true miracles of regeneration recalled by the stories of Valmiki in the Puranic period and Jagai and Madhai in much later historic times, as also the many anecdotes from *Vaishnavabhaktamála* and Brahmic biography. Verily, as declared in the *Kathopanishad*, 'He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. To him the Self manifests Itself.': "*Yamèvysha vrinuthè thènalabhyasthasyai shathmá vrinuthá thènum swám.*'

Then, by far the greater portion of the book is taken up in Chap. IV with an illustrative description of the "obstacles

in the way of *Bhakti* and how to remove them." Of these also we must content ourselves with but a passing indication. The external obstacles to piety are summed up in evil company, whether as bad society, indecent literature, lewd songs or impure scenes; and the ladder of moral down fall, so accurately depicted in the following verses of the *Gita*, is rightly held out as an awful warning to those at the entrance to the primrose path of dalliance: 'Man musing on the objects of sense conceiveth an attachment to these; from attachment ariseth desire; from desire anger cometh forth. From anger proceedeth delusion, from delusion confused memory, from confused memory the destruction of reason; and from destruction of reason man perishes.' Narada's caution, given in *Bhaktisutras*, is added, viz., '*Sthree dhana nástika vyri charitram nassravanceyam*' (Listen not, in a light-hearted spirit, to talks about women, rich men, atheists and enemies). Thrice charmed, then, becomes the life that is strenuously set to the key of the prayer the *rishis* of old sang with their pupils before beginning their daily lessons: '*Om bhadram karnèbhih sree nuyama bhadram pasyèma akshabhiryajathráh sthiraiangaisthushtu vangsasthathubhir vyasema deváhitham yadáyuh.*' (May we hear with our ears or see with our eyes nothing but what is pure, so that, with our senses unperturbed, singing hymns in praise of the Divine, we may attain life as long as that of the gods!) As internal obstacles to piety, we have enumerated, of course, the six familiar 'internal enemies' (alas, how familiar!): Lust, Anger, Greed, Infatuation, Vanity and Envy, with their attendant vices, Desultoriness, Worldly Anxiety, Worldly Craft, Loquacity, Disputatiousness, Pharisaicism and Moral Cowardice. Then follow certain elaborate but highly suggestive, because eminently practical, directions setting out general aids to the avoidance of all sin with specific rules, too, for the conquest of particular sins. The injunctions of a general character include the following:—(1) Keep out of the way, as stated above, of baneful influences outside in the light of Bhishma's counsel to Yudhishtira, 'You have no desire for a thing till you know what it is like.....Therefore, the best principle for a man is not to take, touch or see whatever is likely to taint the imagination', (2) Ponder the personal and social consequences of actions in the penalties of sin and the rewards of righteousness; (3) Think of the Damocles' sword of death, which

must operate as a deterrent from sin; (4) Study the lives of moral heroes—the wrestlings, for example, of a Sakyasimha with Mara and a Jesus with Satan. The love and contemplation of the purer spirits of one's own near friends helps as a threefold talisman against baseness through: (*a*) the silent emulation of their virtues, the first causes of attraction; (*b*) the wholesome recollection of their exhortations; and (*c*) the natural concern for their good opinion. (5) Reflect in self-scrutiny on the particular attributes of God opposed to your particular shortcomings and pray without ceasing against the latter; (6) Try to realise the omnipresence of the All-Holy, and (7) the infinite potentiality of your own nature. On the question of the subjugation of Lust, a number of ethico-medical authorities—*Sivasamhita*, *Jnanasankalani thanthram* and *Yogavásishtam*, on the one hand, and Dr. Louis's "Chastity" and Dr. Nicholls's "Esoteric Anthropology," on the other, is drawn upon to drive home the grim truth that continence is life and incontinence is death. Not to go into the details of *sattwic* diet and *yogic* postures recommended, the following principles of sovereign efficacy cannot be entirely passed over:—(1) Keep yourself always engaged. 'I am always busy. How can lust approach me?' was Swami Dayananda's reply to the enquiry, 'Do you ever feel the disturbance of passion?' (2) Think of your mother, and realise by the help of that sweetest, purest of pictures even the Motherhood of God in every madonna here below. As to what woman, then, can the heart bring itself to harbour an unholy feeling? No other thought crossed Paramahamsa Ramakrishna's mind, on the approach of his own wife once with a carnal desire, than this of 'Here Thou art, my Mother, come to me in the guise of a wife!' (3) Set up in yourself the counteraction of Love against Lust, and answer to yourself the query of the *Brahma Sangit*, 'Does the bee leave off honey and take to water?' (4) Lastly, live ever in the light of the inspired teaching, 'The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.' Among the helps to victory over the second of the internal foes, Anger, are given the following:—(1) Discuss the disastrous effects of anger and the good that comes out of its mastery, and resolve never to yield to this passion the root of so many horrid barbarities and of not a few physical maladies; (2) Begin with an endeavour to make your anger as short-lived as possible. 'Let not the sun go down

upon your wrath.' (3) Admit your weakness after the anger has subsided, and ask pardon of the object of your wrath, even if it be the meanest of your domestics. This will induce a feeling of self-reproach and prevent a recurrence of the fits of madness. (4) Keep silent at the time of anger and remove yourself from where you have been. Plato was once sitting silent in his room in the course of such a fit; and when asked what he was doing, he replied, 'I am chastising an angry man.' (5) Learn to disregard insults and calumnies.

'As one who feels the immeasurable world,
Attain the wise indifference of the wise.'

(6) Cultivate a forgiving and peace-loving spirit—of course, not by any means a Laodicean indifference to untruth and iniquity; for, as Mazzini has it, 'whenever you see corruption by your side and do not strive against it, you betray your duty.' Remember, however, under all circumstances, that 'there may indeed be need in this world for hissing, but there can never be any necessity for biting.' In the matter of Greed, the hollowness and transitoriness of every material enjoyment and the effect of gratification, which only adds fuel to the fire—these reflections must help to check the creation of ever so many imaginary wants and hook up the fish of desire by wise abstinence. Next, Infatuation is then finally destroyed when the growing tide of universal love, sweeping before it all narrow embankments, resounds with the address of the parting Prince of Kapilavasthu to his sleeping spouse,

'I loved thee most,
Because I loved so well all living souls.'

Furthermore, Vanity in all directions and of all degrees being first burnt up before the search-light of honest introspection, the solid foundations of character are then to be laid deep down on lowliness of spirit, the entire structure bearing at every turn the inscription, 'I can of my own self do nothing'—that lesson which the self-satisfied *Dèvatas* in the *Kenopanishad* could only learn through proved powerlessness over a straw! Lastly, the best antidote to Envy consists in constant preoccupation with, and glorification of, others' merits side by side with remembrance of our own unworthinesses and in the firm resolve to speak no slander, no, nor listen to it.

After this thorough treatment of the way to triumph over temptations, external and internal, the book goes on to

specify in its next section, Chap. V, some of the positive aids to devotion, chief among these being the five well-known courses prescribed by Sree Chaitanya, namely, *Sádhusanga* (good company), *Krishnasèva* (service unto the Lord), *Sástra pátha* (study of Scriptures), *Námajapa* (taking the Divine Name) and *Brindávanavása* (visits to, and residence at, places with hallowed associations). Non-sectarian in his aim, the author takes care, as it is cheering to note, to attach to these injunctions a wider significance than was meant by the prophet or has been understood in the ruling traditions of the country. Finally, the explanation of Patanjali Yogi's eight remedies against mental distraction concludes this part of the subject with a beautiful observation to the effect that, after all, he must be sadly deluded who thinks the attainment of God a mechanically inevitable sequel to the practice of any number of such austerities and disciplines. For, in sooth, we cannot too closely lay to heart the supreme truth of Matthew Arnold's lofty sentiment,

> 'We cannot kindle when we will
> The fire which in the heart resides;
> The Spirit bloweth and is still,
> In mystery our soul abides.'

Aye, 'what need is there for a fan, when you have the zephyr blowing?' (*Thálavrinthèna kim káryam labdhè malayamárutè.*) So we repeat once again, '*Brahma Kripáhi Kèvalam*' (God is Mercy alone!) and wait upon Him who cometh not with observation! Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein descendeth the Spirit of Grace.

Having thus described how the soil is prepared and the seed sown, the author proceeds, in the succeeding chapter, to show how the fruits are matured and marked out. A description of "the stages of devotion and the characteristics of a devotee" follows, based upon the eleventh *skandha* of the *Bhágavatham* and the twelfth discourse of the *Gita*, as also the *Bhaktirasámritasindhu* of Sree Rupa Goswami. The outward manifestations of *Bhakti* pointed out by Sage Sandilya and illustrated by his commentator, Swapneswara, are dwelt upon in the next chapter on the subject of the relations of the devotee to the Deity and deserve to be here reiterated—

'Sanmána bahumána preethi virahètara vichikitcha
mahimakhyáthi thattárdha pranasthana thattheeyathè
sarwathithbava
prathikulyadheenicha smaranèvya bahulyath' :

that is, respect as in Arjuna ; honour as in Ikshvaku ; love as in Vidura ; forlornness as in the Gopees ; ignoring all objects except God as in Upamanya ; celebration of Divine praise as in Yama; living for His sake alone as in Hanuman ; regarding everything as His as in Uparicharavasu ; perceiving Him in all things as in Prahlada ; and resignation to His will as in Bhishma. Out of the radiant wreath of devotional sayings culled and strung together on these silken threads, here is one golden flower of exquisite fragrance from the garden of the sage-poet, Ramprasad : 'Regard lying down as prostration before Her, sleep as meditation upon Her beyond thought, and walk around the city as perambulation round the great Mother. Whatever reaches thine ears is nothing but *mantras*, the various formulae of Her name ; for the fifty letters of the alphabet are each but a symbol of Her name. Ramprasad rejoices in proclaiming that the Supreme Mother is immanent in all that exists. Eating is but pouring clarified butter into the sacrificial fire of Her resplendent Being.' It is of the outbursts of wounded pride and consequent rage against God in this great *Sákta* devotee that Aswini Babu truly remarks, " Indignation of this character has, I suppose, hardly its parallel in the whole religious literature of the world. It befits the *Bhakta* alone." ' I will never call Thee *Má* again. O, the sufferings Thou hast put me to, and how much more art Thou still adding ! Again and again have I been calling Thee *Má*, *Má*—hast Thou struck Thyself deaf and blind ? What boots it that the mother is alive, if the son is in such a plight ? A householder I was ; Thou hast made me a homeless anchorite. What worse canst Thou do ? The worst that may come to me, I will beg from door to door. Does a child cease to live because the mother is dead ? How strange is this conduct in a mother, to turn Thyself inimical to Thy son ?' Next follows a highly illumining account, with examples, of the varieties of relationship between the Lord and His loving ones crystallised in the language of Sree Gauranga as *sántha* (quietude), *dásya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *váthsalya* (paternity) and *dámpathya* (conjugality).

Verily, " the *ultima thule* of *Bhakti* in this world. Who will say what is in the next ?'

Valuable beyond words is this contribution from Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt to the devotional literature of the Theist, nay, of every believer ; and with no feeling but the deepfelt gratefulness to him and to his translator do we receive this priceless boon and hug it close to the bosom as dearly as our own Mozoomdar's " Aids to Moral Character " and Brother Lawrence's " Practice of the Presence of God ", of the nature of both of which it partakes somewhat. Scarcely left any scope of divergence over the wide area traversed, we may be permitted, in conclusion, to note our inability quite to follow the popular conception of the ultimate goal accepted by Babu Aswini Kumar. *Samádhi*, absorption of the human in the Divine, is with him " a complete annihilation of the human existence as a separate entity " represented by " the butterfly that leaps into fire and burns itself to death." Retaining the similitude of the fire, we understand it rather as the heated iron-bar losing its colour and contour in those of the enveloping flame but none the less spared its own integrity of being. In fine, would not the ideal of *sároopyam* seem to accord better than that of *leenam* or *layam* with the whole strain of his own system of *Bhakti* ? But, to quote from Shelley, the prince of anti-dogmatists, may not these be, after all, merely

> ' words which make the thoughts obscure,—
> From which they spring (as clouds of glimmering dew
> From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture) '?

Leaving this aside, the book comes to us, however, as one more testimony, altogether, to the gratifying principle that to be unsectarian in religion is to be Theistic in stand-point, all-inclusive and universal, self-approving and spiritual.

26

I BLESS THEE, O MY GOD *

1897

For life and all that makes it bright
In this, Thy realm of peerless might,
Which Thou dost rule by day, by night:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For sound health kept and strength with zest;
For all that boons of sense attest;
For food and clothing, work and rest:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For all the friends yet spared to me
And those dear ones gone home to Thee;
For timeless love so full and free:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For her whom Thou hast knit with me
In sacred love held fast in fee,
A treasure hid secure in Thee:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For power to feel for others' fate,
To raise their joys to higher state
And help their sorrows to abate:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For Thy good grace which everywhere
On other sons pours mercies rare,
Albeit these I may not share:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For this fair world to feast the eye;
For sun and moon and stars and sky,
For woods and waves and mountains high:
I bless Thee, O my God.

* Based on 'A General Thanksgiving' in Miss Cobbe's *Alone to the Alone.*

For summer, autumn, winter, spring;
Day, night, and change in everything;
And all the timely joys they bring:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For forest trees of stately height;
For fragrant flowers richly dight;
For thorns that upward point aright;
I bless Thee, O my God.

For feathered songsters' carol sweet;
For beasts and each instinctive feat;
For creatures all with joy replete:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For special gifts to man confined—
Speech, writing, science, art and mind
With fancy times and climes to bind:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For all the visions of the pure
Who, knowing Thee their Saviour sure,
All ills for Thee thro' faith endure:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For bliss when I Thy voice obeyed;
For bitter pain that on me preyed
Whenso, alas, it little weighed:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For the joys that to Thy feet me brought;
For the pangs that me my duty taught
Whene'er the path of sin I sought:
I bless Thee, O my God.

But most for this—that myself Thou
Hast schooled Thy being to avow
And unto Thee alone to bow:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For that love which rules as well as me
All lives that earth and air and sea
Fill with Thy glory and their glee:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For all my cries of prayer to Thee
By mercy granted all too free;
And more for such as could not be:
I bless Thee, O my God.

For that clear light by which I know
My soul is doomed, however slow,
For evermore in Thee to grow:
I bless Thee, O my God.

27

WHAT IS IT TO BE SAVED ?*
1917

The tried and tempted heart of erring man—
What is the gravest problem here below
All times and climes have round about it set?
Say what its fiercest foe and hardest-fought
And what its weapons in that holy war!
"We sin and long to make our peace with God"—
This be the fact that stares us in the face;
This be the inmost root of living faith;
The basis this on which have been up built
Such solemn superstructures subtle-shaped
As ceremonial, creed and character.
"Oh, make this sacrifice and you are saved";
Or "Own this creed your title-deed to Heav'n";
Or "Keep your being pure and all is well."
I say with Christ upon this sacred theme,
"Be perfect as your Father is in Heav'n."
Salvation is deliverance of soul
From error, woe, disease, iniquity;
The growth of faculties and feelings all
Up to the standard of the perfect man;
So like the marvel of the mustard seed
And of the leaven hid within the dough!
What, then, is it to be in truth redeemed?
Is it the getting gratis into heav'n
When we deserve but hell? Nay, nay, not so.
Or slow escape from one's own nature? No.
'Tis but the endless, Godward growth in man
Of all the seeds that God in him has sown—
Of mind and heart and conscience evermore.

I call him *saved in mind* whose intellect,
Right duly trained, is in its judgment swayed
By no caprice or petty prejudice fond;

* Adapted into verse from Dr. H. W. Crosskey.

Who never feels too proud of his own sight
To follow brighter light with ready step,
Nor too impatient of his neighbours' wants
To scan aright the secret of their souls;
Who sees, and yet more ardent seeks to see,
The facts of Nature, simply as they stand,
Whether they prove him wrong or lowly wise;
Who, barred out never from the noblest truths
By dark perplexities of thought or word,
Still to the universal can subject
The partial, local, earthly, transient;
Who lives so conscious of the mystery
That infinite about his being hangs
As ne'er to cease to be a learner meek;
And who in deep regard for boundless truth
Unites a child's inquiring eagerness
With all a true disciple's lowliness.

I call him *saved in heart* who, true to friends,
Is kinder to his foes with generous warmth;
Who, rather than indulge in carping cant,
Delights in whatso sounds of good repute;
Who toils in sacrifice for what he loves
And would not waste in idle sentiment
The vigour of a deep emotion's depth;
Who can, amid suspicion, calmly trust
And hope against the seeing of the eye,
When true love once hath pulsed from heart to heart;
Who, serving, never makes a prudent pause
The due percentage of his gain to count;
Whose faithfulness in friendship varies not
With earthly fortune and its accidents;
Who shirks no call to suffer for the right;
Who tempers judgment on the foul offence
With clement softness to the weakling will;
Who spreads no slander sly nor sucks it in
For spite or e'en sensation's sake so cheap
But knows the sacredness of fair renown;
Who, rather than impair a brother's weal,
Is anxious to deserve his kindly praise;
Who can preserve his independence free
From dogmatism and true to himself prove,
Not false to one amongst his fellow-men;

Whose love for worthy causes grows in strength
As dangers daunt them dire; and who with zest
There tasks himself to do the greater good
Where he doth plainly note the greater need.

And, last, I call that man *in conscience saved*
Who ever straightway leaps where duty leads;
Who knows no wish but that of righting wrong;
Who seeks not aught of pleasure, if it tend
Against the sober laws of strenuous life;
Who tarries not to vaunt of selflessness
But rises prompt in silent pose at call;
Who would not slight the duties of his post
Because its grade is not still higher far;
Who in the ranks can watch and wait in peace,
Or strive and struggle firm with steadfast zeal,
Or sway the rise and fall of battle's heat,
As one least anxious for his own advance
But most for Heaven's Kingdom set on earth;
And who, deterred from heeding duty's call
By no neglect or wrong sustained by self,
Can labour on, amid applause or blame,
With both unswerving heart and steady hand,
And to the last, alone or with the crowd,
Prove faithful to the inner voice divine.

I call him saved who can with native ease
Life's graver colours blend with genial hues;
Who laughs as heartily as he would pray
And lets sweet humour play about as blithe
As he would join in the burden of a psalm;
Who frowns upon a light hour's fancies pure
No more than he would scoff at church-bells' chime;
Who smiles and weeps with those that smile and weep;
And who would darken not with morbid gloom
The gladness of a happy festival,
E'en as he would not mar with ribald mirth
The sanctity of his dear house of pray'r.

I call him saved who knows the claims of each
Of all the vast relationships of life;
Who cares not for his private weal alone
And is not wholly wrapped up in the good
Of kith and kin, his own by nature's tie,

But binds his honour to his native land's,
Making its freedom his, its glory his,
So that, while striving for his inward growth,
He also labours hard to save his race
From fresh or hoary stains of hateful wrong;
Who is, however, not so deeply lost
In self and home and nation as to own
No interest in all the world beyond,
But wails in woe and breathes indignant scorn
While powers evil sway earth's destinies,
For he can know no perfect self-content
So long as might is right and right is doomed.

I call him saved who has his gospel writ
Upon the fleshly tablet of his heart,
The gladdest news of universal grace;
Who, since he prizes rare beyond compute
The liberties of all high-minded souls,
Benignly bears with those that bend the knee
At altars far outside his favoured fane;
Who just adores in faith and hope and joy,
Because he loves and not because he fears;
Whose heart would still hold fast to righteousness,
Were there no heav'n to gain or here or there,
And hate all sin, were there no hell to dread.

I call him saved whose whole unbroken life
Of thought and love and duty and delight
The deepest sense of God, the Infinite,
All overshadows--calm, clear, constant, vast—
As doth the boundless sky the bounded earth;
Who trusts in brighter visions yet to shine
And sweeter voices yet to sound within
And still serener smiles to spread without,
While holier bliss shall swell the gladsome heart;
And who, approaching God's footstool on high,
There carries not his own achievement poor
But presses onward for his calling high
Through boundless Grace, his only prop and plea.

I call him saved—oh, how securely saved!—
Whose life in God, the Life of life, implies
The rapt devotion of a ravished heart,
The sole surrender of a subdued will,

The blest absorption of a baptised soul
Bathed in a flood of mystic unity.
    Such, then—so high, so deep, so long, so broad—
The end of life for the human soul divine!
But now, my feeble spirit, cry not out,
"This end for man? What weakness is in him!
And ah, what heights to climb!—a task how vain!"
Aye, rather learn, good soul, to see in thee
A rover of the skies with roost on earth;
And know Who sets the race illumines the path
And grants a strength that serves all needs and more;
For, hark, the swan-song of salvation chants
How in the fulness of eternal life,
While God is God, the sinner *must* be saved!

28

GROWING *VERSUS* OUTGROWING

1936

'*Agamárdhantudèvánám gamanárdhanturákshasám*'—so runs the opening *mantra* in the orthodox idolatrous ritual of *Dèvatárchana*. Leaving alone the old-world belief in the potency of the incantation to secure, before diving into worship proper, the entry of the powers of good and the exit of the spirits of evil in concrete shapes, the traditional form of preamble to the exercises of devotion is not without its own weighty significance for all spiritual-minded aspirants after the higher life. Not only does it suggest an appropriate preparation for 'divine service' but it also specifies an acceptable rule as to the right order of discipline within the whole ambit of life. The sequence followed in the pious petition, first, for the incoming of the *dèvás* and, only next, for the outgoing of the *rákshasás* furnishes a valuable, because valid, index to the only effective method of dealing with contrary elements of character both in the self and in society. For, it does this with due regard to the bottom truth about the mutual relations and interactions of those elements. How to expunge vice and promote virtue and what place to assign to each of these tasks in the scheme of reformation whether in the inner or in the outer sphere—this is the important question the aforesaid formula turns upon in its extended bearings.

To be sure, the precedence given to '*Agamárdhantudèvánám*' over '*Gamanárdhanturákshasám*' is far from a haphazard, random stroke of syntactical arrangement. It stands ensconced on a sound psychological basis, as it also indicates a distinctive mark of racial culture and outlook. From the standpoint of the Eastern ideal which it represents in particular, you are enjoined not to think of your vices but, rather, of your virtues—not of the patent dirt but of the latent divinity in the furniture of your being. You are

charged to eschew the sense of sin outright and engross the core of consciousness in the positive preoccupation of '*Aham brahmásmi*'. In relation to others, too, you are bidden to reflect least of all upon their blemishes and, as Thomas A Kempis in the Western world as well would urge, "If there be any good in thee, think there is more in others". And even if the contemplation of the darker side of the shield is to engage any attention at all, both East and West harmonise in happy accord, across all Ural Mountains, Ural Rivers and Caspian Seas, in the common injunction to ponder your own vices for elimination but not your own virtues for self-gratulation and, *per contra*, not others' vices for condemnation but others' virtues for assimilation. Hence Mahatma Gandhi's reminder in our day to the effect that, if ever exaggeration is excusable in thought or speech, it is only in reference to one's own weaknesses and others' excellences.

Of the varied aspects of this world-wide behest, the *raison d'etre* consists in the assurance that only as you strive to reach up to the standards of virtue in your ideal and also to rise up to its levels as already attained to by others will your limitations fall off like withered leaves. To outgrow is not necessarily to grow; whereas to grow is perforce to outgrow also. That is how Sri Sankara's chain of sequence in the celebrated *Bhajagóvindaslókam*, starting positively with *satsangatwam* and ending with *jeevanmukti*, embraces in its range along the way the negative realisations also of *nissangatwam, nirmóhatwam* and *nischalatattwam*. And that is how the Vedantic version of the doctrine of being and becoming is astutely epitomised in Swami Vivekananda's latter-day warning not to harp evermore or overmuch upon the sinfulness of the sinner but to bring repeatedly home even to him how he is a very saint in the making and thus effectually help forward his growth into saintliness. Just so, it is remarkable how scarcely the element of sin in man comes in for notice in the entire transcendentalist teaching of the Seer of Concord, unsurpassed as is its power to uplift.

As such, clearly enough, it is not that the *asurás* first wend their way out, leaving a void behind, and the *surás*, in wait outside till then, step in forthwith to fill the vacant places. Notwithstanding the fact that, in respect of physical horticulture, the plucking out of weed and tare precedes the sowing of the seed, the process of first uprooting the whole

crop of the vices that are now yours and then planting and rearing the virtues that are not yet yours disallows itself as altogether out of place in the concerns of self-culture. The fruitful course is always that of choking up the vices under the crushing weight of growing virtues. Again, to change the parallelism, the rule of mechanical engineering in the inorganic world, no doubt, requires that you first clear the ground of all its obstructive *debris* and then begin to build without let or hindrance. But the natural law in the organic, spiritual domain stands far differently fashioned; and it borrows analogies from familiar phenomena of quite a different description. Even lower down the scale, in filling your vessel, you pause not until you have pumped out all the air before pouring in the water; you let the air go out as the water enters in; and this you do as you are certain the end and aim will so come to pass. Darkness disappears only in proportion as light beams in: the former, intrinsically, is no other than the negation of the latter. Old leaves are shed only as new shoots sprout forth upon the boughs. Worn-out remnants of skin peel off just in the wake of the growing up of fibres of live tissue in the economy of the animal frame down to the periodical sloughing off of the entire sheath of the serpent's surface. Good Draupadi's outrageous humiliation is saved, at every turn, by the fresh furnishing of interminable folds in her garment even while, and not clean after, the pre-existing plaits are stripped off before the kingly court of infamy. The palingenesia of the fabled phoenix, too, envisages the same principle of how the new is born not subsequent to the death of the old but emerges into life straightway as the old is being reduced to ashes; so that the ringing in of the birth-throe and the ringing out of the death-pang progress virtually in concurrence.

What, then, are some of the chief practical implications and applications of the said principle of 'growing' not being postponed to 'outgrowing' but of 'outgrowing' proceeding simultaneously with, or at least close upon, 'growing'? Here, the term 'some,' advisedly used, denotes the all-comprehensive nature of that principle in connection with the entire gradation in the springs of moral action, amongst which the lower gives in only before the influx of the higher. For one thing, in the evolution of the ideal of Love into Monogamy and Monoyandry within the larger meaning of *Páti-*

vratyam, we are led to perceive how it is that to hedge conjugal relations around with negative restraints of cast-iron rigidity, such as the prevention of social contacts as by *gósha* segregation and the proscription of remarriage as in enforced widowhood, is simply to begin at the wrong end for that sustained purity of the marital bond which primarily depends upon the concentrative engagement of the beloved's heart in the freest and fullest satisfaction of the heart's demands. In the second place, as to the supreme spiritual consummation of the above in Faith and Devotion also, one learns to recognise how the sure, that is, the secure way to the establishment or to the extension of Monolatry is not the pulling down and sweeping away of idols from the temples reared with brick and mortar but the ushering in and setting up of God Himself in the shrines not builded with human hands. It is the enjoyed sweetness, however limited, of the worship of the Spirit-God in spirit and in truth that can alone create and confirm a definite distaste for the whole brood of Baalite interests. The altar-stairs leading up to the spiritual attainment of an illumined and sanctified soul like Maharshi Deven dranath Tagore's bear witness to how renunciation by itself does not harbinger realisation, while, on the other hand, realisation cannot but ensure, as it involves, renunciation also as a matter of course. At one stage in ' the saint's progress ', it is no more than " Though the temptations of the world had ceased, the sense of God was no nearer ". Yet, later, it turns out to be: " I have reached the sun and darkness has vanished," the side-hint here being that all real encumbrances and hindrances then renounce the *sádhak* themselves instead of his having to renounce them. And that is how wisdom is justified of her children who know to set immeasurably greater store even by the positive factors of superstition than by the blank vacuities of scepticism—an all too unnatural state for the soul to thrive or so much as live in. Again, in the exclusively ethical sphere, as James Freeman Clarke illustratively develops the germinal idea before us, " The best way to cure our faults is not to fight against them but to cure them by taking interest in the opposite good. The best way to cure intemperance is to give the intemperate man some higher interest—to interest him in better things than meat and drink. To cure a man of the love of money, interest him in giving money to good things—make him take pleasure in giving as

well as gaining. To cure a man or boy of cruelty to animals, interest him in the life of the animals by teaching him natural history. And to cure men of evil, help them to love the supreme goodness". Hence, no ignoble passion was ever thoroughly worked out otherwise than by the gradual or abrupt wedging in of its more powerful counterpart in a noble passion. In fact, the relation, thus understood, of 'growing' to 'outgrowing' will be found, in general, to light up the age-long problem of priority as between the constructive and destructive elements in every programme of national reformation as well as of personal regeneration. The light thus forthcoming is no other than the light of the Gospel precept, "the truth shall make you free," deliverance from fear and falseness of every species being therein set out as a prerequisite and not a corollary to the attainment of truth all-transforming and all-overruling. In respect of the casting out of 'fear,' that multiplex matrix of 'falseness', the declaration, too, of the *Taittireeyópanishad* is quite in point: "*Etasmin...pratishtám vindatè adhasóbhayam gatóbhavati.*" Accordingly, the truth of the whole matter comes pithily summed up in the pregnant maxim we owe to Schlegel, the German thinker and scholar: "The way to mend a bad world is to create a good world." And, finally, thus comes from Stopford A. Brooke the needful reminder that this creative reformation, like charity, must evermore begin at home: "The true way to meet any evil is to manifest the opposite of it in your life, to shine upon it with the light of righteousness and love. If you wish to weaken and overthrow pride in men or in your friends, be yourself clothed with humility. If you would destroy a lie, make clear in your whole character the truth which contradicts it. If you wish to do away with injuriousness, let forgiveness glow within you. If you wish to conquer despair in your friend, let incessant hope brighten in your eyes and be eloquent upon your tongue."

29

THE RUGGEDNESS OF BEAUTY

1933

Speaking of the inevitable sorrows of Teufelsdrockh and his flight therefrom into the wilds of Nature, Carlyle takes occasion to describe the combined majesty and grace characteristic of a mountain. 'The rocks,' he observes, 'are of that sort called primitive by the mineralogists which always arrange themselves in masses of a rugged, gigantic character; which ruggedness, however, is here tempered by a singular airiness of form and softness of environment.' This lapidary feature of the loveliness of unity in and through a diversity of ruggedness is extended also to human institutions. And the reflection follows: 'Thus does the little dwelling-place of men, in itself a congeries of houses and huts, become for us an individual, almost a person.' Then the question is raised, Wherein consists the underlying source of such a kind of objective phenomenon alike in the natural and in the human sphere? The answer is briefly set out: 'Always of its own unity, the soul gives unity to whatsoever it looks on with love.'

The mighty mountain, attractive at once in its ruggedness and beauty, stands there a parable from Nature. Hence we need to visualise beauty not only in spite of, but properly in the light of, attendant ruggedness. The latter aspect, far from being incompatible with, is even conducive to, the former. Here we strike upon the basis of the idealism of the so-called incorrigible optimist amidst the roughnesses of the actual. As in the aesthetic, so in the ethical and the spiritual. The 'faultily faultless' belongs not, in any department, to the affairs of this planet. Yet 'beauty spots' are in evidence everywhere—wherever we roam, whatever realms we see. Further, it is ever the familiar, none the less strange, blend of incongruities that comprises the humanness of man, as it embodies, too, the conditions of humour in man—that peculiar patent-mark and prerogative of the race. This is what constitutes, in a word, the magic of human touch.

In these searching times, when at every step we are thrown back upon fundamental issues, nothing is of greater moment, whether for thought or for action, than the right reading of the ultimate composition and the practical reactions of our common nature. The true idealist, never so ethereal, can ill afford to be other than a thorough realist as well. For, the one lesson writ large through the entire volume of Fact is that of reverence for life as it is, even for the sake of an endless essay toward life as it ought to be. To this vital principle of religion, therefore, must the policy of reform harness itself, if it is to plough up the soil of our globe to any purpose. Accordingly, the authentic minister of progress is always found to bring with him a sedate spirit of reconciliation into the vexed world of imperfections. Only, it is reconciliation, not for purposes of supine slumber and stolidity, but with an eye to effective reclamation and regeneration. He will not kick against the pricks in querulous aversion. These he will rather accept as quickening goads to strenuous exertion with sanguine serenity. And this because he keeps himself in equal touch with both present circumstances and prospective destiny. Firm as is his grip upon the staring realities of the two hemispheres of the within and the without, the reformer cannot stop short as the piquant protester, but must needs become the intrepid believer—a believer in inherent possibilities beyond all bounds and barriers. He becomes possessed with the twofold compelling conviction that, on the one hand, even as the sun has his spots, none is so far advanced as to be immaculate and, on the other, even as every winter must change to spring, none is so utterly dreary as to doom himself to perpetual sterility. The whole picture-gallery of Shakespeare's clowns and villains, idlers and idiots—does it provide merely an arena of amusement and not, rather, a school of enlightenment, nay, a very shrine of inspiration, thanks to the silver lining not absent from the darkest of clouds? Does not history also stand witness to this significant, typical truth that, with all its far-reaching beneficence, the extremisms of the Puritan movement on the negative side wrought, in its day, no small harm to the lovely amplitude of the human face divine?

The Kingdom of Heaven to be planted upon earth needs not those imbued with Jacques's morbid melancholy or Malvolio's priggish prudery, certainly not those too prone to turn away with dissatisfied distrust or captious contempt. It re-

quires only Orpheuses of the spirit, free from every trace of 'critic peep or cynic bark' and prepared to plunge down with a song into our Hades and release therefrom the prisoned splendour of immortal beauty. As a thoughtful writer puts it, 'Difficulty in circumstance and in people is the raw stuff out of which is to be shaped some enduring loveliness in God's kingdom.' The *prison*-bars of limitation noted above yield only to the 'open sesame' of insight into the infinite scale of values locked up behind. View the position *in esse* under the more expressive image of a *prism*—the prism of character into which all diversities, even seeming contrarieties, of colour coalesce with a singularly happy effect. Consider, again, the harmonious interfusion of variegated hues in the warp and woof of the spider's web or the weaver's fabric. And you get the picture of the complex make-up of man with every tint and every thread of which the reformer has perforce to reckon. 'And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side': what a cipher code this which goes a long, long way towards the correct interpretation and fruitful utilisation of apparent anomalies and angularities !

All in all, the all-important thing from beginning to end is seen to be the eye of faith, sane and sure, sanguine and sympathetic. That is the eye which, in aesthetics, beholds in rugged aspects a superbness of beauty denied to the fleckless flat and the slippery surface. That is the eye which conjures up the most exquisite charm out of a piece of fretwork comprising endless curvatures and concavities in the midst of relief-lines of bold protuberance. That is the eye which perceives that, if the human form is the lauded paragon of comeliness in all physical creation, it is but as the net result of diversely and delicately chequered lineaments past all computation. That is the eye which, likewise in ethics, discerns a grace all its own even in a spectacle of moral heights and hollows co-existent side by side in the same self. That is the eye which, as in the sensible, so in the supersensible, discovers how, after all, under a law of relativity, depressions and elevations come out of one another, combine into one another and only in their together-ness call for artistic appreciation and claim hope-filled devotion. That is the eye which, in spiritual experience, finds everywhere the evidence of things not seen: 'Earth's crammed with Heaven, and every common bush afire with God'; *'Isá vásyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyám*

jagat.' Thus, as we are lifted up beyond the bounds of this mortality into a glimpse of the mystic potencies pressing upon the 'clay-shuttered doors' of our being, Faith, Hope and Love blend and bloom into the beautiful, bountiful energy of tireless because trustful ministration for the perfecting of human qualities, human relations and human institutions. In his little novel, *The Moon and Sixpence*, posing the problem, 'Can one serve society and yet unswervingly pursue idealistic ends?', well does W. S. Maugham, a present-day wielder of psychological fiction, declare: 'Only the poet or the saint can water an asphalt pavement in the confident anticipation that lilies will reward his labour.'

30

THE ISSUES OF LIFE

1903

A well-known saying of Solomon seems to me to present in a nutshell the alpha and the omega of the science as well as the art of right living. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Here is a piece of precious counsel—of *hitho̍padèsa*—that has come down to us from a royal sage of old, and is of especial value to young men in need of a practical rule of life based upon a true and thorough grasp of human nature, its constitution and its conditions. Out of the heart are the issues of life; keep thou, therefore, thy heart; and keep it with all diligence. The text before us opens out avenues of thought over which we may travel with advantage and gather what good we may.

Now, what did that wise man mean by the issues of life, and by the keeping of the heart? And first, what and where is life itself? If there is one fact we know more certainly or more clearly than any other, it is that we live; nay, this self-evident fact of our existence is that by which the knowledge in us of other facts is rendered possible. But directly we seek to define and locate the life that lives in us, our powers fail; official science herself is at a loss and confesses how it transcends her sphere and eludes her definition; so that, after all the account that may be given of it has been well-nigh given, so high an authority as Professor Tyndall, while pompously investing matter with "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life," admits, after all, in so many words that the materialist's "molecular groupings and movements in reality explain nothing." But this evidently is a position which if the human mind could ever be content with, the very impulse would be wanting from which materialism has sprung, namely, the quest after a 'bond of union' through a variety of phenomena. And it is remarkable, as it is refreshing, that, in a passage which I take leave to extract, Professor Tyndall himself has recognised the emptiness of his own *ne plus ultra*

faith in dead matter. "I have stood," says he, "in the spring-time and looked upon the sprouting foliage, the grass and the flowers and the general joy of opening life. And in my ignorance of it all, I have asked myself whether there is no power, being or thing in the universe whose knowledge of that of which I am so ignorant is greater than mine. I have asked myself, Can it be possible that man's knowledge is the greatest of knowledge, that man's life is the highest life? My friends, the profession of that Atheism with which I am sometimes so lightly charged would in my case be an impossible answer to this question." Biology, no doubt, professes to be, as the word implies, the science of life; and physiology pretends to hold the key to the secrets of life. But what *is* biology save only a general study of the physical phenomena of life, and physiology if not merely the science of organic function? Neither touches the heart of the problem; both deal only with the manifestations of life on the material plane. And the evolutionary deduction—the key-note of these sciences—admittedly betrays chasms not to be bridged by the story according to matter, when the question arises, as it must arise, of genesis and momentum in the progressive uprising of this universe through all the ascending scales of widely-differentiated being. The shadowy scene that veils primordial cosmos and the mysterious dawn and development of life upon it, who has removed or can dream of removing by any communing ever so deep? The more the men of learning seek to penetrate through its hidden folds, the more inscrutably complex becomes the sphinx-riddle. The deeper they dive, the darker grows the darkness. Why? Because the area covered by materialistic science is evermore bound to be represented but by a few manifestations that accompany life, though, in the arrogance of exclusiveness, she mistakes the part for the whole and calls these manifestations the integral total—the *summum bonum*—of life. Our hope, therefore, for the right solution of the Great Mystery as it affects us cannot rest on physical philosophy, whose object is not the essence of life or life *per se* but the externals, the trappings, the appearances of it. Scalpels and microscopes may interpret the shell, the outer furniture, of man; they cannot cut a window into his real self and open the smallest vista on any of the wider horizons of being. There are more things in human life than are dreamt of in the laboratory; where, even amongst the lower grades of exist-

ence, your wonderful skill and resource can, doubless, break up a lovely rose into its several constituent elements but may never pretend to reproduce by any laboured reunion of those ingredients the natural flower that so lent itself to analysis. How profoundly true, then, the poet's verdict of insight that "Life's bases rest beyond the probe of chemic test" !

In point, of course, of bodily structure and concerns, experience as well as science—our sole authorities in the matter —entirely put out of court the old-world contention that man must not be classed with the animals as an animal, bisexual, vertebrate, four-limbed, mammalian, anthropoid. But, science or no science, using the word in its narrow, common acceptation, experience and introspection no less strongly force upon us the truth that there is in man a life far higher and quite other than the mere life of the body. In fact, the two factors have, in the history of thought, not seldom been represented as absolutely antithetical and directly antagonistic, as when Jesus declared, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," and, again, as when our own sages found for the mutual exclusiveness of worldliness and godliness an apt analogy in the two eyes of a crow, the one closing as the other opens. Whether or not science also stands witness to this fact of the higher life should make one radical difference ; and that is why we need to dwell upon the scientific aspect of the subject at some length. On the hypothesis of absolute materialism, the elements of the higher life—its aspirations and inspirations—would remain wholly 'of the earth, earthy,' and continue simply as homeless outcasts in an empire of aimless matter. If, on the other hand, the universe is the product and domain of an Eternal Mind—and this is the view to which, as we have just seen, the master-minds of Science are slowly veering round, the higher life is provided with a permanent ground and an inviolable guarantee. Thus individual consciousness, historical testimony and scientific knowledge all unite in affirming the fact of the higher life. It is this very quality in him that rates man "better than many sparrows" and "the life more than meat." The lower orders of creation have their appointed interests to pursue; the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air fulfil the respective laws of their being. And we, their kindred of a more exalted family, have also the ordained interests of *our* life to pursue and the law of *our* being to fulfil likewise.

For, if human life is unspeakably larger and loftier than that of any other creature here below, its ideals must be larger and loftier, too, than those of other beings. Further, if to the true end and destiny of any object its innate constitution furnishes the only possible and reasonable index, it follows that the ends we are to realise here or hereafter are manifestly as varied as our nature has sides, aspects or faculties, howsoever we may have come by them. Whether we are descended from the ape or from Adam, whether the activities of thought, feeling and will may or may not be adequately explained by the simple adaptation of molecular movements, is strictly, beside the question of human destiny, which is to be determined not by how life has evolved but by how the life should be lived. And granting that such and such thoughts and feelings originate from such and such movements, the essential point still remains: can we orc an we not produce and control such movements in order to excite in the brain corresponding thoughts and feelings; and if we can, what are the thoughts and feelings we ought to generate in ourselves and in others as well? This can be solved only in the light of the ideals dictated, as noted above, by the faculties of our nature.

Hence, the issues of life, by which is meant the course our multiplex energies will take, depend for us, broadly considered, upon how we realise, rather, upon how we strive to realise—seeing that, in this world of law and love, to deserve success is more than to command success—the ends of the several faculties with which we find ourselves endowed, and realise them with proper regard to the perspective of their relative values. The issues of life for us depend, first, upon what we make of the body with its passions and propensities—whether we pamper the flesh in gross sensuality or immolate it in rigid mortification or, as a healthy golden mean between animalism and asceticism, cherish the body visible as the sacred shrine of a holy spirit invisible. The issues of life for us depend, moreover, upon what we make of the mind—whether we content ourselves with childish ignorance or abandon ourselves to rank rationalism or, again, as a happy *via media*, love knowledge and let her work prevail but ever knowing her place as the second, not the first. The issues of life for us depend, further, upon what we make of conscience—whether the still, small voice is strenuously stifled like a muffled drum or its ever-strengthening accents studiously hearkened to as

of the unerring monitor of life's discipline. The issues of life for us depend, finally, upon what we make of the soul—whether we drift along, utterly blind to the ineffable "Presence not to be put by," or whether our whole life is overarched by a most reverent sense of the Infinite even as the lowly earth is by the glory of the heavens above.

Of these, the soundness of the moral and spiritual conditions preminently constitutes character, which lies deep down at the foundation of all genuine life, its simple sanctities being rightly accounted on all hands as of infinitely more avail than physical gianthood or even intellectual genius. If 'conduct is three parts of life,' character is the all-in-all—the be-all and the end-all—of life, nothing shorter. Character is, not the possession or the exercise of any one particular virtue, but the source and spring of all the virtues—the underlying and unifying principle of all the graces of humanity—the hidden and vitalising root of all St. Paul's fruits of the spirit. And now abideth all these; but the greatest of these is that virtue which, among other institutions, the little body* in whose name we are met this evening is pledged to promote, first, individually, and, next, socially, as far as may be. At the head of all these—brightest, loveliest, sweetest, divinest—stands purity, the very crown and jewel of life, the pearl of great price, the one thing needful. "Purity," it has been well said,† "is to character what symmetry is to beauty—not an accident of adornment but an essential of structure." Character has been compared to a bucket and impurity to a leak at the bottom. Such is the supreme importance of our cause and so inextricably is it bound up with the larger issues of life.

Whence proceed, then, these issues? As, in the physical, the general health is mainly determined by the condition of the central reservoir of the heart from which the life-current is distributed to the several limbs, so, in the moral and spiritual life, the general health is chiefly regulated by the tenor of the thinkings, imaginings and feelings which are figuratively spoken of as seated in the heart. 'Tell me your thoughts,

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* The Masulipatam Purity Union.

† *Vide* 'Social Purity and the Anti-Nautch Movement' by Mr. (now Dewan Bahadur Dr. Sir Brahmarshi) R. Venkata Ratnam in Mr. C. Y. Chintamani's symposuim on 'Indian Social Reform'.

and I will tell you what you are'—this is the cardinal point of psychology. Therefore, above all things, he must keep his heart who would ensure the right issues of life.

And what is it to keep the heart? In the adjustment between the organism and the environment in which consists life, to keep the heart is to keep it from the dangers incidental severally to organism and to environment. It is to preserve the one from inner taint and purge the other of injurious influence. Which of the two forms the more important element and plays the greater part in the formation of character, must, perhaps, remain an open question. It is enough, however, to recognise that they are both there and to work, as Herbert Spencer teaches us, for their due adjustment. We come not into the world as so many concretions of vacuity; neither do we go through it as so many slaves to circumstance. Certain inherited, innate faculties or tendencies accompany our entrance into life and constantly act upon, and are acted upon by, the surroundings amid which we are cast. The mutual relation between the two forces is precisely that which subsists between the seed, on the one hand, and the soil and climate, on the other. The waters of the mountain rill start with the features of the spring whence they rise; but they change in character to a considerable degree with the constitution of the bed along which they course on, as the latter is itself altered by the former.

Hence, in the first place, the great stress laid upon the wholesomeness of external influences in this matter of character-building with purity as the key-stone of the structure. Hence it is that, in the covenant into which we have entered with ourselves and with God, we forswear, in Milton's language, all "unchaste looks, loose gestures and foul talk" and "lewd and lavish acts of sin" which "let in defilement to the inward parts and clot the soul by contagion." Hence, as our worthy leader observes in the Thesis on Social Purity already quoted from, hence our "stern, uncompromising repugnance to whatever is base or vulgar, indecent or immodest in study or pleasure, speech or song, faith or sentiment, thought or life—stout, unrelenting opposition, despite the threat of law or the frown of society, the curse of pretentious piety or the loss of spurious attachment, to every habit or custom, regulation or institution that defeats or tends to defeat

the high purpose of human life by gilding shame with fashion or condoning carnal longing as venial." 'Enter not into temptation ' is the first commandment of caution ; and if, keeping this commandment, we never put our foot over the threshold, we are safe and our life is charmed. But once over that threshold, once we take but a single wrong step for pleasure or out of curiosity or even through unwariness, oh, we cannot be sure what it will lead us to ! First, the look ; then, the picture ; next, the fascination ; and, finally, the fall ! So the old Romans had a wise saying—'*Obsta principiis*' (Resist beginnings). Why not, then, beware of the insidious advances of sin and keep at a safe distance from all such associations and engagements as, by their common sequel, point to the gruesome lesson that all is ill that begins ill ? Why not, for instance, defy the charms of music—and I know not what other pretexts, real or fictitious—and just for the sake of self-preservation, if not on any other account, avoid all participation in the *nautch* presided over by the woman "whose heart is snares and whose hands are bands" ? Again, why not abstain from the theatres, such as they are at the present day—some of them even manned by women of no high repute—where more laxity and lewdness stalks behind the curtain than is generally exhibited before it ? Why not quietly put away the book or the picture the suggestive prurience of which tends to vitiate the imagination and fill the mind with the foul odour of filthy fancies ? Why not shut our ears to, if we cannot also frown down, the obscenities of the jest or the song which, while it panders to a depraved taste, desecrates the tongue, that noble instrument of the only speaking animal ? Why should we, by these and many more habits and practices equally indecent and injurious, appropriate to ourselves the awful indictment of the poet that

"The perils that we well might shun
We saunter forth to meet ;
The path into the road of sin
We tread with careless feet.

" The air that comes instinct with Death—
We bid it round us flow ;
And when our hands should bar the gate,
We parley with the foe !" ?

Now, when we flee from temptation, as we are thus strongly urged to do, we keep the heart from the dangers of environ-

ment. And it may be well to remember, in passing, that here it must needs be that painful clashes often arise with those whom we would not willingly offend or disregard, as we sternly set our face against those "social wants that sin against the strength of youth" and those "social lies that warp us from the living truth." Nevertheless, in such a wise as not to be shaken off with impunity, the obligation is laid upon each one of us to purify the atmosphere of society for his own behoof—that is to say, at least the little corner of society in which he moves.

But this is not all. There yet remains the other duty of keeping the heart from the dangers of its own inherent feebleness and possible corruption; the duty, in other words, of the positive culture of the inner man. How far a fortress under siege is liable to capture depends no less upon the strength of the fortress itself than upon the force of the assault, as witness, for example, the impregnable security of the mud walls of historic Bharatapur against formidable odds. More so is it the case with the citadel of character: temptation lies not so much in the things that tempt as in the desire that is tempted. The landscape of a Niagara makes no appeal to a blind eye. The symphony of an Orpheus cannot stir the emotions through a deaf ear. Neither do unprotected bank vaults tempt an honest wight to steal. So that adequately to fortify the inner nature with the bulwarks of a sound aim and a strong will is to rise effectually superior to outer conditions; it is to build one's house upon Tennyson's

> "promontary of rock,
> That, compassed round with turbulent sound,
> In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
> Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd."

Maybe, such immaculate mastery over outward conditions belongs only to the adult spirit that has attained the high stature of its moral manhood. Yet, it by no means lends countenance to any convenient underrating of the need there is for insistence upon salutary surroundings—especially, for such as those for whom this Purity Union is designed, tender in age, susceptible of influence and with still unformed, if not, alas! ill-formed, habits. It were the height of folly in any of us to flatter himself for a moment that he might, without let or hindrance, associate with any sort of companion he liked,

frequent any kind of gathering he pleased and indulge in any species of enjoyment he chose, and yet remain what he was, his own self-purity untainted. It is given only to a few of the sons of men to go amongst publicans and sinners and not to catch the infection. The bulk of us can no more escape the contamination of evil than fire can cease to burn the outstretched hand, or water to drown the drooping body. Let him, therefore, who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall, remembering how oft the sight of ill deeds makes ill deeds done and how commonly opportunity makes the thief—aye, many similar unseemly things to boot.

But to return to the other side of the question. This cultivation of the personal self is just the part of the gardener in the vineyard who prunes the goodly sapling and weeds out the rank tare. So we keep the heart by the careful tending of the noble thoughts and the watchful nipping of the ignoble ones that spring from within. For, there is much truth in what an old parson used to say: "You may not be able to keep a bird from lighting on your head; but you can keep it from building its nest there." While on this point, we cannot lightly pass over the securest defence man has found against temptation—even that spirit of prayerfulness which from the inmost recesses of the silent chamber, cries out to the Fountain of all holiness at the slightest indication of uncleanness, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." To my mind, all the powerful pleas for human-divine, historical Deliverers point only to a sublimated, spiritualised ideal which offers no new possession to those who have put their trust in the Living God and know in whom they trust. To keep the heart is to put on this armour of the Living God, who sees in secret and shields in secret. Nor are we devoid or independent of the vantage-ground of favourable external helps. The gardener not only removes promptly from near his plant all the possible obstructions, but also surrounds it closely with all the likely accessories, to its vigorous growth. I cannot and need not detail here the several aids to moral culture which a Righteous and Beneficent Heaven has provided for struggling man. Whatever in the Divine economy conduces to the development of "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control," which "three alone lead life to sovereign power," is God-given and must be accepted and assimilated as the very bread of life. The

contemplation of the lives of great men of old who fought the good fight in their day and generation infuses into us the uplifting hope that what man has done man may do. Intercourse with the fellow-men of today who are battling with better success than ourselves against like trials, temptations and tribulations interposes between us and our burdens the silken bands of sympathy which relieve us of half their galling oppression. The inspiration that breathes through healthful literature furnishes food for reflection and meditation in moments of loneliness. Participation in innocent recreations which invigorate the body and elevate the mind provides necessary outlets for the mist of depression as well as inlets for the sunshine of hilarity. Thus bracing tonics of no small efficacy are always close at hand for our moral renovation. No honest struggler ever did complain that he was left bitterly alone to himself, forlorn and friendless. He who would be a soldier of goodness may rest assured that he will never want for weapons in God's armoury. The initial requisite is the sense to realise the solemn import of the issues of life and the supreme duty of keeping the heart. Once the anchor is weighed, the Heavenly Pilot may be trusted to steer the ship of the soul, not only clear of the Scylla of external enticement and the Charybdis of internal deterioration, but also clean into the destined haven of perfected character in the fulness of time.

Now, there remains yet another point to touch upon before closing. In charging us to keep the heart, you notice our precept does not fail or forget to add that we ought to do it with all diligence. "With *all* diligence"—that is the word. It implies that this task we are called to of guarding the forces of character is one which requires the active employment of all the powers of our being—at all times and without intermission, without reservation. This is a reminder we, no doubt, need very sadly to lay to heart. For, how apt we are to trust to half-measures, perhaps to weary of the strife and steal a truce in the middle of the fight! But then, victory is not to be won until the effectual blow is struck and the foe is laid flatly low. The sentinels of the senses and the commandant of the heart must needs be always on the alert to detect the spy and the traitor, because these are only too apt to appear at an hour and in a garb no man knoweth. Those in 'public service' know, and submit to, the claim Government re-

tains upon their whole time, day and night. With what face, then, can those who enlist in the service of the King of kings grudge to have to remain evermore at their post of duty? Convention has too commonly confined the concerns of the higher life to set times and stated places. But we cannot long remain dupes of the fond fancy that when we have once simply wished to be good and to do good, we have done all. No; there must be also the continuous, unremitting endeavour to realise the aspiration and redeem the promise—the force and duration of the endeavour being redoubled in proportion to the failure. In short, *you* must keep the Covenant; the Covenant will not keep you, except indirectly to shame you out of the evil and stimulate you to the good. Hence the thrice-important injunction to keep the heart with all diligence, the most effective help to which is, again, to "pray without ceasing"—to turn to the Father and look in His face at every point. These unbroken turnings and glances, habituated to see God in all things and all things in God, illumine the soul as nought else can and leave no room in it for petty thoughts, mean motives or grovelling preoccupations. Our regeneration and hence our duty lie, therefore, in the early formation of good and godly habits. A habit may be called an automatic action; but it is invariably the result either of careless gratification or of regulated discipline. Every mannish indulgence weakens the ability to resist the next temptation; every manly mastery strengthens the faculty by which the mastery is won.

31

CAN WE AFFORD?

1911

Said Booker Washington, "The negro can afford to be wronged. But the white man cannot afford to wrong him." A remarkable utterance this which, in grim earnestness, sums up at once the uses of long-suffering and the perils of oppression! If the quality of mercy is twice blessed, blessing him that gives and him that takes, the act of wrong-doing, while wronging the victim, doubly wrongs the agent. Nay, truly considered, failing oftentimes to do the former, it succeeds always in doing the latter. And if only the truth of this were vividly realised in the manifold relations of life, how soon would vanish the vexed problems that everywhere set up individual against individual and community against community!

"The negro can afford to be wronged." Oh that each one of us could repeat, 'I can afford to be wronged'! Not as an insignificant, superfluous, negligible factor in the vast scheme of things; not as a craven, insensate, self-doomed weakling amid overwhelming odds; not as an inert, indifferent, effeminate lick-platter with no stake of self-respect; but in clear consciousness of inherent power, through active subordination of the self to a Higher than self and with firm confidence in the triumph of ultimate issues! Submission to wrong is far from being always meritorious: when born of inertia and incapacity, it is of the brute, brutish; when engendered by interest and expediency, it is even of the devil, devilish. How multiplex, indeed, the conformities of the world traceable at every turn to this *thámasic* origin! Else, where should be—especially in this, our land—all the brood of "the social wants that war against the strength of youth" and "the social lies that warp us from the living truth"? Righteous indignation, doubtless, is a supremely bounden duty; and one could devoutly wish for more of this susceptibility in the nerve-sys-

tem of our present-day Hindu constitution. But as there is *thámasic* submission, so there is also *sátthvic* resignation; and this is the point here to be recognised. What lifts the contemptible to the commendable plane is the spiritual conquest of the self in the voluntary surrender, despite the ready mastery, of the resources of self-assertion and self-vindication in the face of repression and reviling. The sovran power of life centred in self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control, is a priceless asset of the spirit, whether in the individual or in the nation denied rightful scope or subjected to unjust usage. Alive to its own inalienable dignity and irreproachable integrity, it rises superior to the smarting sense of personal deprivation and dishonour. It knows to rate the scales and measures of the world's counting-house at their proper worth and is, in fact, too preoccupied with holier, because more selfless, ends to scrutinise the lowly place assigned and the loathsome spots ascribed to itself. The man of true, inward culture—the *vyavasáyáthmakábuddhi* of the *Gita*—can afford to be wronged; for he remains insensitive to all personal elements and is not like the ermine which begins to pine, directly its fur becomes a little soiled. Rather, like Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior," "he finds comfort in himself and in his cause." Not only can he passively put up with the wrong but, by the divine alchemy within, he actively converts it into a veritable minister unto his own higher nature;

> "Doomed to go in company with pain,
> And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
> Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
> In face of these doth exercise a power
> Which is our human nature's highest dower,
> Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
> Of their bad influence, and their good receives."

Thus to afford to be wronged constitutes the beauty in all the characters of history and fiction and fulfils the essential condition of all onward progress. Truth, like a torch, the more it is shaken, the more it shines; and virtue, like a flower, the more it is pressed, the more it imparts its fragrance. How many fine, innocent natures could not afford unmurmuringly to be smothered to death by suspicion, not even with the gentle remonstrance of Desdemona, "A guiltless death I die!", but sternly refusing every chance of refutation on this side of

the grave? There is, in God's economy, nothing comparable to the suffering of wrong, particularly, unmerited wrong, to sweeten, strengthen and sublimate the soul, as witness the efficacy of the trials of the truthful Harischandra and of the patient Grisildis. Jesus never was more divine than when the pang of Calvary wrung out the prayer for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Blessed are they who suffer themselves to be wronged for righteousness' sake; for, indeed, they alone can afford to be wronged.

"Only those are crowned and sainted,
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer!"

Unto them comes the lesson of a higher law than that of resentment and retaliation—even the law of self-abnegation with its power of faithfully waiting upon the Lord. This, then, in the words of the Concord Seer, is the burden of Nature's message to the wronged and the oppressed of the earth: "Patience,—patience;—with the shades of all the great and good for company; and for solace, the perspective of your own infinite life; and for work, the study and the communication of principles, the making those instincts prevalent, the conversion of the world."

Next comes the awful warning of woe unto him through whom the offence arises. The white man cannot afford to wrong the negro! The tyrannous course—that is, to use like a giant the strength, however excellent to have, of a giant—is ever the suicidal conduct. Every act of volition has its bearings upon two worlds, the internal and the external. In the sphere of the latter, there is the principle writ large of the interdependence of fortune between the strongest and the weakest. You cannot trample upon the interests of your weaker brother but you must diminish also the sum-total of the world's weal and, in part, your own share of it too. That is the quantitative aspect of communism. Even where the spoliation of one means the aggrandisement of another, the gain here is not commensurate with the loss there. More than this, however, the effects upon the internal sphere are surer, if also subtler. I cannot cast forth into the world a look of lust and greed but it pierces its poisoned shaft at the same time into that within out of which are the issues of life. Such

is the spiritual law of interaction between the subjective and the objective. The evil-doer debases his own nature, the more so where he fails to perceive it. The mad fanaticism of Hiranyakasyapa brutalised him the more for his torment of Prahlada. How terribly wrong reacts upon the wrong-doer by vitiating the inner core—if not, alas, the outer status also—is pointedly hit off by Shelley's "lorn Maniac" in the exclamation,

> "Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
> The work of their own hearts; and this must be
> Our chastisement or recompense."

Whether in individual or in national relations, then, the negro-problems of this world—and how protean their shapes!—resolve themselves into this: 'It is not so much what you will do with the negro as what the negro will do with you and your civilisation.'

If only, in the light of this truth, we knew the things that belong to our peace! In the larger concerns of the nation's estate, our 'Depressed Classes' Missions, our 'Primary Education' Bills, our 'Amelioration of Woman' movements, our 'Protection of Minor Girls' measures make way and succeed only in so far as the national consciousness awakens to the flaming fact that we can afford to be wronged but cannot afford to wrong. Did ever ship move to its destined haven by working the oars on one side only? Again, in personal doings and dealings, who that was alive to this deeper wisdom could so far damage himself as to seek to damage others? For instance, as to the ethical expediency of meat-eating, whoever, perceiving that to kill the physical life in others is to deaden the moral life in oneself, can really afford, for the sake of a mess of pottage out of the poor, dumb creature at the slaughter-house, to go and make himself a party to plucking the rose (as Shakespeare has it) to which he cannot give vital growth again? So, while virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment, we simply cannot afford to injure, ill-treat, or even wish ill of, the most unresisting of spirits, albeit we can afford to be injured, ill-treated and wished ill of by the most offensive amongst our fellow-beings.

32

'LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY'

1911

Among the many engaging effusions of the love-intoxicated lyric soul of Shelley, crowned by Swinburne as "alone the perfect singing-god," is one lovely little fragment under the title at the head of this essay. A short, sweet carol-snatch of sixteen lines, it is a rainbow reflection of the pure Love-light of the poet's whole seeing, an illustrative image and epitome of the Heart of the Universe. The Philosophy of Love, that Law of laws, the Law above and underneath all laws—the central theme alike of faith and poesy—is nowhere better seized than in this winged vision of the muse! First, the title itself is arresting. Love is not the ebullition of frothy sentiment, now swelling, now subsiding; it is not the descent of wayward desire, haunting here, hovering there; it is not a weakness of the flesh either too strong or too trivial for the rigours of the spirit. Love has a philosophy behind it. In fact, all philosophy begins with love, the love of wisdom, and ends in love, the wisdom of love. Its reality, its pervasiveness, its persistence give to Love a philosophy of its own which shuts out all manner of misconception about it as a delusive, partial, passing accident of surface life. What and where, then, is true philosophic love? No direct definition makes answer; but ample illustration unfolds out of the sibyline scroll of Nature. To begin with,

> "The fountains mingle with the river
> And the rivers with the Ocean,
> The winds of Heaven mix for ever
> With a sweet emotion."

Again,

> "See the mountains kiss high Heaven
> And the waves clasp one another;
> No sister-flower would be forgiven
> If it disdained its brother;

And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea."

So is the life-spring of Life touched in the words,

"Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle."

Law essentially in Love, Love ultimately in Law—the very *primum mobile* of the infinitudes and immensities of Being!

The self-sameness of Law and Love—to miss this were to misread both Law and Love. The content of one is precisely the content of the other. In the first place, Law signifies surety, the certitude, as Shelley elsewhere calls it, of "viewless and invisible Consequence." In it there is no change or shadow of turning. Fire burns, not once but evermore, not here or there but everywhere; so the apple falls; the water-drop yields oxygen and hydrogen; and one right angle equals another—all by a trustworthy chain of condition and consequence. Likewise is it with Love, in whose presence is security. As Law faileth not, so Love feareth not. Whoever loved and doubted? Only as love languishes, suspicion strengthens. Love is incorrigible in its trust even in the face of incapacity to save on the part of the object of trust. Ay, read 'Androcles and the Lion,' afresh. How the confiding sufferer gives himself to be chloroformed and chopped up by the trusted healer! How the boy on the burning deck whence all but he had fled felt more sure of the return of his father than of the advance of the flames! How, again, the Swiss patriot's fearless son stood mocking the very possibility of his father's forced shaft touching one single hair of his own bared head! In the second place, Law connotes ultimateness. The 'how' of things refers you to Law; but the 'why' of things does not take you beyond Law, whether in the case of elemental properties or of complex processes. The questioning mind questions until led to Law through and across the seemingly lawless; and there its questionings must be hushed. Who set fire; how it spread; what havoc it made—here begins and ends all due inquest; wherefore the spark, once set, should have consumed the material—this were the vainest of inquiries. How the captain chanced to betray carelessness could be investigated; but why the waves closed over the mispiloted bark were more than one would think of interrogating.

Similarly, Love is spontaneous, an end unto itself. The mother may no more account for her love of the darling in her lap than for the flow of milk into her breast. The heart loves, as the eye sees and as the rose winnows fragrance—they cannot tell why. "I love, because I love: I am that I am"—this is the one, the only reply true Love has in it to make. Else, why should fair Desdemona dote upon the swarthy Moor "in spite of nature, of years, of country, credit, everything"? Could Lucy Ashton but turn her affections to where prudence pointed, where would be all the pathos of *Lammermoor*? But how could she? Such is Love, like Law, with no explanation of itself but itself the explanation of all its dispositions and dealings. Any attempt at the explication of either to one who knew it not would indeed fare no better than Carlyle's gin-horse, ever fancying itself moving forward but ever returning to whence it started. In the third place, under the concept of Law (ontology apart), the cause produces the effect by transforming, or at least partly importing, itself into it. Both in the progress of self-evolution and in the exercise of so-called extraneous influence, an amount of self-communication of cause into effect is essential to the adequateness of the cause. Thus it is that the manure builds up the plant, the milk brings about the curd, or the caterpillar breaks into the chrysalis. So, too, it belongs to the nature of Love that its subject always imparts itself to its object. Love longs not merely to be with the beloved but to give itself over to the beloved. Hence all the self-sacrifice, even to self-effacement, in the world of heart-to-heart relations. The parents give of their substance to the child; the preceptor impresses himself upon the pupil; the patriot spends himself for the fatherland; the philanthropist projects himself into humanity; the lover merges himself in the beloved. In truth, herein we trace the spinal cord of the martyrdoms of history like the Renunciation of Kapilavastu or the Atonement of Calvary, and, aye, solemnly contemplated, the root-impulse of all generativeness in the sexes. Thus to us the elements of security, spontaneity and self-communicativeness identify Law as the expression of Love. Security marks off Love from caprice; spontaneity raises it above contract; while self-communication sublimes it into communion. Again, the apperception of Law without Love signifies sound without sense; the banishment of Law from Love spells strength without

sight. The former leads to the barren naturalism of science; the latter tends to the baneful antinomianism of sentiment.

Is not, then, the Law Divine by which all things in one spirit meet and mingle the seal and signal of Love Universal, the one coextensive with the other through the interrelational unity of motive and method? If so, nature and humanity represent the two hemispheres of one orb; the rule of cohesion radiates into a lesson in brotherhood; science becomes canonised as the interpreter of religion, and religion approbated as the vivifier of science. The all-ruling force of gravitation rules out all manner of description in terms of matter: it reveals itself as in essence a spirit-force, the script of the seraphs transcribed into the alphabet of the atoms. He who attains this standpoint ascends the true mount of transfiguration and assumes the *divyachakshu of viswaroopasandarsanayòga*. There, behold! he perceives the One that remains while the many change and pass; he descries the one touch of Nature that makes the whole world kin; he hearkens to the one Harmony from which this universal frame began, the diapason closing full in man; he visions the one Light of which our little systems that have their day and cease to be are but broken lights; in short, through the gleam of the Larger Hope he foresees the one far-off Divine Event to which the whole creation moves. Not simply "the greatest thing in the world" but strictly the one Reality called of sages by a manifold of names is this self-determined, self-communicative Love in the universe. The Vedantin's *máya* is not 'nullity' but this Reality; the Vaishnavite's *leela*, the Christian's 'will of God,' are also but other designations of this same "creation's final law" of the poet. So viewed, creation construes itself as the endless self-sundering of the Absolute—in Longfellow's phrase, "for this purpose only: only to love and be loved again"—the Infinite self-sundered into you and into me, less than the least of all, for your and for my participation in the unsearchable riches of His Grace! What saving truth glows enshrined in the pious legend which makes *the Day* of this Christmas week "the happy morn" of Milton's ode! A precious hint this of 'the Everlasting Yea' of Humanity in Divinity—miracle of miracles, mystery of mysteries! Only, the measure of God's Love lies not in that He gave His only-begotten Son, nor its motive in that He gave him to "work us a prepetual peace" with His own wrath! Rather, He prepetually gives His own

self; and that, to spread before us a perpetual Lord's Supper in His own fellowship. How painful, then, all wayward partings from Him! Yet how free from 'price' and how full of 'joy' all welcome reunions with Him! If the administrative reunion of the two bits of partitioned Bengal can throw us into such frenzy of delight as this one fortnight has witnessed, what bounds may limit and what words convey the ecstasy of, and over, the straying soul reclaimed to its Primal Source? So, in the relations, too, with other spirits, Emerson felt, "When a man becomes dear to me, I have touched the goal of fortune." Assuredly so, inasmuch as "no sister-flower would be forgiven if it disdained its brother." And this, furthermore, through endless time. For, as Mrs. Browning saw,

> "Love strikes one hour—Love! those *never* loved
> Who dream that they loved *once*."

"O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" All, all, out of Love, in Love, by Love, into Love! The very *sturm und drang* round about our ears and hearts is literally the eternal travail of the Supreme Mother-Spirit for Her own offspring! Love's Philosophy, fundamentally one with the Philosophy of Culture and the Philosophy of Faith, teaches Love to proclaim, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"—the Way and the Truth, because, in this cordio-centric system, the heart sees farther than the head; and the Life, because life is but the energy of love. So, in the accents of our little poem, we ask ourselves, "What is all this sweet work worth" if our tiny heart beats not, too, in tune with the Infinite? And oh, when can we answer, as Shelley himself answers in another place,

> "I have heard
> By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
> The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
> In love and worship blends itself with God"?

33

DEBTORS ALL

1936

No truth is more patent and yet more grossly overlooked than that we owe somebody for the life we live and the world we occupy with all the power and happiness we enjoy in them. The material globe itself which forms our home and habitat with its multiplicity of comforts and amenities carries us out of our own selves into indebtedness to untold reaches in the past and in the present. Our wealth, hoarded up or tossed about, is hardly the product of our exclusive strength and skill in labour: too palpable are the limitations of what stands enshrined in the Statute-book as the 'Gains of Learning Act'. In truth, every species of wealth, so-called, is ultimately the outcome of the soil beneath our feet as well as of the shine and shower that come unbidden from on high to turn the sod into bread and the bread into coin; so that, in economics, the term 'land' is made large enough to cover the fulness of '*prudhivyápasthèjóváyurákásáth*'—the primal elements that abide in and outside our own puny selves. Then, in the name of law and order vigilantly upheld for us at every step, there is the liberty and security that comes to be ours, unearned, in respect of life, limb and property. Next, as to the possession of beauty, what a deal we pay without stint for such an object of delight as a landscape-painting to hang upon our walls! And yet, what do we make, as against what we ought to make, of the landscape itself with its hills and dales, its streams and seas, its fields and forests and the entire complex of their light and shade effects in inimitable nature? Higher up glows wisdom, the boon of true enlightenment, intellectual and spiritual, by far richer and rarer than, while inclusive of, the secular knowledge that passes for power: how it all comes freely handed to us in large overdrafts from the whole series of 'Kings' Treasuries' and 'Queens' Gardens' in literature and philosophy, science and scripture! Now,

the greater part, at least, of the price at which these divers goods, material and immaterial alike, are obtained, is always paid by others than the possessor or enjoyer himself. Nay, the general proposition holds true all round that he who sows and rears, he who plucks and purveys and he who eats and enjoys are by no means one and the same. Every son of man, high or low, comes into an estate purchased, preserved and improved by others; so much so that none can do better than discover in himself an out-and-out residual beneficiary of innumerable generations that have, unconsciously but positively, enriched him beyond estimation by their toil and moil of hand and brain and by their hardships and heroisms of heart and will. As such, howsoever forgotten or flouted through insensate callousness and inverted individualism, the absolute fact remains that we have received, and every moment continue to receive, more than our share of common blessings, while our deserts, dispassionately weighed, are practically nil.

From the background of this fact of facts emerging into view before the mind's quickened eye, Carlyle's pointed admonition upon the mathematics of merit approves itself as at once valid and valuable in the insistence on continuously diminishing the denominator of one's proper due so that the numerator of actual accrual shall needs come home as increasingly in excess thereof. Yet, in a world of ineluctable compensations and restitutions, power must, in the long run, pay its own way, that is, pay for itself—in cash or kind, so to speak. At the same time, no obligation is adequately discharged by transactions of give and take or in terms of work and wage. Hence, inasmuch as not only sensitive souls like Emerson but all without exception are bound, sooner or later and in one form or another, to rise to the gracious acknowledgment that 'every man is a quotation from his ancestors' in the larger sense of the term, it will be found to be a universal emphasis that is laid upon gratefulness as itself an obligation over and above the redemption of liabilities. Hence, for instance, the practical counsel of the *Imitation of Christ*: "Be thankful for the least gift, so shalt thou be meet to receive greater." Here is a far-reaching consideration fit to compel a circumspect pause and induce a living sense of duty by way of gratefulness as well as of requital. Repayment emptied of the saturating emotion of thankfulness were but an incident of mercenary barter after market methods. And gratitude

blossoming not in outward token, however poorly, would be no better than a sterile sentiment recalling the fruitless fig tree fit only for the oven. The peculiar feature about all genuine gifts, whether traced to their source or not, consisting in this that the giver gives himself—even himself—with, through and in the gift, somewhat of the receiver's own inmost soul must also flow out of himself into every humble act of recompense in the concrete.

Then, in this very spirit in respect, not of this or that partial patch, but of the entire area of life, who are the real creditors repayable and in what shape? Of course, even as, on the transcendent view, in the language of Jesus "there is none good but one, that is, God," He and He alone remains, too, the Giver of all good—the Prime Fount behind all secondary channels of beneficence. And Channing speaks suggestively of far wider and deeper significances than those pertaining to the narrow concerns of the physical frame and its creature comforts when he declares: "It is really God who gives us health. To His inflowing energy we owe the vigorous muscle, the strong arm, the firm tread. Through His all-quickening aid do we walk about to find the air balmy, mere motion pleasure, occupation attractive, society cheering, and our common existence a continual joy." Accordingly, whatever returns fall due from us become due to Him alone not only in the first instance but for evermore, so far as the thanksoffering of the heart is concerned. But as for objective embodiment of that consciousness and that sentiment, it is the other children of His universal family that wait as the only representative creditors within reach on behalf of the unseen, ultimate Creditor of Cosmos out of the plenitude of *nirhètukajáyamánakatáksham*. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" is an assurance that conveys sufficient 'acquittance' in the eye of Divine Law as regards the clearance, ever so infinitesimal, of Divine dues as well, it being recognised that, on our side, there can be no giving at all but towards the repaying of a prior debt. This is the principle that also underlies Saadi's compendious maxim, "The true way of serving God is to do good to man." And, likewise, in its extended applications, this is the rule of conduct that inspires the pious Hindu in his daily sacramental sacrifice of *Baliddnam*—no mere verbal offering of 'grace before meat' but, as it were,

a ' consecrated wafer ' tribute out of the ' meat ' itself to all the entities of creation invoked with the salutation, ' *Sarvabhvotèbhyónamah* ', in devout acknowledgment of real indebtedness and for fraternal participation in symbolic idealism. Therefore, it cannot be too vividly remembered that real repayment, in however limited a measure, is, of necessity, possible only by helping to enjoy, even as we are privileged to enjoy, the good things of life and that, furthermore, it is ever open to us to pass on all our blessings not only unimpaired but enriched as solemn trusts. Service thus rendered in the light of payment of a debt, not-bestowal of a gift, becomes itself translated from gratuity into duty—that is, no more and no other than what is simply due, in the radical sense of the word ; and condescension in conferment becomes replaced by blessedness in being favoured with acceptance. A positive complement is thus supplied to the negative injunction of old, ' *Mágridhah kasyaswiddhanam.*' The very purpose and justification of strength thus construed—whether strength of body or of mind or of soul—enforces the wholesome lesson that the strong are strong only to be burden-bearers for the weak at whose expense they derive their own strength. In the wide world's wondrous scheme of division of labour coupled with coordination of interests, if one is left free to work with mental appliances, it is because another is doing his share of manual work for the race at large. Ponder once more the eloquent Parable from Nature in the processes known to Science as ' transpiration ' in trees —how each little leaf in the forest grove is incessantly engaged in storing only to yield up, for the formation of cloud and shower, the moisture equally constantly sucked in from the soil through the roots. So runs the subtle round of the circuit between debtor and creditor, creditor and debtor. So "one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin" in the role of mutual, of common, of universal indebtedness. And so, as the spirit of Loveought to move behind the act of Service, the sense of Indebtedness needs no less to abide back of that spirit of Love among all the souls bound together by the hand of the Creator Himself with ' organic filaments' even as ' comates and brothers ' in obligation.

34

THE ROAD *VERSUS* THE WAY

1933

Everywhere, the making of roads for use as common pathways constitutes one of the frequent and familiar acts of efficient public administration. The provision of these general facilities of transit to and fro, up and down, is accounted no small boon by the community at large. It affords definiteness to the route, celerity to the movement and security to the attainability of the goal, while it offers also many a chance of companionship along the line. In the light of the happy experience of those who have gone before, the perplexed wayfarer, whatever the odds of his journey, is buoyed up with the assurance that what man has done, man may do. Failing any known thoroughfare properly constructed and consolidated, the poor wanderer is left to find his own way, as best he can, in dreary isolation and with haunting insecurity, faced as he must be right through with quite a possible variety of random roamings as in a wild goose chase. A position this not unlike that of the frail bark devoid of chart or compass amid endless uncertainties of wind and wave upon the high seas. For one thing, manifestly, the road-maker's laborious pains have little to do with benefit for self but aim at the convenience of unknown, even unborn, generations. They thus call to mind that other disinterested benefactor of society, the age-laden yet assiduous gardener planting and nursing seedlings for a fruitage to be harvested by hands far, far remote in time, place and blood. Another feature, more to the point, about this concomitant of civilised corporate life is the circumstance that, once a road is there ready for use, what is termed the rule of the road promptly comes in for strict enforcement to save likely collisions and knock-downs. On the other hand, as against all such amenities and under the opposite set of conditions represented by liberty in the trackless course instead of law on the beaten track, cheery comfort and cosy security make room for urgent enterprise and incautious adventure.

Care-free routine yields place to risk-lured romance. And the ruts of use and wont are left behind in favour of sailings in fresh zones and regions new. Witness, for instance, Tennyson's Ulysses voyaging forth on the unexplored waters of 'dark broad seas' evermore in quest of 'some work of noble note.'

Here, in essence, is a distinction well within the purview of the student of literature under the categories of those two sharply contrasted types of the Muse's art, the classical and the romantic. The one plants the feet firm upon the ground; the other unfurls the wings free into the air. The one moves on along the clean-cut landmarks of cadence and clarity; the other sweeps away into the shadowy domains of fancy and freedom. The one is marked by uniformity even to monotony; the other is characterised by many-toned diversity. The one bears the properties of the correct and the conventional, the easy and the elegant, the smooth and the sonorific; the other reflects the qualities of the imaginative and the independent, the elfin and the elusive, the soaring and the spontaneous. So does each style of composition appropriate a distinctive merit unto itself. Likewise is it with the two lines of locomotion, the organised road and the original route.

Nevertheless, while you are prepared to hold the balance evenly between relative values and when all is said and done in appraisement of the beneficence of 'royal roads' laid out by one generation for those yet to come, the born poet, the true reformer and the profound mystic in Rabindranath speak out emphatically against the application of this formula to the life of the spirit. In so many words, few though in number, he unequivocally counters the surface secularities of humdrum, jog-trot experience in the mass. 'Where roads are made, I *lose* my way'. This is his arresting affirmation of a pregnant paradox. And he would not be understood, to be sure, as ascribing any uniqueness to, or acknowledging any idiosyncrasy in, himself apart from common human nature in this regard. What, then, may this inherently universal challenge signify to such as would work their steadfast way

> 'On, to the bound of the waste,
> On, to the City of God'?

Of the practical antithesis, thus declared, between the 'road' and the 'way', the latter affirmed as simply lost instead of being gained at all through the former, the prime im-

plication—to put it in a nut-shell—appears to be that as 'spiritual things are spiritually discerned, even so spiritual ascents must be only spiritually accomplished—that is, attained out of a spontaneous urge and impulse within and in a free sphere or atmosphere without. The Reign of Law, doubtless, is supreme. Only, in his inward parts, man is a law unto himself—a law no outside force can repress and no external facility can replace with success or safety. God-in-Nature geometrises. But God-in-Man goes beyond and above mechanisation in disregard of its dual process of 'mensuration and numeration.' The rule of what Emerson describes as 'mathematic ebb and flow' covers the material phenomenon of the salt, blue sea. But, as Evelyn Underhill points out in a broadcast address on 'The Inside of Life', it flatly fails to touch the crucial issue, 'How a mathematical world is going to produce and to feed the lover, the poet, the saint.' The positive presentation of the vital principle involved is what is conveyed in the proverb, 'The wind bloweth as it listeth.' And the corresponding 'natural law in the spiritual world' is what is enunciated negatively in the dictum, 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation.' In other words, the Ideal may never be gauged by measurement with rule and compass and never reached by movement along ready-made routes.

Indeed, from one important point of view, as we have it in the Gospel according to Thomas Carlyle, man's principal, nay, perpetual business here below is even this of clearing away jungles and laying out roads as well as seed-plots. At the same time, in the face of the enlarging experience of the race and the graphic story of the decline and fall of institutions, it is too true, as we are here reminded, that under their limitations as petrified, particularistic pavements, roads prove, not unoften, to be hindrances rather than helps—'vacant chaff well meant for grain,' and even worse than the barren fig tree that cumbereth the ground. Accordingly, to break them up in the immobility of their narrow confines, stereotyped directions and exclusive sign-posts becomes a charge upon the protestant, progressive spirit no less obligatory than the breaking down of all obstructive, obscurantist idols. Unchartered expanses subject only to the inerrant pointings of the Divinity within being thereby thrown open, instead of pre-constructed and piously consecrated, standardised and stabilised lines of

march, the soul enters upon its own inheritance with the priceless assets of individuality and originality—be it at the heaviest sacrifice of conformity. 'Roads,' as such, may be good for machines, not for men—that is, as unqualified blessings. For man is not steam but spirit. Therefore, in the sacred name of *'Ekó bahûnám'* and from the spire-top of the watch-tower of his anti-road philosophy of life, our poet-prophet, reformer-pilgrim and mystic-sage, once and for all, calls for truce to every nostrum smacking of the mechanical monopolist and threatening to stifle the spiritual free-trader in the higher concerns of human destiny. Constricting creeds of speculative and subtly-woven theology, cramping ceremonials of selfish or sanctimonious priestcraft—these must needs go under, if only to acccelerate and assist the advent of the widening horizons and vitalising efficacies of character.

'Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they'

Next, what of the immediate or ultimate sequel after the fossil formalisms of institutionalised religion have had their last due, a decent burial? Unity in danger and Isolation in dominance ? Such be the inevitable outcry from the devecots all over—no more, however, than a figment of fear and fatuity, if not a product of passion and prejudice. Misty misreadings and morbid misgivings apart, the heart of the matter may express itself thus : no loss, forsooth, of live, organic unity but elimination of dead, artificial uniformity ; no disintegrating isolation rampant but dynamic individualism regnant as the necessary key-note of a sound socio-spiritual order. The Truth shall make you free, sayeth the Scripture. Equally holds good the converse position that Freedom alone shall make for Truth. Furthermore, as Freedom is the very breath of Life, so, too, it is the one bond of Fellowship. That way lies true spirituality, and therein abides genuine solidarity. Else were it all a hollow simulacrum, a shallow make-believe, of health and harmony in the real absence of both, like the mediæval fiction of a Holy Roman Empire which was neither holy nor Roman nor an Empire !

In no other light could one properly adjudge hoary, historic bodies of believers, each with its own pompous preten-

sions to represent the Church Universal and its own plenteous pouch of patent passports to Paradise as also its own ring-fence of road-way from which to swerve not in the least to the right or to the left—in thought and conduct (as in the Catholic Communion) or in conduct albeit not in thought (as in Popular Hinduism).

For, no steel-frame of cast-iron mould is Religion. No Morrison's Pill of Salvation does it put on sale in the mart to go down glibly through all throats. No machine-made manacles ensure its binding force. No undifferentiated homogeneity holds the rule of its realm. Rather is Religion the celestial seven-hill Rome of our race to which all roads must lead and not one alone to the severe and wildering exclusion of all the rest. Sartorial cunning has yet to devise a single, cut-and-dried uniform to suit alike even the brothers of one family. How did it fare, in fact, with the Newman brothers ? John Henry quietly trusted himself to the Papal road, admittedly prayed against the questionings of a virile intellect and virtually played the ostrich with his own rational self. Francis William chose no ready road but the path of the inward light and manfully wrestled his way through honest doubt on to the sufficing reserves of 'the soul.'

Depose creed and ceremonial. Disown code and convention. Disavow the inviolable vicegerency of church, the supreme sovereignty of scripture and the plenipotentiary primacy of prophet. Instal the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world'—the individual consciousness and conscience correcting and corrected by the universal. And you find your anchorage in the securely benignant Dispensation of the Spirit—'the Sprit within the spirit,' as Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar phrased it. Our Unitarian brethren in the western mansion of the Father's home have significantly moved one step forward in the enlargement of their bounds for the accommodation of all '*Free* Christians.' Under the charter of Freedom flaming forth in characters of gold with the sunbeam inscription '*Ekó bahûnám*,' 'the seekers of the light are one', howsoever their pilgrim paths appear to diverge. The lamps differ ; the oils disagree ; the wicks vary ; yet the flame and the light are one. Or, as the Finder (not the Founder) of our Faith, Rajah Rammohun Roy, loved to contemplate this cardinal verity of verities, cows are of different colours but the milk they yield is the same. And if

as has been burnt home into us in the Brahma Samaj, it is nothing short of a hyper-Herculean task for the soul consistently to rise to the One above the many, leaving behind the manifold symbolisms of phenomena—the plurality of secondary causes and the multiplicity of derivative deities ; it is, again, an effort no less stupendous in magnitude to carry in constant practice the perception of the One into the many, thus warranting the validity of all the complex 'varieties of religious experience' through its varied approaches and variegated avenues to Reality. Yet escape from this imperative discipline of the concrete universal there is none. As the covenant limns out the Land of Promise, lasting peace and abiding bliss are in store for none but the valiant in spirit with strength and courage enough to discern the Self-existent, Self-revealing, Self-fulfilling Oversoul in the inner souls of the children of men—each receptive and responsive in its own way and no two alike with perfect exactitude. '*Tamátmastam yènu pasyanti dhirâh tèshám sántih sásvatee nètarèshám.*'

So let the Spirit, which fundamentally is anything but static, have its own unhampered way onward and upward through all. For the sake of the Spirit, respect the individuality of each soul, yea, of each race, of each culture, of each civilisation, of each religion. Seek not in vain to reduce all to one esperanto, mongrel type or to march all along one 'debunking,' delimiting course. By no means ignore the psychology of the *Gìtá* differentiation between *swadharma* and *paradharma*. Beware that not alone the last part of the journey, as the Sage of Chelsea warns us, but well-nigh every single step forward over the whole length from the beginning must be made alone—'alone with the Alone.' Come to close quarters with life's appointed condition as set out in the altered imagery of 'the good fight' that ever remains to be fought underthe standard of the Unseen :

'The great mortal combat between human life
And each humau soul must be single. The strife
None can share,—though, by all, its results may be known :
When the soul arms for battle, she goes forth alone.'

Rely not, then, on outer roads to pursue the inner way. Find your path, your milestones and your destination, your compass, your lodestar and your haven, nowhere but in the wilds and in the deeps of the self. Look not outside to any pack, parchment

or personality, ever so respectable, for an infallible guide to your goal, an all-compelling keeper of your conscience. Rest assured that the apron-strings of authority, despite any measure of motherliness, avail not for progressive strides in the path of realisation but only for rotatory gyrations in the groove of acquiescence. List you to hearken to your *sruti*, turn the ear inward with 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.' Would you love to read your *smriti*, open the eye inward with 'What in me is dark, illumine.' In an age sold over to the worship of mass-spirit and machine-speed, insist on the independent, slow-sure chalking out of your own road and the pursuit of it after your own manner, apart from the herd and the rabble but ever 'as under the Great Taskmaster's eye'. Remember that, in matters of far-reaching belief and behaviour, the roads of dogma and ritual lead, if anywhere, to sectarianism in the impaled precincts of ignorant zealotry—poles asunder from religion upon the all-overlooking summit of enlightened liberalism. Realise that to slip into, and slide along, cheap and easy roads nearest to the nose—creed-repetitions, catechism-responses, bead-rolls, prayer-wheels and what not—is to turn the back upon the strenuousness of the immensities and intricacies within the deepest recesses of the soul: '*Atmá guhdyám nihitósya jantóh.*' Recognise in religion for yourself the sweet, sublime art of applied romanticism in the life divine; and reproduce in the lyric poem of the soul's flower and fruit the superb excellences of romantic craftsmanship, so far as may be without missing the chaste classical virtues in a composite scheme of blending lights.

'Space is ample, east and west;
But two cannot go abreast'.

So Emerson. Where, then, is the room for a road unto all like a 'hold-all'? How long, after all, can the strongest of roads endure? And how far may it lead at the utmost in any Pilgrim's Progress? Find the answer in the expressive statement of Dr. J. Lionel Taylor, a latter-day votary of Science and Unitarianism happily illustrating in himself the modern ideal,

'Let Knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of Reverence in us dwell.'

"There is", he observes, "no 'ready reckoner' way of understanding the universe. Every step a man goes in science,

while it lengthens the known human path behind him, only opens up more clearly the much more than human that is in front and the nameless that is on each side of the path that he travels". To complete the concept and clinch the arguments as to *Satyam-Sivam-Sundaram* informing all minds and hearts and souls and yet outreaching all roads and rules and revelations, it needs but to extend this principle of the transcendence of Truth to Goodness and to Beauty as well. Then, how can the knowing, feeling, aspiring, adoring spirit help the sane and self-reliant (because Divinity-dependent) if sombre reflection, 'Where roads are made, I lose my way!'? And where beats the heart whose chambers resound not with its ringing echo, unless 'cribb'd, cabined and confined' hopelessly within the four corners of abject fealty to the organised and the traditional by sheer birth, blindness or brute force?

Verily, the readiest and straightest, longest and broadest, of the world's roads, ancient or even modern, is bound, all too soon, to condemn itself as stopping short in a blind alley or as narrowing down into a circumscribed channel far from suited to the forward emprise and the expansive experience of the soul. Hence from the very centre of our being arises the paramount need—duty as well as right—of self-determination in God and self-effectuation under God alone. The corollary implicitly follows, too, that it is only righteous to concede to others the same freedom of conviction and conduct that it becomes rightful to claim for oneself. Then, fully to enter into the transforming spirit of the tense protest against the established externalisms of doctrine or deed, of hide-bound lore or lip-locked law, so separative and stultifying in influence, is the mission of everyone not content to run away with 'the picture', in Miss Underhill's meaningful words, 'of a world which has an outside but no inside.' And effectively to demonstrate by insight and outlook how 'the One without a second' ever discloses Himself only in many ways lest one good road should conceal the vision, is the commission laid on every votary of personal, spiritual religion who would take the road and lose not the way to the hidden, hallowed shrine not builded of human hands. *Noblesse oblige!*

35

CONVICTION AND CATHOLICITY

1934

No two words in the language of life have been subjected to grosser abuse than those composing the title of this article. Constant and considerable is the confusion befogging the sources, contents and interactions of the concepts behind these, much as they are in evidence upon men's lips. Their mutual compatibility or otherwise, in particular, continues to be a subject of prolific speculative controversy, even as it has proved an occasion of endless practical conflict, all along in the religious world. Manifestly, the issue involved is one of especial importance, at every step, to the adherents of a reforming, missionary body like the Brahma Samaj.

The lighter vein associated with each of the two ideas may as well be left out of account at the outset. Such, for instance, is that so-called 'Conviction' which presents but an entirely mechanical reflex of environmental influence, or which carries with it the least admixture of suspected doubt in the conclusion, or which only sits loose upon the will in the manifold movements of conduct. Likewise, it is no more than a misnomer to call it 'Catholicity' which would pursue the policy of the line of least resistance simply through indifference born of incapacity, indolence or expediency. Far from being merely a gramophone echo, an intellectual assent and, least of all, a net balance of probabilities, true Conviction must define itself as a clear, compelling consciousness of indubitable fact rationally and voluntarily cognised as worthy of practical allegiance by the whole of the individual self, howsoever it may impress the outside world. Similarly, by genuine Catholicity is to be understood, not the plastic flexibility of the invertebrate theorist, not the easygoing lassitude of the *laissez faire* doctrinaire, not the interested accommodativeness of the peace-at-any-price diplomat, but a deliberateness of outlook broad and sympathetic which, as an inviolable obligation by itself,

provides for honest diversities of belief and behaviour, the only exclusion called for being in reference to infractions of the basic and universal moral conditions of organised social existence. Subject to this necessary exception, tolerance—aye, more then the neutrality of tolerance—becomes a dictate of conscience no less than does fidelity to conviction itself. The ingress of the former may no longer be discounted as prejudicial to the integrity of the latter. On the contrary, that way alone lies also the purer self-interest, the sublimer egoism, of the soul.

Of all unworthy, unwholesome varieties of intolerance perpetuated on pious principle, the root and the fruit are traceable, in a nutshell, to an all too extravagant insistence upon the 'exclusiveness of Truth.' This breeds a self-assurance about the monopoly of plenary inspiration as from a tribal God. And the accompanying sense of sole custodianship of the prerogative or of the solemn obligation of transmitting the Truth unto others is what begets the fanatical, forceful zealot and animates him, consciously or unconsciously, with spiritual arrogance and pride of heart. So, with outstretched arms, he proceeds in the two directions of destructive elimination and coercive conversion. Quite a natural product of this mentality is Jaques, who never speaks but to 'moralise the spectacle' and who explicitly couples the arrant demand,

> 'I must have liberty
> Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
> To blow on whom I please,'

with the self-conscious challenge,

> 'give me leave
> To speak my mind, and I will through and through
> Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
> If they will patiently receive my medicine.'

To a somewhat kindred temperament (allowing for constitutional differences) pertains also Gratiano's picturesque portrayal of the type of men

> 'With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
> Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
> As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
> *And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!*'

Behind it all lies, at best, a pure and simple mechanical view of the communicability and acceptability of Truth itself as

judged by outward tests. Thus is explained the overemphasis on forms and texts characteristic, more or less, of all the older systems in which ritualism with its tributary, credalism, flows oftener as a cross-line athwart righteousness than as a side-current parallel to it. Witness the intersecting courses everywhere of the 'priestly' or 'legalistic' and the 'prophetical' tendencies in the religious life of the nations. The rack, the thumbscrew and many another harrowing instrument of Inquisitorial torture, the Crusades, the Jahads and many another 'Holy War'; the anti-Buddhist and the intersectarial persecutions of Hindusim and the anti-Jew hunt by the Nazi Christendom of the day; the *odium theologicum* that shows little prospect of ceasing to choke up even the sensitive nostrils of modern civilisation, as witness the Liverpool Cathedral Controversy of the hour—these and like disfigurements in the story of the relations between religion and religion, between religion and science, are, indeed, perfectly logical sequels to the 'exclusive' and 'external' notions of Truth. Bloody or bloodless, gross or subtle, in this regard is, after all, a difference only in the degree and the form of expression. A Caliph Omar of old reducing to cinders all the accumulated treasures of the Alexandrian Library (—on the assumption, that is, of the unresolved authenticity of this reported vandalism—); and an 'Anushtanic' Brahmo of today avowing absolute inability to sit in prayer beside a 'Non-Anushtanic' so called—what, in essence, are these phenomena, if not varying versions of pharisaism pressing on to the extremes of consistency in truth and righteousness self-appropriated? Do they not, at all events, throw a lurid side-light upon the pathology of the growth and glorification, though not the genesis, of the caste-spirit with the whole brood of its social concomitants down to untouchability? To be sure, broadly viewed, no subtler snare besets the life of the spirit than this of the sanctified 'duty of intolerance' through 'righteous indignation' in the name of Conviction. The remorseless logic of such a temper—how can it possibly stop short anywhere with a 'Thus far and no further' in its career of aggressive persecution under the holiest of (supposititious) sanctions?

Where, then, to seek for an effective cure for the consecrated malady of self-righteous or, at least, self-complacent impatience with positions other than one's own? As already

hinted, the prime concept of Truth is what requires to be radically overhauled so as to bring out into working prominence its two qualities of inclusive oneness and organic spiritualness. Truth belongs not alone to any single 'dispensation,' all the rest being but wild-goose-chasers of Chimera. Nor are all systems equally lit up with the glow of Divine effluence and mutually independent like so many air-tight compartments. Rather are they all literally 'dispensations' reciprocally confirmatory and complementary in that the diversified elements of the Infinite are to be traced through one and all as awaiting synthetic integration and progressive disclosure in the increasing measure of realisation by the finite. Accordingly, a clear-visioned and free-spirited suggestion constitutes the one approved factor in proselytism, thereby ruling out all methods of active coercion on one side and all moods of passive pliancy on the other. In matters religious, forced assent to dogma or formal observance of ceremonial inwardly unratified does no more than defeat its own purpose, even as no virtue attaches in the least to compulsory widowhood from the strict standpoint of spiritual monogamy. Hence, the common convergence of broken lights alone points the way for the perfection-seeker and the peace-maker in the face of the eternal enigma of 'yes' and 'no' and 'the war and waste of clashing creeds'. So long as we cannot but see darkly as through a glass, each from his own acute angle, fellowship without faction, copartnership without conflict, assimilation without antagonism, must be accepted as the supreme service due from one to another in the common interests of all and unto the glory of Truth itself. So, says Herbert Spencer with his genius for 'Synthetic Philosophy' : 'In proportion as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do. We shall begin to suspect that the pertinacity of belief exhibited by them must result from a perception of something we have not perceived. And we shall aim to supplement the portion of truth we have found with the portion found by others.' And what thus holds good as between soul and soul is applicable, too, with equal force as between time and time. For, 'no thought,' assures the Sage of Chelsea with a deep historic sense of the Apocalypse of the Divine, 'that ever dwelt honestly as true in the heart of men but was an honest insight into God's truth on men's part and has an essential

truth in it which endures through all changes, an everlasting possession for us all.

This certainly leaves free the widest berth for both Conviction and Catholicity in juxtaposition. From the point of view of the self, none can afford to insulate himself in a spiritual touch-me-not-ism. The rule of growth for the individual is that of growth upon and into others, as beautifully borne out, say, in the final experiences of the Jew and the Christian in *Nathan the Wise* and, again, in *The Gladiators*—two works of art, bearing upon the supreme art of life, which the literature of cosmopolitanism owes to the genius, respectively, of German Lessing and English Melville. If this be parasitism, it is parasitism of the highest order—not one-sided but multilateral; each for all and all for each as 'hosts.' From the standpoint of others, it is but 'the golden rule' of conceding to another what you claim for yourself—unfettered freedom of judgment and of conscience as the very plinth of Faith and the sole corner-stone of Fellowship in Faith. Thus is wisdom justified of her children. Thus does individualism stand filiated to universalism. And thus emerges no surer or sweeter maxim of practical nobleness than the old adage, 'To understand all is to forgive all.' Yet, even here, why 'forgive' and not 'appraise'? For, it will not do to overlook the solemn warning,

> 'There lives more faith in honest Doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds'.

The interests, too, of the cherished church of your own espousal render it imperative that you prove by conduct the possibility of sustaining a sect untouched by the bane of sectarianism. Ah, how much more worthy as well as more blessed it is to serve the Communion as the 'Friend of the Helpless' like St. Francis than as the 'Hammer of the Heretic' like St. Benedict! Again, having regard to the inherent nature of Truth, neither of its correlative counterparts may safely be eclipsed from the view. It has to be borne in mind that, as in the object-lesson impressed on young Edwin by his father of ripe discernment in *Evenings At Home*, 'religion is a thing in which mankind were made to differ' as against humanitarian service in which alone 'mankind were made to agree.' At the same time, there is no ignoring the background oneness of 'Faith beyond the forms

of faith ' reflected in Theodore Parker's dictum, ' As many men, so many theologies; but religion is one.' This is because apprehensions are oftener nearer to the mark than expressions; and as between cognition and cognition, the only variables are *nâma* and *roopa*—not *guna*, *karma* and *svabhâva*. Lastly, from the altitude of the Most High, how can the man of Conviction better glorify and gratify, reflect and reproduce, the God of all Truth than through a study of Catholicity by altogether abolishing that opprobrious term, ' Heresy ', from his lexicon of life? If Napoleon proposed to annul the word, ' Impossible ', he should soon have discovered there was, at least, one thing bound to remain impossible so long as men were not stones, namely, the effacement of difference between ' doxy ' and ' doxy '. Rather, as it was brought home to Charles Wesley in the dream that they in Heaven knew no Wesleyans or Anglicans or Protestants or even Christians but only ' Believers ', be it realised that the Kingdom of God does not exclude—since it will not so much as classify any as—Mletchas, Gentiles, Pagans, Kaffirs *et hoc genus omne*. Mystic Bohme's little parable from nature points the same edifying moral. " Who," he asks, " judgeth or condemneth the birds in the woods that praise the Lord of all beings with various voices, every one in its own essence? Doth the Spirit of God reprove them for not bringing their voices into one harmony?" Let none, therefore, think to improve upon, in setting out to ' vindicate the ways of God to man. ' And what are those ways like in the light of recurrent experience? In the dispensing of bounties, the Supreme Ruler of the universe is no respecter of factitious differences; but from above, He makes His sun to shine equally upon the lofty and the lowly and sends His rain to descend alike upon the high and the humble. ' Just to forgive ' in fair recognition of limitations of His own imposing, He forgives, too, without limit or differentiation. As ' vengeance is mine, saith the Lord ', so judgment also He would have reserved to Himself alone; so that no mortal may feel commissioned to relieve Him of the onerous burden of that awful *role*. In respect of charity, we shall be wise to let the Shylock in us hearken to the soft, suasive plea of the Portia within:

> ' We do pray for mercy;
> And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
> The deeds of mercy.'

Even granting the thorough soundness of one's own conviction, meekness, not arrogance, is yet the only temper that properly becomes him who has imbibed the real import of 'Not I but the Father who dwelleth in me'. As for the hospitality of the heart towards dissentients, what means the concrete story from Saadi of God's swift angel and his gentle reproof of Abraham's refusal of a night's shelter under the roof to an aged and alien Gebir? 'Why, Abraham, for a hundred years the Divine bounty has flowed out in sunshine and rain, in bread and life, to this man. Is it for thee to withhold thy hand from him, because his worship is not thine?' Finally, ponder how, in His own communication of Truth to men's minds and hearts, God Himself never once has recourse to the whip of the despot in order to force it down unwilling, quaking throats but allows to each the widest quarter out of the infinitude of His long-suffering. "There *can* be," it has been well said, "no impatience with God—the God of Eternity with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years. There can be no impatience with God; for, the results of His providential rule have been planned from Eternity and have been gradually developed through æons of our mortal time. There can be no impatience with God; for, impatience is a sure sign of finite weakness or folly."

Now, to resurvey the ground with a few illustrative bearings. The case for Catholicity, as enjoined upon the man of Conviction even in virtue of his Conviction, will be seen to admit of convenient recapitulation under five main catchwords: Control; Courtesy; Culture; Charity; Communion. To begin with, the rigid law of Control requires, for the conservation and concentration of all beneficent force, that Liberty shall go self-restrained under strict regulation and not run riot, treading at random upon others' heels, any more than the steam-engine, with its tremendous power, may find itself free to disregard the direction of the rail-road and yet subserve its appointed end. Next, the refined canon of Courtesy declares that no real wrong to one's self or to one's conviction is involved in another's adherence to his own conviction. For, the same code of chivalry must apply equally to all knights-errant in the arena of Truth. "A man has as much right to use his own understanding in judging of the truth as he has a right to use his own eyes to see his way; therefore, it is no

offence to another that any man uses his own right." Besides, "it is not to be expected that another man should think as I would, to please me, since I cannot think as I would, to please myself ; it is neither in his nor in my power to think as we will, but as we see reason and find cause." Then, the redemptive rule of Culture demands, above all else, a wide-visioned acceptance of the Emersonian doctrine of Truth as 'a diamond of many facets.' And as Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan's Convocation Address at Lucknow University pointedly set out in tune with this teaching, "the man of understanding" is one who " has the openness of outlook, the freedom and flexibility of thought, the capacity to understand other states of mind. His mind possesses space and air and is thus free from dogmatism and is ever ready to sympathise with views which it does not share". Further, the reconciliatory formula of Charity lays down that the most liberal of constructions shall ever be reserved for the attitudes of others and that private sanctities as well as shortcomings shall never be drawn out into the glare of day. So, in course of exposition of " the shining of God in the heart as the condition of apprehending the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," Dr. James Drummond, in a luminous little work on *Paul : His Life and Teaching*, takes very high ground when he asks, "Is there in every heart some gleam of this shining ; and where it seems absent, has it been obscured by earthly cares and selfish passions ?" And he rightly adds as the necessary corollary to the limitations of our knowledge, "We cannot answer ; and it is not for us to condemn or to despise the darkened soul ; but we do know that the light shines in innumerable degrees, from the first faint streaks of dawn to the noontide splendour; and it is for us to follow that which has been granted us". Thus is everyone to be led, without any qualm of conscience, to that serene conclusion of Browning—

> " Let me enjoy my own conviction,
> Not watch my neighbour's faith with fretfulness,
> Still spying there some dereliction
> Of truth, perversity, forgetfulness."

On this principle, it is understood, such an impersonation of the 'church militant' as Charles Voysey, the Founder and life-long Minister of the Theistic Church in London, with his tireless trenchancy before bodies of serious-minded persons against all Anti-Theistic or Un-Theistic cobweb sophistries,

would, however, never go out of his way to question another individual as to that other's personal beliefs or obtrude his own upon him. Lastly, the generative duty of Communion imposes on men of contrary convictions, for the sake of further advance on the part of each, an unqualified reciprocity of relations with evermore a mutual 'Give and take'—instead of a perpetually one-sided 'Give' alone out of superior sapiency and superabundant generosity. The professed teacher is no geniune teacher, if it cannot be said of him, 'Gladly would he learn and gladly teach'; if, indeed, he cannot learn more from his pupils than they from himself.

At this point, it is noteworthy how, right through, among men of burning Conviction, hand has been raised against hand and tongue against tongue and heart turned away from heart—all in spite of, and not under the sanction of, the clearest injunctions from the Prophets and Scriptures of the world. Apart from its social structure and polity, hoary Hinduism, with its comprehensive formula, '*Sarvadèvanamaskárah Kèsavam prathigacchathi*, allows not an inch of tether to anything militating against the ideal of Catholicity, so far, at any rate, as judgment and belief are concerned. One of the numerous points of community, on the ethical plane, between him of Kapilavasthu and him of Nazareth is the anticipation of the Sermon on the Mount in the Dhammapada declaration, 'Him I call a first class person (in technical Pali, a Brahmana) who is tolerant with the intolerant'. The Prince of Peace has his own explict maxim, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged'. That standing rebuke to all bigots, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?', marks the turning-point in the career of Saul of Tarsus converted into Paul of Rome. After that, he knows what it is to harmonise the missionary-martyr passion of Conviction with the rationalist-humanist principle of Catholicity : 'Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience ?' 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' The erstwhile huntsman of Christian heresy would now excommunicate, not weakness in faith, not even doctrinal error subversive of the entire Gospel, but only the grossness of moral offence. This staunchest of Apostles goes so far as to exhort his followers to free intercourse, including commensality, with unbelievers and even to unquestioning acceptance of sacrificial meat, provided they shall not knowingly reconcile themselves to it and thus appear to countenance the curse

of idolatry. In fact, he permits intermarriages as well for the sake of the chance they afford of winning the Non-Christian mate to the Christian Faith. As for the Founder of Islam, whatever the cultus and the conduct of its later votaries with a sharp alternative between the Koran and the sword, nothing could be plainer than his inhibition, in the interests of constancy as of 'peace', against anything smacking of the opposite of Catholicity: 'Let there be no compulsion in religion. Whoever therefore shall believe in God—he will have taken hold on a strong handle that shall not be broken.' And this theory he sealed with his own practice by way of conspicuous concessions, under certain conditions, to unconvinced idolators in Mecca.

The one permissible clause of exception to the general rule, thus inculcated on all hands, of tolerance in dealing with others has already been touched upon—namely, warrant for check upon violence offered to the ethical fundamentals of corporate life. Next to this, the only intolerance prescribed for the man of Conviction must be understood to be in relation to himself. As tolerance towards others is not only compatible with Conviction but imperative on the basis of Conviction itself, so, for obvious reasons, intolerance towards one's own self does find a proper place and justification in the economy of progressive life. To compromise your own conviction in personal conduct and yet sit in judgment upon others is to take after the ungracious pastor who shows others

> " the steep and thorny way to heaven,
> Whiles, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
> And recks not his own rede."

It is to confirm Paul Richard's satiric definition of morality, in *The Scourge of Christ*, as a lively sense of the duties of others! Conviction ceases to be Conviction unless unreservedly acted upon or, better, acted out. In Carlyle's words, " Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct." Intolerance to self, in this sense, is a condition precedent to further light and guidance, as the Author of *Sartor* again reminds us: " Do the Duty that lies nearest to thee, which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer." A precept of invaluable service is this in making the dawn ripen into day! Rest

assured, 'as the night follows the day,' true to thine own self, 'thou canst not then be false to any man'—nay, to God Himself. Parley not, then, by any means with the insidiousness of that internal foe, self-excuse, but watch without ceasing and dare to front it 'full-square to all the winds.' And in all circumstances, be it said of yourself, as by the venerable negro-slave in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 'Master is so kind to all but one.'

Altogether, a besetting, bewildering problem this of where to draw the line between aggressive Conviction and accommodative Catholicity! Learned and penetrating disquisitions, doubtless, are not wanting—such as Mill's work on *Liberty* and Morley's on *The Limits of Compromise*. And while each seafarer of the spirit must needs find his own chart and compass under the polar star of the inner light, Brahmic history abounds, too, for us in illuminous side-lights streaming from radiant examples. The simple yet soul-satisfying Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj, that irrepealable Magna Carta of Rajah Rammohun Roy unto universal humanity—how gloriously it enshrines a happy, hallowed coordination of the two cardinal principles of Conviction and Catholicity, Independence and Interdependence, in the noblest of human pursuits and the most organic of social filaments, to wit, Worship! As for the habitual illustration of the lofty principles in his own practice, there is the personal testimony conveyed by Dr. Boot to Mr. Estlin just two months after the Rajah's demise, according to which, standing "in the single majesty of, I had almost said perfect humanity", he would oftentimes voice his "wisdom, grace and humility" in such beautiful words as: 'I can never hope in my day to find mankind of one faith, and it is my duty to exercise the charities of life with all men.' Maharshi Devendranath Tagore discarded his own *yagnópaveetham* but would not be prepared to insist upon his fellow-ministers doing likewise. Pandit Sivanath Sastri could, as he told me, without any sense of self-abasement bring himself to indulge his good mother's tenderest sentiment and suffer her to tie up an amulet of superstition to the end of his cloth each time he was to set out on his extensive journeyings on mission tours. And what to say of that 'silent pastor', Bhai Nandalal Sen, whose sealed lips and sainted life made no open demonstration of where Conviction ended and Catholicity began? As reforming protesters, it is so incumbent upon us

ever to be men of Conviction—not pieces of driftwood, not men of straw. As rational universalists, too, it is equally obligatory upon us always to be men of Catholicity—not stinging wasps, not men of the grinding mill. Only, there are ways and ways of setting about the dislodgement of 'federal errors'. "An iconclast without a hammer, who took down our idols from their pedestals so tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship": that was the way with the author of the phrase, 'federal errors'—the Seer of Concord. And what a vision of sublimity and significance the picture brings up before the eye!

Be it ours, then, to find ourselves without exception implanted steadfastly on Conviction and expanding sunnily into Catholicity. Be it ours to prove always that Catholicity is not inconsistent with Conviction any more than inspiration is identical with infallibility, unity inclusive of uniformity, faith inseparable from fanaticism, or zeal synonymous with zealotry. Be it ours ever to present the entirety of our personality—Conviction its inner concave and Catholicity its outer convex. Be it ours still to demonstrate the intensive depth of our spiritual being in Conviction and its extensive breadth in Catholicity. Be it ours constantly to exemplify how Conviction impels, leading us to our brother-man with the offer to share our inheritance with him if he will, and how Catholicity invites, drawing our brother-man to us on terms of regardful responsiveness. Be it ours unfailingly to show that if Conviction imparts, Catholicity imbibes, the two thus forming inalienable counterparts in the life divine. Be it ours unintermittently to verify how, by inherent nature, while virile Conviction not unoften carries dissonance, dissevérance and dissolution in its train, sweet Catholicity alone holds the key to reunion, reintegration and recreation. Be it ours now and for ever not only to smite and break down, as Conviction must, but also to salve and bind up, as Catholicity can; not only to deepen chasms and heighten mountains but also to cut canals and carve tunnels. So shall some of the pentecostal showers of Freedom and Fellowship descend as well upon our Household of Faith even from that International Reunion of Liberal Faiths under the beacon-banner of 'Liberty, Variety and Fraternity' which is now in solemn session at Copenhagen—so far off to the feet, yet so near to the heart!

36

THE ADVERSATIVE IN LIFE

1933

Not the least among the pioneers of modern science was 'the Tuscan artist' to whom the world owes the invention of the sky-scanning terrestrial telescope. Galileo was endued with the vision and the voice to stand out in support of the new Copernican as against the old Ptolemaic theory of the universe and its movements. Summoned before the Inquisitional tribunal and silenced under menace of terrific torture, the heresiarch—if legend speaks true—could not, even at that sore moment of stultifying repetition of the formula of abjuration, help exclaiming, as he rose upon his knees, 'Still, it moves', in reference to the planet on which he stood. And this he accompianed with a forceful thud of his foot upon the ground. From the Italy of the seventeenth, we shift to the America and the England of the nineteenth century for another instructive story. During his English visit, Emerson, the premier philosopher of the New World, was shown round all the apartments of Newgate Prison, the largest in the Kingdom. And at the close of that first-hand view of all the criminal depravity concentrated there in the concrete, he was confronted with the disquietingquery, 'Now, what of your optimistic outlook upon life?' 'For all that, the world is good; and its God also.' Such, in substance, was the unperturbed answer upon his unfaltering lips.

Now, these two interesting episodes pondered side by side—do they not disclose points of contact amid differences of features and yield a common significance between themselves? Galileo had to grapple with a false if hoary belief. Emerson had to settle accounts with apparent facts. Neither the anathemas and the consequent compromise in the one case nor the contradiction from actualities in the other could succeed finally in extinguishing the vision of verity. The one was concerned about the central truth of the physical, as the

other was about the fundamental certitude of the spiritual universe. The one, in spite of himself, was honest-hearted enough, spontaneously though parenthetically as in a saving clause, to deny the falsehood before him and affirm the truth in him, thus retracting his forced recantation. The other was clear-sighted enough to perceive the non-finality of the immediate phenomena around him and assert their not incompatible place in the absolute truth behind. The 'still, it moves' position of the one may be noted as implicitly symbolic of the forward procession of the entire sum of things, including the destinies of the human denizens of this globe. The 'For all that, God is good' averment of the other may be seen to be explicitly indicative of the driving, ensuring force at the back of the world's progress—even the power of Eternal Goodness. The one announced, so to say, a figurative statement of optimism in the light of Nature's workings. The other proclaimed that optimism point-blank as grounded in the very being of the God of Nature, including humanity.

Such affirmations, embodying strictly the negations of negations, represent the irrefragable spirit of true protestantism in all ages and climes. Only, its apparel and its accents vary with the conditions that challenge the nonconformist into the arena, it being remembered with Emerson that 'Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.' Again, a stamping 'still' is evermore the thunder-voice of such nonconformity for positive, purposive ends. And a sudden, revealing 'For all that' is the lightning-flash accompanying the reverberation. Hence, the two stories related above stand linked together by one vinculum—an intrepid support and service of Truth founded on conviction. Together, they illustrate how, on one side, moral courage may descend into the region of physical facts, so called, and how, on the other, it does ascend into the realm of spiritual experience. As such, whatever the field of manifestation, courage of conviction reports itself as something far from unmoral and farthest from sub-moral, being intrinsically moral in its character and primarily spiritual in its source. This is because, in the last analysis, all Truth is one; and the harmony of idealism must melt away the artificialities of differentiation between material and immaterial, between 'natural' and 'revealed.' Such largeness of composite view it was that, in effect, lifted St. Augustine out of the narrow confines of an exclusive, non-secular and mira-

culous 'revelation' independent of normal human faculties and led him to the 'confession' that, after all, he saw no distinction whatsoever between what man discovered and what God revealed. Accordingly, Galileo himself, branded though as an atheist for the temerity of that cleavage with cosmogonic fallacy, yet found, for his own part, the sheet-anchor of his soul in the clearest assurance as to the being of the Godhead. 'Call me an atheist? Why, I can prove the existence of God from this blade of grass.' Such were his doughty words apparently in vindication of self but really in confirmation of 'The Everlasting Yea.' The head and front of his offence consisted in this, that he ventured to remind die-hard dogmatism of the real objective of the Bible—namely, as he put it, to tell people how to go to heaven and not to teach them how the heavens go. That being so, one can discern how, across the wide spaces that yawn between the scientific believer in Galileo and the believing seer in Emerson, Jove nods to Jove from behind each of them.

All through the epochs of history, they that have walked in the ways of protest have incarnated in themselves the sturdy spirit of 'Still: for all that' in different contexts. And naturally, the clash of this practical dynamic has had to be with the Chinese Wall of defiance from the nearest, dearest kith and kin. The prince of protestors in the old Indian tradition was Bhakta Prahlada—none more genuine, with an ideal blend of firmest loyalty to the royal within and meekest deference to the respectable without. Innocent of the slightest shadow of deflection and free from evey trace of bitterness under the persistence of paternal pleas and penalties, he knew, unflinchingly yet not unfilially, to determine for ever, with a 'Still: for all that', the direction of his own soul's allegiance as between the *asura dharma* of insensate Scepticism and the *viswa dharma* of inebriate Faith. Restricting the purview to the hundred-year annals of our own communion as the offspring of pure and not barren protest in this modern era, we can recall how replete these are with shining instances of 'Still' and 'For all that' in the most crucial of situations. Rajarshi Rammohun's lifelong crusade against hydra-headed Superstition called him forth, even early in his teens, into many a gentle passage-at-arms with the venerable Rama Kanta Roy, who was given to engaging the little boy in frequent 'theological discussions.' After the necessary prelimi-

nary admissions, the son's response, as we read, would usually begin with the adverbative particle, 'But' (*Kinthu* in Bengali). So that, on one occasion, the exasperated father burst out in the tone of remonstrance: "Whatever argument I adduce, you have always your *kinthu*, your counter-statement, your counter-argument, your counter-conclusion, to oppose to me!" There, indeed, was the auroral foregleam of later meridian effulgence in the all-round rationalist Father of the Brahma Samaj. Next, Maharshi Debendranath, not long after his formal acceptance of the Brâhma Covenant devised by himself, became exposed to an unprecedented ordeal of wild obloquy and fierce ostracism as the reward of a stern refusal to swerve from Spiritual Duty in connection with the funeral obsequies of his father, Prince Dwarakanath Tagore. "Alone on one side, against everybody on the other," what had he to say to his demoralised and dissuading younger brother, Girindranath? "In spite of all that, we cannot possibly countenance idolatry." Thus was signalised the first *sráddha* ceremony in accordance with the monolatrous spiritual rites of Brahma Dharma. Similarly, when it came to the collapse of Carr, Tagore and Co. and the alternative in dealing with the vast troop of creditors lay between sordid comfort and honourable penury, this quondam nursling of pomp and luxury brought himself, readily and cheerfully, to offer up every shred of even legally protected trust-property with a care-free, because self-abnegated, 'What though?' And thus was performed a memorable '*viswajit yegna*' in strictest fidelity to the Moral Law. Turn, again, to any of the arresting passages in Brahmananda Keshub Chundra's revolutionary career of nonconformity and innovation. Take, for example, the sturdy resistance of the young seeker after Truth against all that imperious pressure which impinged upon him for his acceptance of the customary idolatrous 'initiation' at the hands of the Colootolah family-priest. Or, as enforcing the social application of the progressive ideal to the status of India's Womanhood, behold the dauntless reformer daring to lead the timorous, faithful, young wife from behind the *purdah* out into the open and on to the Jorasanko home of the Tagores for participation in the solemn ceremony of his ordination as the first non-Brahmin *Achárya* of the Samaj by Maharshi. How all hostile forces were there arrayed in solid phalanx but to vanish into thin air at one determined

whiff in the spirit of 'Still, for all that, I will; for I must'! Lastly, as I had the account direct from Pandit Sivanath Sastri, his own aged and honoured father who particularly doted upon Hemalata Devi as the first grandchild, alternated no end of importunities and imprecations in the anxiety that the heterodox, heretical son should refrain from outdoing all his past outrage and settling that darling of his heart upon a man of 'low' birth. The son could only plead, "Still, still, father, how might I possibly ban the alliance on the score of caste, which I myself hold in all sincerity to be not merely meaningless but positively mischievous? She loves him; and I know him to be good and worthy." So in the end, as the narration went on, poor old Harananda Bhattacharya felt the force of the argument for or from consistency and just quieted himself with a groan of anguish. Another characteristic anecdote in point about Sastri Mahasaya is this: that while he was in England, an English admirer of his once reported himself as having trudged over a number of miles just in order not to miss the opportunity of hearing him utter, as he could with an effective emphasis all his own, a particular, single word in the language, to wit, the downright, honest, Anglo-Saxon 'No'—verily, the 'Logos' of Nonconformity!

Typical sources these of an inspiration which courses as a life-current through the entire arterial system of 'the Soul Politic.' Assuredly, in the making of history and the fulfilling of destiny, the Adversative in Life proves itself possessed of an infinitude of vital potency, whenever and wherever the protest raised is seen to be the legitimate outcome of an indissoluble union of conviction with courage of conviction. Blessed is the nation whose sons and daughters are enabled ever to translate into luminous deeds the lofty words of the good old *Liberator*: "I will be as harsh as Truth and as uncompromising as Justice. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retract a single inch. *And I will be heard*". '*Kulam pavitram; janani kritârthâ.*'

37

THE LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL CONTROVERSY:

ITS INDIAN BEARINGS

1934

"The spiritual men of India, a great and watchful multitude, whose spiritual status is unassailable, many of them catholic in a deeper sense than we of the West have yet given to the world, these, Mr. Dean, will note what you have done, and they will hold Liverpool Cathedral in high honour. They, too, are mostly Unitarians, but not denominationalists."

These gracious words form part of a remarkable document of the 17th June last from the pen of one of the best known Unitarian leaders in contemporary England. That is Dr. L. P. Jacks—son-in-law and biographer of Stopford Brooke; Principal Emeritus of Manchester College; and Editor of the Hibbert Journal. For the understanding of the context, it will suffice to sketch the related background of facts in the barest outline. By invitation, in October 1933, from good Dean Dwelly of Liverpool Cathedral, the Rev. Lawrence Redfern, M.A., B.D., Unitarian minister of that city, preached a special Assize Sermon on "The World is Ours to Make or Mar" at Sunday matins from the Cathedral pulpit. Dr. Jacks was also drawn upon, later, by the same official and, this time, with the full approval of the broad-minded Bishop of Liverpool to deliver from the same civic shrine a series of three discourses on "Elemental Religion" at special week-night services. Thoroughly non-controversial in character and uniformly comprehensive in appeal, the utterances, one and all, elicited unqualified approbation by their intrinsic spiritual quality. Lord Hugh Cecil, however, was roused, as a zealous champion of evangelical orthodoxy, to lodge before the Archbishop of York a vigorous charge and complaint against the "illegal and scandalous" conduct of the Cathedral authorities so outrageously "disloyal to Christ" as to recognise professed

disbelievers in the deity of the Man of Nazareth for a place in Christian fellowship under Anglican auspices. Accordingly, the Upper House of the Northern Convocation, comprised of fourteen Bishops, met in solemn session on 7th June last under the presidency of Archbishop Dr. Temple and unanimously adopted the Bishop of Durham's resolution condemning the past action and forbidding its future repetition even at other than the regular services, so far as non-votaries of the Ecumenical Creed were concerned. Thus, for any degree of fellowship in the twentieth century and after, the absolute (though truly obsolete) credal condition of the fourth century was, once again, authoritatively reaffirmed in the name of "the common Christian Faith of Jesus Christ" as "Very God of Very God who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was made man"! In course of the discussion, a gallant defence was put up by the Bishop of Liverpool in support of the measure of discretion vested in members of the Episcopate by former Church Conferences and, particularly, in the interests of the larger spiritual unities needful, during these times, for the very security of Religion itself. The finding, such as it was, on the technicalities or, rather, the trivialities of the laws ecclesiastical was finally acquiesced in, for administrative guidance, by the two dignitaries at the bar. But close upon this, the Dean and his associate in the Chapter, Canon Prof. Raven of Cambridge, were moved by a thrice commendable spirit of courage and graciousness to address a joint letter of apology to Dr. Jacks and another to Mr. Redfern. The first was read publicly at the special Cathedral service on June 17th, as also Dr. Jacks's reply in acknowledgment quoted from at the beginning. The second was read out by the recipient at his Church service on the succeeding Sunday together with his own reply. The apologies gave beautiful expression to a keen sense of shame and remorse at such humiliation as the invitations, by their sequel, had exposed the honoured preachers to. They conveyed the warmest thanks and gratitude for the valued tokens of goodwill and cooperation rendered to them, as, indeed, for the inestimable contributions made to the higher life of the City and the Realm by a whole galaxy of predecessors in the Unitarian fold. And they concluded with renewed assurances of preparedness, with the counsel and help of the Unitarian leaders, to maintain further occasional common worship else-

where irrespective of consequences. The replies, in their turn, disavowed the least touch of personal pain or abasement as occasioned by the situation. They tenderly reversed the position by owning indirect responsibility for the trouble and embarrassment that had ensued to the apologisers themselves. And from divers standpoints they dwelt at length upon wider bearings both with reference to, and apart from, the canonical grounds of exclusion. Mr. Redfern, for his part, concluded with a general offer of unconditioned hospitality at his own Church, if at any time it should seem good to them to come for common witness to the vital things of the spirit without compromise to their own persuasion.

Now, for one thing, the invitations, the protests, the discussions and the finding have, since, naturally helped to bring the Unitarian cause considerably to the fore in England; so much so that anticipations are being made in many discerning quarters that the only people to profit by the whole of this latest historic agitation are—the Unitarians! Already a multitude of public comments has been called forth from the opposed view-points of organised, official religion, on the one side, and essential, spiritual religion, on the other. And, at all events, it has been made amply manifest that here is no mere tempest in a tea-pot, no passing domestic ecclesiastical episode or problem; but its implications carry a significance for the whole future progress of true religion and of spiritual relationships as against the rampant forces of scepticism and secularism. Locally and immediately, of course, it is the recurrence of the old sharp issue of Nicea in temporary triumph over Nazareth. At the same time and in due course, the reactions are bound to prove vastly more far-reaching. In his reply, worthily appraised as "a model of magnanimity and good judgment," Dr. Jacks finds remoteness from reality to be the banal defect in the vision of the keepers of the Church. And while quietly leaving it to others to presage the dire consequences, himself content with dignified humility to submit the official verdict on the Christian status of Unitarians to a Higher Tribunal than any earthly synod, he proceeds thus to acclaim the redeeming features of the general situation in the passage preceding that cited above. "In placing the interests of religion first, and the interests of Church policy second, you have lit a candle in the Church of England that will not easily be put out. The light of it will have a far pene-

tration both in time and in space. It will be seen and welcomed by an immense multitude of Christians not professedly Unitarians, but no more bound by the Creed of Nicea than they whom the Bishop of Durham's resolution, if taken seriously, would render outcast from the Visible Church. And beyond these are the masses of our fellow-subjects in the East, the Hindoo, the Buddhist, the Moslem, to be counted in the total by hundreds of millions, for whom the appeal of organised Christianity is so often sterilised by the spectacle of its internal divisions and by its attitude of exclusiveness, if not of repudiation, to all that lies outside itself."

May we hasten to observe how, even as deep answers unto deep, our own stirred emotions swell in grateful, sympathetic responsiveness out here in India within the communion of the Brahma Samaj, which, doubtless, Dr. Jacks has in mind among his noble references ? All along united with them in the bonds of the spirit and taking our stand by their side on Freedom as the condition, Righteousness as the expression, and Love as the substance, of Living Faith, we in the Brahma Samaj do hail the real recognition behind the apparent repression of the present even as the dawn of a New Reformation in the West. We do rejoice to trace how leadership amongst our spiritual kinsfolk in England has risen and is intent on still rising to the occasion in this memorable crisis, asevidenced by the courage and also the patience, the detachment and yet the determination, breathing through the sober and withal spirited columns of their organ. With intimate fraternal interest, with fervent greetings and with devout goodwill, we shall continue to watch the course of the heroic struggle in which they are privileged, again as before, to play a notable part for the emancipation of Religion from the 'thirty nine' clutches of credalised Churchianity and for its installation as a realised life-dedication to the Kingdom of God in the spirit of the Christs. And as for the prospects of Christian propagandism in this ancient land, as we echo every sentiment of the rejected heresiarchs, we contemplate how, at this rate, it cannot but suffer a hopeless set-back, while it still persists in identifying the content of Christianity with the literalism of dogma of any theocratic council, however august, or with the rigidity of formulary of any metaphysical definition, never so precise. On a soil saturated through and through for ages with the idealism of tolerance towards all varieties of outlook,

of comradeship towards all elements of existence and even of worshipfulness towards all manifestations of personality, how dream they further, we ask, of decent standing-ground, let alone effective appeal, so long as the custodier Bishops of Durham at the fountain-head keep jealously striving to hold their own national sanctuaries of communion under strict lock and key and profess holy horror at the otherwise admittedly logical permissibility of a "Hindu Tolstoyan like Gandhi" to enter in and witness to his inner vision ?

Far from this, the soul of India, which has already seen and suffered overmuch of the same high-browed temper on the part of the olympians of race and religion, will instinctively recoil from the emissaries of these new Winston Churchills in the spiritual sphere. Our people, surely, are not so devoid of the practical sense of irony and of humour. Hence, they may not easily forget the dismayed consternation excited in the devecotes of narrowness by the "seditious fakir striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal Palace to parley on equal terms with the Representative of the King-Emperor." Again, as we reverently uphold with our Unitarian brethren the intercommunion of all human souls at the open Altar of Worship as also the inviolable 'liberty of prophesying' in the light of the immediacy of Divine inspiration, we know we have the same or similar antagonisms to contend with and the same or similar achievements to work up to in the larger Hindu community to which the Brahmos primarily belong. Only, if Christian Anglicanism has set up a credal fortress, Hindu Sanatanism, in its way, has erected a ceremonial citadel for its own 'safeguard'. Can it be too deeply or effectively realised, then, that liberalism is one, even as anti-liberalism is one, East or West, in respect of the ultimates of Religion, aye, of Life?

38

THE BRAHMAISM OF MEDIAEVAL EUROPE

1933

In this season of the Centenary of Rajah Rammohun Roy, the searching eye and the reverent mind love to vision and contemplate, with devout gratefulness but not with exclusive concentration, the grandeur of the personality and the glory of the principles bodied forth in that crowning apex of a most crowded career, the Brahma Samaj. One would rejoice as well to stretch back the gaze afield into the precursive prophecies, far and near, that heralded his Religion of the Spirit in varying degrees of clearness and completeness. The hoary history of our own land opens up an age-long stream of Protestant Hinduism through the several stages of its widening with the process of the suns into the Monotheistic Church of Modern India. With a hold upon the subject which he has made his own, Pandit Sitanath Tattvabhushan has long since gathered up for us, in a lucid discourse entitled 'The Brahmaism of the Rishis', all the salient features of consanguinity between the Brahmos of today and their earliest spiritual forbears, the seer-sages of the Upanishads. Inestimable would be the value of like tasks similarly accomplished on the part of qualified exponents in reference also to many a later epoch gone by and many another clime far off.

By way of nothing more than raw material for a finished fabric or framework for an exquisite picture in competent hands, herein will be brought together a few bare yet, it is hoped, interesting particulars relating to a specific time and region and calculated, though by a single instance, to help to substantiate the general position that the God of Pure Spiritual Theism has nowhere or nowhen left Himself without a witness and perhaps, also, to stimulate something like the desired investigations in thoroughness along different directions. So far as the story of our own people is concerned, the place of the

Father of Modern India has properly been fixed right at the point of its emergence out of Mediæval India. As regards the western world, it is remarkable how, in the very heart of its Middle Ages or Dark Ages so-called and out of the seemingly sterile soil of its Catholic Christendom, there was witnessed, even prior to the great Reformation, the uprising of a vital movement of spiritual regeneration quite anticipatory of our own Dispensation of the Natural Religion of Universal Humanity. The marks of affinity are, indeed, so striking in respect even of the scope of its appellation as also of the circumstances of its genesis, the significance of its message, the opposition to its acceptance and the influence of its forces.

In the centre of Europe, Rhenish Germany of the fourteenth century became the birth-place and the life-sphere of a great mystical movement of practical religion substantially one with our own. Its membership was open to all, laity as well as clergy. And its followers were knit together by no bond other than that of unity of spirit under the broadest and most enduring of horizons. As Rammohun Roy was led to find for his Church an all-embracing, all-sufficing name in the term, 'Brahma Samaj' (the Society of the Followers of Brahma), so they were content to denominate themselves by the simple designation of 'The Friends of God' with no sectional, restrictive qualification to associate it with any one incarnation, prophet, leader, belief, rite or administrative principle. The Order thus broad-based stood on a distinctly more comprehensive footing than, say, that of 'The Brethren of the Common Life', famous through Thomas A Kempis, which came into being towards the end of the same century and was confined only to the votaries of the cloister with an overstress upon other-worldly detachment from the now and the here. Again, it was clearly far more removed from still later cults such as that of the sixteenth century 'Society of Jesus' with its narrowly particularistic allegiance and aim, the reclamation of Protestant heretics for the Catholic Church of Christ. True, even the 'Friends of God' did not formally or openly cut their cables from off the old Romanist moorings. But that was because their one objective was to leaven their own immediate heritage of teachings and traditions with the effective inspiration of an all-round universalism—a circumstance prefiguring in itself the truly conservative-progressive, national-universal outlook of the Inaugurator of the Brahma Samaj.

In Meister Eckhart, its Founder, the new Community hailed its own Rammohun—the former with his indebtedness to the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and the latter with his bias toward the Monistic Vedantism of Sankara. Among the spirits conspicuous as having profoundly assimilated and extensively propagated its ideals and idealisms was its Devendranath in John Ruysbroek, the prince of contemplative mystics, to whom large numbers would resort for counsel in spiritual perplexities. It had its Keshub in John Tauler, whose brilliant and powerful preachings drew crowds to hang ever upon his lips. Not to multiply the parallelisms, it had, too, its Sivanath in Henry Suso, who, happening to cross the Lake of Constance with a doughty young knight on the latter's way to arrange a gallant tourney with the prize of a gold-ring for him who should best bear wounds and bruises and hold out the longest, just said to himself, 'How much these men are willing to risk and endure for a prize so trifling! Oh to be a Knight of God!' And answering to our own book of 'Brahma Dharma', it had its beautiful treatise of transcendent experience, the 'Theologia Germanica' of unknown authorship, if not ascribable to Tauler himself.

The Confraternity arose as the outcome of a twofold purpose in spiritual therapeutics—namely, to cure away, on one side, the choking 'circumstantials of religion,' its formalisms of dogma and ritual, and, on the other, the canker corrosions of the world, its engrossments of pleasure and profit. Likewise, in the birth and growth of the Brahma Samaj over here, what have we but history repeating itself as a reaction against the arid scholasticism and superstition of the India of a long-drawn past and the insidious sophistry and scepticism of the India of a new-dawning age? Only, it has to be noted in this context that the work of the 'Friends of God' was more regenerative than reformatory, while that of the Brahma Samajists has all along been committed equally to regeneration in the root and reformation in the fruit, regeneration in the organism of the spirit and reformation in the environment of the body politic. For this phenomenon, the reason might partly be found in the obvious differences of sociological condition as well as divergences in the antecedents of the respective promulgators. At all events, the uniqueness of the Brahmic Dispensation, marking it off from all its forerunners in Indian Protestantism, consists in this: that, from the begin-

ning, it has not stopped short only with liberalism in conviction or merely with the cultivation of the inward parts but has, with thoroughgoing consistency, stood scientifically and religiously pledged to all the manifold requirements and complex processes of biological readjustment between the inner and the outer. Hence, in this our fold, the combination of the *Brahmavádi* and the *Dharmaveera* as also the thinness of the dividing-line between the *Sádhaka* and the *Samskáraka*. Hence, too, with us, a continuous tale of oppression and ostracism heroically borne with no whisper of demur or shadow of deflection. It is not, however, that the 'Friends of God' in Europe were, for their part, altogether spared the cup of bitterness in their own day. As they evoked popular interest more and more, they as well aroused official antagonism side by side. On the doctrinal ground, Eckhart's teaching, in certain of its bearings, was condemned by the ecclesiastical authorities as rank heresy, whereas today it should find only welcome acceptance as the Higher Pantheism or, more expressively, Panentheism of every truly elevated system of philosophy. Tremendous, incalculable, nevertheless, was the dynamic influence of the thought-life of his circle upon succeeding generations in the Western latitudes, even as the last one hundred years or more have abundantly testified to the potency of the deeds and dreams of Rammohun and his followers in all the spheres of Indian national progress. A ripple out of the amplitude of each of the two mighty currents—is that not what we witness reaching forth, for example, to the farthest bounds of the New World and there commingling with one from the other, as we turn, first, to its Quaker-Poet's gracious homage to Tauler and, next, to his graceful version of the Hymns of the Brahma Samaj ?

Now, as to the body of the teaching itself and its content all too rare and refreshing. The transcendental-minded Yankee has been called an Oriental gone further west. So might those Theistic-souled 'Friends of God' in Europe be acclaimed as Brahmos born before time in the Occident and identified by common convictions upon the fundamentals of Faith and their far reaching implications. Tenet by tenet, these are : the Spirit-God, the Absolute Reality ; the human soul, the purest abode and holiest receptacle of the Divine Presence and Revelation ; direct, intimate union and communion with God and with those seeking the will of God, the highest beatitude of

all being ; growth into the perfect image of the Godhead, the unending destiny of every spirit grounded upon the infinite resources of the Eternal ; penitential retracing of the strayed reveller's step, the surest pathway to the restitution of redemptive sonship; love, the law of life, and service, the seal of surrender; diversity of endowment and experience, as of existence itself, a necessary incident in the unity of the Supreme Consciousness subsuming and sustaining it; and, finally, the dignity of all human relations, interests and vocations, a natural corollary to the divinity of man and the solidarity of his kind. To listen to any of their voices is to be filled with the sweet satisfaction of appeal to our own cherished sense of the broadest universality and the loftiest spirituality. It but requires to catch a few of the echoes of their message for us at once to recognise the closest correspondences at this end of the radio 'down the ringing grooves of change.'

Here, then, are some of the appropriate citations. Says Eckhart of the immediacy and indissolubility of relationship between the soul and the Soul of the soul: 'The Divine Light permeates the soul ; God has given to all things their proper place, to the fish the water, to the bird the air, to the soul the Godhead.' How unspeakably heavier should be reckoned the hindrance from all so-called intermediaries or symbolic images, when, as in the following accents, he rules out even the personal ego as a blinding veil in the way of the attainment of God! 'If the soul is to know God, it must forget itself and lose itself; for, as long as it contemplates itself, it cannot contemplate God.' 'Simple souls conceive that we are to see God as if He stands on that side and we on this. It is not so; God and I are one in the act of my perceiving Him.' No external scripture, no outside teacher, but only *'jeevanvèda'* may lay valid claim to the seat of authority. For, 'the Friends of God,' declares Tauler in explicit language, 'read the living Book where everything is life', unlike 'great doctors' who 'read ponderous books and turn over many pages.' Again, not temporal but eternal, not spatial but spiritual, is the state or, rather, the adventure, the occupation, of at-one-ment with the Deity, according to both Eckhart and Tauler. Observes the Master, 'Towards this union with God, for which it was created, the soul strives perpetually.' And adds the Disciple, 'This is the best convent to live in, the blessed convent of communion with God.' Next, here is Tauler's presentation of the dual

part of the human and the Divine, condition and consequence, in the miracle of Saving Grace : 'When God finds the man thus simply and nakedly turned towards Him, the Godhead bends down and descends into the depths of the pure, waiting soul and transforms the created soul, drawing it up into the uncreated essence, so that the spirit becomes one with Him.' Then, agreebly to Tauler's repeated affirmation of the idea of God's image and superscription' impressed upon every created soul to set up a Divine currency beyond debasement, salvation, it is insisted, is, by no means, a monopoly of the baptised Christian. On the other hand, one of their writings, 'The Book of the Nine Rocks,' worthy of a place beside 'True Faith' or 'Yoga', universalises the gospel so far as to embrace everyone who 'fears God from the depths of his heart and leads a good and simple life.' And to the guarantee that 'God can baptise him in the holy desire of his will' it appends the assurance that 'there are in the eternal world many good pagans who have been received in this way.' Once more, as 'Love,' in Eckhart's epigram, 'works the likeness of God into the soul,' so the fruition of godlike love is sought in the fulfilment of the selfless aspiration thus voiced in the 'Theologia Germanica' : 'I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man.' Lastly, in abolition of the professional saint and the sacerdotal priest, runs the wholesome lesson of Tauler, 'One can spin, another can make shoes ; and all these are gifts of the Holy Spirit.'

Altogether, what precious foregleams and foreshadows ! Accordingly, as we know of Brahmos outside the Brahma Samaj, we rejoice, thank God, to read as well, elsewhere as here, of Brahmos before Brahmaism and of Brahmaism prior to the Brahma Samaj—all breathing alike 'an ampler ether, a diviner air' in 'the city which hath foundations whose Builder and Maker is God.'

39

(A)

THE BRAHMA SAMAJ OF MY DREAMS

1935

Is Dreamland always no more than a delirious scene of flitting shadows and sensations? How comes it to pass, then, that in me my dreams persist with so many haunting apparitions? Apparitions I call them. But to me they are not less real than my own self—projections, no doubt, from within; nevertheless, also entities without, luring me on and on. They are apparitions only in the sense of being, by nature, too impalpable for a firm grip at any point. Those shadowy images before the mind's eye—how they close in together more and more! How they, at last, cohere into an organic unity of being, until even my clouded vision is enabled to discern in it the benignant figure of the Brahma Samaj that is to be! Nearer and nearer she draws unto me; and, behold, how fares it now with her?

Not pale, by any means, with colourless insubstantiality but colourful with red-blooded bloom to the very finger-tips is this Brahma Samaj of my dreams. No lop-sided lankiness but all-round ampleness is in this Brahma Samaj of my dreams. And, closely scanned, each particular feature of the spectral reality marks a clean-cut lineament in the limning forth of the entire form.

Howsoever it be with the Brahma Samaj of my present-day experience, I see the Brahma Samaj of my dreams holds her glowing pair of eyes not half-shut, not cast down, not looking askance, but unmistakably and stedfastly uplifted toward the heavens in quiet, unbroken communion with the Most High. She drinks in the serene star-light of the silent night and, again, the roseate aurora-beam of the rising sun in the spacious firmament on high. And her meat is no other than the manna that descends from above—with naught therein

of the flesh-pots here below, no matter how decked their carvings outside or how spiced their viands inside.

Her feet, all the same, I see planted fast upon the ground, not dangling in mid-air but in immediate touch with the actualities of the grim world around, and alive, too, to the far-reaching implications of those intimate contacts.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she embodies a sect but an unsectarian sect, even and only because she must and and cannot but. Her year is made up of the days of all the saints' calendars from pole to pole. Her scriptures are garnered in from all the scattered corn at one and all of the points of the compass. And those and these rest not in their niches and on their shelves just for purposes of ceremonial salutation on occasion. Far from it, they enter never so fully into the warp and woof of her daily meditations and hourly communings. As she thus establishes kinship with all and proves it by active, assimilative discipleship, so they, in turn, severally claim her for their own, the common bond of filiation being traced to the fundamental formula, "The seekers of the light are one". She is confronted with no antithesis between authority and freedom, no antagonism between revelation and reason, no alienation between sacred and secular, even as she evidences no cleavage between creed and conduct, in the supreme adventure of synthetic harmony in spiritual progress. Again, as she acclaims no insulated greatness in any parcel of hallowed humanity and appraises no sealed wisdom in any archive of sacred literature, she discovers no alien in the commonwealth of souls and no orphan in the household of heaven.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams is far from static, anything but stationary and stagnant. Essentially a 'movement', she is ever on the move, forward-bound. And with her she must needs carry her whole frame and furniture, the totality of her being and her belongings in thought, feeling and will, leaving no organ or limb behind to sink and swoon in atrophy.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams— she soars aloft into the boundless blue. Yet she spurns not the nest of her own birth and breeding. No complacent cosmopolitanism of unattached apathy is hers but unreserved allegiance to the visible centre, albeit without a circumference, of the Church Universal.

Ever warm, never lukewarm, the Brahma Samaj of my dreams is heedful of the solemn injunction, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged'. Equally mindful is she of the imperative challenge of the reformer's role, 'Judge not by appearance, but judge righteous judgment.' Fully sensible of the old but not obsolete maxim about the beam in one's own and the mote in one's neighbour's eye, she knows herself to be her brother's keeper, not as his apologist under all circumstances or as his censor under any, but solely as a fellow-guardian with him of his purest virtue and his truest weal. Thus, shunning all extravagance at either extremity, extenuating nothing and exaggerating nothing, she has no two standards to swear by of right and righteousness for herself and her own, on one side, and for all else, on the other. She glorifies herself as a worthy mother of worthy sons who enter the arena of public life to cleanse and chasten it, so far as they may, but not to corrupt it or be contaminated by it in any measure, by any manœuvre or through any manifestation direct or indirect. She would have her children uniformly approve themselves in terms of the character of the Happy Warrior who

> "owes
> To virtue every triumph that he knows:
> Who, if he rises to station of command,
> Rises by open means, and there will stand
> On honourable terms or else retire,
> And in himself possess his own desire."

She ever shows herself unflinchingly more zealous for the out-and-out probity of the holy cause she represents than for any partisan victory or personal uplift. She is a perfect stranger to the fine art of trafficking with another's right of self-determination and the finer art of being content glibly to swallow the Dead-Sea apple fruit of such traffic.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she is comprised not of any so-called born Brahmos but wholly of 'reborn' Brahmos; no hide-bound Brahmos but all 'open-doored to every breath of heaven.' The ever-slighted, though much-lauded, Kingdom of God she first enshrines in the regenerate heart. And only next she sets up its extended dominion over the reformed spheres of the home, the nation and the whole of human-kind.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she is a citadel built upon the everlasting hills, not by hands of flesh nor with hoards of lucre. The mighty pillars she leans upon never once give way through the stark unconcern of self-detachment or under the combined weight of factious passion and fond delusion. No anguished, aching votary need writhe and groan, 'Alas, what a betrayal!' And no astounded, bewildered onlooker may stare and shout, 'Aha, what a wreckage!' An outstanding object of unqualified 'admiration, hope and love' on all hands, the Brahma Samaj of my dreams, strong in the strength of the Rock of Ages, stands proof, securely proof, alike against the disruptive elements of ultraconstitutional dissension and the worse havoc of the corruptive forces of gross moral degradation, however exalted its auspices, however accommodating its agencies and however hoodwinked its victims.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—there she looms, a common denominator for all Divine dispensations, not the acid solvent of the manifold of faiths into homogeneity but the golden key to the hidden heart of each by itself embosomed in 'faith beyond the forms of faith'. To her, as science unfolds unending revelations, philosophy presents perpetual restatements and religion guarantees progressive realisations.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she knits together into a mystic knot the yesterdays, the todays and the tomorrows of civilisation, not mixing up the passing and the permanent, not confounding the local and the universal, not ignoring the glory of the things that are not seen amid the glamour of the things that are seen.

So rises into self-disclosure the Brahma Samaj of my dreams out of the phœnix-flames of the Brahma Samaj of my experience. And so shall I seek what cheer and comfort I may in dreaming my dreams—even I.

(B)

THE BRAHMA SAMAJ OF MY DREAMS OVER AGAIN

1935

'Enough of this ! Avaunt ! I will no more of thee'—how far may one think to dispel one's persistent dreams with such impatient incantations of exorcism? It is incidental, perhaps, to the very phenomenon of dreams all over that, once they gain upon you, they will not be easily laid at rest: they must recur and reappear, time and again, in kaleidoscopic variations of light and shade. At all events, my particular dreams, such as they are, relative to the body spiritual of an idealistic 'being' like the Brahma Samaj, cannot but keep up a hovering, haunting hold, and that with more and more of self-unveiling at each succeeding time. And so, features altogether missed out or only dimly eyed in the disquieting hurry of a first glimpse emerge later into somewhat clearer outline at a fresh angle or in a new light. Maybe, the subsequent perspective envisages a certain measure of overlapping of colour and contour as between lineaments previously descried and those newly discerned. Nevertheless, what matters it, provided the figure they pertain to and set forth remains one and the same? Again, within or without the domestic pale of the fellowship of faith, let those recoil who will from the grey-tinted stuff of these, my dreams, through any overdelicacy of subtly sensitive reactions in themselves half-conscious, half-articulate. 'Hopeless victim of fantastic moonshine ! Fond dupe of riotous delirium'—thus the word may pass round about this supposed freak of new-bred morbidity. Yet, in all seriousness, how, I ask, may one contrive to leap out of one's shadow ? So long as I am my own, my dreams, indeed, are mine, too. Nay, I am fundamentally of my dreams—not their idle sport but their solemn subject, even part and parcel of their very substance. Whoever breathes but has subjectively his own repeated experiences of what others insist upon reading as no

other than perverse fits of personal pique and passion ? For my sole part, I am only to make sure that the Brahma Samaj of my dreams is not the mere nursling of a snug arm-chair or of a soft pillow but a genuine emanation from a heart within the heart, visioned by an eye behind the eye and stretching across the confines of disappointment in the now and the here, the known and the seen. As such, life emptied of its visitant dreams were only reduced all the more to dull dreariness and dismal darksomeness beyond endurance. So said Browning, that sovereign dreamer of superb dreams,

"Idealise away !
You're welcome, nay, you're wise"

Therein alone dwells all the true, pure wisdom that mothers refreshing cheer and reassuring consolation amid the rudest of shocks. In relation, then, to my dreams, it is not for me to stiffen up with doubting Hamlet's first demur to the beckoning Ghost ahead : 'Whither wilt thou lead me ?...I'll go no further.' Such, surely, would not provide a position by any means tending to the best behoof either of the subject or of the object.

Why not, accordingly, go on, without any further ado of explanation or excitement, to note, out of the deepest impress upon the inner consciousness, a few more of the self-defining marks of identification of the Brahma Samaj of my dreams ?

Writ large upon her forehead, what is it I spell out ? Why, even the cryptic characters : "Here am I, Heaven-descended as at once *Sanâtanadharma* and *Yugadharma* in happy coalescence and fruitful consummation ! Here I am—mark you, for pressing problems, not for puzzling riddles; for science, yet more for conscience ; for the world but also for other-worldliness in the world !"

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she has clean outgrown the trammels of the conception of matter dominant through the century of the birth of the Brahma Samaj of history. Unto her, the lingering shadows of downright dualism being all finally resolved away even by the positive sciences in the last analysis, 'this so solid-seeming' world-order reports itself as alone that of a spiritual monism of ultimate Force and Energy evermore quivering out into the multiplex manifold of phenomenal self-expression by purposive design and

progressive direction. For her, nothing subsists outside the perpetual pulsations of universal Life and Love in all spheres and stages, the impersonal being thus simply brushed aside to make room for the Omnipersonal. With her, worship comprises, not a one-sided process of approach and attainment as in the physical march to an immobile image or a stationary shrine, but the inevitable attraction and the ineffable commingling of the self and the Overself in mutual movements of ascension and descension—

'the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross'.

For, if spiritual things are only spiritually discerned, spiritual essences and entities, she avers, can no more draw at all into togetherness otherwise than reciprocally in spirit and in truth. Consequently, all trace of idolatry, in broadening connotations, she abjures, not simply by denouncing or even renouncing the diversion of soul-homage to concrete, created objects of different descriptions, but as well in transcending every vestige of separative barrier, passional or verbal, between the man-in-God and the God-in-man. And congregational worship she appraises, not barely as the purest and the most polished platform for social fellowship, but as the one authentic seal and sacred symbol of the spiritual solidarity of the race. Hence, the conjoint life-breath of the *bhaktas* she evaluates as of supreme worth, next only, if at all, to the life-blood of the martyrs, in its cementing efficacy for the church. And as to the customary elements comprised in the exercise of such united devotions, she finds the tripod of the supersensuous life in the service proper as its heart, in the hymns as its lungs and in the sermon as its brain.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she takes her secure, her serene stand upon the all-commanding pedestal of pure Faith and undefiled—Faith immeasurably removed, on the one hand, from Fatalism by the realised sense of the personal in the providential and unassailably rescued, on the other, from Fanaticism by the restraining grace of the catholic in the universal.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—the household of her fellowship is not made up exclusively or even predominantly of men-folk self-entrenched in the preserves of office, with or without corresponding obligations, through any monopoly of

humanising culture or, worse still, through any sanction of insensate custom or any manipulation of the formal constitution. Far from this, within her fold, the mothers, sisters and daughters of those minions of wont and usage come to their own in fulness by virtue of the recognised inherence of equal rights and responsibilities but barring out the least impairment of their native gifts and graces on the gentler, humaner side. Therein, likewise, betwixt buoyant youth and mellow age, betwixt the devoted lay-worker and the dedicated minister or missioner, she knows no vexations of vitiating cleavage or weakening collision but only the sweetest harmony of co-ordinated cooperation for the common weal of the church and the community. In the economy of Divine dealings with her 'chosen vessels', her consecrated children, the descending dove of inspiration is no respecter of sex, age, occupation or any other accident of accidents; so much so that 'the priesthood of every believer,' far from being merely a dead letter or a pious profession, constitutes the one only working, because vital, principle throughout.

Within the ample precincts of the Brahma Samaj of my dreams, as 'all the air a solemn stillness holds,' not a whisper is to be heard of the din of civil strife, civil only in name but far other than civil in temper. In a double sense of each of the two substatives in the old adage, her votaries—*sèvaks* who all are *sádhaks* and, again, *sádhaks* who all are *sèvaks*—know well and remember wisely that charity must begin, while it ought not to end, at home. After so much of the long, loud talk about universal synthesis and the rest of it, all discord within her chambers is, not simply hushed into silence, but wrought into unison over the tough strings of 'Adi' and 'Navavidhan' and 'Sadharan,' 'Prardhana Samaj' and 'Brahma Samaj', 'Non-anushtanic' and 'Anushtanic.' Aye, interfusion beyond intercourse is ever and everywhere in evidence as between nationalistic and universalistic Brahmaism, between rationalistic and mystic-minded Brahmaism, between democratic constitutionalism and theocratic control, between the stress on prayerfulness and the emphasis on its self-attestation in the entire round of life, between the limits of honest compromise and the limitations of professed consistency—in respect, too, of many another imaginable 'cause of action' between section and section, soul and soul. That way stands soberly relegated to the limbo of the past the fateful tragedy

of a house divided against itself even upon the hallowed heights of Zion.

The Brahma Samaj of my dreams—for the denizen of time from among *amrithasyaputhrâh*, she provides in the sanctuary of the home a blest point of reference in space on this side of crossing the bar. There she instals her celestial *Brâhmadharma* as the all-regnant *Grihadharma* in every concern. And there, in miniature, she presents a reflex of the perfected 'state' at large in the felicities of a family fundamentally built upon the democratic regard and affection of the members one for another.

Finally, the Brahma Samaj of my dreams—how she constantly vindicates herself as the corporate, crystal embodiment of a faith to live for, which is equally effectively a faith to die by—life the temporal focus of eternity and hence not to be lightly rated, much less, austerely shunned; and death itself a necessary episode in a continuing pilgrimage and therefore not to be blankly endured, much less, timorously dreaded!

And now, after all is said and done, the Brahma Samaj of my dreams—she straightway steps forward still closer to my frame, tenderly touches my trembling ears and softly recalls how, as 'man never is but always to be blest', man's interests, man's implements, man's institutions never are but always to be perfect. She urges that, by the very essence of her *Brâhmadharma*, the Brahma Samaj of the 'consummation devoutly to be wished' is bound for evermore to remain but a Brahma Samaj of dreams in the infinite, inscrutable designs of a Divinity incessantly, though invisibly, at work shaping all rough-hewn ends. "So," she pleads, "let no contradictions however glaring, no contrarieties however gross, throw you off your balance and impel you to turn your back upon me in cynic disgust and sceptic despair whether as to self or as to society. Yes; however sadly might and mammon prevail over right and righteousness, however strangely even Vasishta-Raghava relations degenerate into Bheeshma-Kaurava obligations, and however sickeningly the scandalous venalities of the protagonist outdo the scurrilous vilifications of the antagonist in defiling the loveliness of my countenance, oh, suffer not the enigmas, the evasions and the enormities before your eye to interfere at all with the equipoise of your own allegiance. Aberrations and anomalies there will needs

spring up in a recurring round and stare you straight in the face at every other, if not at every, step upon this mundane path. Among other things, to account for the ugly, unmeasured expanses yawning between the lofty ideal and the lowly actual even in matters of elementary ethics, ah, Macbeths of self-deluded ambition, for example, there will be and Lady Macbeths, too, of dogged pertinacity, compassing the cold-blooded murder of Conscience, the royal guest within. Banquets of triumph also will not be wanting, with infelt but ill-concealed horror before the ghosts of ingenuous Banquos, with gleeful gestures of gratulation to 'the best o' the cut-throats' in the strain of 'Thou art non-pareil' and with the blatant bluster of 'Thou canst not say I did it.' Still—and still—amid the moral chaos of 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair', the Witches' word of promise kept to the ear shall eventually be broken to the hope, and all wrongs shall right themselves 'by the grace of Grace' until 'the time is free.' Meanwhile, oh Equanimity and oh Forbearance, see you to it that no enthusiasm flags and no enterprise flickers here below; and let love trustful clasp loyalty ministrant, 'lest both be drowned.' Then, so be it. So may it be given to the down-hearted believer boldly to dream away beyond the appalling actualities of the day and the hour and humbly to 'learn to labour and to wait' with the eye of faith fixed upon the fulness of time and with nothing short of the sky and the sun for the background to his own best striving! Amen!

40

THE BRAHMA SAMAJ
A MOVEMENT OF TEARS
1933

FOREWORD

If ever there was a spiritual movement of vital import born in, and nurtured by, tears of blood, the Brahma Samaj is one such in all conscience. Its origin and its upgrowth have indubitably been out of a genial soil saturated with tears wonderfully profuse and fertilising beyond measure. Through all its written and, more still, its unwritten annals spread over these hundred years and longer, it has sanctified itself, over and over again, with many a sacramental baptism of tears from out of the font of the consecrated heart. Thus it has gone on, perpetuating the lachrymal rites that marked the preparation for, and the process of, its very inception. Beginning, indeed, with the illustrious *prathishtápanáchárya*, our *náyaks* and our *sádhaks* have, one and all, demonstrated, in genuine experience as well as in pointed utterance, the naturalness, the redemptiveness and, hence, the sacredness of trustful tears. The truly spiritual philosophy of sacred sorrow, they have both wrought and taught, not only unto the ends of individual self-expression and self-realisation, but also with a profound consciousness of the solemn charge as to its social efficacy in the Divine ordering of things:

> "God did anoint thee with His odorous oil
> To wrestle—not to reign; and He assigns
> All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
> For younger fellow-workers of the soil
> To wear for amulets."

And, qualitatively speaking, how richly varied is the ample content of the precious legacy of hallowed tears that has come to be yours and mine as the chosen heirs of those spiritual forbears! Obviously enough, it cannot but prove an impossible task for one to essay to gather up, within a narrow

compass, more than a very limited number of the widely-extended sheaves of that abounding harvest. The more so must this be the case, because, in the nature of things, as pointed out in the eloquent imagery of one amongst themselves, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, "Great souls are seldom found in the act of weeping. Their tears flow inwardly, and like the rivers of Paradise, like the sap of mighty ancient trees, circulate in hidden, noiseless currents within the deep disguise of outward life. Their unseen tears, like celestial moisture, deepen the roots of their being in God and carry their heads nearer and nearer to heaven." We can but proceed, then, with the humbler aim of an illustrative indication of just a few brief and broadly typical instances, in diverse contexts, of the remarkable outflow of Brahmic tears, leaving it to the well-informed reader to recall many, many more of the kind from the vast stores of his own reading and reminiscence.

(i)

Returning home to Radhanagar after prolonged absence in Rangpur, Rammohun once found himself harshly repulsed from a dearly loved mother's embrace with the irate, insistent demand, "If you would touch my feet, you must first go and bow down before my Radha and Govinda." Constrained thus at a trying moment to obey the maternal mandate, he dragged himself into the apartment of the household deities and voiced the naive confession, "I bow down before my mother's god and goddess." Who but the One that seeth in secret knows what hot tears of self-humiliation were then unloosed from the bosom of the Author that was of *Tuhfatul Muwahiddin* and the Founder that was to be of the Monotheistic Church of Modern India? Those were tears of the compromise of heavenly conviction for earthly affection—tears through which many a struggling follower has since had to wade his own forlorn way in despite of the tenderest of ties. Again, until his Herculean efforts for the suppression of the hoary iniquity were crowned with success to the lasting glory of the first and stoutest champion of India's womanhood in the era of modernism, at how many burning-ghats and before how many harrowing scenes must the ground about his feet have been literally suffused with tears overflowing that humane heart of his at the horrid sight of the forced immolation of the *sati*? Those were tears each several one of which belonged to the family of

"The tear most sacred shed for others' pain
That starts at once—bright, pure—from pity's mine,
Already polish'd by the hand Divine."

Once more, how sure an index to the keenness of his ingrained *susceptibility to tearful tenderness is* furnished by the recorded account of the "fits of crying" into which he was thrown even by a touching dramatic performance witnessed at Fanny Kemble's theatre while in England! In this regard, how notably, too, the child was father to the man in him who, according to an earlier story of boyhood, "could not bear to witness the performance of the *Yátra* (or popular play) of *Mánbhanjan*, in which the god Krishna weeps clasping the feet of his fair Radhika, and his peacock head-gear and green clothes are seen rolling in the dust"! Of such side-lights, the significance is directly reflected thus in the biography which has made us debtors for all time to Sophia Dobson Collet: "It is pleasant to know that the great reformer was not above tears even over a well-acted play." Lastly, does not the narrative of his days in England relate how, in congregations of worshippers at church, he would often be observed shedding tears in profuseness, though there was nothing in the service apparently to occasion it, and how a friend once queried him as to the cause of such manifestations and out came the heavy-hearted answer that the corroding, consuming thought of the untold ills of his hapless countrymen, custom-ridden and superstition-laden, left him no rest or peace of mind? Those were tears of compelling commiseration from the ardent patriot heart of the pioneer hero of a hundred fights in the cause of the nation's deliverance. Little wonder that the contrasted sense of 'Ours is Universal Religion, birader' would so unseal the tear-springs within.

(ii)

In 1843, the memorable year of the first vow of initiation into a new life in Brahma Dharma, the eldest son of the then Crœsus of Calcutta, with his fellow-aspirants, formally embraced the Faith in unreserved self-dedication. At that unprecedented moment, what was it that actually transpired? Out of the heaving bosom of the lonely custodian of Rammohuns's ark of national hope and the early cicerone of Devendranath's pilgrim ascent to heights of personal spirituality, there welled up a stream of resistless tears as he exclaimed, "Such was the aim of Rammohun Roy, but he was

not able to realise it. After all this time now, his desire has been fulfilled." Of this episode as told in Maharshi's Autobiography, the Historian of the Brahma Samaj states in his own graphic narrative : " As the twenty-one young men, dressed in suitable attire befitting the sacred and solemn occasion, approached the old minister and repeated with reverential awe the solemn words of the Covenant, the feelings of old (Pandit Ramachandra) Vidyavageesh overpowered him to such an extent that he sobbed like a child and could not preach the sermon he had intended to preach on the occasion, but only said—'O how I wish that Rammohun Roy were present this day!' " Those were tears of transporting joy in the abundance of devout thankfulness for the fruition, in good time, of the deepest loyalties sustained with unflinching trust.

(iii)

The spiritual experience of Devendranath Tagore, our own true, typical Maharshi of the modern day, was one of rapt communion with his God in the inmost recesses of the soul both amid and outside the solitudes of the Himalayas. In that reproducer of the especial genius of the Upanishadic Rishis, the raptures of absorption could find expression only in visible thrills through the whole physical frame, the entire countenance aglow with emotion and the very hairs of the head standing on end, at any the barest suggestion of '*satyam*', the prime attribute of the Deity. 'Too deep for tears' is just the description appropriate to such a state of beatitude. And that is because what he observed to Pandit Sivanath Sastri shortly before his ascension applied as fully to tears as to words : "New truths are dawning before me which I know no words to adequately express." Yet even this *Paradiso* of bliss was not to be attained except by passage through a *Purgatorio* of tears in the prior stages. We read how, close upon the temporary eclipse of the glorious vision after thet cremation-ground realisation on the death of his beloved *didima*, "his agony at times was so great that he saw darkness instead of light in the rays of the midday sun." Also, the first moral victories of that most remarkable career played their own noteworthy part in the evocation of tears, at least in those about him. Touching his absolutely selfless decision to place all the family properties before the court of justice in satisfaction of the claims of his father's creditors to the tune of a crore of

rupees and the scrupulously correct and complete list drawn up by him of all available assets, not excluding the trust-protected share, there is the testimony that "with the list in his pocket and accompanied by his brothers, as he issued out of the inner apartments of his house, after breakfast, on the appointed day, there was loud wailing inside the house, raised by the female inmates, as if someone was dead." "Calm and majestic, serene and undistracted, he approached the Judge and presented his list. The effect was instantaneous and electric. The Judge admired him and recommended him to his creditors for consideration ; one of whom was so far overpowered that he began to sob like a little child. Moved by his courage and uprightness, his creditors refused to put up his estates to auction." Those were the tears of equally intimately interested ones, on one side, out of sorrow over the impending ruin of the family ; and, on the other, in acclamation of the good and faithful votary of '*mâgridhah kasyaswiddhanam.*'

(iv)

"I am all sin." So ran the self-delineation, terse and tense, of the inspired chanter of *Jeevanvèda.* To him as "the most uncompromising witness of my own sins", sin connoted, not simply the perpetration of the sinful deed, but strictly the very "possibility of sinning" even in thought. The awful consequence, shortly stated, was : "It is this sense which causes me anguish." And that way, while communion with the *Paramâtman* had been the *summum bonum* for his spiritual father, this man of contrition soon matured into the man of companionship with the *Patitapâvana* in present paradise. Accordingly, to Brahmananda, hell was the hospital of God and saving grace its senior apothecary. In other words, the fiend of hell was one with the hound of heaven. "The wonder of it is," he observed (but, really, where is the wonder at all ?), "that I cry and then again rejoice, I weep as much as I laugh." This organic synthesis between repinings and rejoicings—how singularly it was achieved in the open chamber of Keshub's spirit under the dual influence of the sinner-saint in Christ and the *pâpimukta* in Chaitanya ! As his dances and trances arose out of the realisation of "Regenerating Faith" in "the Living God", so his tears and throes were engendered by the contemplation of liability to the grieving of the Holy Spirit through the slightest lapse in desire and devotion. Those were

"Blest tears of soul-felt penitence!
In whose benign, redeeming flow
Is felt the first, the only sense
Of guiltless joy that guilt may know."

Hence it is, too, that in him the genius of spiritual imagination, wedded to the passion for creative organisation, gave birth to that marvel of emotional development in the Brahma Samaj which has been kept up more or less unbroken since the days of his *sankirtans* and *sangats*—potent magic wands conjuring up no end of tears! If Keshub thus became the acknowledged source and centre of emotional culture in the Samaj, that was because, referring to his inauguration of Brahmotsav in 1867, his intimate and lifelong comrade could declare of him, "He had never been seen to weep, but now streams of tears ran down his handsome face. He was turned into a new man!"

(v)

If, of the whole band of our Apostles behind the Man of the New Dispensation, the gifted author of *The Oriental Christ* could enter most deeply into the genius and depict most vividly the lineaments of divine humanity in "the weeping Christ," among other things, that was due to the fact that it was given to him to realise in full the sovereign ministry of what he called "secret sorrows." Out of that realisation comes to us this serene precept as one of the life-giving pulsations of his "Heart-Beats": "These secret sorrows, which are sacred, have their secret consolations, which are equally sacred. Both the sorrows and the consolations raise thy spirit to that dignity of sainthood in which the spirit of God crowns man with the imperishable crown of truth and righteousness." Nay, more: "God weeps with those who weep, and stands in suffering pity by the bed-side of the miserable wretch." Once again, "Only, believe God weeps with you, and your weeping is turned into joy." And how fared it with him in his own life-story? Landing back in eager expectation of happy reunion after an extensive 'Tour round the World,' Pratap lay utterly prostrate with crushing grief at Madras to hear of "my friend, my master, my brother"—"Keshub, my crown, my consolation"—having been summoned away from the earthly scene only a cruel couple of days before. But even out of the first flush of dismay—"blank, blank, heaven and earth all blank"—amid

the poignant cry, "After all this great exile, my God calls me home to a feast of sorrow," there emerged the lofty, prayerful resolve: "I disdain to honour him with common grief. I wish to consecrate to him my life. I pray to Thee, teach me how I may make the whole world, all mankind, rejoice that he was born." Next, taking thought also of the dear circle of co-workers and fellow-mourners, "O give us the sense of the awful responsibility. Cause our great sorrow to chasten us and soften us. Bless Thy cause, Thy household, Thy Truth." Those were tears of bereavement far from bitter and barren through dark despair but transfused into tender tokens of a renewal of holy obligations in homage to cherished affections. At once they stamped him a worthy follower of that sainted patriarch who, on receipt, at far-off Chinsurah, of the fatal news about a dearly-loved third son, could instantly command a fortitude of tranquil faith and manifest a firmness of new-awakened purpose in the terse ejaculation : "Strange are the ways of Providence that I should thus be spared and Hemendranath should go. He leaves his own burden to me." Pratap Chandra knew, as well, to shed tears of thanksoffering over miracles of personal providence. In course of the aforesaid return voyage after the World Tour, to his great astonishment he found himself at Colombo face to face with an uncommon occurrence in the movements of a P. and O. Steamer, which circumstance enabled him to secure an immediate passage home without losing a single day. About this unexpectedly pleasant relief, he recorded the entry, "I raised mine eyes to Thee in tearful resignation. I dared not pray. And Thou hast done this wonderful thing for me." Furthermore, how constantly we catch in *Heart-Beats* soft echoes of his doleful yet not dreary jeremiads before the Footstool of Love and Grace over "the broken church, the dismembered community" of those bygone days with their internal discords and dissensions ! "What all demoniac confusion in God's church!" "And now, O God, my witness, I pour out my soul to Thee in heavy distress. I have loved and honoured each of these little sects in which Thy household has been divided. I have deeply humiliated myself before every one. I have forgiven every cruel wrong and injustice, and before Thy presence behaved as if I was the wrong-doer. But their hatred has not yet abated : they have all looked upon me as their enemy." "In great anguish I pray, Father, if it be Thy pleasure, soften

their hearts towards each other in humility and by Thy awakening.....Lord, save Thy household, come to the help of Thy misguided servants, oh, raise Thy fallen cause." Like the tears of his favourite prophet, Jesus, over Jerusalem, those were tears not of morbid revulsion from, or of vain lament over, the woes but of prayerful, agonising concern for the weal of the household of Faith and its Fellowship.

(vi)

Among the valued privileges opened out to me by my first sojourn in the Home of the Brahma Samaj at the turn of last century were visits to Rev. Bhai Umanath Gupta at Mangalbari and Rev. Bhai Prasanna Kumar Sen in Bhavanipore. In either case, at the bare initial word of introduction—by Rev. Bhai Mahendranath Bose to the one and by Babu (now Dr.) Prasanta Kumar Sen to the other—to the effect, 'Here's a Madrasee young Brahmo come to see you,' there stepped out from an inner apartment a sightless, tottering old figure. Only, the former was as short as the latter was stalwart in stature. In either case, literally no time was lost by the venerated old man before groping his trembling hands about, clasping me fast to his bosom and holding me locked in his warm embrace for minutes and minutes together. In either case, all the while, 'This *prèmasádhan*, Keshub has taught us; this *prèmasádhan* Keshub has taught us' were all, in effect, the half-audible accents that escaped a voice well-nigh choked up with the gush of emotion amid spontaneous tears copiously trickling down a furrowed face and knowing no intermission. In either case, altogether, the scene was so sublimating as to ensure its indelibility in this mind up to the verge of the grave. Those were tears ardent with more than brotherly love for spiritual kin among the Brahmos of that elder generation—tears sweeping away all stranger barriers within the fold and demonstrating the beauteousness of love even as

"The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears."

(vii)

Round about the personality of Pandit Sivanath Sastri are entwined two striking circumstances, the one as edifying as the other is amusing, with reference to the place of tears in the evolution and character development of the Brahma Samaj. Dealing with early Navavidhan practices which, from

his own standpoint he stigmatised as "halfway to idolatry," he wrote in 1881 : "Alas ! many of us have caused terrible misery to our friends and relations for refusing to bend our necks to any material object and for advocating the spiritual worship of God. Many of us have been persecuted, excommunicated, and banished from home and family. The mother's heart-rending wailings have not yet subsided in many homes." Such, then, are the burning tears of the grief-prostrated parents of our reformer-heroes—tears which, forsooth, furnish the cement of the church hardly less than does the blood of the martyrs. Again, at the *ádya srâddha* of Pandit Harananda Bhattacharya, we heard the filial lips recount how the orthodox old father would sometimes twit the heterodox, heretic son with the taunting query, 'I say, Sivanath, how is it you Brahmos are to be seen sobbing away all together like that at your so-called prayer-gatherings ? Does any imp of a tormenter, I wonder, give you your due by slippering you, one and all, upon the cheek with an unseen hand?' Those are tears of penitential confession and repledged self-consecration such as one like Pandit Sastri himself knew so powerfully to educe by his impassioned appeals on the Eleventh of *Magh* and other solemn occasions, even as he excited bursts of laughter by his humourous anecdotes at all times.

(viii)

"Is it any wonder that the gifted son of such a mother should also be remarkable for his piety ?" So asks Sivanath Sastri, dwelling upon his own devoted and lifelong *confrere*, Ananda Mohun Bose, in that collection of interesting and inspiring sketches, *Men I Have Seen*. Monica of old had wept her pious tears over the waywardnesses of a child whom, in the end, they converted to universally acknowledged sainthood. And now, Ananda Mohun's mother, though in her own orthodox way, transmitted to him by blood a predisposition to tears of authentic piety. For, as goes the story about her, a party of pilgrims to Puri from her own place, of whom she was to have made one according to a plan prevented, however, by some intervening cause, happened all to perish in the sailing vessel during an unforeseen storm ; and when informed of the sad catastrophe, "the good lady, instead of rejoicing that a similar fate had not overtaken her, was found weeping that her god (Jagannath) did not deem her worthy of such a blessed death"!

As for the son, there follows the touching testimony, "On our festival days and on other occasions, his sweet, humble and devout-looking face, bedewed with tears and glowing with emotional fervour, was one of the inspiring spectacles to behold." Again, that torrent of tears which I beheld accompany the perfervid 'lay sermon' he delivered on 'Love and Service' from the *vèdi* of the presidential chair of the National Congress at the close of its session on New Year's Eve in 1898 at Madras—did it not impress one add all among the unnumbered, enraptured thousands there assembled as but the overflow, into the arid region of politics, of a boundless flood of spiritual enthusiasm in behalf of the soundest patriotism making for the securest progress in the larger life of the country ?

(ix)

The interior life of one like Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar was a shining witness to the identity of the favoured land of the first setting in of Nature's monsoons with the faithful land of plenteous showers of Theistic tears round about the Western Ghats. Principal (Dr.) Heramba Chandra Maitra's obituary notice of 1925 in *The Indian Messenger* aptly set out the mainspring of the worth and work of that mighty pillar of the Prardhana Samaj on the Bombay side, a true inheritor and an illumining interpreter of the melting melodies of such of the Mahratta saints as Tukaram and Namadev. "The fervour with which he prayed often moved people to tears.....He would sing hymns for hours when the whole household were asleep; and if any one stood near the door of his apartment at midnight, he might hear the old man sobbing like a child. Here lay the secret of the strength which sustained him when his faith was tried by crushing bereavement." Those were tears that not only established the truth of the oneness of the crosses of life with the crowns of life but also dissolved the fiction of antithesis between the searching wisdom of the savant and the self-forgetting devotion of the saint.

(x)

The master-singer of the Brahma Samaj, who is also the laurelled bard of a far vaster sphere, has long since had his draught of the chastening chalice celebrated in the section on "Bereavements' in his *Reminiscences*. "The acquaintance which I made with death at the age of twenty-four was a per-

manent one, and its blow has continued to add itself to each succeeding bereavement in an ever-lengthening chain of tears." "This unbearable grief," however, was not without its own proximate sequel of compensatory gain. For, he adds, "Death had given me the correct perspective from which to perceive the world in the fulness of its beauty; and as I saw the picture of the Universe against the background of Death, I found it entrancing." So has our Rabindranath come to hold the forefront among the Shelleys of the soul who 'learn in suffering what they teach in song.' And those world-famed mystical musings and devotional lyrics of his—what are they if not so many tear-offerings unto the Mother of *vátsalya* and the Spouse of *mádhurya* amid the alternations of pain and peace through severance and restitution? This and more, they truly are in manifold contexts and relationships, but evermore and everywhere the sweetest of chord-thrills in a heart-harp peculiarly sensitive to the sweeping "fingers of the Divine Musician of the universe." "Mother, I shall weave a chain of pearls for Thy neck with my tears of sorrow." "It is the pain of separation that melts into melody through my flute." "The pain was great when the strings were being tuned, my Master. Pour Your heart into my life-strings, my Master, in tunes that descend from Your stars." Of the outcome in songs of praise and prayer, faith and self-surrender, the burden is fairly summed up in the verse, "Your light glistens in my tears," and the range is aptly covered by the stanza, "Some have tears that well up in the day-light, and others tears that are hidden in the gloom; they have all need for me." It must make an unending chain to cull together, for rosaries of reverent adoration, the resplendent beads so richly strewn over his superb pages. Here, then, are but a few of the poet-devotee's short swallow-flights of song that not merely dip their wings in tears but are wholly bathed in that ethereal element. "When Thou commandest me to sing, it seems that my heart would break with pride; and I look to Thy face, and tears come to my eyes." Such are the tears of humility induced by the devoutness of inspired genius. "My night has passed on the bed of sorrow, and my eyes are tired. My heavy heart is not yet ready to meet morning with its crowded joy." "I weep at my unworthiness when I see my life in the hands of the unmeaning hours;—but when I see it in Your hands, I know it is too

precious to be squandered among shadows." Such are the tears of a branding sense of personal abjectness and irresponsibility in the godless plight. "The question and the cry, 'Oh, where?', melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance, 'I am'." Such are the tears of insensate blindness quickened into the vision beatific of the self-evident certitude of 'the Everlasting Yea.' "'I dream of Thee, but to serve Thee I can never hope'; the dew-drop wept and said, 'I am too small to take Thee unto me, great lord, and my life is all tears.' 'I illumine the limitless sky, yet I can yield myself up to a tiny drop of dew;' thus the sun said, 'I shall become but a sparkle of light and fill you, and your little life will be a laughing orb'." Such are the tears of the limited, longing finite over the fancied bar of its exclusion from the transcendent yet immanent Infinite. "It is this overspreading pain that deepens into loves and desires, into sufferings and joys in human homes; and this it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my poet's heart." Such are the tears of groaning anguish under the burden of separation from the presence of the one only Beloved. "I bitterly wept and wished that I had the heart to give Thee my all." Such are the tears of humiliating grief over the shamefaced bargains of reservation in self-surrender unto the stintless Giver of all good. "Again and again the banks have burst, letting the flood sweep away my harvest, and wailing and despair have rent my sky from end to end. This have I learnt that there are blows of pain in Your love, never the cold apathy of death." "He crushes the shell from the pearl, dumb in the prison of the dark. You muse and weep for the days that are done, poor heart! Be glad that days are to come!" "You hide Your treasure in the palm of Your hand, and we cry that we are robbed. But open and shut Your palm as You will, the gain and the loss are the same." Such are the tears of self-abasement at the woeful lack of living faith in the perpetuity of Providence through shine and shower. "The beggar in me lifted his lean hands to the starless sky and cried into night's ear with his hungry voice...The cry of desire eddied round a chasm of despair, a wailing bird circling its empty nest. But when morning dropped anchor at the rim of the East, the beggar in me wept and cried: 'Blessed am I that the deaf night denied me—that its coffer was empty.' He cried, 'O Life, O Light,

You are precious, and precious is the joy that at last has known You!'" Such are the tears, successively, of blasting disappointment and of refreshing disillusion at seeming refusals of Divine mercy and their later disclosure as blessings in disguise. "I am thankful that my lot lies with the humble who suffer and bear the burden of power and hide their faces and stifle their sobs in the dark." Such are the tears of spiritual sympathy's self-identification with the grinding afflictions of "the poorest, the lowliest and the lost" upon the thorny surface of the wide world. "The child cries out when from the right breast the mother takes it away, in the very next moment to find in the left one its consolation." Such, finally, are the tears that attend the soul's sharp transition from life temporal to life eternal. Is it, then, much of a misnomer to rechristen *Gitánjali* and *Fruit-Gathering* respectively as 'Bashpanjali' and 'Tear-Gathering' and designate the glorious celebrant of such variegated tears as distinctively the uncrowned laureate of the rainbow tears of faith, hope and love?

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Of the two master-spirits in the Andhra mansions of our Father's house here below, Pandit Veeresalingam, the hero-humanist, was ever too busy wiping the tears of the child-widow to find a moment's leisure of soul for any tear from his own self until he poured out his whole life and substance upon the altar of the God, preeminently, of the child and the widow. Brahmarshi Venkata Ratnam, the mystic-saint, has, in a signal manner, super-added the tears of piety to those of philanthropy. The friend of the prostitute and the father (with more of the mother in it) of the destitute, he is what he is as being, first and last, the God-pursuing savant and the God-possessed sage. The teeming tears that gleam over the pages of his *Message and Ministrations* in five* precious volumes are but surface ripples of the unsounded deeps within, the right eye being a constant outlet for tears now of *viraham* and now of *viswásam* in relation to the supreme Inspirer of all the *rasás* and the left, likewise, for tears evermore of *vishádam* over woes not his own. While his eloquence in

* Since increased to *six* in number (to be had of the Librarian-Clerk, Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, at Re. 1 each).

words is a subject of wide renown, his eloquence in tears remains a phenomenon familiar but to a circle of intimates and fellow-worshippers. His silent rounds of fasts and vigils, his systematic calendar of the year's days fraught each with sweet and solemn associations touching his kin of spirit, his wide readings and deep communings ranging over vast illumined expanses right up to the heart of sufism—these are among the outer, prolific springs of an intensive life of tears and transports in the abiding presence of the All-loving and the All-holy. And so, out of all these rich stores, we come in for such ensamples of the sacred emotion as the following :—"Till the mirk and dirt of iniquity has passed through the fire of sorrow, pain, tribulation and contrition, there can be no real emancipation for the soul." "I do not repent that I may get better. I repent that I have hurt the heart of the Divine Mother." "To sin and not to sorrow is to ignore, if not to defy, the Redeeming Grace." "The active presence of the Eternal Witness and Mentor in every heart is evidenced not only in the serenity of saintliness and the trust of martyrdom but also and equally well in the sigh of sorrow for righteousness." " We are thus a ring around the Lord, and to the Lord we come with our crosses and our crowns, our tears and our triumphs."

Afterword

Have we not, by now, seen enough of the sacred origin and the supreme potency of tears as exemplified in the wondrous story of our own dear Church ? If the distilled essence of the simple and sweet, sublime and satisfying creed of the Brahma Samaj is nowhere more clearly and completely, though compendiously, crystallised than in the parable of the Prodigal Son and the poem of Abou Ben Adam and the Angel, and it the underlying principle of this natural religion, this universal faith, is bound to hold good through time and eternity, that is, so long as God is God the Father of forgiveness and loving-kindness and man is man the son in penitence and dependence, why then, how can the faithful Brahmo feel at all ashamed of the largess of legacy in the testament of tears which has descended down to him from what his bretheren in Bengal denote as *Atheethèr Brahma Samaj* ? Rather, let him repair to Dame Nature and read over again her parable as to how

"The flowers live by the tears that fall
from the sad face of the skies,
And life would have no joys at all,
were there no watery eyes."

Let him learn of wise Robert Herrick that

"Tears, though they're here below the sinner's brine,
Above, they are the angels' spiced wine."

Let him ponder with good Elizabeth Barrett Browning how tears "leave the vision clear for star and sun";

"And my Great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise."

Let him realise with pious James Montgomery that, in very truth, as the truth of truths,

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear—
The upward glancing of an eye
When none but God is near."

Thus illumined, let him recognise and remember with his own *áchárya*, Pratap Chandra Mazoomdar, how "weeping is no weakness, it is the overflow of strong love and, again, how "tears save where teachings fail." Thus reinforced, let him repeat and recite afresh all the peerless songs in his priceless *Bráhmasangit* hymning the gospel of grief, together with such affecting strains as Babu Monomohan Chakravarti's *Bèthèr puja* (the Worship of Malady and Misery) and Mr. D. V. Krishnasastri's *Kanneeru* (Tears of the Eye). Finally, thus established in the tranquillising trust that the Brahman of the Brahmavadin, the Brahmospasaka, the Brahmasevaka and the Brahmo Samajist, hears all his sighs and counts all his tears without fail, let him administer to himself the ever-to-be-renewed *udbòdhan*,

"Hide not thy tears; weep boldly—and be proud
To give the flowing virtue manly way:
Tis nature's mark, to know an honest heart by."

Yes; an *honest heart*, considering the fact that the unnaturalness of the cynical, the hypocritical or the superficial heart makes one a stranger as much to tears of tenderness or other than crocodile tears as to any but sardonic or shallow smiles. So shall the honest-hearted Brahmo strive to keep himself safe from the supersubtle intellectualism of the land of San-

kara as well as secure against the oversentimental emotionalism of that of Chaitanya. For, these be the Scylla and the Charybdis along the soul's adventure of every home-bound Odysseus. Accordingly, not only all callous carpings but all vapid vapourings successfully lived down by strenuous discipline, so shall the celestial tears of the genuine-spirited Brahmo take care not to lose themselves underground in sheer ineffectiveness like the stream of the Saraswati but to rush along in the plenitude of fructifying waters like the twin courses of the Ganga and the Yamuna into a confluence of the love of God and the service of man. Also, as each congregation of devout-souled Brahmos meets to offer up the supplication, "Send our roots rain," so shall they beseech therein the rain of tears of penitence, of fellow-feeling and of thanksgiving from within as well as the showers of pentecost from on high. And now, as this all too partial, though prolonged, survey of the *jeevanadi* of the Dispensation of Tears commenced with a citation from Pratap, it will close, too, with a prayer of his to "the Mother of ineffable love"—"Let every tear shed sow Thy vineyard : Let every sigh fan seme troubled forehead."

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BRAHMIC UNITY *

A LOVE-OFFERING

FOR THE BRAHMA SAMAJ CENTENARY

1928

"That they all may be one"—St. John, XVII, 21.

I

Early Brahmic Unity

At a solemn passage in the life-story of the Founder of Christianity, as told by the wisest of his disciples, there stands out with a remarkable clearness of contour and content, a touching episode (*vide Addendum*) borrowing an obvious paral-

* Introduced originally by the following 'Foreword' from the pen of Dewan Bahadur Dr. Sir Brahmarshi R. Venkata Ratnam, Kt., M.A., L.T., D. Litt., LL. D.:—

This fervent plea for 'Unity,' on the inspiring occasion of the Centenary, as it seeks to evoke the sweet spirit of heart-union, of soul-kinship, without vetoing varieties of thought and of method, ought to elicit a response from every heart quickened by Hope and every soul illumined by Faith. The mission of religion—of vital experience as against fossil formula—is to 're-bind' those sundered by ignorance or passion. The gospel of a true Seer is Peace; the message of a true Prophet is Goodwill. Unto the Seers and Prophets of the Brahma Samaj is entrusted the special commission to proclaim this gospel and to deliver this message. In Dispensations of an elder day, the ideal was to weld all into one Belief; in this Dispensation of our day, the ideal is to string divers faiths into one Harmony. It is the difference, so to speak, between the two mathematical symbols—bracket and vinculum; the former enclosing and circumscribing, the latter over-arching and in-gathering. It is to worship with the Earth as Altar and the Firmament as canopy. It is to honour, in heart and soul, the Truth of our first principle—*Suviśálamidam viswam pavitram Brahmamandiram*. It is to embrace in one 'Jagannath' reunion the whole race and the entire cosmos. What may worshippers in this Temple-home form but a fraternity?

lelism from the beginnings of most religious faiths and fellowships and fraught with the utmost significance for all. It is the episode of the Master's profound and prolonged prayer, on the eve of the Ascension, for what is succinctly described as the 'preservation' of the followers in spiritual unity one with another in himself and in their common Father.

Like Jesus, in particular, and the founders of other missionary faiths and fellowships, in general, the illustrious inaugurator of the Brahma Samaj, at the fountain-head of Modern Indian life, dreamt his own dreams and saw his own visions of the consummation of a true spiritual unity—unity with and amongst those who were, and were yet to be, drawn together by his new evangel. In his day, it is true, he was acclaimed by eminent humanists abroad like Jeremy Bentham as an honoured collaborator in the service of mankind. And ever since, it is equally true, he has been acknowledged among all patriot-workers at home as at once the earliest and greatest of India's nation-builders in this spacious era. None the less, neither the love of humanity nor the longings for nationality interposed any bar against the most intimate self-fusion with the spiritual kith and kin close at hand. With him these were positions far from mutually exclusive. In fact, his *samajism*, his nationalism and his universalism were rightly conceived and consistently upheld by him as but a necessary trio of concentric circles around Yagnyavalkya's noblest of noble affirmations, '*Atmanasthu kámáya sarvam priyábhavathi.*' His uncommon grip of the Concrete Universal with its richness of differentiated elements as the reverse of a barren homogeneity was itself responsible for a firm and fruitful recognition of the distinct entities of the nation, the *samaj* and the individual besides the race as a whole. Hence it cannot be too strongly emphasised that, in Rammohun's philosophy of life, the *samajic* ideal was no more a circumscription of the national ideal than the national was a contradiction of the universal. He fully realised that charity must begin, while it cannot end, at home—even the charity of that simple yet ample creed of his, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Little wonder, then, that a heart filled with the affluence of tropical warmth had a special corner in it for each particular member of that memorable band which formed, under God, the nucleus of the Brahma Samaj a hundred years ago. Nor was it for nothing that that heart

set up perpetual censorship over a tongue never once allowed the inadvertence of missing out the most endearing term of address in human intercourse, namely, 'Brother', even while accosting any one of those fellow-believers and co-worshippers, no matter in which context or how often it might be. Such was the infusion of our Founder's personal religion into the whole round of practical relations. And we can well conceive how, in its outreachings, this master-bias of unity in spiritual brotherhood was not confined to the handful of immediate followers or to the time he moved in their midst. By the law of inverse ratios in the realm of spirit, the farther he was separated by space from his own, the nearer were they to his heart in the sweet tremors of solicitude; and the nearer the prospect of his translation into the Unseen Beyond, the farther the stretch of his sympathy over the tract of time to succeeding generations of the adherents of the Faith. How frequently, how fervently, then, there must have gone up the devout petition, "Keep through Thine own name these whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are"; and this, not alone at the congregational gatherings in the stillness of Jorasanko but more so through the imminent perils of the storm-tossed voyage over the wide waters and most of all towards the solemn close of the earthly chapter in far-off Bristol!

Later, too, inasmuch as "the Life was the light of men," the elders of the Church on whose shoulders descended the mantle of succession admirably assimilated this inspiration and sustained this tradition of invisible oneness in love and indissoluble oneness in loyalty. The active cultivation of mutual affection and sympathy through an unfailing reciprocity of gentle forbearance and uplifting helpfulness formed one of the chiefest ends of their *sangat* and their *sádhan* by day and by night. "The influence that the *sangat* exercised on the minds of the young men was something indescribable." "Every day was a day of new experience with them; every thought a new revelation. By similarity of age, education and aspirations, they were closely united with one another." Delicious words these from the Historian of the Brahma Samaj, which only condense into a clear-cut compass a whole cloud of witness upon an edifying theme. It was thus our forerunners translated into living, practical experience the retrospective, elegiac emotion of the poet, "More than my brothers

are to me." It was thus they proved, on the human side, the just title of those truly pentecostal times to something akin to the glowing tribute of an elder minstrel, "strong in love", to the auroral "hope and joy" of the French Revolution :

" Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven !"

What, in its essence, is the story of the Brahma Samaj as it has unfolded itself as a body these hundred years since its inception ? Is it not the evolution of the true type, and the enlargement of the real scope, of man's relation to man purified and developed, not merely side by side with, but even as an effluent, of, the same process in man's relation to God purified and deepened ? And are not the stages in this growth well-defined in accordance with the fundamental principle of religion understood as social mysticism, '*Thadupásanam*' consisting not alone in '*thasminpreethih*' but also in '*thasyapriyakáryasádhanancha*'? Broadly speaking, in the all too tardy advance of civilisation from status to contract, Rajah Rammohun Roy not only waged relentless war on various fields against all old-world relics of 'status' but also validated the secularity of 'contract' by the spirituality of 'congregation' in the concerns of the soul. On the new, hallowed ground, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore nurtured 'congregation' into 'community' by pouring out into the consecrated chalice of public worship his own precious nectar extract from the celestial fruit of personal 'communion.' And, in his turn, Brahmananda Keshub Chandra Sen transmuted 'community' into 'confraternity' even by discovering the philosopher's stone of fabled fancy in the apostolic love of every-day life So that, what remains next for those who own themselves the spiritual descendants—children and children's children—of these conscript fathers, is the thrice-sacred task of recovering the holy heritage of confraternity in so far as they have lost it by indolence, of unearthing it in so far as they have buried it in the ground by intention and, lastly, of investing it, for both present and perpetual enjoyment, in the securest Bank of Heaven.

II

Unity in Socio-Religious Interests

Forming an ennobling study by themselves on the spiritual plane, these unity-pulsations of the heart find their reflex, indeed, in every part of the entire arterial system even of ordi-

nary domestic life and social intercourse among the children of men.

In the home, the members hold together as one in the *pater familias*. A common attachment to him constitutes the connecting link and the cementing force. This solidarity lasts so long and only so long as the original focus of coalescence is present in flesh and blood or as the compelling sense of its old sweetness and sacredness survives. Hence the not infrequent snapping of the home-ties and the separate setting up of sundered sections, if not also of a vulgar and indecent rush into no end of broils in and out of the law-courts, close upon the passing of the father, the mother or, sometimes, the eldest-born in their place. Howsoever it turn out in the sequel of the actual, one thing, at least, is certain and more or less universally so—the death-bed entreaty of the head of the family that the oneness he has preserved during his life should not be affected within that circle when he is gone. As such, his last act naturally comes to be to interlock the hands of his offspring, and his farewell breath to articulate over those clasped hands a grave, tremulous charge for unity, unbroken unity, amongst them one with another thereafter.

Similar instances of the prevalence and power of oneness in love and loyalty will readily occur from larger spheres of common pursuit and avocation within familiar experience. In quarters where the air is generally rent with the fierce discord of headstrong rivalry and heedless captiousness amid deprecation on either side, there comes at times the relief of a happy contrast, at least, as between fellow-pupils under the self-same preceptor and on the self-same training-ground. At the school of instruction, in the commonwealth of letters, in the hall of arts and even in the gynnasium of athletics, the presence, nay, the memory, of common homage to an honoured teacher is enough to prove an effective solvent of sordid jealousies and, more, to inspire an honourable sense of identity and mutual pride. For one thing, is not Karna's unswerving devotion to the Kauravas—such as it was, overmastering the obligations of uterine brotherhood even after their disclosure by the mother —traceable ultimately to his original pupilage with them under Drona amid their protecting companionship ?

Secular association apart, religious history and tradition and practice naturally abound still more with concrete illus-

trations of this remarkable phenomenon of organised, collective life. The underlying impulse beneath what has come to be summed up in our land as *guruism* presents the same features in individuals as well as institutions—the authority of the *guru*, the allegiance of the *chela* or *chelas* and their alliance (why not call it 'amalgamation'?) into one coherent body by virtue of that authority and that allegiance. The *digambar sádhus* of Upper Ind, by no means excessively spiritual-minded, somehow emerge, each out of his little self, and all commingle into one army around a common *gurupeetam* to stand by it and swear by it, to fight for it and die for it. With what 'red fool-fury,' but for the Police, they would proclaim and prove their desperate oneness with and in the *guru*, all for the sake of his jealously contested precedence over others of his ilk in processional progress to the bathing *ghat* of the *Kumbhamèla*! Among the numerous religious movements that have had their day in India's historic past, that of Sikhism, in particular, tells the arresting tale of unbroken pacts of devotion and duty sealed, on occasion, with the common heart's blood of united allegiance to the *guru* under God. The Franciscan and other celebrated Orders of mediaeval monachism in the West typify this very influence crystallised into a refined and beneficent shape. The personality of the master as an object of loyalty and a source of unity has its vaster counterpart, too, in the like potency of the church as a whole Whatever its crudities of belief and corruptions of conduct, the Holy Catholic Church stands before us a hoary monument of the world-wide operation of the spirit of churchism from its centre, the visible symbol of the Vatican. In fine, the most exquisite embodiment of what Jesus meant by the interlinking, on his part, of the God of Truth, the Prophet of Love and the Fraternity of the Faith, is to be found in the threefold protection-pledge of the initiate into the earlier Buddhist cult: *Dharmam saranam gachchámi*; *Buddham saranam gachchámi*; *Sangham saranam gachchámi.*

III

Unity an Inherent Brahmic Obligation

Apart from the valuable incentives to spiritual unity afforded to it by early Brahmic as well as extra-Brahmic example, there is laid upon the Brahma Samaj of today, in this important regard, an exceptionally uncommon obligation

inherent in the nature of its own faith and implied in the import of its very name. That faith and that name, as they have come down vouchsafed to us, present together a most happy congruity—a pearl of the greatest price set in a locket of the purest lustre. It is itself a circumstance of superb significance in the extreme that, of the numberless religious bodies of different times and climes, our own distinctive designation is the one directly derived from, and declaratory of, the 'One Only Without A Second'—the common, correct Denominator of all denominations (so to speak). As Brahmos, adherents of none other and none lesser than Brahma, we stand, once and for ever, self-committed to the Supreme and the Absolute, irrespective of all accidentals and accessories, of all dividing lines and diverging elements. The ancient dictum of the Upanishad, '*Ekó bahoonám*', and the modern motto of the United States of America, '*E Pluribus Unum*'—these may compendiously be adopted as the Old and New Testaments of our Gospel of that Universal, Eternal Unity which manifests and yet transcends, while binding together, all diversities and accordingly compels and also confirms all other unities. Be it as it may for those of other persuasions, for us at all events are fused into the central unity of God as a fundamental truth—and that, not incidentally but inextricably—all the other correlate unities of practical realisation, whether actual or potential: the unity of God and the Universe, of Revelation and Reason, of Religion and Science, of Religion and Ethics, of Love and Law, of Religion and Religion, of Scripture and Scripture, of Prophet and Prophet, of Religion and Reform, of Life and Love, of Life Here and Life Hereafter, of God and Man and, consequently, of Man and Man.

IV

Concluding Plea for Unity

On the one hand, this all-embracing note of synthetic harmony confers upon the Brahmos the priceless privilege of strenuously striving to earn the grand appellation of "the Unitarians of the United World" in the felicitous, far-reaching phrase of Emerson. And, on the other, it also enjoins upon them, even with the divine mandate of '*Noblesse Oblige*,' the inviolable duty of sweet concord amongst, if not also around, themselves as the only valid evidence of their prime

and profound conviction about unity in all, through all and over all. How else to lay unto their souls the flattering unction of being at all true to a faith and a name never to be outgrown, because representing the deepest, broadest and highest of things, things of the most permanently adequate import? As for little divergences, too readily made much of, in opinion, in belief, in ritual, in church polity, in mission organisation, in social usage, in political outlook and what not, the right word for them all can alone be 'Hail!' on the part of the Brahmos from their vantage-ground of unity-in-difference as the cardinal principle of Monotheism. It can never, by any means, be 'Hiss!' as with many a fever-stricken, fond-dreaming sect of hankerers after colourless unity right through. In respect of theological differences, so called, was it not a stalwart Brahmo in the West, Theodore Parker, who said, "As many men, so many theologies! But religion is one."? Far be it from us, then, ever to breathe and diffuse any of that *odium theologicum* which, by the saddest of practical ironies, too often creates the wildest and most vicious of disorders in the name of what ought to be the gentlest and most benignant of integrating forces.

By an irrefragable law, a house divided against itself can never stand; and it is doomed to fail in its mission as peacemaker unto other abodes of discord not infrequent in a wide world. Full fathom five drown we, then, the feuds of our fathers which now are nothing if not obsolete; and ourselves stir no strife and talk no slander, no, nor listen to it. Since our most compelling need on every side is coherence, gather we all together now to cohere—ministers and congregations, missionaries and laymen, leaders and leaders, leaders and followers, followers and followers, elders and youngsters, Adi Samajists and Navavidhanis, Navavidhanis and Sadharanists, Nationalist Brahmos and Universalist Brahmos, Brahma Samajists and Prardhana Samajists, Anushtanics and Non-Anushtanics, metropolitans and mofussilites, brothers in the north and brothers in the south, brothers in the east and brothers in the west—and repeat with one accordant voice the *mantra* of our solemn league and convenant: "By one spirit are we baptised into one body and have been made to drink of one spirit." What are we but beads selected for the Rosary of Faith and bricks chosen for the Temple of Love? How ineffable the beatific glory that could be ours in life with hearts opened

out to be strung together by the unseen thread, and with spirits lifted up to be fastened together by the underlying bond, of

"That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves"!

Again, whatever its aberrations, how much there is for appreciation in the nation's conjugal sentiment against divorce and even against remarriage, which roundly asks what on earth can lawfully part those who have once plighted troth in love as man and wife before the same sacrificial fire! If so, oh, how painful, how unthinkable, must be the very idea, on any account, of severance, dissidence or any the least infraction of oneness, as between souls that have once sincerely adored and prayed together with hands folded and eyes uplifted, or heads bowed and knees bended, in common, around the same Footstool of Mercy!

Even as, at the supreme moment of 'crossing the bar', the whole energy of the thought and emotion of Rammohun, as of Jesus before him, must have centred round the anxious problem of later spiritual unity in his fold, so, at this solemn march from the first to the second century of their church-life, shall his faithful ones, as best they can, stimulate one another, supplicate for one another, sanctify the self for one another and thus realise his one wish "that they all may be one." So shall the lips and lives of these tall men and true resound now and ever with the unity-song of the all-unifying faith,

"From hand to hand the greeting flows,
From eye to eye the signals run,
From heart to heart the bright hope glows—
The seekers of the light are one."

With a soul-deep self-examination on the part of each one within himself before the All-seeing God, how better may we together commemorate the Centenary of the Dispensation of the Spirit than as Mrs. Barbauld celebrates in her lofty pæan the solidarity, the sweetness, the sanctity, the saving grace and the survival value of spiritual fellowship?

"How blest the sacred tie that binds,
In union sweet, according minds!

How swift the heavenly course they run
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one!

"To each the soul of each how dear!
What jealous love! what holy fear!
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth, and cleanse from sin!

"Their streaming tears together flow
For human guilt and mortal woe;
Their ardent prayers together rise
Like mingling flames in sacrifice.

"Together both they seek the place
Where God reveals His awful face:
How high, how strong, their raptures swell,
There's none but kindred souls can tell.

"Nor shall the glowing flame expire
When Nature droops her sickening fire;
Then shall they meet in realms above—
A heaven of joy, a heaven of love."

ADDENDUM

Christ's Ideal of Spiritual Unity

The encircling gloom having thickened fast and the forces of hostile bigotry having made impetuous headway, the doomed victim, knowing how near the end, gathers close under his wing those devoted ones whom the Heavenly Father has given him for his own. To them, out of the depths, he administers needful comfort even with the promise of the advent of the Holy Ghost. Retiring into himself with the soft intimation, " Hereafter I will not talk much with you," he yet pauses to voice to them the absorbing passion of a heavy-laden heart—the desertions before the inevitable hour of his own ensuing departure by violent death, the dispersals at it and the dismemberments after it. " Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own." His deepest life through all these years, precious though few, he has lived with them and in them. What more natural, then, than that, at this awful, crucial moment the inmost chords should thrill as never before with that most human of all questionings and longings, ' What of these after me?' In that mood he lifts his eyes on high and heaves out his last prayer for the dearly beloved heirs of his tender heart. Here the outpouring becomes altogether as terse in language and as cogent in sequence as it is fervent in spirit and comprehensive in range. What is more to our purpose, it comes home as intensely practical in its intended bearings, albeit through the ages a fabric of subtle metaphysic has been reared up on its Johannine basis.

His inward anguish on their account and his final supplication in their behalf at present, Jesus first traces to a triple ground of personal unity with the disciples. This oneness of the vine and its branches has, we learn, its origin and occasion, its evidence and expression, in a sameness of relationship with the outside world at three different points: (1) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (2) In fact, "The world has hated them" (even as it has hated me); and that, too, because of my own self, "even as I have given them Thy word"; so that "The glory which Thou gavest me I have

given them." (3) Lastly, though not *of* the world, aye, hated though *by* the world, neither master nor disciples have turned their back *upon* the world; far from it, his life-work and theirs alike being *with* and *for* the world, that life-work has sent them forth in common with him *into* the world upon a common call—a call transmitted, in their case, by or, rather, through him from on high. "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world". Thus, he literally 're-members' the disciples, that is, makes them members of his own self over again through a renewed recognition of unity in spiritual community and of community in essential divinity in the present as in the past.

The reinvigoration of this higher consciousness he follows up, again, with a threefold prayer of intercession for the future—prayer for their spiritual security againt the worldlings of the world, for their harmonious oneness amongst themselves after no less a pattern than his own established oneness with his God and his Father; and that, by no lower means than the fullest realisation, on their part, of common oneness in and with the double divinity of the manifested and the unmanifested. The import and implications of the prefatory words, "Keep through Thine own name, those whom Thou hast given me", are set out both positively and negatively, as necessary, in the succeeding clauses: (*a*) "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them *out of* the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them *in* the world." (*b*) "That they may be one, as we are"—or (as more explicitly put lower down) "as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee." (*c*) And further, "that they also may be one in us." To what end, then, is all this impassioned plea and prayer for unity amongst those now before him? For *its* sake primarily has he imparted to them, without any the least reservation, that Divine glory which has entered into himself as a chosen vessel. And why? The reason here is threefold over again: (i) "That they may be made perfect in one". (ii) "That the world may know that Thou hast sent me". And (iii) (That the world may know) "that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me". So that, perfection—the far-off interest of unity—is none of his monopoly; rather, perfectibility is there already as the common property of the rest as well. Neither is the love of God his peculiar prerogative. As the one has been operative towards them as towards himself from time without beginning,

so the other is and shall be open to them as to himself through time without end. And so his ambassadorship from Heaven he verily proves to the world even by this explicit disavowal of anything of the nature of uniqueness or exclusiveness in his own favour.

Furthermore, his supreme desire and dream as to their genuine unity and growing perfection ends not, in its urge, with pious prayer, as it has not stopped short earlier with tender exhortation. Too well the Man of God knows the sheer futility of wishes and appeals, never so intense, that are not wafted up to the Footstool of Grace. No less alive is he to the complementary truth that, if 'words without thoughts never to heaven go,' neither do the devoutest supplications without honest self-consecrations. Accordingly, there follows, too, in the story the espousal of a solemn covenant on his own part: "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth".

Finally, it is worthy of note how, by no means content with narrowly restricting the purview of his spiritual relations and intercessory prayers to the small, visible band of followers by his side, Jesus goes on gloriously to draw within his embrace at every point the whole community of believers that is to grow through the ages "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." And how aptly does the Prophet of Peace on earth and Goodwill among men close upon the sublimest note of Love as the very soul of all Unity: "And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in Thee."!

42

SERVE AND BELONG

1933

"Only they who serve really belong." Thus concludes a correspondent's letter in a recent issue of *The Inquirer*, the organ of Unitarianism in England. The writer is concerned to put in a strong plea for more opportunities of service for lay men and women, especially youth, as supplementary to the professional ministry in a church which has repudiated the traditional ideas of priesthood. The advocacy is urged, not merely in the name of conciliatory expediency, but on the higher grounds as well of rightfulness and efficiency in the consolidation and expansion of the good work. Allowing, of course, for diverse kinds of appreciable service down to cleaning brasses and arranging flowers, it is to be realised, adds the note, how the most effective way to foster the spirit of interest and promote the talent for service in the younger section of church members consists in the practical encouragement and training of them to take their place in the pulpit from time to time. "A church which would serve its young men and women must give them the opportunity of serving it". Such is the summing up of the argument for a sound programme of pooling the scanty, scattered resources of our sister-movement of Liberalism in the West.

In its dual aspect of requirement and resource, the situation there quite obviously parallels that over here in the Brahma Samaj. What is properly rendered obligatory, under existing conditions, as from the organism to the limbs and, conversely, from the limbs to the organism, will readily suggest itself along specific lines of possible and desirable usefulness. Yet, details of application apart, the broad, vital principle underlying the monition is itself one which deserves to be repeatedly brought before the mind's eye and pressed home into the heart's interior. And this holds good in the interests alike of the indi-

vidual member who would not willingly stagnate and of the collective body he would fain see prosper from strength to strength. The stress laid upon service, in the enlarged sense of the term, comes at once as a charge to the Fellowship and a challenge to the Fellows, one and all. Granting the mutual obligation, it still remains to be recognised that the burden of responsibility on the part of the individual unit is, far and away ,the paramount factor, even because the body politic in itself is nothing if not a conscious and purposive union of such units and, again, because individualism, as such, finds justification and fulfilment only as a necessary means to, an essential mood or moment in, collectivism.

How is true membership in the Samaj to establish and evidence itself? What actually constitutes the living link between the spirit and the spiritual home? Do we 'belong' soon as ever we sign the card of enrolment? Or do we 'belong' while we continue to pay off the subscription amount? Again, do we 'belong' as we are prepared on occasion to make no secret of our inner moorings? Do we 'belong' even by virtue of holding ourselves in readiness, any time or at all times, piously to wish well of the word and the work and lustily to shout forth 'Pull on, pull on' to fellow-members with their ruddy hands upon the stiffening rope in the heat of a fierce tug-of-war? Doubtless, each of these tokens or gestures carries with it its own moral value as well as concrete utility. The convinced waverer fighting shy of signature on the covenant of committal; the well-to-do confrere deferring payment in fond expectation of accumulated arrears being written off clean by reason of their very heaviness in the long run; the opportunist comrade quick to put himself in evidence just to acquire an easy passport for religious respectability in elegant circles; the patronising sentimentalist careful enough to spare himself all the sweat of his brow but eager to make up for it with vociferous effusions of solicitous support—these and the like of these do unfortunately form by far the fateful bane of the Brotherhood. But even outside these categories, no one who fails not in any of these ways may lay any flattering unction to his soul as already representing the be-all and end-all of allegiance. God is too jealous a master and His church too exacting a mistress to be propitiated with the ink spent upon the roll of membership, with the coin shelled out from the pocket, with the nod of assent mechanised by the head, or even with all the breath

of benediction lavished out of the lung. No doctrine avowal, no dilettante acknowledgment, no seeming-genial association, no half-hearted affinity, no sleeping partnership, no mere purse patronage, no buttress outside as against any pillar inside —none of these can be truly said to 'belong.'

"Not he that repeateth the Name,
But he that doeth the Will."

——'*Matkarmakrun matparamó madbhaktah.*'

And why ? Even because, in fine, 'by their fruits ye shall know them.' The man of airy pleasure, the man of agile intellect, the man of active charity, the man of ardent affections —these stand wide apart, one from another, in the ascending scale of relation to 'the one thing needful'. And the last-named, nearest to the mark, approves himself by—in proportion to—the offering of himself in service all round or, at least, along each possible line. Consequently, such a one alone 'belongs' according to the surest of touchstones and the most searching of tests. 'He that is not against us is with us'—here, after all, is something 'considerably less than a half-truth, meant only to induce peace-loving and even hope-filled neighbourliness towards the non-obstructionist. On the contrary, 'He that is not with us is against us'—this determines the very core of positive, aggressive co-partnership among yoke-fellows. In the light of the supreme standard thus laid down, service and service alone—not lukewarm as in the temperate, but warm with all the warmth of the tropical, zone—becomes the one authentic title for 'belonging.' Somebody has defined a kiss as 'the marking-ink of love.' Service, similarly, may be designated as the very 'Privy Seal' of devotion in all available spheres and eligible capacities. If, as Carlyle warns us, 'Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into Conduct,' it can be no other than the conduct of genuinely grateful or gratefully genuine service that falls due to that Household of Faith which claims together for its own all those of common conviction as to the deep things of life. Not for nothing did the Buddhist formula of initiation prescribe among its solemn vows this one of *Sangham saranam gachhámi.*' Nor is the implicit self-surrender with pledges of absolute filial devotion on the part of every dutiful child of Roman Catholicism into the embracing arms of the Mother Church barren of its salutary, spiritual lesson even for us, professors of the universal catholic outlook.

The most fruitful type of devotedness must be that which binds us consciously to the Infinite as enshrined, at least for us, in our own particular Communion more plainly and purely than elsewhere. Hence the sacred duty incumbent upon every clear-sighted, true-hearted, high-souled Brahmo, whatever his handicaps, to 'serve' the Brahma Samaj even as it is sung of loyalty in relation to royalty :

"He bowed himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kinds of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing of it."

Now, as to the varied directions in which selfless yet soulful service is demanded of the consecrated spirit with ingenuous regard to actualities. Undarned rents of by-gone schisms widened, if anything, into growing weakness; unscaled mountains of misunderstanding sundering the nearest, one from another; baleful feuds subtly and sedulously fanned over fictitious differences between missioners and lay workers; a clumsy turmoil of sentiment worked up into a pious principle of antithesis in respect of bare mutual adjustment between monetary needs and supplies, on the one hand, and spiritual sufficiency and independence, on the other ; all natural disparities between leader and led thrown into the wildest confusion as in the disorders of inverted democracy; mill-stones of self-distrust, if not self-degradation, weighing down one and all into the depths; finances reduced to the lowest ebb as being nobody's because everybody's concern ; the not numerous denominational organs condemned to an all but languishing life ; the rare literary productivity of the past worked out already to exhaustion and its riches quietly consigned to the limbo of things forgotten; even promising mission operations stuck up in the quagmire of a stand-still ; only congregational ministrations kept on with diminishing attendances and in all too routine a fashion; worn-out workers left unheeded to ply their lonely, disabled oars or sink silently with the bark; the lack of prospect of fresh recruits for the field equalled only by the absence of anything like facilities for their systematic training or adequate upkeep ; personal prayerfulness and domestic devotions conspicuous by their decadence, if not disappearance; all collateral nation-building labours snatched away by secular hands and sectarial bodies; and, altogether,

the whole movement appearing to mark time upon the backwaters of retrogression or even reaction, while, forsooth, all the signs of the times from the four corners of the land are, as never before, full of eloquent witness to it as the one proper centre of convergence for all forward forces! Painfully, if not provokingly, gruesome reading all this! But, pray, are not self-scrutiny and, with it, self-indictment the first steps to self-reformation? And if here is no overdrawn picture of the present predicament, does it not help to rule out as superfluous the recurrent question as to what specifically represent the crying needs of the hour and call for arduous service from the willing votary? Be it noted that in this behalf no bit is too trivial and no undertaking too vast. In fact, the simple and the stupendous may, not unfittingly, intermingle along the same channel. Of the great Dr. Martineau, it is reported that it was a sight to see, down almost to the close of his long life, as he would be found on every New Year's Day punctiliously mounting up the stairs of Essex Hall in order to pay down his annual subscription upon the counter of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Dr. Sir Brahmarshi Venkata Ratnam's words once expressed to the writer ring still resonant in the ear: 'We cannot give too much to the Brahma Samaj; we cannot do too much for the Brahma Samaj'. Linger not, then, with cool content over the 'century of service' lying behind as computed from the birth of the Brahma Samaj. But press forward with fiery zest to the fresh century of service dawning upon you with the ascension-centenary of the *Yugapurusha* who is coming to his own as the world-*vates* of a spacious era.

Far be it from everyone to seek shelter under all circumstances behind the blind old bard's assurance, 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' According to its context, this dictum enunciates but one ordinance of a good God who, as He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, is also 'just to forgive' inaction in cognisance of really incapacitating limitations and not 'exact day-labour, light denied.' So that, leaving out such exceptional conditions of divine, not self-conceded, exemption where the only service possible assumes the form of biding one's time in meek submission to the cross of tribulation, it is too true—true with all the overwhelming awfulness and amplitude of its implications—that "only those who serve really belong." A friend willing to figure as a sym-

pathiser but suspecting that perhaps the whole thing had simply paled into a spent force as 'a creed outworn,' once encountered me with the straight query, 'Why is it the Brahma Samaj has ceased now to make headway as before?' And I ventured to suggest, 'Why; not because of inherent decrepitude or obsoleteness in the ideal itself but owing to sad inadequacies in supporters and adherents like you and me.' Ah, what loftier aim looms in the horizon than that of effectively renovating the Samaj, so far as it lies in us, even as the nation's and humanity's mighty lung through which to breathe the 'ampler ether' and the 'diviner air' of the invisible realities? And what nobler task behoves each one of its sons than to put on 'the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation' and let the stirring battle-song of self-dedication sing its way again and again on to the lip from out the life?

"Count me for one, if only one,
E'en though a thousand were too few,
When Valour's bravest should be done
And Honour's highest is to do;
Whatever else I mar or miss,
Whoever else may share my place,
As one at least let me be this—
A Brother to my Brother-man.

"Sworn to maintain life's lowliest
And be to Mercy's cause a friend,
Where flames the beacon of the Best
Be mine to follow to the end.
'As one'? Was that the word I said?
Nay, since a thousand were too few
And since the one I loved is dead
And fights no more, count me for *two*."

43

THE FESTIVAL OF THE SPIRIT

1936

Was it no more than a bare, bald accident that, as early as 1842, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore was led to fix upon this particular season of Bengal's *Mágham* for the recurring celebration of the Annual Festival of the Brahma Samaj? Obviously, even the immediate intent behind the institution of the anniversary day was more than the gladsome, grateful commemoration of the historic Eleventh of *Mágh*. Otherwise, too, for all time to come, it must go down as a thrice-memorable episode in the higher concerns of human-kind the wide world over as also in Modern India—namely, how, with an outlook of far-sighted trust and devotion, the hero as prophet and reformer in Rajarshi Rammohun, with the hero as priest in Pandit Ramachandra Vidyavageesh by his side, consecrated for his confraternity the first house of prayer of its own under the ægis of a Trust Deed of its own—a Magna Carta, withal, for the whole humanity represented by "all sorts and descriptions of people, without distinction, as shall behave and conduct themselves in an orderly, sober, religious and devout manner for the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being." But we have it on the direct authority of the Autobiography that, while determining himself in favour of the Eleventh of *Mágh* for the annual *Utsav*, Maharshi was not forgetful of the fact that "In the month of *Bhádra* 1750 (A.D. 1828), the Brahma Samaj was first founded in a hired house belonging to Kamal Basu in Jorasanko" and that "the anniversary of this, which used to be held in *Bhádra*, had been discontinued since 1754 (A.D. 1832), before I joined the Brahma Samaj." And it were pitiably amiss for us if we failed to sense the directing hand of Providence in the organisational appointment in question together with its growing access of fresh import and strength

under later influences as, indeed, in all the luminous landmarks through the development of the Dispensation of the Spirit.

How unmistakably each season comes impregnated with its own peculiar spirit even from on high! A supreme feature this which holds true not a whit more in respect of the seasonal rounds of the natural world than in reference to those of individual life and of historical epochs. So about the era ushered into Europe by the year 1789 with its revolutionary slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven!"

Likewise, as to the significance of the new age signalised by the crowning culminations of the Fourth of July, 1776, in the New World of America and hymned forth in fitting apostrophe to the primal, impelling

"Spirit that made those heroes dare
To die, or leave their children free."

And so far as the New-Old Testament of our own blessed Brahma Dharma unto heart and hearth alike in organised affirmation of the spiritual autonomy of man is concerned, the sacred solemnities centring round the Eleventh of *Mdgh* (the Twenty-third of January) cannot but bring sacramentally home to us the exquisite accord of the Festival of the Spirit with the Spirit of the Festival. All around rings in sublimating strains upon the golden harp of Cosmos the refrain of universal *udbódhan* for the hour and the day—

"One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season."

In the world without, fraught with rich suggestiveness, this marks the season of the rigours of midwinter gently loosening hold of sun and sky, of wind and weather. Now is the season, too, of the bounties of mother earth spreading smiles of golden grain in garnered heaps. Again, as regards the inner life-currents of the larger community of our lineage, the present constitutes the season for the ebullient well-springs of *bhakti* overflowing into the surge of a deluge, as witness, especially, the choristers of the Vaishnava fold tripping, now even by daybreak, along the highways and byways and sweetening—

not merely stirring—the air the while with their full-throated chant of the holy name of Hari. In fine, *this*, preeminently, is the congenial and hence the traditional season at once of *bhóga* and *bhakti*, as *Dhanurmásam's* Aftermath pours out her copious horn of plenty and pleasantness on all sides. As such, this makes the one appropriately inspiring passage in the year's course distinguished everywhere by replenished stores, rehabilitated surroundings and rejuvenated spirits in the midst of a marked community of interests, with mutual reactions, among the triple forces of nature, self and society.

If so, the pious Brahmo seeking to sail upon the tidal crest right into the haven-heart of his Samajic Festival can hope to progress thitherward only in proportion as it is given to him to witness in that dear, dear Festival a lively reflex of the grander, outer Festival of 'joy in widest commonalty spread.' Howsoever it be in other seasons and contexts, enjoyment pure and simple can alone form the proper key-note of experience in these days of the Festival. No enjoyment, no festival: that is what the term itself connotes and stands for. Accordingly, "the joy of the Lord" shall render the Brahmo's Festival festive in the highest, holiest degree even by his evolving a perfect compound of the season's *bhóga* and *bhakti* and quaffing the elixir-cup of *bhaktibhóga* to inebriation 'at every pore'. The inadequacy, nay, the inappropriateness of 'toiling reason' being realised as never before, he shall turn his back, now at any rate, upon what Mrs. Humphrey Ward deprecates as 'the labyrinth of language and logic'. With a firm grip, however, upon that approved species of *jnánayóga* which alone sustains the self-assurance, 'I *know* in whom I trust,' he shall plunge headlong into the vortex of entranced rejoicing in the immensity of that Brahman in whom the Siva of *thyága* becomes merged into the Vishnu of *bhóga*. He shall improve to the full the only privilege that is his in the offer and the opportunity of sharing in the eternal *leela*-festival of the Divine through the entire cosmos. For thus and only thus *utsava* comes to be identified with *utsáham*, as expressively signified by the linking of 'enthusiasm' in the root with 'Theos' (God) so as to constitute the outcome—the very content and consummation—of Divine emotion. But this he can do, if haply he may now recapture 'down the ringing grooves of change' the sublime, hoary accents of '*Eshóshya parama ánandah*' and '*Eshahyèvánan-*

dayáthi'. This he can do, if now he may vividly recognise over again the categorical imperative of the injunction to abandon all and enjoy Him alone—'*Thènathyakthèna bhunjeedha.*' This he can do, if, in short, he now brings with him an increased aliveness to the uniquely comprehensive, quintessential all-sufficingness of his own out-and-out Theocentric Faith with its universal, spiritual mission towards the fulfilment of the transcendent prophecy, "Believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father."

But then, strictly viewed, spiritually to 'enjoy Him alone' is not numerically to exclude all else as objects of enjoyment. In the light of ontological truth, what is there at all self-subsistent outside of, and apart from, the all-containing, all-encompassing Godhead apprehended in '*Isávásyamídam sarvam yatkincha jagatyám jagat*'? And yet, on the affectional side, is it not equally true that, even on account of —in and through—the 'One only without a second', everyone, everything, round about becomes restored to the heart securer, sweeter and more sanctified on the negative-positive principle of '*Nava arèy sarvam kámáyá sarvam priyá bhavati, átmanastu kámáya sarvam priya bhavati*'? Hence the twofold practical corollary of an obligation inevitably entailed by the very prospect of reunion, in communion, with the Deity and that for the sake of completeness in the enjoyment itself—namely, 'pilgrimage to the saints' of the Church Universal and congregational copartnership with all kin of spirit. In fact, even customary experience in common daily relationships goes to verify by illustration these self-same implications of the ultimate law of being and beatitude. Whoever would think of apt welcome to a beloved bridegroom or to an honoured guest all alone to the rigid exclusion of the encircling bridal party or of the inseparable retinue ring and, again, in self-deprivation of the happiness of calling in his own near and dear ones as well 'to meet' the august personage? Nay, would the recipient himself find anything like a full, comporting measure of satisfaction in the blank solitariness of such a colourless reception? That is the reason why every invitation to an auspicious ceremony goes round, as a rule, with the inclusive call, '*Bandhumitraparivárasahitam.*' So that, even as Sree Rama is ever associated in the popular mind with the familiar formula, '*Sree Seetá Lakshmana Bharata Satrughna*

Hanumath samètah,' the devout Brahmo, intent upon rendering up the deepest, the highest and the broadest that lies locketed in himself and receiving in return the rarest and the richest that is held out by his Festival of the Spirit, shall see to it, at least in these longed-for days, that the fitting reception of the heart's Bridegroom and of the universe's Sovereign in the innermost chamber is also extended coincidently to the Faithful of all sects and systems and of none far or near in time and space. There, Aryan and Semite shall once more swell in unison the blending echoes of forest-glades, of lake-shores and of desert-sands. There, in his Nava Brindavan, the enraptured Brahmo shall revel in the rehallowed spousal companionship of *Jaganmóhana* amid the social circle of ecstatic dance. There, in his Neo-Mecca, he shall, again and again, bow the head and bend the knee in exaltation of the Jalal-Jamal uniqueness of Allah out of the hidden retreats of the soul. There, in his New Jerusalem, he shall vision afresh the effulgence of the Kingdom of Heaven upreared even on the base of this earth by all the rededicated strength of body, mind and soul. There, touching the objective synthesis proclaimed by the Rajah, the subjective synthesis realised by the Maharshi and the objective-subjective synthesis enforced by the Brahmananda, the fervent Brahmo shall reassess for himself, with profounder discernment, the historic heritage derived from the venerated patriarchs of his own church as the bequest of a birthright over all the limitless legacies of the behind and the before in ever-enlarging measures of life, light and love. As to fellow-votaries at the elbow in the household of faith, the ardent Brahmo's penitential pangs of soul-wrung passion for at-one-ment shall now make the renewed clasp of the hand the firmer and the refastened embrace to the bosom the warmer, as all threshold-brook oceans get crossed over clean and all mole-hill mountains melted away outright. For, he shall the more thrillingly hear the conch of the celestials reverberate the angel-anthem of peace and goodwill over all fields of feud alike on this globe. So shall the jubilee of the Festival become for him one with the blessedness of adoring allegiance and love-laden amity—not contradiction but communion its holy, its only *mantra* repudiating no sonship, rejecting no revelation, eliminating no experience and proscribing no evolution but comprehending all within the comple-

mentary opulence of the concrete universal in the infinitude of *Virátpurusha*.

Altogether, in the benignant meekness of humble self-scrutiny and unreserved self-surrender, may the favoured one of Grace find in the Festival of the Spirit now upon him nothing short of the baptismal font of regenerative redemption —a very mount of transfiguration overlooking a new earth and a new heaven upon and across

"the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun"!

Blessed be the Lord of the *Utsav* that in Him *Brahmótsav* may fructify as *Anandótsav*, even *Brahmánandótsav*, calling forth the harvest-hymn of the heavy-furnished heart and the pentecost-paean of the overfilled soul!

44

NON-ATTENDANCE AT SERVICE

1933

An earnest-minded writer in a recent issue of the Unitarian *Inquirer* went into a suggestive study of the circumstances commonly at work as obstacles to attendance at congregational worship. No apology, certainly, is needed for the present attempt to think some of its leading thoughts over again and review the position on an issue so vital to our own fuller, higher life both individually and collectively in the Brahma Samaj.

In the article under reference, the examination of the question starts with the situation at the first Christian Service ever held—that of the Apostles on the evening of the Resurrection Day, the Resurrection itself marking the birth of the Church. Then mustered together only ten out of the eleven that might have been present—that is, leaving out the perfidious betrayer who had soon become the penitent suicide. 'Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them', as we read, 'when Jesus came'. And why? For this marked absence, it is stated, one or all of three possible causes might have been responsible. All of them pertain to the subjective mood of the mind and may be construed as typical of the psychology of the habitual non-church-goer of to-day. They will here be conveniently summed up in three key-notes: Solitariness; Sorrow; Sophism.

(1) By nature, Thomas was a moody, melancholy, brooding spirit. He would often go away from the rest: so much so that he came to be literally a mystery to them. In so far as his absence on that signal occasion was influenced by this constitutional trait, he just represented the class of men (or members) who temperamentally love to be alone with God and with their own souls and prefer to find in the retreats of closet meditation or country walk a valued channel of valid grace for themselves aside of fellowship at the public sanctuary. (2) Thomas loved Jesus with a deep devotion. And now

that the Master was dead and gone, the disciple buried his own heart as well with him in the grave. Naturally, then, he might have said to himself, 'Why go and talk about it to others or list to their chatter thereon?' If so, he was simply one of many who would fain nurture their private sorrows in the caves of their own inmost selves and away from the light of day. Grief, with such, is intrinsically and entirely a lonely experience. (3) Mayhap, Thomas came to be persuaded within himself that with the all too dismal tragedy upon the cross, the cherished common cause had once for all been done with and wrecked beyond repair. So, after that absolute 'finis' when the curtain fell never to rise, he felt no urge and saw no point about any further pursuit of the blank void. What had he next to do but to turn his back wisely upon the fruitless reunion of the followers three long days later? Herein he quite reflected the practical sageness of those who have given way to misgivings that, after all, religion itself is naught but an exploded cause and worship an effete scheme no longer worthy of serious attention save on the part of the self-deluded.

Now, on these working bases, what does it come to? (1) The solitary-minded man is not necessarily unspiritual. But he thinks to cultivate his spiritual interests in a non-social—that is, virtually anti-social—atmosphere. (2) The sorrow-laden man is distracted, if not divorced, from faith and cannot bear to carry his broken, bleeding heart out into the open even under the sympathetic auspices of old comradeship. (3) But the self-sophisticated man is the one who distances himself from spiritual fellowship around the altar through a sly suspicion, if not a stolid consciousness, that spiritual life itself with its elements of faith and hope, communion and cooperation, has proved to be no more than a solemn simulacrum in the light of a disquieting discovery.

Yet, with all this, have we reached the last word and touched the bottom truth? By no means. Half-truth—rating none of the above attitudes at lesser worth—is ever a sorry patient insensible to her own imperfectness. No cure, cordial or corrective, therefore, can be out of place in the much-needed treatment. (1) Doubtless, solitude is good and necessary, too, for the life of the spirit. Too little of it was never a more besetting evil than in these whirlwind days of the garish round and the giddy rush before the vulgar gaze, as we do no more than

'Glance and nod and bustle by
And never once possess our soul
Before we die.'

At the same time, in all conscience, is not too much of solitude a still graver peril, if anything? Fellowship is and must remain a basal and hence never to be outgrown or ignored need of human nature. None can afford to be a confirmed solitary in habits and outlook. There are possibilities realisable only in and through association with others on the road to God. Companionship with those conscious of the same weaknesses and temptations, desires and hopes, is an indispensable factor in the upgrowth of the soul. The influence of contagion for good and godliness is an aid or asset not to be underrated. *Satsangatvam* stands appraised on all hands as the first and foremost among

'the great world's altar-stairs.
That slope through darkness up to God.'

And there is nothing so conducive to this supreme end as the repeated, recurring praise and prayer of the common sanctuary in unison of hearts and consonance of voices. (2) As for sorrow, it is unspeakably one of life's sacred and sanctifying possessions; and how may secularism dare to ask that it be lightly brushed aside? 'Let love clasp grief lest both be drowned': this must be the sedate course of storm-tossed navigation upon the ocean of life. But sorrow is here to be mitigated out of its rigour into a ministry—not suffered to scorch up, but sublimated so as to sustain, the soul; and that through every means made available by the very Dispenser of sorrow. And where to seek for such healing balm and heartening succour outside the pharmacy and the power-house of the Divine Presence? Aye, in the shrine of common worship are, not unoften, to be found the purveyors of needful relief and renovation, not by the elimination of the cross, but by its transfiguration in a new supernal light. These arise out of a variety of hallowed suggestions—who knows which, in particular? Say, in the strain of a favourite hymn, in the echo of a sacred text, in an accent of honoured ministration or in a recollection from happy memory, a mysterious ray of welcome illumination may perchance strike or steal into the darkened, desolate chamber within. Unto the richness of this ready resource, every man of sorrows and acquainted with grief has borne ringing testimony. Until he goes

into the sanctuary, the sorrow of the Psalmist is too excruciating a harrow. But as he emerges out of it, behold, he shouts and sings forth, 'God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever'. (3) Prejudice is ever the fondled first-born of Sophism. And Scepticism, so called, is, as a rule, the bastard child of Prejudice. She shuts her eyes and will not see until, unable to see, she begins to rest satisfied that there is nothing to see. The infelt Presence of God alone avails as the effective remedy for this kind of self-induced ostrich-blindness. And this Presence is nowhere so securely guaranteed as in the solemn pledge, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them'. The scales do not fall off and the eye continues to fail to see, until the forlorn goes alone into company out of himself. It is significant that the story of that post-Resurrection Church Service with which we started ends by recording how even Thomas did see Jesus a week later when he came with the rest. Thus the vision denied to the self-excluded stayer-behind was finally vouchsafed to the sunny-spirited participator in the shoulder-to-shoulder and soul-to-soul commingling of the fraternity. In fine, even while you come to scoff, who can tell but that you will not remain to pray?

Now, to sum up. Be the reason what it may—whether (1) partiality for the company of self or (2) preoccupation with the corrosions of care or (3) preclusion by misgivings about spiritual values (or any other imaginable or unimaginable difficulty not herein particularised). And be the omission occasional or chronic; for, from the one to the other, it is but a slippery slide in the plane of habit. For a certainty, absence from congregational worship stands to lose immeasurably more than it can hope to gain. Such non-attendance brings upon itself in the extreme, though by degrees, a heavy liability to forfeiture of the priceless spiritual benefits (1) of Fellowship, (2) of Illumination and, aye, (3) of God-consciousness. The resultant plight, from the standpoint alike of the individual and the institution, is one to be expressively described only by the Emersonian term, 'Blight'. Oh, let every Thomas in the fold watchfully examine his own heart and habit in a matter in which, lamentably enough, there abound more of his ilk than in the proportion of one out of eleven.

45

THE GENIUS OF HUMANITY IN HISTORY

1934

On the vital question of the place of great men in the economy of life as unfolded in human history, the twin-stars of the Sage of Chelsea and the Seer of Concord have, in effect the same ray of light to shed. Carlyle and Emerson remarkably confirm each other, when the one lays down that the soul of history abides in biography and the other avers that the genius of humanity is the right point of view of history. The truth sought to be enforced by both is that, inasmuch as the proper study of history consists in a diligently devout tracing of the deeper, diviner tendencies of human thought, feeling and action, these dynamic tendencies, from generation to generation, are to be seen faithfully summed up nowhere save in the epoch-makers. Accordingly, to understand any particular age aright is no other than to understand its representative man or men with intimate insight.

It is always a twofold capacity that belongs to such interpretative personalities. As epitomes of their respective eras, they figure and function both as causes and as effects. While they exhibit the conditions that have called them into being and wrought upon them to some definite end, they likewise point the directions given to the movements of society by their own fresh ideas and ideals. No man liveth unto himself. Least of all is the life, the dream-life as well as the deed-life, of any great man his own single and altogether insulated concern. Rather is it, in essence, the larger life of his race focussed into one radiating centre at a particular point of time. 'Heroes, sages, bards sublime' are, indeed, the mountain-peaks of humanity. What the snowy summits of the earth's surface in their lonely loftiness do for its plains and its cities, towering genius—towering whether in the head or in the heart, whether in facts or in ideas—has done and will do for the

lowly levels of human-kind. That type of outstanding genius sends down rich, fertilising streams of higher truth and rare, bracing winds of purer emotion to the folks below who little cognise from which quarter the reinforcements and renovations have emanated. Even as the physical productivity of a country's soil remains not fully accounted for unless traced to the sources of its river-currents, the real forces of social progress, in the largest sense of the word, are not apprehended except in the well-springs of tall men and true, great men and good. In their lives and labours, in their thoughts and toils, alone do we seek with success the cypher code for a correct explication of all civilisational developments. All 'force is from the heights,' declares Tennyson's *Ancient Sage*. It is the far-reaching significance of this truth that is conveyed again, by the transcendentalist teacher of America in the terse averment, "The genius of humanity is the real subject whose biography is written in our annals"—that is, annals disengaged, as his mighty prototype in England insists, from all mere 'tomb-stone information.'

And so it is, the underlying principle standing true of all times and holding good for all time. There never was a period of human history but had its own phoenix of greatness and grandeur. Supermen, veritable Tritons amongst minnows, whom the vulgar herd is too prone to fancy as coming upon the world's stage at haphazard and to little purpose, do come, in reality, each as the redemptive offspring of aeons of Nature's travail and as the incarnate response of Providence to the clamant call of his day and generation. As no time or clime is without its peculiar crisis and its especial challenge, in no period or place does God leave Himself without a witness. True, the witness cometh not always with observation. But come he must in the fulness of time even with that beautiful certainty or 'fatality,' as Emerson terms it, which marks the successive zodiacs of constellations and of communities in the story of cosmic evolution. Nay, the advent of the shining orbs of humanity is a phenomenon subject to the same unfailing law that brings to pass the prophecies of astronomy as to the swimming of new planets into ken in the spacious firmament on high. For, the creative and recreative Power at work behind the social, is one with that behind the solar, system ; and the dust out of which the sons of men are shaped is the same as the stuff of which the stars of the skies are

made. So could we predict the exits and entrances with the assurance of knowledge, if we adequately realised the infinite patience, the inexhaustible resources and the inscrutable processes of that *Viswakarma* with whom "time and space are cheap" beyond all conception. Wanting the plenitude of knowledge, it is at least given to us, 'believing where we cannot prove,' to possess our souls in trustfulness about the inevitability of great men.

Furthermore, as the genius of humanity is coeval, it is also coextensive, with the entire range of general history. Inevitable in their appearance, these makers of nations and moulders of movements are no less penetrative in their influence. They brook no segregation in which the fire in them shall burn them up into extinction and leave not a rack behind. Oftentimes, their voice may sound but as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Nevertheless, surely if slowly, the echo of it cannot but pierce far, far through contemporary insensibility and even through all counterblast clamour deep into the quickened ears of posterity. The organic unity and the inherent progressiveness of the race, as also the conserving energy of the Divine Economist of the universe, absolutely rule out all possibility of there ever being one lost good here below. For,

> "no beauty, nor good nor power
> Whose voice has gone forth, but each
> survives for the melodist."

The dullest of hearing, then, discloses himself as verily an Abt Vogler in the making who "shall hear it by-and-by." If, as the Oracle of the New World announces out of the strength of this same impregnable optimism, "a new quality of mind travels by night and by day in concentric circles from its origin," well may we of little faith take comfort in the persuasion that "what gets admission to one cannot be kept out of another" in the ultimate course of things. The auroral foregleam first caught by the cloud-capped pinnacle—is it not, in substance, the golden glow that is bound, a while later, to descend diffusively down unto the outstretched base? As such, to fix our admiring, aye, adoring gaze upon the elect and the exalted is not to be shut out from the promise of any section of the commonalty, including our own limited selves. On the other hand, provided we see to it that the Primal Light-fount does

not thereby get overshadowed—a danger only too common in spiritual optics, to overlook the splendour of the former in the survey of the latter would be to ignore the tap-root in preoccupation with the foliage. Worse still, it may even be to rest content with the salt that has lost its savour. At all events, as we are reminded in *Repesentative Men*, the great man justifies his Heaven-donated greatness and fulfils his Heaven-ordained mission only in proportion as, among other things, he takes care to save his followers from himself, while saving them from themselves. Else, he sets up a virtual stumbling-block in lieu of an intended stepping-stone and mars into a hiding screen what is meant to function as a reflecting prism.

Thus, the worthies of soulful biography, all the world over, approve themselves as time and space embodiments of the Most High in the degree they are endued with, and are observed to employ in the spirit of the faithful steward, beneficial potencies actively operative upon all minds and under all conditions. And it is truly the part of wisdom to recognise in them the surest mile-stones of advancement as well as the stateliest "stones of testimony"—guides in present probation and guarantees of future perfection. Despite all passing or seeming aberrations, so shall mankind attain the right point of view of history in the genius of humanity.

46

RAMMOHUN AND THE LARGER UNITIES OF LIFE * 1933

Mr. President, Sisters and Brothers in the ever-holy, all-unifying sentiment of Hero-worship—

From this radiating centre of Cultural, Academic India, shall we transport ourselves awhile upon the wings of pious imagination far off to the ancient city of Athens, the Queen of Greece? There witness we one of those sacramental ceremonies fraught with exquisite symbolic significance aptly applicable to the present context. It is an imposing demonstration renewed every year in the recurring round of the seasons close upon Eastertide. Vast multitudes of eager, expectant souls stand congregated, each with an unlighted candle in his hand, upon the wide, open grounds encircling the Chief Cathedral of the City. The anxious gaze of one and all in the bustling throng is riveted to a single common point in the closed portal of the stately shrine. Presently, the door opens; and there emerges the venerated figure of a hoary hierarch arrayed in sacerdotal robes and upholding a lighted candle in his own hand. Forthwith, the breathless waiters, one by one, solemnly make up to the cynosure of far-extending eyes and reverently light up their own respective tapers from the sole flaming light before them.

There, in the concrete, you see a reflex, a replica representation, of the central source of illumination and inspiration for Modern India along many channels and through manifold agencies. How the grand Renaissance and the glorious Reformation of the New Era had to stand in abeyance until the appearance, on the tense scene, of the Prelate-torch-bearer of

* Discourse at the All-India Centenary Celebrations, University Senate Hall, Calcutta.

the dual Movement in the charmingly colossal personality of him whom we commemorate today! Verily, from his one light have all other later lights been kindled. Even so, Erasmus and Luther happily blended into one, the acknowledged Pioneer-patriarch of the New Spirit counts for immeasurably so much in the world's consensus of judgment at this pregnant hour of conjoint reverence. For now, in very truth, reaping the golden harvest of full one hundred years and more, Mother India, joined by sister nations abroad, rejoices to pour forth her heartfelt admiration, her soulful gratitude, towards the eldest of the elect ones among her regenerators of the age—

" souls of ample fate,
Who the Future's gates unbar,
Minions of the Morning Star."

And how belongs to Rajarshi Rajah Rammohun Roy, above all others, that peerless preeminence as the primal fount of all the national aspirations and activities of a singularly spacious epoch so diversified in scope and direction, yet so unified in spirit and aim? We turn back our pilgrim steps to the precincts of his native home. There we behold, characteredround about the *védi* he erected for himself, the key-note of his supremely synthetic genius at once all too fecund and far-reaching. As upon that material tablet, so upon his entire spiritual being, he inscribed the sacred text, '*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*,' the distinct reverberations of which he had caught up so early in life from all points of the compass 'down the ringing grooves of change.' Thus it is that, as the Herbert Spencer of the Synthetic Philosophy of the Spirit, not alone on the speculative but essentially on the practical side, he shines forth before us, in the light of his outstandingly stupendous labours, a living pattern and a lucent mirror of the larger unities of life. These, for him, were grounded upon the deeper, broader universals of common human nature. And these, by him, were applied with open-eyed clearness, thoroughgoing consistency and constructive originality to the entire business, from out of the very bosom, of work-a-day humanity. Acclaimed as 'India's Columbus in the discovery of a new'—in fact, ever old yet ever new—'continent of truth,' even the eternal truth of '*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*' in all the opulent richness of its concrete content, Rammohun becomes easily understandable and eminently appreciable in his

homely answer unto his wife, Umadevi's simple query as to the relative merits of the divers systems of faith: "Cows," he said, "are of different colours; but is not the milk they yield one and the same in substance?" That same, common milk of all *Kámadhènu* dispensations—*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*—*that* was the heavenly manna Rammohun derived from every source and served up in every quarter. The forthputtings of all his prolific energies on quite a prodigious scale—what were they but the necessary applications and expressions of the vital, dynamic principle of '*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*' in reference to the multiplex manifestations of being all through the gradations and aspects of nature and the interests and relationships of life?

This supreme discovery (or rediscovery) Rammohun reached, first by the direct, Eastern route of mystic penetration and perception, as witness the earliest of his extant publications, *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin*, and next, again, by the devious, Western path of rationalist research and recognition. Prophet first and philosopher next, the mystic in him only preceded and never superseded the rationalist. Earliest systematic student of comparative theology as he was, the rationalist in him was employed to verify and confirm, to emphasise and amplify, to illustrate and work out in practice, the prior intuition of the mystic. And the distinctive feature that marked off his own insight and outlook from those of other seers and savants consisted in this: that he brought the amplitude of his native endowment as well as mature experience to bear unreservedly upon his exigetical investigations into, and interpretations of, the world-scriptures and set the individual consciousness at every turn to correct, while laying itself out to be corrected by, the universal. So avails his life-work to bring home to after generations the truth of Emerson's dictum that life, and life alone, is our dictionary.

Himself no master of the positive sciences in those days of unscientific oriential scholarship, Rammohun came, nevertheless, to be the in-seeing appreciator and the far-seeing advocate of occidental scientific culture. Apart from the facts of science, it was given to him to gauge aright the pointings and to grip fast the purports of science in their direct bearing upon the complex phenomena and the challenging problems of existence. '*Ekóbahoonám*,' '*Ekóvasee*

sarvabhootánantarátmá,' 'Ekamroopam bahudhá yah karóti.' The unity-in-diversity revealed to, and discovered by, the Prophet-philosopher was, in short, the inner, deeper unity of all seemingly self-secluded, self-subsistent, self-sufficient units—those comprised in the mineral, vegetable, animal and human orders of creation; in the thinking, feeling and willing faculties of sentient existence; in the physical, economic, educational, political, moral and spiritual concerns of human life; and in the entities of individuals, families, races, cultures, civilsations and religions in the social group. In his superb vision of one only Life vibrant, one only Light radiant and one only Love dominant through all, these units, however, were not simply submerged but only summed up in unity. So that, unto Rammohun, the totality was not one of colourless uniformity or undifferentiated homogeneity but the concreteness of the universal with all the wealth of its actual vastness and variety. The saving gospel proclaimed by the Seer-sage of so sublime a vision may well be pondered in terms of the Spirit of Modernism, briefly and beautifully epitomised thus by the most sensitive, the most representative and the most faithful singer of the century across which, though dead, he yet speaketh to us:

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

(1) "One God." Herein Rammohun found the fundamental unity, the final ground and the ultimate guarantee of all other unities. Hence the fact of his being more than content to take his stand throughout upon the all-inclusive certitude—

"One thought I have, my ample creed;
So deep it is and broad
And equal to my every need:
It is the thought of God."

Hence the whole-souled stress he breathed into the clarion-call of his comprehensive evangel, "Nations, behold your God; rejoice, rejoice!" Hence, too, his organisation of the Brahma Samaj with no other mark of identification or bond of filiation than that its followers were to be known as the votaries of Brahman. And Brahman, to him, was neither the extra-cosmic God of Deism delegating the governance of

the universe to a set of regent laws nor the intra-cosmic God of Pantheism exhausted in and through the manifested universe. It was, of course, far other than the hierarchical God of Polytheism parcelled out into gods many and lords many—the populous pantheon of thirty-three crores of deities and the metaphysical tritheism of three-in-one and one-in-three having, in his reckoning, to be clubbed together under the self-same vinculum of pluralism, as witness the Tytler Controversy. Rather was it the In-Soul and the Over-Soul of inviolable Monotheism rooted in the indivisible unity of a Godhead at once immanent and transcendent.

(2) "One law." In the forefront of the necessary corollaries and logical consequences of the concept of One God, Rammohun placed the commandment of One Law as a 'natural law in the spiritual world'—even the law of aspiration followed by inspiration in the most vitalising exercise of Worship. His signal service to the cause of '*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*' comprised the uncompromising enforcement of '*Nédamyadidá mupásathè.*' His declaration, once for all, of the irrefragable Magna Carta of every citizen in the commonwealth of souls vindicated the scientific naturalness, the practical possibility and the sovereign efficacy of spiritual worship. His reaffirmation of the ancient rule that spiritual things are spiritually discerned and, therefore, can alone be spiritually approached, spiritually apprehended and spiritually assimilated, allowed no secure quarter to the prevalent practice of idolatry in which he clearly perceived the hydra-headed monster-mother of multiplex ills. Thus, altogether, in the phrasing of the sacred Bristol Mausoleum, "a conscientious and steadfast believer in the unity of the Godhead, he consecrated his life with entire devotion to the worship of the Divine Spirit alone." And, thanks to his Heaven-ordained mission, the grim, glaring paradox of the age-long, baneful divorce between Monotheism and Monolatry has, in these latter days, come to be annulled for the individual and the congregation in a custom-ridden land of countless idols and icons alongside of the pervasive consciousness of the 'One only without a second.'

(3) "One element". Next followed, in realisation of that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, Rammohun's large-hearted insistence upon the element of

universal love as the atmosphere of spiritual democracy through all the realms of creation starting with the human. "Under Heaven, One Family" constituted evermore the working formula of him whose genuineness of cosmopolitanism, not mere catholicity, was aptly appraised, on his demise, in the votive tribute—

"Thy caste was human kind;
Thy home, wherever Freedom's beacon shone."

Anti-idolatrous in his spiritual relations with God, he could not but be also anti-caste in his social attitudes towards God's children. All, all, he averred even then, were equal Harijans—first-born and last-born, high-born and low-born, alike. 'Biredar' was how he would invariably greet every one of those with whom his love-intoxicated soul of tropical warmth sought and held intimate communion. Also, as between caste and caste, so between sex and sex, he nobly upheld the inherent demands of their mutual complementariness as the head and the heart, the Siva and the Parvati constituents in the wholeness of normal humanity. Likewise, as to the wide-yawning oceans of patriotic prejudice and the high-heaving mountains of national parochialism all over, he exemplified in himself how the 'many mansions' in the 'Father's house' were to attain to the full a live spiritual at-one-ment, one with another, in an international confraternity of races, cultures and civilisations with interdependence as against independence as the basis, not of fusion mechanical and sterile, but of fellowship organic and vital, healthy and fruitful.

(4) "One far-off divine event." Lastly, the *finale* of the Divina Comedia of Cosmic Evolution Rammohun perceived in the ever-progressive consummation of universal salvation and corporate immortality through eternity, God Himself constituting the ultimate assurance of life everlasting unto His own '*amritasya putráh*.' If all are, all must needs subsist for ever, as the offspring of one immortal Sire without exception, without exclusion, without elimination.

Accordingly, in his Brahma Samaj with its ever-memorable Trust-Deed bearing the patent hall-mark at once of modernity and eternality, the Akbar-Architect of the Age erected the newer Fatehpur-Sikri of a new scientific and spiritual epoch—the focal centre and the rallying-point of the One in

theMany and the Many in the One, of the Divinity of the Soul and the Humanity of the Over-soul, of *Jnâna* and *Bhakti* and *Karma*, of East and West and North and South, of the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World. Each succeeding generation, through the secular-to-be, proving increasingly worthy of its benignant shelter, so shall it endure, *Dei gratia*, upon the foundation-rock of the Fellowship of Faiths and under the beacon-banner of '*Ekamèvádwiteeyam*' —the All-Being of the Church Universal, of the Pentecost Perennial, of the Choir Invisible and of the Life Immortal!

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MOZOOMDAR AND VEERESALINGAM:

TWO MAY-MEMORIES

1928

Vanga and Andhra have long stood close-knit by the spirit-strings of the Theistic Movement in Modern India. In the Saints' Calendar of the New Church, sacred in common to both, the 27th of May shinesout prominent as the focussing point of two hallowed memories—those of two worthy leaders called to their rest on the same day, though at an interval of nearly a decade and a half, from either province and community. Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar and Kandukuri Veeresalingam, certainly, are, and will continue to be, stars of the first magnitude, however wide apart in the firmament of the Liberal Faith. No two personalities can readily be thought of as more dissimilar in temperment and training, in talent and taste. Yet, even as a study in contrasts, these two pictures, placed side by side, afford an object-lesson strikingly interesting and profitably significant. First, they bring home the reality of the Pauline experience of one spirit amid a diversity of gifts. They illustrate, in flesh and blood, the truth of Mozoomdar's own words: "God is one; but to each man He has a new phase, a new form, a anew message, a new kind of personality." (*The Silent Pastor*) Next, in particular, they demonstrate the capacity of a Church like the Brahma Samaj to serve alike as an ark of shelter and a vineyard of service for types of living spirits never so opposite.

In the

OUTER CONDITIONS

of life in general, one cannot fail to observe the clear beginnings of the difference between the two great men we contemplate today with grateful veneration. While both belonged practically to the same formative period of Indian Renaissance

in this age, Mozoomdar saw the light eight years earlier in 1840 and Veeresalingam closed his eyes fourteen years later in 1919. How serenely impressive was Mozoomdar's physical frame, a stalwart, statuesque figure imposingly refined with an all too unfurrowed countenance! You turned round to Veeresalingam, and what did you find but an unprepossessing rustic dilapidated and disrupted into wrinkles? As for subjection to the ills of the flesh, if the one specialised in diabetes, the other was an adept in asthma. In garb and garment, the former was wont to be as clean-cut as the latter was clumsy. Predominantly Hindu with a clear impress also of the Greek in his interior, Mozoomdar might well be regarded as wholly Greek in his exterior. On the other hand, quite an embodiment of the Hebrew in his interior, Veeresalingam remained out and out Hindu in his exterior. Here, the qualifying clauses about the inward build become necessary to foreshadow how the search for, and fellowship with, the Spirit of God and, again, the struggle for, and satisfaction in, the Kingdom of Righteousness made the two what they essentially were in their respective spheres of life and work. It was rightly given to Mozoomdar to enjoy almost world-wide fame in his own day after those three successful tours through the Western mansion of our Father's Home, as Keshub piously christened the Occident. As for Veeresalingam, it were only to be devoutly wished that the due meed of celebrity had made his golden deeds and his sterling worth more intimately familiar in far horizons beyond the southern peninsula.

Lines of divergence are, likewise, traceable between the

Early Careers

of the two worthies. In neither was the child father to the man, that is, in the strict sense of the terms. Frivolity, if not profanity, through loose associations was soon replaced in youthful Mozoomdar by earnestness and devoutness, as witness the prayer scrolls and devotional prepossessions even of the working-hours of Bank service. So that his friend and admirer in after-life, Dr. Samuel J. Barrows (President of the Chicago Parliament of Religions), could testify how "Even at a very early age his religious nature began to feel the mystic thrill and prophecy of the God-life." But a staunch adherence to custom-ridden orthodoxy formed a characteristic trait self-announced in Veeresalingam even as an adult. Accordingly,

the later story is the process of conversion, in the one case, from secularism to religion and, in the other, from conservatism to liberalism. Mozoomdar herein possessed a rare advantage—the beckoning beacon of the example and guidance of superior spirits. Of the two personal influences that wrought mightily upon him, he himself referred, in the congenial language of art, to Maharshi as a "finished piece of workmanship" and to Brahmananda as "unfinished and yet growing" at that stage. Furthermore, about the latter, "He became to me really a part of myself, the better part. He was like another self to me, a higher, holier, diviner self." One other testimony will suffice, not to linger long over this romantic and inspiring chapter of spiritual comradeship. "Placed in youth by the side of a very pure and powerful character whose external conditions were similar to my own, I was helped to feel—in the freshness of my susceptibilities, by the law of contrast—that I was painfully imperfect and needed very much the grace of a saving God." (*The Oriental Christ*) To Veeresalingam, on the other hand, with none to look up to and none to lean upon, belongs all the honour of a self-evolved, self-regulated soul save for faint, far-off reports of a Keshub, a Vidyasagar and a Vishnu Sastri elsewhere in this continent of a country. And just as, in earlier life, it had been Mozoomdar's high privilege to be received into the welcoming embrace of outstretched arms, so even in later life, when he came to be reckoned among the 'anointed', he was one such only behind and beside others of varying degrees of power. But this was altogether denied to lonely Veeresalingam—himself the struggler and the climber, the path-finder and the torch-bearer, the pioneer and the organiser, from beginning to end in a 'benighted province.' Whereas no deprecation is implied in the least as regards Mozoomdar, this is a circumstance which must redound the more to the glory of Veeresalingam and call forth the undying gratitude of the nation towards the patriarch of public life in Andhradesa. Mozoomdar was initiated into Brahmaism in the last year of his teens. Thenceforward, except for the breach with the ancestral home when he dared openly to take his wife to Devendranath's house at Keshub's investiture with the ministership, his struggles through life (as reviewed in *Aseesh*) were, for the most part, inward wrestles with all the subtle-featured brood of sin and sordidness. Veeresalingam entered the war-path at a comparatively later period in life with his

solemnisation of the first widow-marriage in the Southern Presidency in 1881, although, as a matter of fact, he had long ago burnished his armour and blown his bugle. The formal discarding of the 'sacred thread' and acceptance of *Brâhmadharmadeeksha* did not come about, too, till so late as 1906. And the tale of these long years, as recounted in *Sweeyacharitra*, is a tale of fire-baptism—of fierce social persecution, aye, of the crucifixion of the spirit inch by inch. Naturally, therefore, the real man is revealed, in Mozoomdar's case, in the heart-beats and in the Himalayan communings, and, in Veeresalingam's, in the clash of arms and in the dint of knocks received and returned.

As we step, next, into the precincts of

HOME LIFE,

we come upon a remarkable phenomenon of parallelism in the two careers. The partners in life to whom Mozoomdar and Veeresalingam were wedded, as by custom bound, at such tender ages as eighteen and eleven, twelve and eight respectively, proved, by force of love, to be equally devoted companions and comforters through the sahara-weariness of solitary, childless life. The gracious tribute of unqualified acknowledgment, "If it had not been for her, I could not have got on at all", might literally be applied to Rajyalakshmamma as to Soudamani Devi. Its touching note is what resounds through the dedicatory lines in *Sweeyacharitra*.

Then, as to the

WRITINGS,

the same classical taste is apparent here as there, with the purest graces of elegance and finish, dignity and sweetness, not without freedom and naturalness. There is also alike the purposiveness of letters as a vehicle of self-expression. Mozoomdar points thus to the mainspring of all the forthputtings of his own literary energy: "The religious impulses that come to me open all my powers of expression and thought. My religion is entirely and absolutely the source of my education, character and power of speech." In fact, his is the sublime Logos-doctrine of the ancient Greek philosopher, which he re-enunciates in the affirmation, "All language is merely worked out in conceiving, expressing and glorifying God" (*The Spirit of God*) Veeresalingam's genius, it is true, dwells not equally

upon the deep things of the spirit within the wide range of his ten volumes, a unique collection by themselves in Telugu literature. But as the preacher in Mozoomdar nobly vindicates the ways of God to man, the protester in Veeresalingam powerfully enforces the will of God among men, the dynamic of inspiration being the same behind both. Hence, 'Thy words are fresh glimpses of the True' is our due acknowledgment to the one, even as 'Thy words are half-battles for the free' is our proper acclaim to the other. In the fulfilment, accordingly, of their separate missions, Mozoomdar's pen is verily the skilled painter's brush, creative artist as he is in English prose; Veeresalingam's is, on one side, the flowing fount of mercury and, on the other—what a jewelled Excaliber of magic, what a puissant sword of the Crusader, also recalling now the resistless axe of Parasurama, now the crushing club of Bhima and again the unerring bow of Arjuna!

In fine, the

SPECIAL VOCATION

of each cannot be more expressively described than by the coinage of his own mint. The priest and preacher will always be cherished as our 'Interpreter' and our '(Silent) Pastor.' With something in him of the trio of Thikkana Brothers—Kavya Thikkana, Khadga Thikkana and Karya Thikkana, the editor of the *Vivèkavardhani* and founder of the 'Hitakarini Samaj' will, in his turn, be enshrined in the memory as our '*Vivèkavardhana*' and our '*Hitakâri*'. "Thinker, prophet, reformer"—this is the summing up of the one in the words of Dr. Barrows, his renowned admirer. Nothing short of "kin to Providence"—this is the appellation of the other in the estimate of Dr. Sir (Brahmarshi) Venkata Ratnam, his worthy coadjutor. The *sádhak* and the *áchárya* we designate as our spiritual mystic; the hero and the humanist as our social mystic. And in relation to both, we imply by mysticism not merely the theoretical side of it as the Science of Reality, according to Coventry Patmore's definition, but also the vaster practical aspect of it agreeably to Edmund Holmes's exposition in last April's Hibbert Journal: "There is more of art than of science, more of practice than of theory, more of feeling than of thought in the mystic's handling of his subject." Mozoomdar and Veeresalingam were at one about the basic truth that social evils, in their ultimate analysis,

are due to spiritual causes and require to be spiritually healed. Only, in this healing and regenerative process, the former, alike by precept and example, revealed to his generation how spiritual things are spiritually discerned; the latter went forth, rousing the social conscience with the prophetic strain—

"Cursed be the social wants that sin against
the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us
from the living truth!"

There is, it is believed, enough in the recorded word to support the characterisation of the

DISTINCTIVE OUTLOOK

of Mozoomdar as one of subjective idealism and of Veeresalingam as one of objective rationalism. In the former, how happily the keynote is struck in the autobiographical statement, "My utterances are only my personal record"! This same feature is thus reiterated in his own account of the scope of his *magnum opus*, *The Spirit of God*: "In His name and glory I have only tried to describe His dealings with me." Even the headings of its chapters—'Sense of the Unseen,' 'Spiritual Power of the Senses,' 'The Spirit in the Spirit' *et cetera*—afford a correct clue to the character of the genius that has thereby enriched the world's religious classics. The whole of *Heart-Beats* is there, again, with its self-reflections from the recesses of inward meditation as evidence both of the intense subjectivity and of the lofty idealism. Also, according to the marvellous development of Keshub's concept, recognised by Dr. Barrows as an original contribution to Christology in *The Oriental Christ*, even the "present relationship to the soul and sympathy of Christ"—"the meat and drink of my soul"—the recompense of that period of "special isolation" in the twenty-seventh year of his age—constitutes a historic landmark in Mozoomdar's subjective realisation of ideal humanity. Doubtless, he was far from being unmindful of the values of objective truth. If proof of this were needed, it could be found, clinching the conclusion, in his own statement of the very occasion for the *Aids to Moral Character*. "History and biography," he says, "have much greater value than aphorisms and essays. Deeds and examples affect the mind of youth everywhere but nowhere so much as in India, where the doers of good deeds and

possessors of virtue are generallyinvested with a mystical semi-divine glow". At the same time, to quote once again from Dr. Barrows, "Mr. Mozoomdar is so completely identified with his work and so habitually lives in the contemplation of universal principles and the Universal Life that he shrinks from bringing into contrast concrete elements of individual history." Consequently, taken up more with spirit-perceptions than with mind-processes, Mozoomdar is among those to whom we repair, not to learn the philosophy of faith, but to witness the faith of philosophy. The common foreword to every utterance of his runs thus in invisible ink: '*Om Brahmavádinó vadanti.*' Not so with Veeresalingam—the Akshaya Kumar Dutt of Andhra Brahmaism as of Telugu Prose Literature. His pages are packed with close reasoning. Trenchant and resistless in argument, he is a very Titan in controversy, his armoury abounding evermore in the manifold resources of wit and humour, banter and irony, sarcasm and satire. The admirable discourses against Caste, Idolatry, the Transmigration of Souls and the Infallibility of Scriptures are some of the instances in point, besides the formidable Widow-Marriage Appeals on grounds of scripture, reason and expediency. Mozoomdar, as we have it on his own authority, drank deep of the springs of both literature and philosophy during his editorial charge of *The Indian Mirror*. Yet, his writings bear scarcely any trace of formal, systematic philosophy, while they are redolent with the perfume of literature. Nor is there to be found any deep-built theology in Veeresalingam either, though a working principle of faith lies imbedded in the works as in the life. Mozoomdar's religion is the religion of psychology. Veeresalingam's religion is the religion of common sense. Among brother-Theists in the West, Mozoomdar's affinities tend towards Francis Newman of *The Soul*, the episode of their personal fellowship forming part of the well-known continental experiences of our Apostle to the West. Veeresalingam's reflex is furnished in Charles Voysey of the Church Militant. Incidentally, perhaps, it may be suggestively added in this context that, if Mozoomdar reminds one of Francis Newman in England, Keshub—not, of course, the mature Keshub—recalls Theodore Parker of America. Mozoomdar's was the Brahmaism of Realisation, and Veeresalingam's the Brahmaism of Reformation, whereas in both the Brahmaism of Regeneration had been previously reached soon

enough to be early adopted as the starting-point in the career. It is as though with Mozoomdar religion was an end instead of a means; with Veeresalingam it was a means to an end. Life, as conceived by the former, is the realisation of religion and its beatitude. Religion, as understood by the latter, is the realisation of life and its efficiency. "Self-realisation through disinterested service of the commonweal" is Dr. Sir (Brahmarshi) Venkata Ratnam's paraphrase of the ideal of the school which he fitly identifies with the name of Veeresalingam. As already indicated, superstitions having been sloughed off, if ever they did possess any hold, and right beliefs and ideals having grown to be axiomatic comparatively earlier and the surrounding atmosphere itself being differently constituted, we hear far, far less of the protestant blare and the destructive blast in Mozoomdar than in Veeresalingam, the lifelong denunciator of externalism and ecclesiasticism, of the tyranny of custom, the hollowness of cant and the subtleness of corruption. It were hard to fix upon more flaming diatribes than Veeresalingam's memorable apostrophes to *Durâchâra-pisâcham* (the Demon of Evil Custom) indited with a pen of fire in the Widow-Marriage Appeals. If Mozoomdar set himself wholly to temple-service, Veeresalingam had to be occupied largely with jungle-clearance. To light the lamp of faith, to ring the bell of fervour, to burn the incense of devotion, to sing the hymn of praise, to chant the canticle of love, to blow the conch of peace—these were the offices of the one. To fell down stifling upas-trees, to burn up rank brushwood, to hunt down ravenous beasts, to destroy venomous reptiles, to bore impassable hills, to weed out pricking thorns—these were among the tasks of the other. And 'among the tasks' becomes essential here, inasmuch as the jungle-clearance was nothing if not preliminary to the garden-culture that strove to rear a very Eden in our midst. Hence "thro' the centuries let a people's voice" attest,

> "With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
> Eternal honour to his name",

how the good husbandman who cleared the tares sowed also the wheat and wore himself out in training the struggling, in pruning the exuberant, in watering the withering, in tilling the fallow, in protecting the fruit-bearing, in gathering in the ripening—aye, in divers works of noble note! Eastern intro-

spection (*ántardrishti*) and Western practicality (*kárya-deeksha*): here, then, are typified the two hemispheres of our orb of perfection. While Veeresalingam's religion of humanity subserved our 'domestic mission' in the Homeland, Mozoomdar's religion of harmony carried our 'foreign mission' across the waters and raised it to its rightful status as he was elected to lead the Chicago Parliament of Religions in its opening prayer.

One or two more points of marked contrast can be but barely touched upon before closing. A living communion with Nature in the true Wordsworthian mood of 'wise passiveness' was one of the constant preoccupations of the wonder-worshipper whose magnificent pen-and-ink reproductions of the Niagara Falls so beautifully adorn the *Sketches of a Tour Round the World* and of the *dhyánayogi* the bulk of whose profounder works were reared on the hill-top of Kurseong and whose expositions of 'The Spirit in Nature' and 'Kinship in Nature' challenge acceptance as part of the Apocalypse of the Age. On the other hand, despite exquisite poetic touches about Nature in the verse productions, the conflicts with Man through the love of Man crowded out such communion with Nature in the *Karmayógin* of the Andhras, their Vidyasagar as well as Dayasagar. Again, if *Heart-Beats* has been rightly appraised by Dr. Barrows as "the most remarkable devotional book since that of Thomas A Kempis", the collocation of those two names would seem to justify itself also on another and a minor ground—the common absence of humour. As to the originator of those novel varieties of Telugu composition, the *Prahasanams*, *Vyavahárádharmabódhini*, *Satyarájá's Travels* and *Rájasèkharacharitra*, it can safely be claimed that he has surely no superiors and scarcely any equals in the field of humour, reproducing the eighteenth century vein, now of Swift and now of Goldsmith. Lastly, if Mozoomdar won laurels everywhere as one of India's foremost orators to crown his eminence as a writer, Veeresalingam, who, like Goldsmith again, touched nothing he did not adorn, excelled only by the wizard-wand of that pen which clung to the hand right up to the last breath.

Now, to bring these rambling thoughts to their due

Conclusion.

If History is made up of the Biographies of Great Men and if

Great Men are no other than God's Men, the life-stories, as told by themselves, of two such of God's Men as Mozoomdar and Veeresalingam must acquire for us a far greater value than any of their other works. *Aseesh* and *Sweeyacharitra* thus taking rank among the foremost tokens of the redemptive triumph of *Brâhmadharma*, we do well to realise that, were these alone extant out of all Brahmic literature, in the company of Rammohun's Autobiographical Note, Devendranath's Spiritual Autobiography, Keshub's *Jeevanvèda*, Sivanath's *Atmacharit*, Rabindranath's *Jeevansmriti* and the like, we could, over again, build upon them, like edifices upon a groundwork, the whole theology and histroy, liturgy and hymnology of a century of Brahmaism—why, even of modern Indian thought and life. Mozoomdar and Veeresalingam have both lived and died without any issue from their loins. Each, nevertheless, does possess his own progeny in spiritual discipleship—the one, though not to the same extent as the person-cult surrounding his own guide, philosopher and friend; and the other, too, though oftentimes damned with faint praise and even beset with his own Peters and Judases.

A far, far cry all this—do you say?—from 'Peace Cottage,' Calcutta, to 'Ananda Gardens', Rajamundry ! But even as the Ganges and the Jumna spring out of the self-same heights and, after varied meanderings, mingle and merge until they reach their common goal in the one only main, so do Peace and Ananda, Ananda and Peace!

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REV. DR. HEM CHANDRA SARKAR:

AN ANDHRA TRIBUTE

1933

'How good! how kind! and he is gone.' This is the spontaneous sentiment of the day in all our circles large and small. While doubtless ringing true upon every lip, the words fall flat as too feeble an expression of the sense of loss within and the spell of gloom without. Not unprepared though for the dreadful distress of the impending hour, the head could not but reel and the heart could not but writhe under the extreme heaviness of the actual shock of the twenty-third of December last. However ,in the solemn, tranquil retrospect, not the poignancy of grief but the fervour of gratefulness is what properly wells up from the depths in between the distracting anguish of an irreparable loss to the church and to the community and the aching void of a keen personal bereavement for the self. Through the long century and more now behind us in our annals, the all too bountiful hand of Providence has, indeed, dowered the Brahma Samaj with a unique abundance of the wealth of divers gifts and graces. All in all, among the rarest of these rare boons must be placed the anointed soul, the dedicated spirit, the consecrated life of him whose 'transplanted human worth' now enhances by so much the dearness of Heaven's treasures for the sorrow-stricken heart. None that reverently ponders the radiant features of that noble character and career but will whole-heartedly swell the classic acclaim,

"I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee."

Albeit out of the weeping vale, the one appropriate, the only permissible mood for the moment, as for all the secular to-be, is that of *'Sursum Corda'* in soul-deep thankfulness for the blessing of that thrice-precious life and its legacy.

By virtue both of associations and activities, Rev. Dr. Hem Chandra Sarkar belonged, as few of his fellow-missionaries did or do, to the whole country at large. At the same time, by a peculiarly intimate and exclusive relation, he was filiated, as none of them was or is, to the household of our faith in Andhradesa. For close upon a quarter-century, his very life-current flowed incessantly and increasingly towards the Andhra latitude. From the blooming manhood of 1904 down to the melancholy end, even with the blighted vitality of these latter years, season in and season out, he kept up renewed visits to our several scattered centres and made more or less prolonged sojourns for tireless work in our midst. Left to himself, nothing would have gratified him more than to be permitted, as he had planned, to breathe his last and bury his bones in Pithapuram or Cocanada. As it is, the sacred ashes are there, the valued possession of loved and loving ones, in that Metropolis of Brahmaism which gave him of her best and got from him his all. Yet, every true Brahmo heart here in far-off Andhra shall evermore enshrine itself into a living urn for the more hallowed remains of an imperishable memory.

How easily and readily our beloved and venerated 'Sarkar Babu' entered into the genius of Andhra Socio-Religious Renaissance and Reformation! From the early days of those 'Letters from the Field' which gathered up for the *Indian Messenger* interesting impressions and useful estimates seldom beside the mark, he showed a judicious and sympathetic, practical and at the same time imaginative grip of the personalities, problems and prospects of Andhra Brahmaism. If he sometimes misread, he misread—thank God—only in the benignant light of a charitable and incorrigible optimism. With a first-hand knowledge, alike extensive and intensive, of the actualities of the movement all over the land, east and west, north and south, he was led, in a gracious spirit of special appreciation and assurance, strongly to believe in the Brahmaism of the Andhras—its inspirations and achievements, its promise and presage. This insight and outlook blended itself so remarkably with his every dream and design, with his own longings and labours, by night and by day. So, for one thing, his constant self-infusion into us served us aright in so far as it heartened us, even us, to believe likewise in ourselves in despite of our manifold lapses and limitations, set-backs and shortcomings.

For both our 'chosen' patriarchs on this side, he cherished unbounded admiration and affection. He was all reverence and gratitude towards them for what they had and have done and been in and for the Telugu country. As he divided his heart-chambers between them, he set his two eyes upon them as two all-essential lodestars of genuine progress. Oftentimes would he be found aglow with enthusiasm for a happy harmony of those prototypes of the *samskâri* and the *sâdhak*, the hero and the saint, the martyr and the mystic, in the dispensation of religion pure and undefiled. Next only to the Sivanath Memorial, he pined for a Veeresalingam Memorial on a fitting scale; and even at ebbtide, he gave every available ounce of his energy for collections towards its materialisation. So, too, he was primarily responsible for the discovery of Brahmarshi Venkata Ratnam to the Brahmo world outside Andhra, beginning with the memorable landmark of the Presidentship of the All-India Theistic Conference of 1906 at Calcutta; and none rejoiced more than he over the subsequent stream of honours from the state, the academies and our own fellowship as well as over the diffusion of the spoken *Message and Ministrations* in a collected and permanent form.

In his own preaching operations, Sarkar Babu let slip no opportunity of pushing back the bounds of prevailing ignorance about the evangel of the Brahma Samaj in village and city alike. By far alien to the 'propagandist' species, he set little store by mere perfervid discourses flung now and then into the midst of promiscuous audiences made up of curiosity-mongers, word-wranglers and pyrotechnic-spectators. On the contrary, he strove in silence securely to plant the seed underground and strenuously to foster its upgrowth into a shady shelter for earnest groups of devout worshippers. Then, in relation to the wayward or wayworn believer 'stagnating in the weeds of sloth,' our good brother's infectious zeal was not slow to ply its simple arts of suasion, gently yet persistently, to impel the onward march to a thoroughgoing *anushtânism* complete and consistent, creative and cooperative. Again, where differences occasionally accentuated themselves into anything bordering on disseverance within the fold, he was ever unsparing in the genial task of seeking to bind and to heal—and this in the pure, perfect spirit of non-partisan faith in, and forbearance towards, all the factors concerned. Besides, that one ruling passion of his whole being—the yearn-

ing for 'workers, workers'—was, throughout, conspicuously in evidence, since nothing so possessed his spirit as the imperative need for the further consolidation and extension of God's own work through soulful yet selfless instruments. Intent upon this supreme end, he would wistfully listen for stirrings of the inner soul here and there and trustfully fan every breath of aspiration towards self-surrender in promising quarters high or low. For, he truly believed in a diversity of gifts to be utilised as also in a variety of wants to be subserved and, underlying them all, in a unity of spirit to animate the exercise of an only talent equally with that of ten talents. When such a worker, however remotely prospective, was forthcoming, why, then, the devout exultation, the warm embrace and the requisite support did not lag behind in the least degree. In all his outgoings and incomings, down-sittings and up-risings, Sarkar Babu carried with him the Sadhanasram spirit that he incarnated in himself. In fact, was he not himself a living, moving Sadhanasram in worthy succession to his revered master and mentor, Pandit Sivanath Sastri? The *chhâtra's* devotedness of discipleship in loyalty of allegiance to the *guru* was my own first personal glimpse of Sarkar Babu during a pilgrimage to Calcutta for the Maghotsav of 1903, while he held the editorial charge of the *Messenger* after return from Manchester College. Ever afterwards, all Andhra was privileged to witness and study at close quarters, much to its edification and his glorification, not only the faithful reproducer but the fostering perpetuator of that transcendent ideal of which Pandit Sastri was the exemplar and the Sadhanasram the embodiment next to the glorious epoch of Keshub and the apostles of the self-denying ordinance.

Thus, as preacher and pastor, peace-maker and harmoniser, fisher of men and organiser of forces, Dr. Hem Chandra Sarkar stood and will stand closest to us in the distinctive capacity of the 'Apostle to the Andhras.' The growth, amongst us, of a Brahmo community, the rise of a band of Brahmo mission-workers, the institution of a central organisation like the 'Andhra Brahma Mandali' that was or the 'Andhra Brahma Sangham' that is, the stabilisation of resources through the 'Andhra Brahma Pracharaka Trust' of one lakh out of the munificence of Pithapuram—these and everything else pertaining to our well-being were among the anxious solicitudes and the happy satisfactions of his life. Time was in the early

part of this century when bed and board in the outermost verandah or close to the cow-shed was all the hospitality extended to him without compunction and enjoyed by him without complaint. In due course, under God, there came to be no humble homestead in the Andhra Brahmo community but was only too grateful to receive him into perfect at-home-ness as more than a welcome guest. No associate or adherent of the Samaj, not even a stray, unattached suspect of a sympathiser, in ever so remote or obscure an outpost in the Andhra districts but Sarkar Babu cultivated with him a personal relationship of cordial tenderness—nay, knew all about him and his concerns and participated with brotherly sympathy in all the weal and woe of his family. Similarly, no hopeful—or, for the matter of that, hopeless—organisation of Theistic or Pro-Theistic influence or activity, whether as a germ, a sapling or a tree, whether labelled as a Brahma or a Prardhana Samaj, in the Circars but he followed its fortunes through varying vicissitudes with unremitting vigils and heart-heavings. His unresting hand was upon the pulse in all moods and tenses. His correspondence, always extensive and systematic and not less so under the gravest infirmities, bore this characteristic mark upon it that wellnigh every one of his letters—we hailed them as 'epistles'—contained an array of a score of eager queries on all sorts of details about a variety of interests, individual and institutional, with which our cause was bound up. How often his thorough knowledge of, and intimate communion with, the least amongst us would indirectly and inwardly put to the blush the stolidness of our own ignorance, indifference and apathy if not antipathy! Accordingly, the silver links and silken ties forged and fastened to make us one with him and him one with us knew no sundering, no snapping, under any conditions. It is the bare truth that he never succeeded (shall I say?) on any account in exciting the least degree of ill-will or disregard towards himself amongst Andhra Brahmos of any type. Rather did he enjoy unclouded affection, unqualified esteem and unreserved confidence at all hands to the last.

Perhaps, the foregoing sketch appears but a long-drawn picture of the outskirts, with little of a revealing portrayal of the interior, of the man we mourn and honour. That is because the restricted objective here is just an acknowledgment with concrete indications—as ample as may be, though none too adequate—of Andhradesa's irredeemable debt to him

as 'a central warmth-diffusing bliss' and 'influence-rich to soothe and save.' Suffice it if these simple pencil touches avail as fond remembrancers of what was ours so long to look upon and benefit by—

"High nature amorous of the good
But touched with no ascetic gloom,
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood."

One word at this point: Sarkar Babu's life, as he lived it out, was in itself verily a sublime poem with rich elements of 'passion pure' and pathos profound. Naturally, the sad yet sanctifying contemplation of it at the moment turns the mind and heart constantly to that other poem in letters, the immortal elegy which piously embalms for all mourners the virtues of the great, the good and the godly.

As for the sublimity of the pathos referred to, oh how it wrapped the closing years, not a few, with quite a celestial halo! The whole chapter of suffering it translated into a very canticle of service. The hard afflictions of the flesh it sublimated into so many steep ascents of the spirit. The bleeding cross of tribulation it transfigured into the beauteous crown of triumph. In love and service, the life literally poured itself out drop by drop and wore itself out grain by grain. For the sake of the opportunities of love and service, the life, with wonderful tenacity, defied the challenge of death as long as might be. And when the summons was finally accepted, it was accepted—be this our solace!—with an 'All-hail' to the *finis* of a continual dying—the recession of the Time shadows for the resurgence of the Life Eternal. 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord': is not this the luminous lesson of the story of that soul which waxed in faith and resignation ever in proportion to the waxing woes and worries of the flesh? 'How are you now, Sarkar Babu?' 'Yes; I am all right, I am all right.' Such was the recurring refrain of the serene song of victory over the whelming odds of decline and decay, pain and privation. In the trying, terrible darkness of a premature night far more than in the brightness of normal noontide, there was a threefold *thrishna* that laid firm hold of the spirit with the intensity of an insatiable craving. The increasing thirst for service animated him—rather, the all

too disabled and dilapidated remnant of his former self—into the very soul of the All-India Brahma Samaj Centenary Celebrations as, indeed, of many another periodical conference and anniversary festival During the very last stay with us not quite a year ago, the increasing thirst for knowledge impelled him to devour with avidity through the ear classics of such wide range as Froude's 'Short Studies', Carlyle's 'Cromwell' and Newman's 'Apologia.' Likewise, the increasing thirst for fellowship was so much in evidence as to hanker after multiplied visits and prolonged companionships on the part of one and all.

Henceforth, alas, how grievously the Andhras shall miss the repeated benediction of his gracious presence amongst them as also the sweet attraction of the warmest welcome at the annual *utsav* pilgrimages to Calcutta! Now the heart of Andhra reaches out, in measureless sympathy, to that ministering angel of a dear child dearer in affliction, Sakuntala Devi, who, adopted as a daughter, has, in the inscrutable ways of Providence, approved herself as more than a mother.

In closing: through the commingling tears of the entire Brahmo world, may it be given to us all to scan and spell out the rainbow 'rime'—

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble"!

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ACHARYA PALAVAJJHALA LAKSHMINARAYANA

1935

From its earthly casket in the proud possession of the not very numerous Brahmo community in Andhra, a precious jewel of a soul has, within the last few days, been translated up into the invisible Realm of the Immortals. Unspeakably the poorer now for the crushingly heavy loss in the flesh, what has that confraternity left for its portion in the gloom of a far-stretching hereafter except the rare legacy of a gracious inspiration embalmed in the hallowed memory of the dearly beloved, suddenly departed brother and of his consecrated life and labours? The eleventh of July, 1935, on the night of which esteemed Acharya Palavajjhala Lakshminarayana fell quietly asleep here below to wake up in the blest Abode of Spirits, will henceforth, in the recurring round of the suns, continue to enrich for us beyond measure the sweet fragrance of our own saints' calendar in Andhradesa. For the moment, it must minister comfort to the anguished feelings to contemplate how, in fulfilment of the commonly desired or desirable *summum bonum* of existence, '*anáyásènamaranam vinâ dainyènajeevanam,*' the end of the perishable element was permitted to be as painlessly peaceful as the whole career, indeed, had been unpretentiously simple. The united stream of a 'Magnificat' and a 'Requiem' spontaneously welling up from the stricken heart absorbs at once into its volume the translucent tear of gratitude, and sweeps aside in rebuke the bedimming tear of grief, trickling down an overcast eye.

Though under the increasing burden of years and with the constant infirmity of piles on one side and of asthma on the other, the last two and half out of a well-ordered span of decades nearly seven in all were entirely given to the vocation of a missioner and minister, first on the self-ordained account and next under the Andhra Brahma Pracharaka Trust of Pithapuram. Time and talent, strength and substance, be-

ing all dedicated thus to conspicuously useful service in the vineyard of the Highest and Holiest, the honour elicited proved to be uniformly high, as the devotion evinced was deep. This crowning passage of glory commenced practically in the wake of early retirement from long and approved educational work in the employ of Local Boards as Head Master of Middle Schools in Bhimavaram and other Taluks and as Assistant Teacher in the Taylor High School at Narsapur in West Godavari. Throughout that area, including and ranging beyond the place of birth—Mogalturru, a centre of historic interest as of natural beauty, the gentle youth, the kindly neighbour, the conscientious teacher, the effective disciplinarian and the exemplary man of God always enjoyed the warmest approbation of a large circle of pupils and guardians, friends and admirers. Amid extremely orthodox Vaidiki Brahmin associations alike by birth and by marriage, the upbuilding of the personal character with its basic convictions and the enlistment under the standard of progressive liberalism were the outcome of student days at Rajahmundry subject to the shaping impact of the vicissitudes of hardship in the closing quarter of last century. There the permanent impress was received of the stirring and potent influence of Veeresalingam, the renowned hero of the widow's cause and pioneer of the Brahmic Faith amongst the Andhras. And that was despite the absence of anything like a formal or direct link of relationship as between teacher and taught during the High School and First Arts course at the Government College, the one being then employed as the Telugu Pandit and the other enrolled in the Sanskrit section. To the last, a lively sense of veneration for the great leader was retained with the fulness and freshness of tender reminiscence and obligation; and the Superintendentship of the philanthropist's Widows' Home claimed a portion of the mission-worker's term with the cheering consciousness of a debtor's real privilege and opportunity. Likewise, for some length of time, the Masulipatam Brahma Samaj and the Cocanada Brahmo community reaped each, in succession, the fruit of a share of the valued ministrations; while Narsapur, the place of final settlement, latterly came in for theological study-classes on a fairly systematic scale in connection with the training of prospective colleagues for the mission field and towards the popularisation of Theistic principles and ideals among the general public in the light of the

national institutes of religion. Brethren in Calcutta will recall the prior period of the prolonged stay and of the diligent pursuit of self-instruction at the Sadhanashram of the Sadharan Samaj, which witnessed, too, the acceptance of *anushtána-deeksha* at the revered hands of Pandit Sivanath Sastri.

The return home thereafter with a newly-acquired proficiency in Bengali to add to the old soundness of scholarship in Sanskrit and Telugu, was followed, in due course, by the authorship of a vernacular series of eminently appreciable contributions to Theistic literature both in original and by translation. Besides prayers and sermous, these comprised, among others, such varied compositions as a 'Life of Mahammed,' an adapation of Acharya Nagendranath Chatterjee's '*Dharmajignásá*, a rendering of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore's '*Bráhma Dharma*' and '*Bráhma Dharma Vyákhyán*' (Part I of the former as an independent publication and Part II on behalf of the Pithapuram Pracharaka Trust) and translations of Pandit Sitanath Tattvabhushan's 'Evidences of Theism','*Brahmajignása*' and '*Sástreeya Brahmavád*,' the last-named being the most recent of all. Another labour of love was the editorial conduct, at different times, of two good journals, *Bráhmadharmaprakásika*' and '*Nivèdana*,' serving as vehicles of self-expression as well as purveyors of needful pabulum.

Whether as teacher, preacher or writer, the ideas imparted were always singularly clean-cut and crystal-clear. In public utterance, as on the printed page and for private correspondence, the style adopted was marked by a happy set of charming characteristics all its own—impressively limpid and flexible; unconventionally colloquial yet chaste; dignified but far from pedantic; and powerful with the inborn puissance of a purposive personality intent on driving home, through a rich and resonant voice, a few simple, saving truths on each separate occasion after the manner of Pandit Sastri. Hence both tongue and pen ever commanded, while never coveting, ready admiration for solid capacity and thankful acknowledgment for substantial benefit. Natural theology, as such, with sastraic reinforcement outstandingly formed the strong point amid a resourceful background of general knowledge to provide apt analogue and homely illustration from the material sphere and the social atmosphere at every necessary step. A rationalistic bias, perhaps tending slightly, if at all, to interfere with a freer cultivation of mystic meditativeness, stood in good stead for

an inimitably firm grasp and lucid exposition of abstruse aspects in the Philosophy of Theism. Temperamentally (yet not aggressively) nationalistic to the finger-tips and reverently (yet not uncritically) conversant with the *Prasthânathraya* besides the classics of Indian devotional culture, the genius ever maintained intact a refreshingly universalistic outlook aglow with the widest spiritual sympathies and aspirations.

As in so many other instances of the kind, the man by far exceeded and excelled the manifestation, as all the output of work was, after all, clearly outweighed and outshone by the inherence of worth. In one word, Brother Lakshminarayana's was quite a pattern life in point of spiritual taste and temper. Wearing upon his head, as above stated, the snows of seventy winters when the final summons was sounded, he represented the earlier generation of Andhra Brahmos—serious-minded and warm-hearted, deeply thoughtful and assimilatively questful and, accordingly, imbued with a passion for intensive and extensive study to reach down to the foundations of their faith and beyond. Outward social enthusiasms happening thus to be postponed to inward spiritual satisfactions, his own predispositions in this direction seem to have risen superior, betimes, to proximate surroundings so far as to throw him in upon himself as a votary of the 'Brahmaism of Regeneration', apart from the immediately whirling vortex of the 'Brahmaism of Reformation'. It must remain a moot point in respect of such choice spirits as himself within the fold how far really the patent feature of goodness in their make-up was the antecedent cause, and how far the consequent effect, of their conversion (or 'perversion', as we hear it called) to the faith of the Brahma Samaj. At all events, here, doubtless, was a truly worthy elder brother of the noble family of Bapaiah and Sambasivarao, Sitaramayya and Krishnamurti, along with Hanumayya recalled into the Beyond hardly a year ago.

What lovely gifts and graces of the spirit marked him for their own by right divine, as it were! His most distinctive virtue, irradiating the whole nature at every pore, consisted in the quality of unsophisticated naturalness embracing a transparent simplicity and integrity, an unaffected disregard of art and artifice, in all his ways as in all his words. Then, as he was ever a stranger to the pose of assuming airs or standing on ceremony himself, so he was all too gentle and generous in considerateness towards the susceptibilities of others.

Not really lacking though in shrewdness and tactfulness, he studied self-contained silence over the faults and failings even of those in very close touch. And he never allowed himself to indulge in personalities, while at the same time unflinchingly (not harshly) making good his own position as to principles. Next, as he delighted not in slander—never speaking it, no, nor ever listening to it, his calm self-possession, born of practical humour and charity, afforded a wide enough berth of hospitality—out of tolerance and, more, of sympathy—to all unwelcome shades of opinion and disagreeable modes of behaviour. A spark of the impersonal fire of righteous fervour was, no doubt, let off from the platform and the pulpit on occasion. But there was nothing smacking of the fumes of unseemly impatience through over-enthusiasm for his own pet conceptions or even cherished convictions. And he was particularly proof against the vicious taint of partisanship as of egoism and sectarianism—a circumstance contributing to his general popularity both without and within the Samaj. It is no small thing that there existed no two estimates of him and of his bearings among Brahmos of both sexes, of all ages and of all complexions even in these dismal days of internal dissidence and dissonance. Further, contrary to the customary liabilities of advancing age, he was distinguished by a notable lineament of buoyant elasticity, the result of unclouded optimism and mellowed earnestness. In effect, all his mind's strength, all his heart's devotion, all his soul's energy he put into a willing response to the varied demands of man's composite nature. Thus he evolved and exhibited before us a typical specimen of living synthesis—of *jnâna*, *bhakti* and *karma*, all in one. Whatever he turned his hand to in acceptance of the Master's mandate, he set about it and accomplished it with ever-dependable promptness and thoroughness in his own methodical way. It is no overcoloured statement to add that no task required of him or assigned to him was ever shirked or shelved on any score. Yet there was nothing fussy or fulsome, nothing fatuous or frivolous, about any of his doings or dealings. Every phase of morbidity was entirely foreign to the healthful constitution of his good self. He breathed always the bracing mountain-air of the summit of sober serenity; and he dreamt his dreams and lived his life, not as a mere care-free sojourner for a short-lived season, but even as an elect heir of a heaven-laden eternity. Full-throated and warm-blooded was

the unfailing expression of his realised sense of fraternal fellowship all round. To him was denied the happiness of beholding any offspring of his own loins on the physical plane. Nevertheless, as the opulence of his affectional imagination lifted him wholesomely above this accident of a limitation, so it fruitfully bound not a few kindred spirits close and fast to that lonely heart of his. 'Lonely' but not 'love-lorn'—thanks to the assiduity of fostering care and service on the part of a devoted consort faithfully pilgriming the whole way with him in a simple yet sunshiny home. Thus in this remote Andhra latitude was witnessed amongst us, in a modest manner, a reflex of the pathetic interest of Rev. Bhai Pratap Chandra's domestic life and experience, side by side with a replica of the estimable effect of Acharya Nagendranath's Samajic attitudes and achievements. By his side, one always felt oneself in the presence of a child—a child of the *rishis*. And well is it that, in fulfilment of his own last-expressed wish, the tenement of flesh inhabited by such a spirit now rests commingled with the sacred waters of the Goutami.

All in all, a tried stalwart and true who, for long, valiantly put on the breastplate of faith and love with the helmet of hope and, throughout, made himself accountable for no blot whatever on the escutcheon—how dare we bring ourselves in future to fail to miss him, and miss him keenly, at every turn in private intercourse and public worship, in conference programmes and mission schemes? When, how and wherefrom the like of him may be vouchsafed unto us to take that especial place which he filled with signal acceptance in the concerns of the Movement—who knows save Goodness only? To undertake to invoke the unending bliss of Heaven's ineffable peace upon an anointed and now disembodied soul that has amply insured it already by sanctified self-surrender —what should it amount to but an impious, if not impertinent, superfluity in the bereaved mourners? Ours, then, be the humbler part—more imperative, too, as well as more significant of genuine love and loyalty—even this of striving, over and over again in prayfulness, to plant our puny, feeble feet within the large footprints of his vast strides and to close in, so far as may be, those fast-dwindling, fatefully dismembered ranks the service of which formed the meat and drink of his beacon-life.

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DEWAN BAHADUR DR. SIR BRAHMARSHI R. VENKATA RATNAM

(A)—1925 *

Biographical

The call, on behalf of the *Noble College Leader*, for a sketch, however brief perforce, of the life-career of the new Vice-Chancellor of our University comes to be as welcome as kindness makes it imperative. It must suffice by itself as a proper source of pride and pleasure that the most distinguished son of Andhra now at the helm of higher education in the Presidency is, to this Magazine as also to the present writer, a fellow-'native' of dear old Masulipatam. Far more significant than the accident of birth stands another circumstance as the occasion for grateful reminiscence, namely, that to the benignant period of their intermingled life at Noble College, first as pupil and teacher and next as colleagues, belong the beginnings of an indissoluble spiritual relationship, as of disciple and master, between the writer and his worthy subject. How many others, too, of that notable generation are there not, scattered far afield over the Telugu Districts, who ever rejoice to recall those fruitful, ennobing influences of a truly remarkable personality with the acclaim,

'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven!'—

albeit in such an apparently all too 'sleepy hollow'!

From the Log Cabin of ordinary military descent and environment to the White House of the loftiest academic light and leading—this, in fine, is the story of the eminently inspiring life before us. And surely, it must have its own lessons writ as with a sunbeam for such as the youthful readers of

* On appointment as the first elected Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University.

these columns. Born in 1862, Dewan Bahadur Sir R. Venkata Ratnam wears upon his venerable head at this hour the crowning snows of three and sixty winters exactly marking the 'grand climacteric' of the ancient Roman. The United Provinces and the Nizam's Dominions were among the shifting scenes of early residence and education in the course of Subedar Raghupathi Appayya Naidu's migrations in service from station to station. After the Middle School Examination at Banda and the Matriculation at Hyderabad, the Madras Christian College under the renowned Rev. Dr. William Miller was, as it continues increasingly to be, proud of the next four years of University study leading up to graduation in 1885 with Physical Science for the chief optional subject. The 'boy orator' of the seminary then acquired in the regimental ranks the appellation of 'the little prodigy with four hands' in recognition of the additional limbs conferred by the strange academic gown. One year of journalistic activity amid the vital formative forces of the metropolis; and, once for all, the noblest of professions claimed for its own the divinely-appointed candidate with the presage and the benediction, 'This is my beloved son in whom I shall be well pleased.' To begin with, service in secondary schools was seen at three places—first, for about a year as Head Master, C. M. S. High School, Ellore; next for a few months at the Theistic High School, Rajahmundry; and lastly, for two years (1887-88) on the staff of the Hindu High School at the old birth-place of Masulipatam in the heyday of its fortunes under the late lamented Mr. K. Krishnamachariar. In 1889, at the close of the twenty-seventh year, began the widowed race footsore yet faith-sustained. And in 1891, even out of the tender stimulus of its sequel of self-consecration strength was found for accomplishing the M. A. in English Language and Literature, the L. T. being added later in 1897. The two years that succeeded the former Degree were those of an 'able and agreeable' Assistant Professor at Pachaiyappa's. The year after the elevation of Noble College to the First Grade and the celebration of its Golden Jubilee ushered in a quinquennium (1894-98) of happy resettlement amongst the loved and loving ones of Masulipatam. Here to the Assistant Professor and High School Superintendent vigorous work of vital importance was vouchsafed both within and without, the unique quality of which was afterwards described by the then Principal, the Rev. C. W. A. Clarke, M. A., in the

words, 'In my eighteen years' experience of Indian education I have not met a better teacher than Mr. Venkata Ratnam; nor have I met one whose personal influence amongst students was as powerful.' The Revs. H. J. Tanner, M. A., W. C. Penn, M. A., and E. G. Roberts, M. A., were among the genial colleagues of this outshining lustrum. The Principalship of Mahboob College, Secunderabad, covered the next six years, 1899-1904, until the welcome call back into the Andhra zone came for good from Pittapur Rajah's College, Cocanada. Then followed the longest and the most fruitful term of its leadership from February 1905 to July 1919 in unbroken continuity save for a half-year's respite towards the end. This, under the sheltering wing of the illustrious Raj of Pithapuram, was signalised alike by an all-round expansion and a firm-rooted stabilisation with a more than tenfold increase in the college department and a threefold extension on the whole. Government honours rained fairly thick and fast before and after the well-earned retirement—'Rao Bahadur' in 1912; 'Dewan Bahadur' in 1918; nominated membership in the first reformed Provincial Legislative Council from 1921 to 1923 coupled with a Deputy Presidentship by election; the Kaiser-I-Hind Gold Medal in 1923; and the Knighthood in 1924, a *coup-de-grace* unprecedented altogether in the lot of any other non-official educationist all the country over. Likewise, before assuming his responsible office in May last, the first elected Vice-Chancellor of the University served, by nomination, on both the old and the new Senate, besides being also a Syndic at the head of the poll on behalf of the latter. And now again he enters the Local Legislature as a special member in connection with the Andhra University Bill. Into these higher walks, be it added, he carries as well the varied experience of the lower avenues from the Chairmanship of the old Primary Examination Board to membership in the S. S. L. C. Board and the Presidentship of the Secondary Education Reorganisation Committee.

Space forbids even the barest allusion to what all channels the richly-endowed, devoutly-dedicated energies of this educational philanthropist, moral reformer and spiritual teacher have ceaselessly flowed along over the extensive tract of the last two score years. Yet who but knows with admiration how in the sacred psalm of this sweet life the divers tones have ever been those of 'divine service' unto the *bhik-*

shu and the *bhakta*, the waif and the widow, the victim of lust and the votary of learning? Who, again, but acclaims with reverence the high thinker in the plain liver, the seamless puritan in life behind the cheery humorist in society, the staunch monotheist in faith beside the strict monogamist in love, and the profound inspirer of the sanctities of experience through the penetrative interpreter of the immortals of literature? Not to cast a wider ken, the history of modern Andhra progress, as it comes to be completely and correctly written up, will not fail to enshrine our scholar, speaker, sage and saint (all in one) in a conspicuous niche hallowed with the purest of fadeless sentiments. And, to be sure, that niche will be placed next only to that of his own 'ever-trusted *nâyaka*', Rao Bahadur K. Veeresalingam Pantulu Garu of 'deeply-honoured memory.' So do the valedictory words of his devoted pupils remain assured of a ready, responsive echo 'down the ringing grooves of change': 'Your name will for long years be venerated by the Andhra student as identical with genius and erudition, sympathy and charity, purity and self-consecration.'

Here, then, the outline of the life-story will close and make room for a few short extracts from the spoken and the written word so far garnered up in three annual collections since the *Shastipoorthi* festival of 1922, the places of honour in them being aptly held by the Presidential Address on the Spirit of Rajah Rammohun Roy at the Indian Theistic Conference of 1906, the Thesis on Social Purity and the Anti-Nautch Movement out of Mr. C. Y. Chintamani's symposium of 1901 on Indian Social Reform, and the Madras University Convocation Address of 1923 on Culture and Duty. May it be hoped that the subjoined selections will serve directly to illustrate somewhat the taste and the temper, the insight and

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* 'The Message and Ministrations' of Dewan Bahadur Sir R. Venkata Ratnam, KT., M.A., L.T. Edited with photogravure portraits and introductory appreciations by V. Ramakrishna Rao, M.A., L.T., Principal, P. R. College, Cocanada, in 3 volumes (pp. xxxix + 398; xx + 420; xxx + 459).

N. B.—These have since been added to by 3 more volumes (of similar size) with like portraits and Introductions, the life-sketch being brought up to date in the latter. (To be had of the Librarian-Clerk, Brahmopasana Mandir, Cocanada, at Re. 1 each.)—V. R. (1936).

the outlook, familiarly associated with the helping hand, the questing mind, the loving heart and the adoring soul so silently yet so potently at work in our midst ' moulding the India that is into the India that is to be '?

Selections from Speeches and Writings

Teacher and Pupil

'I know that the richest reward of my life-work has always been the affection and regard of my pupils. That, indeed, has been the most valuable asset of my life, as it has been also the most powerful stimulus in my work.'

East and West

' It may be broadly stated that the ethical method of the East is personal discipline, of the West social service; and that the ethical end of the East is self-refinement, of the West social efficiency. Of this comes the old feud between the ways of the individual and the demands of society. But unto the higher harmony of a soul that beholds in East and West the two wings of the same mansion, may not the true ethical gospel lie in the self-realising fulfilment of the individual through social service and the perfection of society through individual development?'

The End of Education

' To know how to judge fairly, how to view the opposite side from the right stand-point, how to keep the head calm while there is a storm raging around, how to hold the foot firm while there is an earthquake underneath, how, in a word, to carry a level head over square shoulders—that is the greatest acquisition of a sound education.'

Culture and Duty

'The distinguishing characteristic of culture is the equipoise of truth which resists what the poet calls ' the falsehood of extremes.' The goal of culture is that emancipation from the bondage of self-interest whereby every right is instinctively transformed into a duty, as in unimpaired physical life food is automatically transmuted into energy..... The sacred book of human existence opens with the dedication—' To Duty.' In the estimates of Duty, there is no distinction of high and humble. The day's duty notes the fulfilment of the day's worship. The privilege of performing Duty is the 'only absolute Right ' of man.'

THE SERVICE OF WOMANKIND

'Whenever there is an opportunity, you should be all too prompt to help or serve your mother's sex. Go forth clothed in your own purity, and you will change the whole atmosphere.'

PURITY AND CHARACTER

'Purity is to Character what symmetry is to beauty—not an accident of adornment but an essential of structure.'

SOCIAL PURITY AND NATIONAL GREATNESS

'Social purity thus acquires an honoured place in that constellation of sublime virtues without whose guidance the horoscope of a nation's greatness can never be cast.'

PURITY AND RELIGION

'In fine, it (Purity) is that attuning of the soul to the processes of nature as the chosen purposes of God, which ought to make every man what only an occasional sage now is—the interpreter of life in terms of eternity and the beautifier of earth as the corridor of Heaven.'

THE MORAL LAW OF THE SPIRIT

'Conformity to the moral law means being on the side of God; and he who is on the side of God can, in this vast universe, have no *outside*—no foreign realm. Learn this lesson at the start of your life; and you will find that the hardest task becomes the most fruitful occupation; the most trying situation becomes the plea for genuine self-reliance; and you will feel that, like a protecting canopy over your head, like a shield and armour round your body, like a soothing balm under your feet, like an inspiring breath in your bosom, like an illuminating ray in your eye, this moral law will be your guide and your protection, your strength and your happiness.'

RELIGION AND RECREATION

'Accordingly, the attitude of religion to the pleasures of life is one of a censor or supervisor who places the sentinels of conscience, truthfulness, purity and generosity at the portals of pleasure, admitting and encouraging those amusements and recreations which are calculated to relieve the fatigues of life, to refresh the spirit of activity, to soften the hardness of conventionality, to foster a feeling of union, and to promote a desire for brotherly sympathy; while vetoing or keeping out

those which make "too large inroads on our time, our fortune, our health, our character or our duty," or which "raise and warm the passions." '

In Relation to Others

'With those who stray rest our beckoning sympathies; for those who struggle are our cheering good-wishes; upon those who fall is our tender compassion; and for those who sin—not for those who have not sinned but for those who have sinned and are penitent—are our ardent prayers: that even the life of each one of them may in future cheer us and encourage us all!'

God as Mercy

'At the threshold of your life, remember that, as the light that illumines, as the life that energises, as the sweet which gives relish, as the harmony that enraptures, as the beauty that ravishes, as the love that transforms earth into heaven, God is Mercy available unto all.'

(B)—1933*

Benedicite

Om Parabrahmanènamah !

Father of mercies! Parent of good! On this pleasant yet solemn occasion, we first draw nigh unto Thee, as is but due from us, in spirit and in truth.

For all Thy creatures and all Thy children, Thou art the prime Source of life and the perpetual Sustainer of life's destiny.

As the orbs of light on high, so the shining ones of our race here below reflect the radiance of Thy being alone and run their several courses as appointed by Thy wisdom alone.

From Thee is all talent and opportunity, all achievement and beneficence. And it is Thou that dost put upon us the duty and prompt within us the desire to own with reverent gratitude our own indebtedness to Thy chosen ones, the recipients of Thy gifts and graces, and, even for our own behoof, to raise enduring memorials in honour of their services and sanctities.

We devoutly invoke Thy hallowing, fulfilling benediction upon this dear function that so it may be begun, continued and ended in Thee.

The elect one whom we proudly honour this day Thou hast richly endowed, wisely taught, rightly guided and fruitfully employed for Thy purposes in the noblest of all fields of activity—even as a rare pattern of refined enlightenment, a happy blend of genius and goodness, of culture and character. Among the worthiest sons of this ancient, this august Institution of the premier University, Thou didst call him to be her trusted steward in the crowning part of his outstanding career.

The memorial of his likeness that we here set up, so gratifying to the eye, so endearing to the heart and so suggestive of thankfulness to the soul—do Thou grant that, for

* Opening Prayer at the Portrait-unveiling ceremony in the Senate Hall, Madras University, performed by His Excellency Lt. Col. the Rt. Hon'ble Sir G. F. Stanley, P.C., G.C,I.E., C.M.G. (29-3-33).

generations to come, it may, by Thy grace, prove a perennial spring of the purest inspiration unto all the members and workers of this University, this focus-point and radiating centre of higher enlightenment for the whole Presidency. So may it hold its fitting place in the portrait-gallery of this hall of honour and upon the storied walls of this shrine of learning, as it will in the grateful heart-chambers of all those quickened by the lofty, wholesome influence of that high-souled and rare-gifted Master!

Do Thou bless him with lengthening years of lettered ease and pious peace in the tranquil evening of a well-spent life.

Bless all, far and near, who have been moved by Thee to contribute to this successful realisation of a long and widely-cherished desire.

Bless those who are here to bear witness to their own high sense of admiring appreciation and kindly goodwill; and him, preeminently, who is to lead in this tenderly sweet engagement and lend to it the weight of his exalted dignity.

Bless all who now carry on and are hereafter to carry on further the old strenuous, devoted labours to fuller fruition.

And, finally, bless all the youth of the land with the entire body of teachers and preceptors laudably served by this far-extended University—spirits ever so near and dear to the noble heart of him whom we honour now and here.

Unto Thee, Lord God, be all praise and thanksgiving; and unto us be Thine all-sufficing grace and guidance now and for ever!

Amen!

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PHASES OF FRIENDSHIP

1894

There is nothing which more vitally affects a man's life than the associations he forms in early youth, nothing, indeed, which exerts a more powerful influence in moulding his future destiny. While the tie of marriage comes in at a later age and touches most the issues of conjugal happiness and domestic peace, that of friendship is formed at comparatively earlier stages and has to do more with the currents of social pleasure. Presupposing, of necessity, some of the fundamental factors underlying the theme, it will be a profit to ponder awhile how far friendship constitutes an inevitable requisite of felicity, what type of friendship it is that approves itself as essential to the fulfilment of one's real needs, whether a personal and perfect union is warranted by the principles of a sound socio-ethical standard, and what all comprise the conditions, ends and effects of its healthful growth.

Sings the poet,

> "Nothing in the world is single;
> All things by a law divine
> In one spirit meet and mingle;
> Why not I with thine?"

It is a worn-out truism that man is preeminently a social animal, as he stands fashioned by the divine law of nature. In fact, not merely man but even the wild beast of the wilderness, as Bacon reminds us, roams about in search of a mate. The social bond is thus a matter of instinct, the urge of a natural craving—not a commercial contract of give and take, nor a bare metaphysical fiction for fond contemplation alone, but one of the supreme delights of real life, an invaluable boon conferred by the All-Creator out of boundless grace to serve as a potent means of widening the scope of genuine happiness.

"As we are made sociable to all, so we are friendly ; but as all cannot actually be of our society, so neither can all be admitted to a special, actual friendship" with us. Universal love, the keynote of the higher life, becomes a solemn duty so far as it connotes an outlook of general benevolence coupled with good offices of kindliness on occasion. But none can stop short with this diffused goodwill in restfulness. There always asserts itself an innate hankering after something nearer and more intimate. As we are led to grasp the sovereign efficacy of friendship as the medicine of life and the cure of cares, we no longer labour under difficulty in realising the imperativeness of private friendship, seeing that all fellow-men cannot be taken into confidence and there must ever remain certain ills which only the closest of companions can help to trace and remedy. Discussing this side of the subject, Jeremy Taylor argues that universal friendship must be limited even because we are ourselves limited. He points out, by way of illustration, how, though it is a duty to give alms to all men in need and to pray for the weal of all souls, yet it is only those few who are brought by circumstances within the reach of one's hand that one is able to satisfy the wants of and, likewise, one can evince one's affection with any note of reality in it only by special prayers of intercession for particular individuals or groups of individuals. "Our needs and our conversations," he concludes, "are served by a few, and they cannot reach to all ; where they can, they must ; but where it is impossible, it cannot be necessary." As such, it is, by all means, well and good to be courteous and considerate to every one with whom we are brought into contact ; and it must, doubtless, be accounted a violation of the plainest of obligations not to observe this rule in strictness. But to set up one and all as real friends is quite another matter. As to the apprehension that such intimacies of union between individual and individual interpose a positive obstacle in the way of universal love, nothing can be more ill-grounded than this kind of misgiving. We may rest assured that those who have even once tasted of the springs of pure affection for any single soul will learn with ease to cherish a growing degree of human tenderness for all. Hence, what is meant is that there must be none else to claim so large a portion of your heart as the friend you have chosen for yourself and that the richest love your nature is capable of must be reserved for the latter, all others coming in for lesser measures in proportion to their

deserts and capabilities of reception. Do we not read in Nature the parable of how the same sun who, when a lens-glass is held up against his burning disc, focusses into it the acutest sharpness of his rays, does none the less shed the geniality of his light over the expanses of a boundless universe ?

Now, 'the choice of friends' is a trite old expression in frequent use to urge the need of especial care in this behalf, having regard to the multiplex benefits and dangers inseparable, respectively, from well and ill-assorted companionships. The essential idea involved is that of captaincy or coadjutorship for good or ill in view of the fact that friends well-chosen cannot but prove as effectively instrumental in lifting up as those ill-chosen do in dragging down. So there are friendships and friendships, not leaving out of account what are known as fugitive 'railway friendships' and the like between unknown strangers. And persons there are willing enough to lay gentle hands on the shoulders of any and every wight they chance upon, their inmost hearts all the while belying the light movements of their hands. Again, so far as matters go on with smoothness, those working together in the same professional sphere cannot but enter into a relation that passes for some sort of friendship. In respect of associations like the above, which Plutarch denotes as but "idols and images of friendship," they are by no means open to exception on any account, provided you own your true friends beside and behind in the intimacies of the interior life. Furthermore, no elaborate effort at discrimination is called for in relation to 'friends' of the former category, since it not only does one no harm but forms a part of one's duty to stand ever on decently amiable terms with all people at large, good, bad and indifferent alike. Only, concerning the selection of the latter class of friends, no amount of care and caution may be deemed to be too much or more than necessary and sufficient. Be it not understood, however, that when once you have vowed lifelong fellowship with another, you ought still to allow yourself to be hampered by hesitancy or deterred by dubiety at every step. Rather, before the die is cast, it behoves the two contracting spirits to try and test each other thoroughly on various touchstones. Different are the circumstances and divers the motives that induce contacts and determine compacts in the complex of relationships. No two persons are ever brought together but by particular circum-

stances or interests. Therefore, there is no overestimating the value of seeming accidents in the peculiar concourse of events that so bring men together with untold possibilities of good accruing therefrom in the affairs of life. An instructive instance may here be cited of how 'school friendships', so called, do sometimes thrive to grey hairs and develop in after-life to the immense advantage of those concerned. At the famous seminary of Westminster School in the beginning of the seventeenth century, one of the junior pupils happened once by mischance to rend the curtain which separated the upper from the lower form. The then Headmaster being an uncommonly rigorous wielder of the iron rod, the meek and timid youth felt sorely afraid of the consequences of making his appearance before him with a confession of the little misdeed. One of the class-fellows, more spirited and daring, went up to the boy, exhorted him not to give way to fear and trembling and proferred to own himself the culprit in his place. So on this generous friend's head fell the dire penalty inflicted by that martinet of a master; and so was the real offender saved from the possible effects of profound trepidation—a heart-break or some worse plight. After a time, the two friends parted and did not hear of each other again. They entered different walks of life according to their respective aptitudes: the warm-blooded one joined the camp and the mild-tempered the bench. In the great Civil War, the one became a staunch supporter of the Royalist cause, while the other espoused the Parliamentarian side. During the Commonwealth, the quondam culprit at school rose high in favour with the Protector and was made the highest judicial officer in the realm. At that juncture, the mighty military general was clapped up in the Tower along with many another implicated in an ill-starred enterprise of 'treason.' The new Judge was appointed to try the case. The accused were all put up before him. He stared and stared at his former companion's countenance. At length, recognising before himself the dear old self-devoting ally of his school-days, he embraced him with ardent arms. And off he hurried forthwith to London and, prevailing upon Cromwell by dint of his enormous influence, succeeded in securing the pardon of his friend's life; while the rest of the band were brought to the block. And here is another story, amusing yet authentic, of the department of school friendships. One day, an Indian pupil went to school, unprepared with his lessons. The teacher wanted

effectively to impress the evils of such negligence on his mind. And knowing that the boy had been in the closest of relations with a particular mate in the class, the teacher himself held out the hand of the defaulting one and directed the mate to employ the cane upon it. Seeing that his very friend was to deal the blow of humiliation, the intended victim could not but shudder from top to toe and shed hot tears in profusion. And then, what do you think transpired actually at that crisis? The friend coolly takes up the cane and deliberately strikes the blow in such a way that the teacher holding the boy's hand gets the worst of it. And thus an impressive lesson is taught on the practical significance of friendship—that, even at a juvenile stage, there is at work in the tenderly attached mind an inborn sense of how a good turn falls due to a friend under all conditions, that is, as far as immature reason enables one to conceive of goodness.

It is strongly urged by one set of thinkers—and as strongly denied by another—that true and lasting friendship is out of the question without an exact coincidence of disposition between mind and mind. Of course, it is always a pleasure to be loved. And barring the mother-heart, nobody, as a rule, loves without the prospect or, at any rate, the expectation of a return of the love. The surest, clearest way in which to demonstrate this reciprocation is by imitation in the modes of thought and of action, which imitation is proverbially recognised as the sincerest flattery. How can the politician, asks Johnson, lay his soaring schemes for the reformation of law or his comparative estimates of the different systems of government before the chemist accustomed to naught but thoughts of salt and sulphur; or the astrologer his calculations and conjectures over the sky before the cold grammarian who finds enough of preoccupation for himself in the happy etymology of an obscure word? No doubt, there abides more than a modicum of truth in the adage that 'like attracts like'. But how far does this warrant a generalisation to the effect that, of necessity, unlikes fail to make 'harmonious combination'? Do we not know, as a matter of fact, that some of the finest and firmest of friendships are those contracted between persons of widely differing humours? In such instances, the background is furnished by the psychological principle that the mind is, not unoften, pleased with those perfections in others which it misses in itself and a man even fancies his own defects as

supplied at secondhand and himself as thus vicariously possessed of those gifts and graces which mark him whom he reckons as his *alter ego*. There is such a thing as the sympathy of difference akin, say, to that which closely knit Charles Lamb and Thomas Manning together. We have, too, the testimony of Washington Irving, who, in the *Sketch Book*, observes of his friend, George Leslie, and his wife that "the very difference in their characters produced an harmonious combination." Accordingly, Johnson would seem to have formed a somewhat narrow conception in that he confined himself to considerations of intellectual sympathy and intercourse. On a moot point like this, it may be as well to bear in mind that parity of disposition should provide, if not the antecedent incentive to, at least the consequent fruit of, an indissoluble union of spirits. Friends, after they have been 'sworn in' as friends, cannot do better than strive each to cultivate his temper, tastes and tendencies in such a direction as to be able to stand side by side on the same platform with the other. Another noteworthy circumstance is the extreme desirability of picking and choosing friends from among those who hold an equality of rank and fortune with one's own self. And this holds good in spite of wise Bacon's warning that while "there is little friendship in the world", it is in evidence " least of all between equals". He suggests as one advantage of friendship between superior and inferior that they are thereby placed in a position to comprehend each other the better in the light of their distinctive circumstances. His language, however, is not clear enough as to a specification of the aspect or aspects of inequality so favoured. All the same, generally speaking, it must be a matter of no small difficulty for dissimilars to to cohere long, unless strong elements are present to span the yawning gaps of fortune. At all events, it is of importance to distinguish between the similarity of fortune here in question and the similarity of inclinations above referred to.

While on the choice of friends, it is incumbent on us to take a side-glance at what is termed 'fancy'—that ethereal quality of which philosophers have always a good deal to say —and to note how far it may make an ingredient in the choice. To this inquiry a simple answer is furnished by the 'golden-mouthed' minister of the Word already drawn upon. He holds that, as an intuitive and innocent impulse or passion, 'fancy' may properly play its part in this as in other concerns

which afford scope enough for the coexistence of liberty with variety. There is, indeed, a sort of Platonic friendship as well as of Platonic love in which the soul of one exhibits a spontaneous sense of cognation with, and affinity to, the soul of another—nobody can explain how or why. And we are told that even a Jesus loved John the Apostle and Lazarus the Beggar with the instinct of a special love and manifested it by special attitudes. But—and this is a grave 'but'—the youthful spirit is only too apt to swear lightly by this creed and to be carried away, in effect, by the lures of a smooth face and a comely contour without giving itself the least pause for discernment. Hence, in order to guard against such a parlous predicament, it is urgent that 'fancy' should be kept within safe bounds to render its appropriate service, namely, to "strike the flint and kindle a spark, which if it falls upon tender and compliant natures, may grow into a flame".

Then, as to the proper, permissible number of boon companions, an extension of range only exposes itself to the obvious risks of untenable positions in effect. Who knows not as a commonplace of experience in the student world how hard it practically is to keep up a regular course of private study for an examination in conjunction with, say, more than one or two fellow-candidates? How much more, then, should the angle be greater in respect of real friendship on an equal footing—of copilgrimage hand in hand along the steep and rugged paths of life? With no reasonable limit as to number in the inner circle, there is no knowing how little the balance of humour may be depended on to maintain itself in equilibrium amid the manifold vicissitudes of life's wind and weather. As the poet of the fable has it, in fine,

"Friendship like love is but a name
Unless to one you stint the flame."

Next, after a careful choice has been made of one or two bosom friends, the further problem arises: how best to carry on intercourse with them so as to reap the greatest benefit from the prized association. In the first place, the preservation of true friendship is itself as momentous a matter as the choice at the start. Hence it is that even the sententious moralist in *Hamlet* lays down the rule apprehended by real insight,

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel."

Here, the basic principle self-approved beyond question is that of perfect sincerity and unclouded confidence resting on the rock-bottom of reciprocal love and esteem. Spirits so interlocked necessarily look upon each other as equals in every regard so far as to exemplify the sublime ideal that "Friendship among men is the true republic, where all have equality of service and all have freedom of command," each the master as well as the servant of the other. Once the insidious worm of suspicion or selfishness creeps in, lo, the vitals of friendship are only too certain to be eaten away. Proverbial Philosophy, therefore, distinctly enjoins—

> "If thou wilt be loved, render implicit confidence;
> If thou wouldst not suspect, receive full confidence in turn;
> For where trust is not reciprocal, the love that trusted withereth."

Nobody is so simple-minded as not to anticipate injury at any moment from those whom he knows to be his avowed enemies. And, *per contra*, none may consistently apprehend any the slightest harm—that is, harm by design—from those who, he knows, are his firmest friends. Such being the case, it follows that the unlooked-for wrong sustained sometimes at the hands of an intensely beloved and implicitly trusted friend smites home, naturally, as a far more crushing blow than "the certain loathing and the lodged hate" of the open enemy or the sinister friend. So, while "it must needs be that offences come" and sensitive to a degree must be the tender mind of a trustful friend,

> "How light a cause may move
> Dissension between hearts that love"!

Accordingly, the one thing needful for the securest upkeep of friendship is just to make up every incipient hitch ever before it aggravates itself, the offender then and there remorsefully coming out with a clean confession of his fault and the offended as instantly cleansing away once for all every trace of rankling recollection. If, so far from having recourse to this ready remedy on either side, the soreness be but allowed to linger unattended to for never so brief an interval, why, then, every new move from either quarter must only worsen the situation beyond repair, widening, deepening and heightening the mischief of misunderstanding even because

" Trifles light as air are to the jealous
Confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

Thus, whereas conformity in inclinations may, as already observed, be well relegated to the role of a sequel, not a prerequisite, to the formation of friendship, a perfect interchange of what all pulsates within the recesses of the self is a *sine qua non* to continued friendship. Nay, without it true friendship is simply inconceivable. A friendship confined to certain departments alone of the complex composite of life and hedged round with the ring-fence of 'Thus far and no further' is but a sectional or fractional friendship not quite worth the name it bears. The ideal rightly demands that the sympathies, if not the inclinations also, shall cover the entire field of life's interests and activities. For, unless you admit your friend into the folds of all that pertains to yourself, he does not and will not, for his part, feel drawn to you, by the resistless pull of an all-round obligation. There be those whose studious self-reservations are equalled only by their shrewd evocations of self-expression from friends kept ever at arm's length though with every semblance only of close reciprocity. But, to be sure, this diplomatic policy of 'Say little andeduce all you can' has nothing at all to commend it for serious consideration from any point of view. Again, we are often taught, as a very counsel of perfection, that it is the part of wisdom always to treat a friend as though he may turn out an enemy and an enemy as though he may prove to be a friend at any moment. Admitting the saneness and soundness of the second part of this Baconian formula, might we not take leave, with advantage, to modify its first part and firmly impress it on ourselves that on no account should we suffer a friend to become a foe in so far as the prevention depends upon us as much as upon him? All in all, then, the corner-stone of friendship must stand transfixed in mutual love and loyalty and all that these pregnant terms imply. One not insignificant safeguard in this connection may be recognised as consisting in scrupulous abstention from anything smacking of monetary dealings in the shape of borrowing and lending between one and the other; "for loan oft loses both itself and friend." When you find yourself privileged to supply the pecuniary wants of your friend, give of your substance, never in the name of a loan with an eye to recovery, but absolutely to minister to his needs as to your own; and then, you stand on secure as on sacred ground.

Turning, as led by this last observation, to the proper offices of friendship, its first and foremost function may be summed up as comprised in the timely or constant infusion of courage and cheer enough to brave the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. A hard-bestead soul thus sustained—how wonderfully it outdoes itself as it cannot think to do otherwise! On the other hand, deprived unexpectedly of its succours in friendship, oh, how it droops and languishes, as witness the recorded story of Lamb's decline into the grave when, as if trying for a little while to survive his dearest friend, Coleridge, "he liked it not—and died"! A true friend is he who is ever equally ready to impart and to imbibe the saving grace of monition and ministration as occasion demands it. In that highly edifying novel of hers, *Janet's Repentance*, George Eliot fittingly glorifies the "blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another"—"not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden process by which the tiny seed is quickened, and bursts forth into tall stem and broad leaf and glowing tasseled flower." Such a blessed possession, twice blest, cannot fail to double the joys and halve the sorrows of the soul. With a view to such a consummation devoutly to be wished for, the silver links and silken ties of friendship, as of matrimony, are to be forged and fashioned out of growing assimilation in the pious godliness of the soul, the affectionate esteem of the heart and the intellectual *rapport* of the mind through mutual reactions besides the bearing of each other's burdens in the material concerns of the body.

Anent the relative position of friends and kinsmen, it is a matter of common experience that the nearest of blood is not seldom the farthest from the agitating turmoils of the bosom, whereas no set-back operates to hinder the unbosoming of the self unto the friend. So does Tennyson appraise Arthur Henry Hallam: "More than my brothers are to me." Also, the disregard of duties towards friends is a dereliction more inexcusable than that of duties towards relatives, because the friends are of our own voluntary choosing while the relatives represent a bond to which our consent was never requisitioned. Then, there remains the question whether the wedded spouse may not rise to the exalted height of an ideal friend as here set out and whether, after all, this appraisement on our part is not open to the charge of playing into the hands of the

usurper. The wife-friend is, of course, the ideal of ideals. But, in the actual working, it all turns on what sort of wife one is fortunate or unfortunate enough to get under the prevailing conditions of practical sociology. Ignorant and narrow-minded, a mere bundle of singular oddities and superstitious crudities, the Indian wife of today, despite the unique charm of her constitutional simplicity and fidelity, cannot, for a long, long time to come, satisfy in herself her educated husband's demand or, rather, yearning for a fit 'guide, philospher, and friend'. God speed the day when Mother India shall attain to that level of dual refinement at which her sweet wives can adequately occupy their rightful place in the economy of the body politic as worthy helpmates of their own partners in life!

Does all this, we ask in closing, sound as no more than clap-trap from cloudland and savour overmuch of facile idealogy too far removed from what passes muster as practical politics ? Nay, nay ; if ideas rule the world, ideals, however unpractical and abstract-looking, are, indeed, the very lodestars of human voyage. Be it, then, the earnest, honest endeavour of each of us to steer the course of his life with eyes fixed steadfast upon the acknowledged values of friendship—at once " the allay of our sorrows, the ease of our passions, the discharge of our oppressions, the sanctuary to our calamities, the counsellor of our doubts, the charity of our minds, the emission of our thoughts, the exercise and improvement of what we meditate."

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THE ADVENT OF WOMAN

1935

Unto each *sakhi*, the first word of greeting and good wishes must be even this—none finer or fitter:

"So, sister, be thy Womanhood
A baptism on thy brow,
For something dimly understood
And which thou art not now;
But which within thee, all the time,
Maketh thee what thou art;
Maketh thee long and strive and climb,
The God-life at thy heart."

Now, is it not a truism that Woman has not yet come to her own, even yet in these days of vaunted civilisation? The ideal, of course, has shone forth radiant up in the sky all along. Poesy has nobly sung her laudation of Womanhood 'to one clear harp in divers tones.' Social Philosophy has justly allotted the place of the fair sex in the economy of the body politic. Practical philanthropy has fruitfully wrought some of her dreams into deeds in behalf of the weaker vessel. Positivism has symbolically exalted the worship of the mother, the wife and the daughter into a very creed of religion. And Theocratic Faith, always and everywhere, has visioned in every daughter of Eve no other than 'the handmaid of the Lord.' None the less, the bare, bald fact remains—

"woman's best is unbegun;
Her advent yet to come."

How, then, is it to come at all—this Advent of Woman? First, idealise, idealise away, in that direction. Therein lies the potent prerequisite, inasmuch as it is ideas and ideas alone that verily rule the world. If, in all this multiplex creation, there exists any one entity worthiest of such idealising transfiguration, rest assured it is none other than Woman. A mas-

culine voice might have said, 'The noblest work of God is *man*.' In so far, however, as the dictum suggests an implicit ignoring of the counterpart of man, there might, in a representative sense, be something in the general diagnosis put forward by one of the slighted sex:

> "By custom doom'd to folly, sloth and ease,
> No wonder Pope such female triflers sees."

At all events, a brusque indication to this effect might, as well, stand good as a broad vindication against every species of misogynic detraction (to use a pompous word in expression of a prevailing attitude). A whole world of refreshing contrast is what comes presented in the apostrophe we owe to the premier poet of Puritanism:

> "O fairest of creation! last and best
> Of all God's works! creature in whom excels
> Whatever can to sight or thought be form'd
> Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet."

For a certainty, nothing is more calculated to stimulate and speed the "yet to come" than for the earnest-minded representatives of both sexes to recall, now and again, the large, the lofty vision that, anywhen and anywhere, has so far shaped itself on the varied aspects of Woman—her difference and yet her unity with man; her dower and her destiny; and, in the light of these, her rights and her wrongs.

And how fares it with her, roughly, on these lines according to recorded testimony confirmatory of all but universal experience? The mystic line, it has been said, that severs man from God—'which is human, which divine'—is far too subtle to draw. Not a whit easier is it, to be sure, to define with any approach to precision what really marks off woman-soul from man-soul. 'Common is the commonplace' which points to man's superior strength in the head and to woman's in the heart. A half-truth this, at best; and, like all half-truths, one that has mothered somewhat of mischief in its own way. On the other hand, how wholly sound and salutary the hoary concept of the Siva-Parvati commingling of natures to typify man with rich suggestiveness as *ardhanâreeswara*! Go a step further and discover a still closer relationship, even identity, of the woman-heart with the child-heart. For, if Divine simplicity dwells at Childhood's core, the latter, for its part, thrives nowhere but at Womanhood's bosom. Again, man

joys to equate woman with beauty and, still more, beauty with woman. And, perhaps, nothing humours her better. But wherein endures the essence of beauty pure and simple? Say what the age of fops and frivolities in fashion may, not the gaud and glitter of the outer form, not the gloss and glamour of the outermost pigment, not the grace and garnish of lineament or movement—none of these makes true feminine beauty or any beauty at that. Rather, as one avers, genuine female fascination is, properly, of the type of an ancient cathedral 'built by that only law that Use be suggester of Beauty.' That way, as has been otherwise put, starting though in romance as 'a phantom of delight' 'to haunt, startle and waylay,' Woman duly matures into a reality 'not too bright or good for human nature's daily food' and at last mellows into a very 'tutelary deity' 'to warn, to comfort and command.' Of the progressive career thus sketched, the import as well as the importance is exquisitely reflected in a woman-artist's own picture as under. Runs the strain, as blown by Sarah J. Hale:

"Woman's warm heart and gentle hand, in God's eternal plan
Were form'd to soften, soothe, refine, exalt, and comfort man,
And win from pleasure's poison cup to life's pure fount above,
And rule him, as the angels rule, by deeds of grace and love."

Note how comprehensive the chart, embracing alike the negative and positive implications. Little wonder that the ministry gets dignified into regnancy itself, finding apt expression, say, in the well-known epigram, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world". Where it tends, though unobtrusively yet effectively, to none but wholesome ends, this dominance provides a needful corrective in that grammar of life which construes man as evermore a noun in the objective case governed by woman. Further, as one celebrant has it, it is the genial beams of womanly loveliness born of gentleness in suffering and endurance through scorn, of lily-white virtue and rock-rooted faith, that 'give it the stamp celestial, and admit it to sisterhood with angels.'

Now that Womanhood is slowly hastening to step to the fore and take mankind by storm with her downright 'declaration of rights', it just becomes the better part of wisdom—

to put it even on that lowly ground—for the sterner sex to yield up the overdue recognition ere it is squeezed out of close-fisted hands. 'More sinned against than sinning' being quite the kernel of the whole matter, the claim enunciates itself thus in the sober spirit and the sweet accent of Susan Coolidge, so far removed from the sheer, grasping suffragette:

"The right to a life of my own;
Not merely a casual bit
Of somebody else's life flung out,
That, taking hold of it,
I may stand as a cypher does after a numeral writ."

'Self-determination', 'self-realisation' and the like—so they call it in long-winded terms. But the spirit behind courses through the blood and blows not alone in the air. Accordingly, good Mazzini's challenge must apply to the Eastern as also to the Western mansion of our Father's Home, as he admonishes the race to "hasten the redemption of Woman... by restoring her to her mission of Inspiration, Prayer and Pity." Revel you in 'the splendour that *was* Ind', in her Maitreyis and Miras, her Savitris and Sitas? Well; the more reason why no effort should be spared to shed the sordidness that *is* Ind! The age of clay may not too soon be transmuted into the age of gold.

Humble in means, yet high-vaulted in scope, may the sphere and, what is more, the atmosphere of liberal culture in institutions like yours of St. Mira's High School* avail, under God, to implement the consummation devoutly to be wished!

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* At Hyderabad (Sind) under the fostering care of Sadhu T. L. Vaswanji.

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WHY WIDOW-MARRIAGE ?*

1894

May I be permitted to observe at the outset that our subject for this evening is, by no means, an agreeable theme whether from the point of view of the speaker or from that of the hearers? We are here not to exult in praise over the matchless 'splendour that was Ind' nor to glory in the vast strides of progress accomplished by ourselves in advance of our ancestors. Neither is it open to us at this moment to sit in sharp judgment upon generations long since gone by. Gratefully alive to all the triumphs of culture and enlightenment so far achieved, our humble purpose on this occasion will be to review dispassionately the present position in respect of India's treatment of the sex of her mothers, sisters and daughters and, contrasting it with the conditions obtaining among other peoples, to try and impress vividly on ourselves how far we still are from having reaped the finest, sweetest fruits of the modern ideal and how imperative the cry, yet unheard as in a wilderness, for further marked improvement along the line. As such, how may it be anything but an unpleasant and even painful task for us to administer shocks, as necessary, to our own pride of race and religion so-called? Nevertheless, are not introspection and circumspection to be accepted, so to speak, as the two eyes capable alone of leading us along the safe and sure path of real progress from step to step?

Now, in the earnest consideration of the all too uneasy problem before us, we are by no means in need of labouring under the disability of dealing with bare abstractions or mere hypothetical conditions. The widow, with all the distinctive features appertaining to her lot, is no rare being in our community. Rather is she a concrete reality in evidence all

* An essay read under the auspices of the Masulipatam Students' Union with (Rao Bahadur) P. Venkatappayya Pantulu Garu, B A., in the chair.

around at every turn. And it may not be too much to add that, as regards the child-widow in particular she is verily the skeleton present in almost every other, if not every, house. Surely, she is not the least striking and characteristic factor in the Hindu social order of today. Hence, no one requires to roam far afield to recognise what it means to be a Hindu child-widow in actual life, what her environments and what her handicaps are like in the society she lives and moves in—that is, under the limitations of such measure of life and movement as is extended to her in the existing state of things.

As nominal wifehood suddenly yields place to real widowhood, there begins for the hapless victim of insensate, nay, of cruel custom a footsore race bound to run to the end of her own earthly existence even like the invariable concomitant of shadow chasing substance on and on. While this is not the place to dilate upon the sanctities of the marital bond, it may suffice to remind ourselves that marriage is an institution systematically evolved in the march of human progress, if not as old in origin as creation itself, all along designed by Providence to supply an adequate and legitimate sanction—to put it even on the lowest ground—for the gratification of the so-called carnal cravings innate in the human frame of either sex. It is, then, clear what all is involved in an ordering of things under which, only in the case of girls so unfortunate as to lose those who are called their husbands, man steps in with self-arrogated power to debar what nature would impel, such of them as succeed in subjugating the passions being, of course, left out of account with an all too merited meed of reverential praise. In the generality of cases, ah, how the internal pangs prick the flesh on all sides, as Death clips off the golden thread of all that happiness which the tender little ones have hardly yet tasted, if at all, in conjugal life! Nor is this the whole brunt of the misery; for the position is at once rendered different from that of so many other cases of bereavement—in one word, it is made *sui generis*. To add fuel to fire, the bitterness of the situation is aggravated through a series of cast-iron appliances so far as to become the more appalling because set up with no end of assiduous care even by those nearest and dearest.

That early marriages are all too common in this land of many ills, self-inflicted, is a patent fact which there is no denying or disputing. Accordingly, as above stated, it proves to be

no mere flight of fancy to scan and survey the condition of the peculiar product of that childish custom, the child-widow; since it is with her cause we are concerned more than with that of the elderly widow. Manifold are the forces, on the religious, moral, economic and social sides, that operate powerfully to keep the inhuman usage still in vogue, although not a few grant in theory that it is already time enough for its decent burial. The ranks of the unfortunates are daily swollen by the considerable influx of fresh recruits of child-widows from the fertile soil of early marriage. No doubt, it is not meant that the discountenance of child-marriage will ward off death itself from the male population or that the alliance prematurely contracted is what brings mortality upon the boy-husband. But this much is beyond controversy that, if only the farcical ceremony did not take place so early, it would not, even should the boy in question happen to pass away, affect the social economy so tremendously by adding to the number of sufferers condemned to the widow's weeds in perpetuity. None with a heart to feel and a mind to reflect will fail to visualise the awful wretchedness that covers the lot of the poor little one whom the irony of stolid conservatism declares a widow ever before she has become a wife. Of the lurid fact that she has once been given in marriage and is now consigned to endless woe for no fault of hers, the average girl of six or seven years of age knows nothing. She, therefore, naturally blooms out with delight on occasions of festivity in the family circle. Down come the parents upon her; and away she is flung as an ill-omen from the scene of mirth and merriment. She sets up a cry, unable altogether to understand what lies behind this parental cruelty. And it is only gradually that she gets initiated into the gloom of the mysteries of widowhood by the strict prohibition of all personal ornamentation, the rude tonsure of the head to the utter havoc of nature's luxuriant locks and the rigid prescription of one coarse meal a day to be supplemented with fortnightly recurring fasts and privations. Too often in vain, she enquires about the why and wherefore of all this strangely savage treatment. So long as it serves the purpose, some queer story or other is trotted out to silence the questionings. To her infinite agony, as time advances, it is borne in upon her by the stern actualities of contrast that he who should have been her all-in-all—her helpmeet and purveyor of felicity—through life has disappeared from here below,

leaving her a victim to that life-long fate. Time alone unfolds to her heart the true, the far-reaching significance of the hopeless plight thus forced upon her—thanks to that ununderstanded rite perpetrated before her ideas of it have extended beyond drum-beats, new-woven cloths and dainty confections; whereas, even later after those five, fast-faded days of the wedding *tamash*, she has never been suffered to mix with, or set eyes upon, the one now lost for ever. If the background, however, presents some slight degree of alleged relief in the case of other than absolute virgin-widows, one really does not know how far, after all, the cross is intrinsically less galling and more endurable where, after a brief space of time, the blessings of husband and home first begun to be tasted are suddenly withdrawn and there follows the call to exchange that normal life for one of quite a different tenor.

In other climes, men and women marry ; and women become widows. In India, boys and girls are married ; and girls are made widows. The contrast between the two 'voices' of the verbs, representing as it does the differing lights in which our widows and those elsewhere are looked upon, may be pointedly observed in the odium crystallised in the very name of 'widow' in all our languages—at best, a mark of inauspicious foreboding; and, too often, a term of vile reproach—while the creature herself is, by common consent,, no more than a drag upon the family. And what remains yet of the sequel to the gruesome tale ? For, the foregoing is only the effect of the husbands' demise upon the personal enjoyment and happiness of the widows themselves. And there still looms the other, perhaps the more glaring, aspect of the problem—one vitally affecting their relations with the society they belong to. Nature gradually asserts her own sway, while there is barred out the only approved means of satisfying her imperious demands. What, then, is the course left open in the midst of sisters, sisters-in-law and even mothers and mothers-in-law witnessed round about at every step in unhampered enjoyment of 'double blessedness'? Why, there is one and only one course, expressively styled as the 'hide-and-seek' game. An evil associate is secretly resorted to or even makes sly and successful overtures of aggression who opens out the world to those blindfolded eyes. In the hard conflict—how hard, Goodness alone knows !—that must rage between the awakened passions and the semi-suppress-

ed sense of shame, the former win the victory in most instances. And the inevitable result is a career of abject license scarcely hid from the glare of day—not unoften, too, in utter disregard of the restrictions of caste and colour. Nature's betrayal follows through pregnancy—now and here a nuisance to be swiftly got rid of as best it may. All possible shifts are tried to compass this fine art of foeticide. These attempts proving futile at times, there comes into being, in due course, a hapless creature with the brand of bastardy upon an innocent forehead. The next step perforce is furtively to make short work of this live damnation. In case of failure even in such extremity for want of clever management, the policeman, as the accredited custodian of civil order, becomes the dread and horror of the party, if there be so much at all as a party to help the strayed soul out of the scrape. His palms must be freely greased; else, the courts of law swiftly set their cold machinery in relentless motion. Then commences the second act of the heart-harrowing drama: the wheel of accustomed sin moves round its own axis; license, the more its reins are loosed, the faster it speeds—till, in the end, the victim sinks into utter ignominy or, more correctly, shamefacedness devoid of the least trace of susceptibility. Unable or unwilling, sometimes, to be cowed down by the cramping, corroding restraints of the house that is anything but a home and goaded on by seductive wiles outside which are never wanting, the forlorn wretch—more sinned against, in truth, than sinning—goes so far as to snatch away as much of monetary wherewithal as she can secretly lay hands on and elopes with a paramour, here a cook, there a washerman, or there again a Mahammadan servant. Where possible, the humiliated kinsfolk strive to recover—by no means to reclaim—the lost one into the fold, the thin story handily concocted for Mrs. Grundy's consumption being that of a pilgrimage to some sacred shrine or a visit to some distant relations to account for the escapade. And, very often, the threat, even the writ, of excommunication from the pious preservers of *sanâtanist* purity melts away before feasts and *dakshinâs*. Such be some of the subterfuges, too well-known, to which recourse is had in the absence of permissive provision for the marriage of child-widows who should otherwise make quite respectable wives as well as happy, useful members of society in every respect and according to any right standard. Yet

our leaders are sooner prepared to swallow all intrenchments on their caste integrity, morality, spirituality and what not than to move by a hair's breadth and provide for their luckless sisters and daughters the unexceptionable scope for living clean lives of uprightness and usefulness.

In this wonderful sociology of ours, a widower has every right to marry without reference to the number of times. And seldom, if ever, does he waive that right. But marriage with a suitably grown-up widow being out of the question even for him, in all cases he goes and fastens himself to a child-wife young enough to be (mis) taken for his daughter, if not his granddaughter. And unable, despite all his high education and refinement, to contain himself at least till she has reached the stage of maturity, he falls into the depths of promiscuous adultery to the ruin of his health and means as also of his prospects for the future. Some enforce premature union with their diminutive wives—invariably to the greater detriment of the latter. What elaboration does it require here for us to realise the horrors of an ill-assorted alliance of the kind, say, between an old, decrepit widower with one foot in the grave and a young, lovely girl with but the vista of a blank or blasted future before her? What community of interest or sentiment, what reciprocity of affection or attachment, what reality of happiness or harmony may one expect to flow, let us honestly ask ourselves, from such a 'sacrament' as we persist in misnaming it with all perverseness? At best, the green little wife is not in a position to manage the household so successfully and bring up her necessarily feeble and sickly children so satisfactorily as an experienced widow could if only allowed to unite herself with one subjected to a like mishap in life.

We have so far seen, on quite a surface view, some of the plainest abuses of the system of enforced widowhood which has laid its iron grip upon our country or, rather, our community. Clearer minds, to be sure, will readily perceive a vast array of more pernicious ills eating away the vitals of social efficiency and spiritual growth amongst us. While upon this aspect, it must not be left unobserved that there is no rule in human affairs under the sun but has its own exception; and so it is, too, in the present context. As already noted, there are, it is far from me to question, not a few of our widows who pursue the right course in their widowhood and lead lives of unsullied purity, *pátivratyam*, to the bitter end of their earth-

ly chapter. Nevertheless, even in such thrice-glorious instances, it cannot be gainsaid that it is a mere death-in-life sort of sapless, sunless existence in which naught but the negation of positive interests toward self-fulfulment greets and besets them on every side. And, after all, where are the scales and weights with which to appraise the moral worth of the results of an absolute scheme of coercive chastity? On the other hand, so long as there remains a single victim of compulsory inhumanity, the system responsible cannot but bring down upon itself the verdict of deserved condemnation. Fancy not, good hearers, I beseech you, that I am indulging in wanton exaggeration. On the contrary, the stark truth stares us full in the face. I cannot invent new tales; nor would I, if I could. While deploring the hard lot of existing widows, how dare I find it in my heart to add to their sad number by creating one more from mere fantasy?

It is an inference of history, so thoroughly attested by every one of its pages as to have virtually passed into an axiom by this time, that the position of women in a country or community is one sure index to the state of its civilisation. If so, what, in fine, was and what is that position amongst us? Towards the days of the decline of feudal serfdom with its incident of forced labour in the latter part of the eighteenth century, there went up as follows a petition from a Hungarian peasant to the German Emperor, Joseph II:—

"Most Merciful Emperor,

Four days forced labour for the seigneur; the fifth day fishing for him; the sixth day hunting with him; and the seventh belongs to God! Consider, most merciful Emperor, how can I pay dues and taxes?"

In all conscience, is not the lot of our womenfolk something analogous to this? Do we not read in their every-day life—albeit, for the matter of that, they are not so much as allowed to exclaim like the peasant sufferer—that, through the hard and fast inflictions imposed by society, a woman in India is never once in life her own mistress but must always belong to somebody? Before marriage, she is the possession of her father or, if the father is no more, of her brother. After marriage, she becomes the property of her husband and, on his death, of her son or of other members of the family. And this all-round subordination of the sex does continue still in

face of the high education, the refining culture, which has awakened our countrymen to a consciousness of their predicament under a foreign yoke and which spurs them on to aspire to self-government and clamour for political independence! Every nation is made up of men and women; and where one section seeks to grow at the expense of the other, there palpably the laws of nature are set at naught; and nature is always too dangerous a force to defy. Shall we say, then, that our compatriots are simply insensible of the wrongs under which their complementary fellow-beings are silently pining, though not articulately groaning, away? Or is it that, like the Priest and the Levite of old, they shut their eyes to the sufferings—not by the wayside as then but right under the very roof—and ignore their own duty by them? Or, perhaps, do they lay unto their souls the flattering unction that, when all is said and done, the present policy stands justified of wisdom in the name alike of equity and of utility? Indeed, there be in our midst all these divers shades of thinking and feeling. So that it behoves us to examine more closely how far justice and generosity bear them out in reference to this vexed but vital question of questions.

The foremost of common-sense pleas for the marriage of widowed girls or, properly, for the lifting of the ban upon it, points to the enormity of a state of things in which what is sauce to the goose is not sauce to the gander—one in which a widower who has once, aye, more them once, enjoyed family life and whose training and enlightenment must have fortified him into subduing his animal passions is yet equipped with every warrant to remarry any number of times; whereas an ignorant, innocent child-widow, quite a stranger to the sweets of married life and to any of the facilities of education and good training, is completely placed under an eternal interdict in this regard. In answer to the above, it is stated *ad nauseum* that the widower's case is one of religious necessity in that the performance of certain spiritual rites is enjoined upon the male as a *grihasta*, it being also incumbent upon him to beget children for the perpetuation of the family; while not only is the performance of rites by the female nowhere laid down but, into the bargain, it is distinctly declared that she has no separate, independent *role* of the kind and that, being virtually merged in her lord and sovereign, she has only a secondary existence by his side. Upon these

good-natured objectors we cannot too strongly impress the truth that to hold that women, as women, have no spiritual functions to discharge is to make a travesty of perfect duty, even the duty of self-realisation in and through the home; and also that the real, the supreme, end of marriage is not only to raise offspring but to avert indiscriminate intercourse. When once the marriage has taken place, there are duties devolving upon the one as upon the other. If the objector's reasoning were well-grounded, it should follow as a corollary that there is little need for a woman, considered by herself, to marry even in the first instance. Some sagely question whether widow-marriage is going to purge the world altogether of the age-long iniquity of immoral conduct. To this no conclusive answer is ever possible. But this much may safely be affirmed that the reform in question will go a great way towards minimising the extent of immorality rampant within the sacred precincts of home; and the one practical and effective means of arresting adultery is first to countenance the marriage of child-widows and then to employ other collateral aids in our power to crush the monster. Our venerated pioneer in this cause, Veeresalingam the Valiant—all success attend his Herculean heroisms!—aptly likens the position of the widow to that of a hunger-stricken man shut up in a room full of eatables and precluded from all chance of working for himself in the proper way but charged, all the same, to maintain himself without appropriating by 'theft' any of the articles close at hand. Thus, the tall talk of putting down adultery without allowing remarriage in the case of the voiceless ones we plead for would prove no less hollow than that of putting down theft under the above circumstances. Then, side by side with those who try by specious arguments to fence up and fortify the time-honoured prohibition, the bulk of our people are inwardly swayed, like Hamlet, by the dread of future ills unknown which, peradventure, may come to replace those they now know of. In general terms, however, the old adage, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush', applies only to good and not to the reverse of good. So that no problematical dubieties may rightly hinder anyone from trying to improve off actual certainties of present evil fraught also with prospective danger. To glance at one or two of such particular issues, there are those, in the first place, who entertain, or pretend to entertain, grave apprehensions

that, with the door thrown open to widow marriage, the murder of husbands is likely to crop up in lieu of infanticide. But may not fears of that ilk be justly traced to the nervous dread, inherent in human nature, of incurring sore peril by way of reprisal at the hands of those who have long been maltreated by them? *Per contra*, as a matter of fact, do we not hear occasionally of the murder of his lawfully wedded wife by some male member of our own society in view, apparently, of the free permit held to take another wife after her? And whoever would propose to proscribe a second marriage for our menfolk on the score of such out-of-the-way occurrences? Also, do we know for a certainty that, on anything like a wider scale, wives are given to disposing of the lives of their husbands in other countries and even in the several communities of our own country in which no prohibition of widow-marriage is operative? In the second place, there is the economic objection which turns upon the serious fear of overpopulation ushering in its train the twin monsters of famine and penury. This apprehension, at its best, betrays an insufficient grasp of the applied science of political economy in its bearings upon Indian problems. Ours even now is a continent of a country full of extensive tracts of unreclaimed land which may, with advantage, be brought under the plough in easy development of rich resources more than sufficient to afford a living for twice her present population. As it is, is not the census being increased, in spite of ourselves, by such as recoil from the vow of celibacy forced down their throats and take to lives of shame? What is more, may not our aged widowers themselves refrain or be made to refrain from remarriage so as thus to set the example in the matter of a Malthusian check upon population? If only they yielded place thus to some of our less aged and more lonely widows, why, then, from the very nature of the case, the loin-issue of the latter could be depended upon to make for better progeny, indeed. Lastly, there remains to be noticed the trite old ground incessantly put forward in defence of the *status quo* that, say what the new-fangled folk may upon the platform, our widows at home are themselves abundantly satisfied with their own lot as the very cream of generous humanity. But, although, doubtless, in several cases there does prevail a strong feeling of tropical warmth, all careful observers must still agree that the miseries of widowhood amongst us are appalling to a degree; and even where they

fail to feel the sharp edge of the affliction, the question remains whether their insensibility, based as it is on ignorance and wont not unlike in the case of the Negro Slaves of America, goes in any way to justify the perpetuation of the old policy on the part of our own sapient, superior selves? Furthermore, is the happiness owned by our widows in their position, such as it is, any different from the pleasure indulged in by a self-deluded lunatic? Above all, and after all, even where genuine happiness falls to the lot of some fortunate ones, assuredly, it has not been through our instrumentality. For, what have we omitted that could tend to intensify the bitterness of their situation?

Considering, then, that a changed social polity is so very imperative for the upkeep of sound national life, let the advocates of law here present determine if apathy and inaction in this matter do not come properly within the four corners of culpable negligence of duty before the high tribunal of Divine Justice. It stands implanted as a citadel upon the rock of common-sense that, except by remarriage, no adequate redress or remedy can ever be afforded against the evils of early marriage to the unfortunates concerned; and until that nipping-in-the-bud institution of early marriage has become itself a thing of the past, child-widows may not strictly be judged with unfeeling harshness for their steps being forced into the by-paths of vice as the only escape from enforced abstinence. In the eyes of our orthodox brethren, this innovation, of course, involves nothing short of the breach of a law divine. Now, howsoever prepared we may be, for argument's sake, even to lower our conception of God and His even-handed impartiality towards all His children and to grant that what He wills for man He does not will for woman among the higher castes of Hindu India, the burden still presses heavy upon our hearts—not so much upon our heads though—of judging, in the lurid light of ghastly facts, how far our self-righteous community, as at present conditioned, is strictly conforming to the supposed Divine injunctions of the *Sastras*. Change is being effected or, rather, is simply gaining ground by ever so much of legal fiction—and this whether we rise to the occasion and stamp it with recognition or, ostrich-like, shut our eyes and slumber away in fancied security. The slothful servant in the Parable of the Talents was, no doubt, under the spell of simple indolence. More than that, there lay behind, too, a false

consciousness of duty at the back of that shallow mind. He was swayed by the strong impression that his business was no more than just to preserve intact what his master had committed to his keeping; so that in the tenacious adherence to the present consisted for him the ideal of the true discharge of duty! Manifestly, it was no act of service that he rendered. The other servants utilised their possessions, namely, their dower of talents, to better purpose inasmuch as they laid them out and set them current among their fellow-men. So, failing to discern in altered circumstances a solemn call and challenge from God Himself to carry on His 'increasing purpose' to loftier issues, does it at all befit us comfortably to disown all responsibility and cleave to the form of things handed down to us, attended though with naught but narrow and even nasty results? Nay, nay. We have neither to cling to the past nor to fling it away. The rule of progressive life, as students of institutional growth like Sir Henry Maine remind us, is always to cleave to the spirit and not to the form for the plain reason that the latter retains not its integrity through all time. And therein, assuredly, what we keep is more beyond measure than what we yield up. Our own forefathers never had such degenerate practices as infant marriage with their brood of kindred evils. Far, far away have we long since wandered from their thoughts and usages. Let us, therefore, claim back and make good our kinship with them by sharing freely the largess of their spirit and digging afresh the channels in which the exigencies of the day and the generation require that spirit to flow.

In closing, permit me to repeat in a too feeble tone the trumpet-tongued exhortation of that eminent savant-friend of India, Professor Max Muller, gratefully held in the highest esteem by one and all in this land. "Cannot", he plaintively asks, "the people of India themselves, so enlightened and kind-hearted as many of the leaders are now, combine to wipe off this blot on their national honour and make the lot of all widows, young or old, not only tolerable but honourable, useful and, in the end, happy and joyful?" Is it not more than time, good, gracious gentlemen, that, men of light and leading as you are, you hearkened to, and heeded, the undertones of the pathetic plaint of your widowed sisters and daughters voiced thus by noble-natured Tennyson:

"These men are hard upon us as of old"?

Else, were it not but to confirm, with reinforced evidence as self-convicted votaries of the Moloch of Custom, the telling indictment of tender-tempered Cowper:

"There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart"?

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KEATS AND SHELLEY AS ODISTS

1912

Two brother-bards with much in common alike in life's outfit, achievement and untimely end were Keats and Shelley. Children both of the Neo-Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century, they shared in a greater or less measure the Hellenic heritage of antique art and literature. Upon both, though not to an equal degree, the contemporary formative influence of Leigh Hunt and others left its impress. And the all too impatient hand of Death gathered them, one close upon the other, to their premature graves side by side in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome. Sweet beyond words as are the heard melodies of both, they force us to feel how sweeter far should have been those unheard from their heavenly harps broken before time. The critical world, with singular unanimity, has agreed that of the rare productions actually left to it by Keats and Shelley, the shorter lyrical pieces must suffice by themselves to make the charm of the muse of each endure as long as the English language should be spoken. In particular, so characteristic of the genius of each in conception and so perfact in execution despite the immaturity of each are the exquisite little representative odes of either. These furnish in every way a most fitting illustration of Prof. Saintsbury's comment upon the two authors—'so alike and yet so different.'

The first impression created by the Odes is the sense o their wonderful rapidity of movement in the flight of imagination and of melody in the flow of verse—features so very essential to this species of poetic composition. Keats's spiri now flies to his 'light-winged' Nightingale 'on the viewles wings of poesy' and then descends to report the 'fled' musi of his vision or waking dream experienced in her company His Autumn Ode has its 'music too,' the music of the 'seaso of mists and mellow fruitfulness.' His *Ode to the Poets* easil

carries the vehicle of a simple metre up to the pitch of consummate skill in celebrating the 'Bards of Passion and of Mirth' 'double-lived in regions new.' And those are by no means 'tuneless numbers' in which, unto immortal Psyche,

'latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy,'

he becomes at once her choir, her voice, her lute, her pipe, her incense sweet, her shrine, her grove, her oracle, her prophet and her priest. Shelley's measure, in its turn, rushes forward here with the elemental sweep of his 'wild West Wind'. It soars aloft there with the spontaneous spring of his 'blithe' Skylark up 'to Heaven or near it.' It, again, dances with majestic rhythm to the chorus of the three Spirits in the *Ode to Heaven*. And, once more, in the Liberty Odes, it flows with torrential force through the recurring refrains of the charge to enthralled Spain, through the classic transitions of epode and strophe and antistrophe in the *Ode to Naples* and through 'the solemn harmony' upon the varying fortunes of the 'lost Paradise of this divine and glorious world' in the story of the nations since creation.

A close scrutiny of the two minstrels' moods connects them, too, by a common colouring of inward personal despondency. Keats is overborne by 'the weariness, the fever and the fret' of life. His is 'the wakeful anguish of the soul' subject to habitual alternations of joy and pain out of the abiding consciousness—

'Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine.'

Shelley, for his part, has his 'sore need', fallen and bleeding 'upon the thorns of life.' He is face to face with 'hate and pride and fear'; and he pants for what is not. In this matter, however, their outlook differs rather markedly: that of Shelley is at least more uniformly healthy and hopeful. This is brought out by the aim each brings to bear upon his chosen aspect of past lore or present nature and the lesson he carries from it. Working out the allegory about Psyche aided by Cupid, Keats does rise to a noble view in his hint of the soul's gradual purification, not out of, but by and through, its passions and its misfortunes so as ultimately to be fitted for immortal bliss. But on his wonted level, he seeks merely to be happy in the happiness of the Nightingale by sinking 'Lethe-wards.' Shel-

ley, on the other hand, longs to 'deem' with the Skylark 'things more true and deep than we mortals dream.' 'Teach us.....what sweet thoughts are thine' is his appeal to that Sprite of a Bird, that so harmonious madness may flow from his lips with a 'clear, keen joyance' free from langour, annoyance and satiety. He would pierce to the soul of good in things evil; while Keats would be content to drown them in forgetfulness, if he could. No doubt, the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* sounds a deeper note than the *Ode to a Nightingale* as to the permanency of the elements of good. In the latter,

'beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.'

But in the former, unto the bold Lover is vouchsafed the positive assurance:

'She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!'

Nevertheless, the refuge against the depression is only the magic of romance in the one piece and the ideal eternality of art in the other. Keats, then, lacks Shelley's unclouded perception of the higher spiritual ministrations of sadness in that he fails to appreciatef ully with him how our very susceptibility to sorrow enables us to approach and apprehend better the joy that lies rooted in the heart of Nature

'If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.'

Consider, again, in proof of the above, how diversely the season of Autumn and its attendant phenomena affect the two poets. Keats's mind finds satisfaction in the personified image of Autumn conspiring with her 'close bosom-friend', 'the maturing sun,' to load and bless the trees with fruit and the granary-floors with grain. And all he gathers is that Autumn is not without her music, too, as against the songs of Spring. Not so with Shelley. Amidst the autumnal wind and rain, thunder and lightning, peculiar to the Cisalpine region, he is possessed with a graver sense of his own mission in the regeneration of the world; so that his charge to them runs thus:

'Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth'.

For, so he would sound through his lips 'the trumpet of a new prophecy' to 'unawakened earth'.

Hence it is that for Keats,
'to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs';

whereas the sadder the thought, the sweeter the song it inspires in Shelley. Hence, too, the absence in the descriptions of Keats of that fire of prophetic passion which flames through the rhapsodies of Shelley. Like the tumult of the fierce storm with which he yearns to be unified—and his, throughout, was a life tossed about in the vortex of such a storm, Shelley knows himself to be not only the destroyer of the 'pestilence-stricken multitudes' of 'Anarch Custom' but also the far reaching preserver of the seeds of the future, the herald of Spring which, when Winter comes, cannot be far behind. Thus, before Spain has recovered her freedom, his own spirit is afire with impassioned strains to quicken her patriot heart into the burning conviction that

'The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes'.

And when liberty, a year later, gleams over that loved land, his soul spurns the chains of its own dismay and clothes itself afresh 'in the rapid plumes of song'. Furthermore, on the declaration of a constitutional government for the 'Elysian City' of Naples, he raises in what Swinburne prizes as the greatest English ode the resonant chant of Hope, Truth and Justice—

'Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
The instrument to work thy will divine!'

Accordingly, if Keats is an enchanter, Shelley is a seer as well as an enchanter.

The Odes, moreover, show how, as Shelley's ambitions are loftier and more universal, his faculties also are more subtle and complex than those of his fellow-warbler. Whether in the contemplation of the dainty sweetness of bird-notes or of the luxuriant fulness of the seasons' produce or even of the delicate spell of human art and hoary myth, the visualising power of Keats retains the same quality—distinctly objective, concrete and sensuous. On the contrary, whatever the theme touched upon, Shelley's imagination stands unique in its subjective, abstract and ethereal character. The Nightingale is only Keats's happier companion—a bird all the same, though

an 'immortal bird.' Cupid is 'the winged boy'; and Psyche a 'happy happy dove,' And even the mood of Melancholy—how palpably it is objectified with a setting of 'cloudy trophies' round about! Over against all this, the Skylark is to Shelley a 'blithe spirit'. 'Bird thou never wert'. Nay, 'what thou art we know not'. Likewise, the West Wind is a 'wild Spirit' moving everywhere impetuous and uncontrolled. The Moon, so called by mortals, is an 'orbed maiden with white fire laden'. The Cloud is 'the daughter of Earth and Water and the nursling of the Sky.' 'The daedal earth' is 'that island in the ocean of the world.' And Heaven is

'the mind's first chamber
Round which its young fancies clambour.'

Nothing to Shelley is material—of the earth, earthy. So exquisitely does he, to borrow a very happy characterisation, 'volatilise' all sense-perceptions. And so strikingly does he, at every turn, draw his parabolic analogues from the sphere of the abstract in order to elucidate the experience of the concrete. What Symonds rightly calls Shelley's new contribution to English Poetry—his ideality, freedom and spiritual audacity—will be readily recognised in the numerous touches of his 'star-flight' amid 'soul-light' in the Odes with which we are concerned: for instance, Spring driving sweet buds like flowers to feed in air; loose clouds shaken like decaying leaves from the tangled bows of Heaven and Ocean; the storm spreading out her locks upon the surface of the aery surge of the breath of Autumn's being; the blue Mediterranean asleep in his summer dreams until awakened by the West Wind; buds rocked to rest on their mother's breast as she dances about the sun; the cloud laughing as it passes in thunder and anon sleeping in the arms of the blast with snow for its pillow; the stars a swarm of golden bees; the mountains columns of the roof of cloud; the rainbow the triumphal arch through which the cloud marches on; the autumnal leaves heard like light foot-falls of spirits; and every living lineament of many a bright sepulchre clear as in the sculptor's thought. Shelley is thus too absolutely insubstantial and transcendent to fix his eye upon the localised contents of the sense-world. His Skylark is 'an unbodied joy,' 'a rain of melody', as Wordsworth's Cuckoo is 'but a wandering voice,' 'an invisible thing.....a mystery.' But, for rapt absorption of gaze on individualised nature and the resultant profuse-

ness of local detail, one has to turn to Keats, as witness his unfoldment of the delicious beauty of the English landscape in the *Ode to Autumn* or the warm splendour of Greek mythical imagery in the *Ode to Psyche* or, again, the supernal glory of the upper regions of communion for translated spirits in the *Ode to the Poets*. In this last-named apostrophe, he, of course, evinces his aliveness to the

> 'Tales and golden histories
> Of heaven and its mysteries.'

Also, in the lines, *On a Grecian Urn*, he appraises 'ditties of no tone' piped 'to the spirit' as 'more endear'd' than those piped 'to the sensual ear.' Yet, as he revels voluptuously in the colours and the odours as well as the sounds of the earth, so his own preeminent delight lies in the vivid, pictorial delineation of the visible lusciousness of objects like

> 'The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
> White hawthorn and the pastoral eglantine;
> Fast-fading violets cover'd in leaves;
> And mid-May's eldest child,
> The coming musk-rose full of dewy wine,
> The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.'

In fact, every epithet, every line of his, calls up a solid and far from shadowy image before the eye. Thus, in the words of Prof. Herford, Keats fills in and enriches; Shelley dissolves and transcends. To this contrast is traceable Shelley's weaker hold upon the historic sense; and it must be interesting to speculate how different would have been his treatment of the Grecian Urn from that of Keats, who, drawn near to Greek life by Greek art, finds in that 'foster-child of silence and slow time' a 'sylvan historian' with 'a flowery tale' to convey the significant lesson of the identity of Truth and Beauty. These words suggest another expressive mode of contrast, while they emphasise the underlying kinship, between our two great masters of song. Keats's Truth is the truth of romantic realism; Shelley's Truth is the truth of romantic idealism. Keats's Beauty is the beauty of classic repose; Shelley's Beauty is the beauty of romantic energy.

In his own sphere, the style is the man in either case. To the picturesque 'Dryad of the trees' belongs the almost cloying opulence of a mastery of 'full-throated ease,' as he blends the sounds of the real with the notes of the unreal,

thus charming magic casements in faery lands. To the empyrean 'scorner of the ground' belongs the bewitching magnificence of floral perfumes, of rainbow colours and of daedalian cadences, as he unlocks the golden melodies of a fresh variety of verse-forms. All in all, for the relative possession of true poetic stuff in refinement of fancy and delicacy of sentiment, brilliance of diction and resourcefulness of metrical effects, the verdict of the doctors must continue to vary as between Keats and Shelley. It is significantly remarkable that while Matthew Arnold acclaims the one as decidedly the greater poet, Swinburne enthrones the other as 'alone the perfect singing-god.'

55

SHELLEY IN 'THE CENCI'

1912

"There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute. Shakespeare was only a human being." So wrote Shelley to his wife in 1818 with a proud quotation from *St. Leon*. And the succeeding year witnessed the production by himself of a tragedy of remarkable merit the composition of which in one and the same year with the lyrical drama of *Prometheus Unbound*, so essentially different from it in character, has been reckoned among the wonders of literature. A work like *The Cenci* on a subject and in a form entirely dependent for its interest upon incident and characterisation was in itself a striking phenomenon, a successful, if solitary, departure from the author's accustomed flights into fairyland. Here, for once, a genius naturally wedded to the abstract and the ideal tried and proved its capacity to descend to the concrete and the actual and to touch with the plumb-line of reality the depths of human passion both in its hideous and in its benign aspects. No coloured vision is indulged in of what ought to be or may be; but a widely-known chapter of human history, brought home to the mind during the residence at Rome, is laid hold of for teaching the human heart a knowledge of itself through innate sympathies with, and antipathies to, what has been. Thus, unlike his other works, *The Cenci* is far from a reflex of Shelley's own life with its clamant thoughts and aspirations for mankind through all the vicissitudes of that "miracle of thirty years." Accordingly, not shadowy, unsubstantial phantoms but living, historical characters (represented as they probably were in life) form the *dramatis personae* of the play. The subtle contrast between the dark and bright sides of human nature is vividly brought out, respectively, in Francesco Cenci, the self-abandoned nobleman with his brutish vices, and in the unfortunate members of his family, his wife and children, constant victims to

his tyrannical passion. Preeminent among them stands Beatrice, the daughter, one of the loveliest specimens, as our artist calls her, of the workmanship of Nature. The plot itself, turning upon the unnatural, incestuous cupidity of the father towards the daughter, is distinguished by the peculiar delicacy of its treatment, the "nameless wrong" being throughout "scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapped in hideous hints." Again, as in the portraiture of his characters the 'prentice hand' of the dramatist displays a clear grasp of the varying moods of feeling through an uncommon crisis, so in the weaving of his art it moves, not at random, but in conformity with rule—passion and thought and imagery being exquisitely and harmoniously wrought together. Hence the qualities of sympathy and self-restraint on the part of Shelley are made distinctly apparent in this work of his, the former in the power to dramatise a situation, the latter in the capacity to curb the imagination. It is noteworthy, as the critics have pointed out, how the descriptions in the drama keep studiously close to the development of the story and, in fact, as Shelley himself observes, how there is the absence of "an overfastidious and learned choice of words" throughout. Eloquence there is equal to the occasion, especially in the last Act, but not the eloquence of words which hit beyond the passion and pathos of the plot. "*The Cenci* is a work of art; it is not coloured by my feelings, nor obscured by my metaphysics."

Judging, then, of *The Cenci* as an avowed work of art, we look not in it for any didactic moral purpose but appreciate it as a poet-psychologist's study of human nature in the light of stirring events. The dreadful interest of "this eminently fearful and monstrous story" centres round Beatrice and her father; while the few remaining characters fall into their respective places in the whole perspective in relation to both or either. The opening lines of the play, in which Cardinal Camillo says to Count Cenci,

> "That matter of the murder is hushed up
> If you consent to yield His Holiness
> Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate,"

introduce us straight to times and conditions in which religion, as the all too dominant force, was a 'refuge,' not a 'check,' to vice and wickedness under the bartered sanction of a corrupt Papacy. "A man believing in God, yet recking not of good or ill," Francesco, the profligate head of a noble family

of Mediævel Rome, has hardened his soul by repeated acts of wanton violence. And now he contrives by a ruse the banishment to Spain, and the removal by death, of his two eldest sons and inflicts horrible wrongs upon his beautiful daughter against the earnest pleadings of his wife, Lucretia, and to the terribly agonised resentment of the sufferer herself. Reckless in the infatuation of guilt, the Count strikes the key-note of his own character in the words,

"I please my senses as I list,
And vindicate that right with force or guile;"

"I bear a darker deadlier gloom
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud;"

"Repentance is an easy moment's work
And more depends on God than me."

Against such abuse of natural relations, too infamous to put up with or to complain of, Beatrice is driven by utter helplessness to seek revenge and redress by the only possible course of riddance, the murder of the foul fiend of a father. There is, too, by her side Giacomo, the elder of her surviving brothers, already reduced to destitution by the common oppressor and now further exasperated by the ruin of domestic peace through "a specious tale" and thereby roused to declare of him,

"He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame."

The unnatural inspirer of filial dread is strangled to death with the help of hired assassins. Then follows the execution, along with them, of Lucretia, Beatrice and Giacomo under the relentless fiat of the Vatican. Here, in the formation and fulfilment of the strange conspiracy as also in the facing of its consequences, we have afforded noteworthy instances of the superiority of Beatrice's nature over that of the accomplices, although her disavowal of them does somewhat take away from her true integrity. Between the two attitudes denoted by the touches,

"That word parricide,
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear,"

and

"O, speak no more!
I am resolved, although this very hand
Must quench the life that animated it,"

we find the index to the wavering vacillation of Giacomo, which it is part of the interested machinations of the wily Prelate, Orsino, to dispel. Close upon the deed, again, Giacomo yields to the urge of quick-rising remorse,

"Alas! Alas!
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,
To kill an old and hoary-headed father."

Likewise, "for pity's sake" he seeks to induce even Beatrice to confess; and anon, under her unbending countenance, he sobs away with the words,

"O weak, wicked tongue
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been
Cut out and thrown to dogs first!"

Giacomo's, then, is the irresolution of filial susceptibility. Lucretia's, on the other hand, is purely the agitation of feminine weakness. Full of genuine love for her step-children; 'loving them as her own, though not their true mother, she remonstrates strongly with her husband against his misdeeds. Nobly, too, does she throw in her lot with the victimised ones even unto death. In fact, she has such goodness of heart that she is simply unable to comprehend the veiled allusions of Beatrice to her wrong and only vaguely wonders with pain, saying to herself,

"It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess;"

until the miscreant's own direct reference makes her realise the horror of the idea! Quite woman-like, she more than once commits herself, though apparently with a view to self-defence in the course of inquiry into the murder; so much so that the better judgment of Beatrice has to intervene in time and divert attention, as in the matter of the keys of Cenci's apartment and the interpretation of Orsino's convicting letter to Beatrice. And throughout the Trial Scenes, Sc. 4 of Act IV and Scs. 3 and 4 of Act V, she has constantly to be inspirited by the firmer will of Beatrice, verily "a protecting presence" to the others as to herself. Bernardo, Beatrice's little brother, exhibits all the innocence and spontaneity of unsophisticated childhood, though not

"free to live
In some blithe place, like others of my age,
With sports and delicate food and the fresh air."

He is simple enough to suggest,

"If indeed
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine
And then the Pope will surely pardon you."

After the sentence of death has gone forth, he is still so far hopeful as to seek out the Pope

"and bathe
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears."

And finally, as the curtain falls at his parting from the condemned, he is graceful enough to observe, "I cannot say, farewell." As for Beatrice, the soul of the whole story, her character drawn from Guido's picture in the Colonna Palace, she is the pink of feminine gentleness blended with more than masculine sternness. She knows how to devise and how to execute, what to excuse and what to condemn, and when to pacify and when to stimulate. The prevision of prudence never deserts her: she is the first to foresee the danger of allowing Cenci to reach with her the lonely Castle of Petrella by night. Through vehement struggle, she slowly forms the firmer mind. And this once done, there is no more of the vacillation of Hamlet—'to be or not to be', to strike or not to strike. Rather, her deepest concern at first is, "Advise me how it shall not be again"; her nature cries out for "atonement" not only "for what is past" but also

"Lest I be reserved, day after day,
To load with crimes an overburthened soul."

She next says to herself,

"Some such thing is to be endured or done;
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,
And never anything will move me more."

Then, as the way defines itself before her mind's eye, she declares, "All must be suddenly resolved and done;" and "We must be brief and bold;" and charges her supporters to be cautious as they may but prompt—prompt after the manner of Othello. Lastly, during the trial as well as after the verdict, she conducts herself altogether unnerved, "as firm as the world's centre."

"Consequence, to me,
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock
But shakes it not."

Beside all this dignity of bearing and energy of action and of endurance, how charming, again, is her tenderness of emotion as her "blood runs cold" on hearing of the fate of her two brothers in Spain! But soon she recovers her fortitude:

"Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
I should preserve my senses for your sake."

And, in the end, she even commands spirits enough to sing a tune, "not cheerful, nor yet sad," and lull her beloved kin to sleep in the prison-cell! Of Beatrice's character Shelley rightly observes in the Preface, "It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered consists." Beatrice herself furnishes the clue to the apparent incongruities of her nature, when she exclaims,

'sorrow makes me seem,
Sterner than else my nature might have been."

The strangeness of the situation, therefore, is toned down by that note of "self-anatomy," described by Orsino as a trick of the Cenci family, which leads Beatrice to feel,

"My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
To see, in this ill world where none are true,
My kindred false to their deserted selves;"

and which, indeed, makes her declare as to her decision,

"I have prayed
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
And have unravelled my entangled will,
And have at length determined what is right."

After all, Beatrice's resolve and the strength to stand by it belong to the consciousness that "the God who knew my wrong" "made our speedy act the angel of His wrath;" and, what is more high-minded,

"My father's honour did demand
My father's death."

Our judgment, then, in this regard must be, in the spirit of Beatrice's own plea to Bernardo in the closing scene, to "err not in harsh despair."

With the exception, perhaps, of Orsino, whose portrait betrays, no doubt, the defect, pointed out by Symonds, of infirmity of conscience amidst calculating wickedness, the characters of the play, it will be seen, are, though few, yet clean-cut and well-defined. It must, therefore, be accounted somewhat of a detraction from the dramatic skill of the artist that, nevertheless, he should have put into the mouth of each character some words directly descriptive of his or her own nature. The master-hand of a Shakespeare would have left his creations to interpret themselves wholly by their actions without recourse to such self-delineations. Yet, the interest is, throughout, well sustained; poetic justice is duly vindicated; and the dramatic unities are properly maintained. *The Cenci*, though rapidly and carelessly composed, is thus a most popular drama relying, as already stated, upon subject-matter for success; while the lyrical element, so characteristic of Shelley's genius, is conspicuously abandoned in it to be resumed, however, in *Hellas*. It is a Roman theme handled with Greek austerity, as Prof. Herford puts it, but so as to appeal to every fibre of sympathy for heroism and for suffering womanhood. And if the characters here are living beings in human flesh and blood, unlike and otherwise than the poet's more favourite, familiar images of cloud, plant or sunrise, maybe he is still so deeply moved by the story even because, as indicated by Taine, its sentiments "were so unheard of and so strained that they suited superhuman conceptions." The result, at all events, is, according to Stopford Brooke's high authority, "the greatest and noblest tragedy since Webster wrote."

56

COLERIDGE IN 'CHRISTABEL'

1913

"The rapt one of the godlike forehead" was Wordsworth's appraisement of Coleridge. "A weaver of day-dreams" was Coleridge's description of his own pursuit. Happy expressions these, as true as they are terse in delineating the inward life and the outward labours of a prodigy who, even in boyhood, knew no recreation but to act over again by himself what he had been reading or fancying and who, early in manhood, rose to be one of the accredited initiators of a new school in the story of the imaginative art of poetry. Alike by habit and by temperament, so deeply absorbed always was he in a supernatural world of "fancies from afar" and so thoroughly and transcendentally imaginative was his distinctive work in the field of literature. A "devourer of fairy-tales" by the urge of instinct, he was marked out to collaborate with Wordsworth by a community of interest in leading the movement of the "renascence of poetic wonder" in the literary England of five quarter-centuries ago. The names of the twin poets linked together in that epoch-making publication, the *Lyrical Ballads*, stand at the parting of the ways between the age of flat acceptance and didactic moralism, on the one side, and the era of responsive wonder and romantic temper, on the other. It was a "return to nature" movement, a surge of reaction against conventional artifice in favour of creative art, that was inaugurated by them in the wake of the great French Revolution. As such, by the way, it just represented in literature across the waters a particular phase of the essentially "natural-supernatural" outlook upon life which was opening in far broader horizons at that very period in our own country before the genius of Rammohun, born in the same year as Coleridge and recalled but a short while in advance.

The place of Coleridge in English Literature is the key to the right appreciation, as it is itself the result of the real

worth, of *Christabel*, the subject of our present study. At least, it is acknowledged by all critics that this poem and *The Ancient Mariner*, whatever their relative merits, shine forth as the two pillars of his poetic fame and that, even if he had left no other literary remains, his preeminence in the roll of the Muses would have passed unchallenged. In its existing form, *Christabel* is an unfinished fragment, in two Parts, of a superbly imaginative poem of five Cantos—Gillman in his *Life* states this as four Cantos on the strength of Coleridge's later account—intended for that joint production with Wordsworth which was to turn the tide away from classicism in the direction of romanticism. The circumstances and the objective of the origination of their plan, vividly described afterwards by each of the partners, will furnish a proper introduction to the study of *Christabel*. *The Ancient Mariner* and three other (minor) poems were included in the joint volume published in 1798; while *Christabel*, the first Part of which had been written in 1797 amid the rural scenery of Somersetshire, was yet to be completed in such a way as "more nearly to realise my ideal." Of this early ideal, therefore, *Christabel* is the avowed embodiment, though not followed up further into the second Part till 1800 on the hills and dales of the Lake Country and though, after all, left incomplete to the end, not ushered into the world before 1816, the memorable year that witnessed also the birth of Byron's *Childe Harold—III*, *Siege of Corinth* and *Prisoner of Chillon*, Shelley's *Alastor* and Scott's *Antiquary*, *Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*. The "ideal" involving a fundamental change in the prevailing notions as to both "poetic method" and "poetic energy," was enunciated by Coleridge as that of "exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of Nature and giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination." For, in the division of their conjoint task the realistic treatment was assigned to Wordsworth, the author of the famous aphorism, "What comes from the heart goes to the heart," and the idealistic to Coleridge, the master of the "shaping spirit of imagination"—those two correlated functions which have been pithily described as cooperative in lending the charm of imagination to the real and the force of reality to the imaginary. Accordingly, whether for its beauties or blemishes, *Christabel* is best studied as the off-

spring, at its highest, of "what nature gave me at my birth," that "beauty-making power" the later decadence of which was so pathetically lamented in the *Ode to Dejection.* Judged in this light, the poem appraises itself as a remarkable contribution to the development of English Poetry. Theodore Watts-Dunton called it, evidently in reference to its incomplete character, "the loveliest torso in the gallery of English Literature;" as Brewer styled the author himself "an intellectual torso" in view of his many unexecuted schemes of genius. For his own part, Coleridge was always unhesitating in his estimate of *Christabel* as his own masterpiece. Ashe, the editor, and Traill, the biographer, both concur in accounting it as inferior only to *The Ancient Mariner.* The latter authority pronounces it the poet's most successful, as being his most popular, production. At all events, as already observed, the judgment holds good beyond dispute that the supernatural has never received such superb treatment as in these two creations of "imagination all compact." Hence the aptness of the association stressed thus in the closing apostrophe of *The Prelude* to the "capacious Soul" of Coleridge:

> "Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
> Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
> The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
> Didst utter of the Lady Christabel."

The distinguishing note of the poem being thus indicated, we proceed to follow the tale of those "rueful woes" and to notice how artistically it is told, so far as it is One chill, moonlit midnight on the eve of springtide, Christabel, the lovely darling of her father—Sir Leoline, the rich Baron—betook herself to the woodland a furlong away from their castle and engaged in silent prayer beneath a huge oak tree in order to ward off from her betrothed lord that ill with the bodings of which she had been troubled in her dreams overnight. Coming to hear a feeble moan as though from the other side of the tree, she gently looked about, stepped aside and there beheld, to her surprise, the shadowy figure of a bright damsel richly clad in white silken robes and decked with glistening gems. Accosted, the stranger lady represented herself, in a faint yet sweet voice, as a nobleman's daughter, by name Geraldine, who was being hurried away from home by unknown ruffians on horseback and had just

been placed there for a while to be seized again on their return. She further implored help to flee from the impending doom. Christabel readily offered comfort with assurances of Sir Leoline's services to see the forlorn maid safe back under her own parental roof and conducted her, through the castle across the mote, into her own chamber beyond her father's bed-room. Entering in with studied stillness so as not to disturb the rare slumber of the Baron in his weak health, Christabel trimmed the dim-burning silver lamp; and soon she braced up the drooping spirits of her guest with the wild-flower wine long ago prepared by her late mother, who, she told Geraldine, had died in the hour of her birth, stating,

> "That she should hear the castle-bell
> Strike twelve upon my wedding-day."

This account was followed by Geraldine with staring eyes; while, in an imperious tone, she abruptly ordered off an unseen "guardian spirit" (presumably, that of Christabel's mother)—an act which Christabel attributed to a passing frenzy of mind born of the horrid experiences of the day's distress. The two maidens lay down to sleep; when, moved by a desire to drink in the beauty of her charming mate, Christabel slowly rose from bed and, with a deep-drawn breath of trepidation, unloosed the waist-belt of that fairy-like form and stole a glance at the lovely bosom laid bare. Geraldine, then, with an air of subdued scorn and pride, pronounced a spell which should render Christabel powerless, by the mysterious touch of that bosom, to disclose to any thereafter more than the bare incident of the rescue by her of a bright but helpless damsel. After an hour of this exercise of witchery on the part of "the worker of these harms," poor Christabel recovered from her trance of fearful dreams to indulge the fond fancy that, perchance, it might be the presence beside her of the guardian spirit of her own mother and that for her own behoof! This kindly impression of an other than malevolent influence about her received confirmation when, amid the merry chimes of the morning church-bells, she saw Geraldine awaken her from sleep with a look of gentle thankfulness for the good offices of the night. The two ladies duly attired themselves and proceeded to the presence-chamber of Sir Leoline, who, on his daughter's introduction, first greeted the strange, bright damsel with immense delight and sympathy but soon changed colour as he

learnt that she was no other than the daughter of Lord Roland de Vaux of Triermaine, his own bosom friend of old now sundered from fellowship by the mad fury of mutual disdain and insult at the instance of "whispering tongues." In his noble heart, Sir Leoline became at once smitten with sharp penitence over the estrangement of "that evil hour." With intensified affection, he fondly took Geraldine up in his arms and embraced her bosom, which induced in Christabel an inward shudder at the unspeakable magic effects of the touch. Geraldine herself preserved, the while, the graceful silence of feigned innocence and mildly prayed to be passed back without delay to her father's mansion. Sir Leoline called up Bracy the Bard and charged him to hasten with a harper on horseback to Lord Roland's castle and to convey him the assurance of his lost daughter's safety in their keeping as also to invite him in restored friendship to meet the repentant Sir Leoline and his troop half-way for her conduct home. The appointed envoy, however, explained to his master the circumstances of a strange dream which had haunted him the night before—the picture of Christabel's dove caught up in the coils of a serpent and fluttering in pain alone on the forest ground. And he begged for time in order to fulfil his pledge to rove through the forest with solemn music and chase away all vile traces therefrom. The Baron, again, caressing Geraldine in fatherly endearment, sought to satisfy her that her father and himself together could easily ensure the safe crushing of the enemy. She courteously blushed and hung down her head in her bearing towards him. At the same time, she instantly turned her own large, bright eyes into small, shrunken ones like those of a serpent and looked askance at Christabel "in dull and treacherous hate," thereby temporarily inducing a dizzy trance in the guileless object of her magic gaze. Recovering from the trance, Christabel entreated her father to lose no time in sending away the woman, of whose weird personality she could not tell more under the constraint of the spell. In ignorance of the true, wily nature of the being before him, the noble-hearted father read in the daughter's solicitations no more than a wanton impulse of womanly jealousy dishonouring to himself in his hospitality to the wronged darling of an erstwhile friend. Thus confused with pain and rage, the good Sir Leoline quickly dismissed Bracy the Bard upon his errand and led forth Lady Geraldine.

At this point, the story breaks off in the hands of the narrator, who never again resumed it for completion despite promises to himself and professions to others as to the presence of the entire plan in his mind from the beginning and also the capacity for the "genial recurrence of the ray divine" for its sustained execution. So that, for a sketch of the proposed conclusion the student has to depend upon the *Life* by Gillman, the sympathetic care-taker of the mighty victim of laudanum in those latter-days. To follow up the story, then, according to this account, the Bard hurried over the mountains to Sir Roland's domain but only to retrace his steps on finding the old castle swept away without any trace by a deluge. Meanwhile, by her guileful arts, the witch kept on exciting feelings of anger and annoyance in the Baron. On the return of Bracy, she changed her form into that of the accepted but absent lover of Christabel. The advances of the personated lover, the at first cold response of the tremulous *fiance* and the entreaties of the unsuspecting father ended in the march to the altar for wedlock with the instinctively hateful suitor. The appearance of the real lover and the production by him of the betrothal-ring at this moment led to the sharp exit of the preternatural wight from the scene, which then closed with the happy solemnisation of the rightful wedding amid the peals of the castle-bell, the strains of the unseen mother's voice and the delights of mutual explanation between father and daughter.

Such comprises the material of the warp and woof of the poem, of which the people, the scenery and the incidents translate us to an imaginary sphere. The author's own sense of the possibilities of its improvement is preserved in a hint from the collection of his *Letters*: "If I should finish *Christabel*, I should certainly extend it and give new characters and a greater number". The existing narrowness of compass and canvas apart, the defects observable are no more than the defects of its qualities. If there is felt a certain remoteness from the course of ordinary human occurrences through the unreality of the central agency while bringing to pass, by means of enchantments and self-transformations, experiences not out of relation to the sensations and struggles of flesh and blood, it is, as in the case of the sister-poem of the skeleton ship, the dead crew and the spectral persecution, part and parcel of the general design itself—namely, to blend the romantic with the

normal and to trace the workings of emotional reaction amidst a vividly realistic setting. Here, then, is a rare outcome of the plan in which, as the *Biographia Literaria* tells us, "my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith". The excellence of the mystic romance, as it is, consists also in the artistic beauty of its presentment—the exquisite melody of its verse and the surpassing vividness of its imagery. In point of metrical perfection, *Christabel* met with the unstinted praise of such masters of harmony as Shelley and Swinburne. In fact, it has furnished the consummate model of a metre for romantic legends in rhyming octosyllables. The story goes that a common friend heard Coleridge recite the first Part of the piece while in manuscript and repeated it out of memory to Scott who "bore the music of it in his heart" and forthwith undertook with signal success to write, in adoption of its versification, his own *Lay of the Last Minstrel*,—an imitation exhibiting more of localised human interest though less of melody, that is to say, supplying feet, as a writer in Chambers's Cyclopædia puts it, where Coleridge gave wings Perhaps, as a purely poetical work unlocalised (except in the second Part, where the scene is incidentally laid in the Lake Country), *Christabel* did not require, and is best left without, any of the realistic mediæval pictures of Scott's gallery. Byron, who paid it the practical compliment of copying its metre in the *Siege of Corinth*, wrote of it on its publication, "I won't have any one sneer at *Christabel*: it is a fine wild poem". Lamb, it is said, strongly recommended its being left unfinished; and this Mr. Traill considers as by no means a loss to the poem, its main idea being already sufficiently foreshadowed, namely, "that the purity of a pure maiden is a charm more powerful for the protection of those dear to her than the spells of the evil one for their destruction". Next, among the isolated word-paintings remarkable for picturesqueness of imagery, terseness of vigour and grace of expression are instanced the situations of Geraldine appearing to Christabel beneath the oak, the two women stepping light across the hall, and the interior of the chamber. In short, the frame of mind in which one rises from a perusal of the piece may well be described in the words

of Bracy the Bard with reference to his dove-and-serpent dream:

> "This dream it would not pass away—
> It seems to live upon my eye."

And as the picture of the shrunken serpent-eyes of the sorceress continued to be the "sole image in her (Christabel's) mind", even so do the striking portraits in the poem persistently haunt the memory of its reader. Such is the skill displayed in the art of visualising, though not so much of humanising. Little wonder that Shelley, with his high-strung susceptibilities, is stated to have fainted at the recital of "the lines descriptive of the spell thrown over Christabel by her uncanny guest". Nor is the composition devoid altogether of human touches. Where are the emotions of the human heart better illustrated than, for example, in that splendid passage in Part II which reconciled Lamb to the continuance, against his wishes, of Part I of the poem—the passage with its tender description of the penitent Sir Leoline making inward peace with his estranged friend at the sight of his supposed daughter in dire distress and cherishing her the more for it? Again, how exquisitely Shakespearean in manner is the portrayal of the essential oneness of all Nature in the sketch of the aspects of the external world during and after the one hour of Geraldine's magic sway over Christabel! The lines,

> "The night-birds all that hour were still,
> But now they are jubilant anew,"

go home to us and awaken a sense of the inextricable web of human drama interwoven with the outside world. We are helped to realise how, in truth, nature and humanity are but the two interlinked hemispheres of one central orb of creation. Such a dream of sweet, if weird, delight is *Christabel*—a 'dream', indeed, as *Adonais* would call the product of a poet's reverie—a dream dreamt, in this case, by one marked out in his generation as " the only wonderful man I (Wordsworth) ever knew."

57

SCOTT THE ROMANCIST

1912

It has been said that, as Byron dealt with the present and Shelley with the future, so Keats treated of the more remote and Scott of the less remote past. Accordingly, the reproduction of mediæval life and manners constituted the special role of Scott, whether in the earlier poems or in the later novels. In fact, his poems have been called metrical romances and, likewise, his novels prose-poems. The preeminent characteristic of almost all his productions is recognised to be a lofty flight of the historical imagination. He stands out in English literature as practically the creator of the historical novel, the progenitor of a long line of successors both at home and abroad Even in his own day, 'the Wizard of the North' became 'the whole world's darling.' And more than any other, he helped to popularise, even as Wordsworth strove to propound, the spirit of romanticism in the early literature of the nineteenth century. Between Wordsworth and him whom Wordsworth feelingly glorified as 'the last Minstrel', 'wondrous Potentate,' there existed, doubtless, a wide enough divergence alike in matter and in manner—the one with his mystical, and the other with his antiquarian, love of Nature and of Man; the one with his violent reaction against, and the other with his conservative adherence to, the literary forms and style of the preceding century. Yet they both drank deep at the common fount of romanticism in so far as it represented an extraordinary development of imaginative sensibility. And this in Scott flowered forth into a revivification of the soul of the past. In it he found a most congenial sphere for the self-expression of a genius connected by ancestry with the turbulent heroes of Border warfare, bred in youth amid the inspiring scenes of 'Caledonia, stern and wild, meet nurse for a poetic child' and steeped by choice in the stimulating lore of Percy's *Reliques* of his own collect-

ing, aptly styled 'the Bible of the Romantic Reformation.' It is true his poetry laid the foundations of his prose. Critics, however, have all agreed to account as nothing short of a distinct gain to literature his resignation of the restraints of the former in favour of the flexibilities of the latter, whether this shifting of interest on his part is traceable to the rising ascendancy of Byron's more brilliant muse or to the patriotic impetus of Miss Edgeworth's Irish Tales. And, thanks to the Ballantyne crash, the series of anonymous publications commencing with *Waverley* in 1814 was sustained for full seventeen years with unprecedented, though not now unrivalled, rapidity and richness.

As regards the growth of this Colossus of fiction, while Hutton rightly disputes Carlyle's judgment that the successors of the first tale only betrayed a deterioration in quality, we have it on the authority of Prof Herford that they at least fail to exhibit any development of method or variation of style. At all events, the twenty-nine romances were 'poured forth in the equable noon-tide of his powers' with ust the exception of *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*, both of which were painfully wrung out of a paralytic brain by an indomitable will. Next, on the question of theme, as Jane Austen's art wove itself into the domestic, Dickens's into the humanitarian, Thackeray's into the satiric, George Eliot's into the psychological, and Marie Corelli's into the ethical novel, so the peculiar province of Scott's power lay, as above noted, in the historical novel. And this estimate is only confirmed by the acknowledged failure of his one digression from that track in *St. Ronan's Well*. Again, in point of treatment, whether engaged on the Scotland of the seventeeth and eighteenth centuries, as in *Waverley* and *Old Mortality*, or on the England of Richard Coeur De Lion and of Elizabeth, as in *Ivanhoe* and *Kennilworth*, or on the France of Louis XI, as in *Quentin Durward*, alike in the court-hall and in the love-chamber, on the hunting-ground and on the battle-field, his one aim was to please. And in this he achieved surpreme success by means of a charming pageant of characters limned with delicate tints of healthful and homely humour over picturesque backgrounds of historic setting. The descriptions and dialogues, if minute, are yet sparkling. The personages, if but representative of types, are yet clean-cut. The action, if lacking in analysis, is yet thrilling in

effect. And the entire situation, if not thoroughly accurate in historical detail, is yet instinct with animation. Scott's delight, like that of his own Lucy Ashton, the Bride of Lammermoor, lies 'in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection, chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors.' And these adventures and horrors are related by our born 'romantic,' as by no other story-teller, with a wonderful command over pathos and terror, laughter and tears, though without access to the deepest springs of human nature. Hence, in Palgrave's words ' he exhibits the man by speech and action ' and, indeed, according to his own comment, more by speech than by action. For, says he :' My persons, like many others in this talking world, speak now and then a great deal more than they act.'

The Waverley Novels, then, as also their metrical fore runners, amply bear out the general dictum that the writer is seen in his writings—the man of martial feelings, of feudal instincts, of romantic tastes, of conventional beliefs and, above all, of a healthy enjoyment of life. And full as they are of the Shakesperean characteristics of an extraordinary variety of scene, character and plot, the merits of these creations of the magic wand of imagination are such as, according to Prof. Saintsbury's testimony, 'nowhere else exist in the work of a single author of prose.'

This master-painter of men and manners, events and emotions, this 'minstrel of romantic energy and martial enterprise,' who, over a century ago, thus diverted the bent not alone of the national but of the continental mind towards a passion for the chivalrous and the romantic, was appraised by Goethe as 'the greatest writer of his time' —a tribute, by the way, in singular contrast with the detraction by Goethe's own admirer, Carlyle; while, again, Carlyle's own follower, Ruskin, ranked him as 'the great representative mind of the age' in literature, as Turner was in art. What a pity, then, in all conscience, that an immortal like this should be suffered more and more to be thrown quietly into the shade by the strange whirligig of fashion even in high academic quarters at the present day!

58

'IN MEMORIAM': ITS 'BEAM IN DARKNESS'

1912

Science tells of 'the things we see.' But there be more things in heaven and earth than we see or she can so much as dream of.

'Life's bases rest,
Beyond the probe of chemic test':

so sings the humanist-poet. Man, altogether, is far from being a 'logic-chopping machine': so declares the prophet-philosopher. And of the things not seen Faith is the evidence. Unto Faith is unfolded the secret of the deepest of the deep things of the spirit—the meaning of Death in relation to Life. For, there exists no more common and, at the same time, no more confounding phenomenon than this of Death.

The first collapse under the crushing doom and the final victory over the devastating passion amid the varying alternations of denial, doubt and assurance—these, for every tuneful or tuneless minstrel of life's 'In Memoriam,' make the 'beam in darkness,' its source and its substance.

The

'wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth,'

that are wrung out of the writhing heart upon the earthly exit of the comrade of its choice become eventually hushed and hallowed in Tennyson into the calm of 'the Larger Hope', the serene trust that the lost one still lives in the Everlasting One. Nay, in the end, to the lone, lorn heart the departed spirit comes restored as unspeakably 'worthier to be loved,' bathed in the supernal light of an all-transforming Heaven, the primal Fount of every ordainment in the *purgatorium* of the now and the here. Thus the ultimate principle of 'Im-

mortal Love' at the root of the universe reconciles the soul to its encompassing gloom. It even endears and sanctifies that gloom through the sorrow that tutors the soul into the realisation that love, under God, is evermore entitled to hold its own in fee and cannot, as it would not, suffer deprivation in any condition. The Love-light that has begotten both life and death now illumes the truth of truths that death only opens the portal to deathless life. And so, for man, the most valid as well as the most valued of all apperceptions comes to centre in the 'I have *felt*' of the experience that 'he was not made to die.' The Love of God, transcending all evanescent phases, endureth for ever; and in it endure also all those whom that Love has filiated to our souls. Such is the sovereign efficacy of Faith in the supreme ministry of its suasion of solace:

'Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd.'

Hence, beneficent because God-revealed and God-revealing, even as Science is in its own sphere and measure, Faith represents the 'beam in darkness' of the Larger Vision under the inviolate law of the conservation of the energy of Love. So let Science and Religion harmonise with each other even by complementing and confirming each other—the one the revelation of the things of sense; the other the apocalypse of the treasures of soul. Then alone may sweetly sound upon the harp of life its richest strain of symphony when 'mind and soul, according well,' help to save the self from the scoffing irreverence and inanition of the sceptical as also from the groping fear and superstition of the ignorant. Culture and Faith, Faith and Culture, wrought into mystic attunement or at-one-ment, shall bring the human into exquisite unison with the Divine. Made wise in His wisdom, the mind shall inspire the will, likewise, to make itself His. And this, forsooth, shall constitute a 'vaster' music than when they of old cast about while they did not know—know amply and clearly as do the children of the new age of larger light.

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59

THE SOUTH INDIAN TEACHERS' UNION : A SILVER JUBILEE TRIBUTE 1933

Hail, all-hail, to S. I. T. U., from the bottom of a faint yet feeling heart, at this memorable meeting-point of thanks-offerings for the past and bendictions for the future!

Verily, the Holy Spirit of the Beatitudes hovereth even now, in the amplitude of its benignant wing, over the five-and-twenty years happily gone by and the numberless decades hopefully stepping in.

Blessed, of a truth, is the Union dedicated to the sacred cause of genuine unity; for unto it belong alike the strength of solidarity, the vigour of vitality and the fellowship of fraternity.

Blessed is the Union imbued with practical idealism to discern in the sorriest of trades the noblest of professions; for so it merges the propagandist in the prophet.

Blessed is the Union devoted to the supply of a want it has itself helped to create and is known already to supply in a manner never to be superseded and to an extent by no means liable ever to become superfluous; for thus it doubly blesseth itself and those it fain would serve.

Blessed is the Union identified with the educators of the nation; for they cannot, for long, be barred out from coming to their own.

Blessed is the Union honoured so far with warm recognition by many, while itself representing vastly many more, among the captains and custodians of culture; for they alone be the prime fountains of national enlightenment and progress.

Blessed is the Union founded as also builded upon the stable rock of guild-spirit rooted in group-consciousness among

the citizens of the true commonwealth of letters; for theirs is no vicious communalism divorced from interests wide as the nation and common as the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Blessed is the Union cut out into a ready and broadening channel of intercommunion, east and west and north and south, for all mature experiences and nascent aspirations in the elect vineyard; for the votaries of wisdom shall wax strong in one another's strength.

Blessed is the Union finding a voice, and that an authoritative, compelling voice, for a body of public benefactors content evermore by tradition and temperament to labour rather than clamour, to strive to deserve and stoop not to demand, and to yield up the place of honour rather than grasp at the palm of approbation; for they shall be rewarded openly by everyone that seeth in secret.

Blessed is the Union constituted into an effective instrument to give the lead to the ideals, and point the direction for the energies, of our workers as well as to shape out the key to the solution of the problems of their work; for thus it shall justify itself alike through its means and its ends.

Blessed is the Union committed to the peace-maker's role of a true interpreter between the rulers and the ruled, the administration and the managements, the givers and the takers, employers and employees, parents and preceptors, teachers and taught; for unto it is unfailingly assured the inward satisfaction of unfolding the wrapped-up possibilities of the reign of law and the rule of light.

Blessed is the Union pledged to the exaltation of the profession into a calling through the sublimation of its rights into duties and the transvaluation of its secular routine into drudgery divine; for it shall convert the school into a shrine and make a religion of education, the latter the antechamber to the former.

Blessed are the straggling yet slow-sure years of the first quarter-century with its varying vicissitudes and far-reaching promises; for they hold out the guarantee of a full-circle century of the sustained beneficence that is yet to be.

Blessed are the darings and doings of the past; for they shall be more than perfected in the dreams and deeds of the future.

Blessed, too, is the inspiration of the present auspicious jubilee; for it shall bear rich fruit in enlightened interest heightened, in live sympathy widened, in strenuous cooperation deepened and in the devoutly-wished-for consummation approximated to from more to more.

60

'LOVE FAR BROUGHT FROM OUT THE STORIED PAST' *

1931

A stripling of two and ten, I first entered in 1888 the sacred portals of the hoary Institution which now completes its three-quarters of a century. As I then walked up to its Middle School Class-room, I began proudly to call it *my* school. And so I shall delight to call it for evermore with all the good-will of gratitude and the loyalty of love. Mine was a brief three years' nurture, up to the Matriculation in 1890, in a Seminary where untold numbers had and have received, as the case may be, their earliest or their entire—at all events, their best—education. Yet that comprised a triennium which, once for all, has claimed the homage of the heart beyond the limit of years. Could Time, his flight reversed, restore those days of old, what greater bliss should be hailed with heartiness by a way-worn spirit for which the past has come to be unspeakably more precious than the future? What would I not give to be admitted, over again, to the glowing light of the sun, and to the genial shine of the moon, of my day—Mr. Krishnamachariar and Mr. Muthu Iyer, both of revered memory?

Theirs, in particular, with the contribution of lesser stars around, was a life-work of measureless value which at once nobly enriched the traditions, enlarged the usefulness and extended the repute of the premier public school in the Circars. The broadest of bird's eye views must suffice to recall how, in the main, the story of secondary education, at least in old Kistna, virtually twines itself round the central High School at Masulipatam. Countless, in the decades gone by, were the families that stood debtors through successive generations to this acknowledged Agency of sound culture with its accredited passport to decent preferment. Not to speak of latter-

* The Hindu High School, Masulipatam.

day accessions to the growing ranks, its privileged beneficiaries of an elder time still flourish scattered about in far-off nooks and close-at-hand corners. They are in evidence on the hill-tops of preeminence as also in the dale-bottoms, not of obscurity, but of modesty. Discerning friends and even captious foes, alongside of the judges of the Department, no less than the vast army of the *alumni* themselves— all, all, in continued chorus, would sing, with spontaneous gladness, 'to one clear harp in divers tones', of the excellence of the vineyard-labourers more than worthy of their hire and of the harvest in their hands rich beyond reckoning. Glancing for a moment at my other and equally cherished *alma mater*,—for that fills the ventricles, as this possesses the auricles, of the vital fount—it only needs to observe how even a surface audit must verify the fact that Noble College was consciously content to draw her best life-blood in ceaseless outflow from the Hindu High School of those times. Thus, year after year, Mr. Krishnamachariar, in effect, immensely helped forward the Rev. Mr. Clarke with the finest material for the upper zones, while, throughout, he as powerfully held him at bay on common ground—a very Roland for an Oliver!

Of my own good teachers, all but one have long since been gathered to their rest, not spared, alas, to share in the jubilee of today under the exalted auspices of the realised dream of a College. The universally venerated Nestor of the band was Pandit Kasinadhuni Brahmayyalingam Garu. In the *auld lang syne*, he had taught my father before my brothers and myself came to touch his lotus-feet. He was our own *mahámahópádhyáya* of pauranic piety and old-world erudition. His genius for digression far, far away into the limitless realms of learned lore with the verified assurance, however, of a safe return to the starting-point in the fulness of time, provided a constant source of amazement and amusement unto all, of convenience and congratulation unto the self-neglectful and the wanton-minded among the lads. In good-natured and good-humoured Kanagala Venkata Ramayya Garu, we had a chosen votary and a facile exponent of 'the hard-grained Muses of the cube and square.' Always with a smile upon his lip and a dash of dalliance in his teaching, the stiffness of his subject notwithstanding, he knew how to spread the cheery sunshine of homeliness around him. There was Raghupati Venkata Ratnam Naidu Garu, then, of

course, without the Knighthood and the Doctorate but even then the proverbial elephant cribbed in a basket of cotton slivers. Bounding with spontaneous elasticity; bubbling with wholesome hilarity; a figure of soldier-like and stately stature; a mine of striking and suggestive anecdotes; a quiver of seasoned and seasonable darts; a spring of entertaining and edifying conversations; a cyclopædia of ready and recondite quotations; a cascade of soul-deep and selfless benignities; and, finally, a fount of thrilling and torrential oratory—such was the Venkata Ratnam of the eighties of last centuary. Ever surrounded by swarms of students in a way reminiscent of 'I am never Charles Lamb but always Charles Lamb & Co.', he frisked and frolicked more than he taught and drilled in those good old days. Nevertheless, that first period of pupilage marked for me an aurora which, at the second *alma mater* six years later, deepened and developed into the perpetuity of a meridian, time without end, in the gracious economy of Providence. Thus, if on no other account, the birth-place of the profoundest influence upon my mind and heart and soul and life must retain for me the sacredness of the genesis of a *jeevanadi*. In succession to 'Naidu Garu' came Jandhyala Gaurinadha Sastri Garu to transplant his remarkable attainments from the class-room into the court-hall after a year of studied effort to vie with his own old mentor, Mr. Krishnamachariar, in the art of instruction.

As for the High Commissioner himself and his immediate Lieutenant, what a study in contrast; and yet how happy the harmony into which the two chimed in, one with the other! A favoured *chèla* of Professor Gopala Rao of the Cambridge of South India fame; a stalwart Titan of chiselled classic mould alike in body and in mind; the doyen of secondary education, head and shoulders above the rest, over far-flung academic areas; a benevolent despot in the administrative role who, as he once put it to me, believed more in the barking than in the biting dog; a standing institute of paraphrase luxuriated in with inebriate revelry; an awing martinet of discipline with nothing, however, of the bear in him after his own favourite Johnson, save the skin; altogether a picturesque and puissant personality whose every pose comported with a self-conscious dignity of office as the custodian of learning and the dispenser of law for youth in the making —that was my master, Krishnamachariar. Once a pupil,

always a pupil: such was the tacit understanding on both sides so far as *he* was concerned. Accordingly, long, long after we had ceased to be *in statu pupillari* under him, we ceased not to be kept, nor did we grudge to remain, not merely at arm's but even at street-corner's length. A matter of instinct in the beginning, this reverential remoteness came, in no time, to be, not acquiesced, but gloried, in as a point of prerogative by one and all. Pope, Goldsmith and Cowper, besides Johnson, comprised our gifted *guru's* particular preferences among the poets; while Macaulay well-nigh monopolised his allegiance among the masters of prose. His own style was nothing if not Johnsonese to a degree. The chambers of memory still resound with his wonted reverberations of the Village Schoolmaster's 'words of learned length and thundering sound.' Periods after periods, too, from the Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings continue to haunt the ear to this day, even as they were plied about in luminous exposition with plastic transformations. Next, too meek to raise his voice; too mild to uplift his eye; too gentle to hurt a fly; too generous to others to be just to himself; too unassuming to swerve in the least beyond his restricted sphere of vocational duty; too deeply imbued with the *Gita* spirit of the *karmayogin*, as wrought by himself into scholarly Tamil verse, to unbend ever so little over his accepted obligations; too methodical, albeit at the risk of being mechanical, to fall short of thoroughness—such was my preceptor, Muthu Iyer. In a word, he always impressed himself upon me as the pattern of a pedagogue in every way. He more than made up by assiduous self-application for what the humility in him conceived as an undermeasure of brilliance in native endowment. Pyrotechnics for the sky were not in his line. He was content to count himself, and he sought to approve himself, as but a quarryman in the obscure mine or a trencher in the lowly field. He evermore gave of his best from hour's beginning to hour's end—yes, evermore, literally without a moment's respite or diversion. How comprehensively and yet how indelibly did the refresher lessons in his hands oftentimes traverse for us the entire tracts, in particular, of the Histories of England and India! Also, in the English lesson, whether under Prose or Poetry, how precisely and how punctiliously did the study of words, the illustration of idioms and the explanation of sentences proceed, as by rule and compass, with an unfailing

eye to origins in roots, to varieties of usuage and to simplicity of expression! Thus to be grounded and handed over for consolidation and embellishment was the great good fortune of the pupils of Muthu Iyer and Krishnamachariar. They taught in time, no doubt. But they taught for all time, in truth. Between them both, in mutual relations, as already observed, and in the benefit accruing to their common heirs, what a refreshingly fruitful phenomenon was the practical accord of obvious dissimilars—the gentle graces of the one and the virile virtues of the other, the abnegated self of the one and the acknowledged personality of the other! Much to our delectation, aye, also edification, the characteristic deportment of the First Assistant towards the Head Master differed little from that of a head-pupil. As to the treatment of their respective pupils, those were scarcely the days, on the meritorious side, of open demonstration with a 'Bravo, well done!' or 'This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.' None the less, if tongue spoke not to ear, heart heaved up to heart all the same. On the penal side, 'Good for nothing!' was all the occasional expression of extreme disgust that fell from Muthu Iyer the Good, and that, not against the derelict, but against his slip-shod answer. In fact, it was his wont to desist from earnest work for just a second, hang down the head, lubricate the lips with the outstretched tongue, hold them tightly together as though to offer no ingress to the rising tide of the schoolmaster's rage, and then resume his task with a 'yes' in token of having duly satisfied himself about the effective subjugation of the provoked passion. In the case of Krishnamachariar the Dreadful, he had his resourceful armoury replete with a variety of self-forged weapons to check the erring and reprove, not the least being his own commanding figure. This latter saved the frequent exercise of the rod of chastisement, except for brandishment at times as the sceptre of sovereignty. It used to be pressed suddenly into active service in the handling of moral miscreants between class-room and class-room and for the overhauling of late-comers at the outermost gate. And the salutary effect of the single operation lasted for close on a quarter-year. Be it added that at no time was the physical consequence of the blow commensurate with the sound and fury accompanying it. And the silly sequel to reports of delinquency through the class-monitor in the Telugu period was invariably one or the other of

two courses. A ten-minutes' free ramble together over the extensive grounds around; and culprit and custodian would reappear, respectively, with the counterfeit tear and the concocted tale: 'Sir, how black and blue the beating given! What a pity you would not relent and refrain from making the report!' And then came the belated remorse all too tender! Or, again, the wily version that tided over the whole tragedy like a *deus ex machina* would be: 'Sir, engrossed just now in his paraphrase work with the Matriculation Class, Head Master Garu has posted the case to tomorrow morning.' And the morrow never dawned!

Thus schooled and tutored, it is out of the question for the gratitude of the heart to brook the intruding wish for any other school or tutor through the succession of subsequent transmigrations. As those alive to the sanctities and efficacies of sentiment will be pleased to bear with a touch of autobiography in a designedly personal tribute, younger workers in the profession may perhaps be interested to know that a moment's inward communion in spirit with the two model teachers of my High School days has, all along, inwoven itself into my being as more or less a settled habit before entering upon the first daily occupation in the art of teaching in my own humble sphere and style. So, to compare great things with small, a former, famous High Court Judge of the Positivist persuasion in Calcutta was known to open his each day's proceedings upon the Bench only after a devout salutation to a likeness of Auguste Comte hung up on the wall right in front.

Tell me not in sapient or morbid numbers that, after all, you see reason only to deprecate the work and workers of the storied past because of a flaw in this principle or a foible in that personality. To measure yesterday with the foot-rule of today must be to offer violence to the historic conscience and to reduce the ethical consciousness to an anachronism. A world of overlapping half-truths and outstretching horizons can leave scope enough for an amplitude of angles from which to view and assess the shifting motives, methods and media of educational endeavour. And if the implements as well as the ideals of the sacred past were not above imperfection, as even the sun is not without his spots, they were, at least, not faultily faultless; and an all-comprehending Providence dis-

dained not to employ them for our behoof. Ours, then, be the fitting strain of the historian-patriot:

"Attend, all ye who list to hear our noble England's praise;
I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in ancient days."

If the just pride of academic reverence would fondly draw upon sweet rhetoric, it had better be after the manner, not of the civic orator's ancient litotes, 'I am a citizen of no mean city,' but of the patriot-poetess's modern hyperbole,

"Ask of any the spot they like best on the earth;
And they'll answer with pride,' 'Tis the land of my birth.'"

If *Achâryadèvôbhava* has not yet become too obsolete an obeisance for the ingrate insensibility of the day, will the present, paltry flower for a votive wreath unto the *Gurukula* and its *Gurugana* find favour, if not for its colourless reminiscences, still for its cordial reverences?

THE END.

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