

**IN THE COMPANY
OF
SAINTS**

K. Ramachandra

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The Author

PRESENTED BY THE BISHOP
Rt. Rev. Dr. S. JEBANESAN

IN THE COMPANY OF SAINTS

K. RAMACHANDRA

Edited by
C. P. M. ABEYSEKERA

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Dedicated

to

the loving memory of

Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan, K.B.E.

(1896-1965)

whose spiritual fellowship has been
a source of great inspiration and help
to the author for over three decades.

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

From time to time at stated intervals, a rare religious book appears which captivates the minds of its readers. This book and its companion volume in Tamil deal with the interpretation and application in modern life, of the divinity of man and the spiritual Oneness of the Universe.

The author of these two publications is Mr. K. Ramachandra, Editor of the English International Journal, 'Religious Digest', and the Honorary Editor of the Tamil Monthly, 'Atma Jyothi'. These publications have paved the way for a world culture based on the spiritual solidarity of mankind.

Mr. Ramachandra will be reaching next month the Biblical span of three score years and ten, which in Hindu tradition is a happy event known as **Amirtha Mohotsava** or Nectar Jubilee. His friends and admirers drawn from all walks of life, desired to celebrate this occasion in a fitting manner, but he has declined any form of public demonstration. He has, however, agreed to accept two Commemoration Volumes embodying selections from his writings. His avowed aversion for publicity and propaganda is well known in Ceylon. We are indeed thankful to him for agreeing to accept these two publications as a token of our love and gratitude.

The editing of the English section has been ably done by his esteemed spiritual brother, a Roman Catholic by faith, Mr. C. P. M. Abeysekera, retired

Assistant Auditor General of Ceylon. We are grateful to him for this loving service, and for the beautiful Introduction he has given to the publication. Venerable. Mirisse Gunasiri Maha Thero, B.A. (Lond.) Senior Lecturer in Buddhist Philosophy at Vidyodaya University of Ceylon, and Director of the International Buddhist Meditation Centre of Colombo, has written a loving and encouraging Foreword. We are ever grateful to him for this great honour.

The selections from Mr. Ramachandra's Tamil writings have been made by a group of Editors. Their task was by no means an easy one. His Essays run into thousands of pages extending to forty five years, and to select from them and from his inspired poetical works about three hundred pages has been an extremely difficult matter. The Editors have done their best, but we regret very much that owing to the present acute shortage of printing paper, the printing work is delayed. The second Volume is therefore likely to come out only by January next.

“When the high heart we magnify
And the clear vision celebrate
And worship greatness passing by
Ourselves are great.”

—**Atma-Jyothi Nilayam**

Nawalapitiya,
Ceylon. 2nd October 1965.

FOREWORD

It is with much interest I read the Religious Digest under the able editorship of Mr. K. Ramachandra. Later I came to know him personally and my appreciation grew more and more when I realized that he was a man of rare qualities. As it seems to me, his great mission is to make the people understand their respective religions and adhere to their precepts sincerely.

Mr. Ramachandra, an orthodox Hindu by birth, has, from the early stage of life, worked untiringly, preaching and travelling far and wide to propagate his noble mission to bring about harmony between man and man, irrespective of race, class, caste and creed. His aim, I believe, is to see every man sink down petty differences and look the whole world in the face in the spirit of **Maitri** or universal love taught by the Great Teachers.

In this world of strife and struggle it is very difficult to come across men of Mr. Ramachandra's calibre who understand the human relationships in their true perspective and who devote their time and energy for the progress of mankind in general. Human history grows eloquent to speak high of those great sages who achieved ever-lasting success in this particular field. Only a few try to follow the foot-steps of those Great Ones and fewer are they who succeed in their selfless attempts. Born with a religious tendency and brought up in a religious atmosphere under saintly

Gurus, Mr. Ramachandra has grasped the interest in the religion and dedicated his life for the service of man.

Mr. Ramachandra's writings and eloquent lectures have gained high esteem the world over. Wherever he went he has displayed the stamp of genius.

As far as my knowledge goes the quintessence of the teachings of Bhagawad Gita is the fulfilment of one's duty by oneself and the human society. **Ashrama-dharma** and **Varna-dharma** have this two-fold duty in its full significance. It is nothing but service to mankind and spiritual progress. Mr. Ramachandra has, to the utmost of his ability, fulfilled these two lofty ideals.

It is most deserving to publish this memorial number of the Religious Digest as a mark of gratitude to this saintly scholar, writer and social worker.

—**Mirisse Gunasiri Maha Thero**

Vidyodaya University of Ceylon,
Gangodawila, Nugegoda,
Ceylon.

21. 9. 65.

INTRODUCTION

There can be no question that Mr. K. Ramachandra deserves our whole-hearted admiration and respect. He is a silver-haired sage, of epoch making personality with a face calm and benign and a forehead smooth in spite of almost seventy winters and every line on that face speaking of a deep reservoir of spirituality within. As Founder and Managing Editor of the International Journal, the "Religious Digest" he has disseminated, to the four corners of the globe, his thought, which sets out the inescapable principles that are the concern of all right-thinking people. While his ideas and teachings flow from this valuable journal, his self-effacing personality lies hidden in print.

To roam about in the garden of World's best spiritual treasures has been Mr. Ramachandra's diligent study for a life-time, to eliminate their contradictions and to emphasise their similarities his unfailing creed, and to digest and disseminate them his one and only aim in life. In the words of the famous American author, Christian Nestell Bovee (1820-1904), "A great thought is a great boon, for which God is to be first thanked, then he who is the first to utter it, and then, in a lesser, but still in a considerable degree, the man who is the first to quote it to us."

He will be completing the Biblical span of three score years and ten this year, and his friends and well-wishers in Ceylon and in other countries, have decided to present to him on this occasion two Souvenir

Volumes, one in Tamil and the other in English containing selections from his works. His writings in Tamil are vast and voluminous extending as far back as forty five years. They are at the moment in the hands of two talented scholars in Tamil who are busy in the task of editing the selections.

It is therefore my rare privilege to be invited to undertake the editing of the English volume and I discharge this obligation with the greatest delight. As the publication is to be a handy volume of not more than 200 pages, the selections have naturally to be restricted.

Mr. Ramachandra has been for the past seven years contributing a series under the heading "Striking Incidents from the lives of Saints." I have chosen seventy articles from this series. They are short and sweet and deal with saints of all ages and climes professing different faiths.

My next choice is confined to his Daily Diary Notes. I am one of those who have been specially fortunate to enjoy his presence very often, and from time to time to quench my thirst in quest of Truth by reading his precious Diary Notes. Here again, a limited, choice number, of selections are included under the heading "Meditations." No wonder that these meditations are so satisfying because in them he speaks the language of the soul after quiet communion with God in the early hours of the morning.

It is not proposed to include any of his speeches at the International Congresses of Religion and other Conferences for they have already come out in book

form. Only one single exception is made. His speech at the Preparatory Congress for a World Convention held at Denver, U.S.A. in September 1963 appears as an Appendix to this publication. This is a speech which has received world wide acclamation and run into five editions already in U.S.A., England and Ceylon besides being translated into six other languages of the world. It was therefore felt that it should find a prominent and permanent place in this Souvenir Volume.

The title of the Book, "In the Company of Saints", is my choice for I know that no one has kept their company with such faith and devotion as the author has done. He lays bare the periodical touch of these "Universe" souls who have given the world renewed hope and strength every time. In doing so, it is his ambition to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everyone and let men and women settle their own fate. He merely wishes to put the divine chemicals together and leave it to God to do the crystallization in His own good time.

—C. P. M. Abeysekera

Talangama,

Ceylon.

2nd October 1965.

NAMELESS AT SIXTEEN

Like fortune-hunters and fame-hunters, autograph-hunters are a ubiquitous lot. They do not hesitate to invade even the holy atmosphere of Sages and Saints. Groups of them used to visit Ramanashram and request Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharishi to sign in their autograph books. With his characteristic sweet smile, the Maharishi would silence them by the following reply in question form:—"Let him sign who has a name. Here (meaning himself) there is no name. How can there be a signature then!"

Once an old woman of Tiruvannamalai who was in need of money to repair her temple was advised by some people that the easiest method to collect the needed funds was to get Sri Ramana to sign an appeal for the purpose. She therefore took the appeal to the Maharishi and pressed him to sign it. He replied:—"You want me to sign this appeal, but how can one sign who has no name? What name will he sign?" The old dame could not grasp the meaning of his reply and left disappointed.

To understand and appreciate the full significance of these replies, one must read and realise the Truth in the farewell note left behind by him at Madurai when he was sixteen years old. The note addressed to his brother is as follows:

"I have in search of my Father, according to His command, started from this place. On a virtuous enterprise indeed has **THIS** embarked.

Therefore, for this act, none need grieve; nor to trace **THIS** out, need money be spent.

Thus

The first person 'I' became 'this' twice in such a short note, and ultimately ended in 'nothingness' by the letter being left unsigned. No further evidence is needed to illustrate the fact that he had attained the high state of **Namelessness** at the very moment he left Madurai for Arunachala. This is a unique incident in the spiritual history of humanity.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE

Prophets, Sages and Saints have, from time immemorial, sanctified the earth by their appearance, and among all devotees of God, Prahlada stands supreme. Born in a spiritual hermitage under certain extraordinary circumstances, he became an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu from his infancy. His faith in the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of God was unswerving.

His father, Hiranyakasipu, was the king of Asuras. He was an egoist and a terror to the Devas. His subjects were ordered by him to honour his own name and not to repeat the name of God. He became enraged when he detected his own son preaching against his injunction and influencing his fellow students to sing the name and glory of God. The young boy was warned first by his teacher and then by his father himself not to do so.

The warnings and intimidation went unheeded, and the boy's determination became stronger under persecution. The father therefore planned to get rid of him by the worst form of cruelties. Through divine protection the boy survived them all, to the utter surprise and dismay of his father.

Exasperated by his repeated failures, the father had the son tied to a pillar. With a sword in hand, he addressed the son thus: "Where is thy Lord?" Prahlada retorted: "He is present everywhere, He

is present in you and in me. He is present in this pillar and in your sword as well." Then the king questioned "How is it then that I do not see Him in this pillar?"

No sooner these words were uttered than the Lord came out of the pillar, in half-man and half-lion form, and tore him to pieces. After blessing the boy, the Lord asked him to desire any boon. Prahlada prayed for the life of his father and for its freedom from bondage. This was readily granted. For himself, Prahlada asked only for selfless devotion to the Lord, as nothing gave him greater happiness than constant remembrance of the Lord.

THE MOST EXALTED SOUL

A certain poor shepherd from the hills came to Mecca to worship in the temple when Prophet Mohamed was staying there. He did his worship in his own rough way. After bowing down and kissing the stone, with tears rolling down from his eyes, the shepherd prayed, "O Adorable Lord of Love! Show me Thy face. Let me be Thy servant. Let me mend Thy shoes, wash Thy soiled clothes, apply oil to Thy head and bring Thee daily the milk of my goat."

The priests who witnessed this simple and innocent prayer felt offended. They said to him, "What blasphemy is this? There is no need of such gifts for the omnipotent Lord." They were about to drive away the poor shepherd when the Prophet intervened and addressed the priests thus: "When you are far away in distant lands where do you turn your faces? They replied, "We turn our faces to Mecca." Prophet then asked, "When you are within this sacred wall, which way there is Mecca and which way do you turn? They said, "All is holy here. It does not matter which way we turn."

Thereupon, the Prophet pointed out that their answer was beautiful and that within the temple it mattered not which way they turned, and preached to them as follows:—"In the place of your hearts, it does not matter how you pray, so long as love and reverence fill your hearts. The poor shepherd's simple prayer went direct into the ears of Allah more clearly than the prayers of yours, because it came out sincerely from his heart, with intense faith and reverence. Make room for God's poor lover near me. He is the most humble, pure, exalted soul."

THE GLORY OF FEARLESSNESS

Saint Appar is the greatest and oldest of the four Apostles of revival of Saivism in the Tamil country. He belongs to the seventh century A.D., and was a contemporary of the boy Saint, Gnanasambhandar, from whom he got the name 'Appar' (father), his earlier name being Thiru-Navuk-Arasu (the Lord of the Tongue).

In the heyday of his life, Appar was a scholarly Jain monk enjoying the much coveted title of Dharmasena. The earnest prayers of his saintly sister, Thilagavathiyar, brought him back to Saivism, his original faith. His spirit of resignation to Lord Siva was a unique one. We do not meet his parallel in the whole Saiva literature. Most of the later Saiva saints have learned the lesson of self-surrender from his life and hymns.

His reconversion enraged the Jain community, who did not hesitate to use their influence with the Pallava King, Mahendra Varma (600 to 625 A.D.) to persecute Appar. The tortures inflicted on him were very cruel but he came out unscathed in all those trials. On one occasion, a wild elephant was let loose to crush him to death. The fearless saint sat in prayer unperturbed and the elephant became mild and tame, and after kneeling down before him with reverence, carried him safe on its back. This and other miraculous happenings opened the eyes of the king who became a devotee of Siva to the utter chagrin of the intolerant Jains.

Following the traditional way, we may explain such miracles as happenings under the laws of Nature. In the Bible we read that the Prophet Daniel was thrust into the lions' den, and the lions could not hurt him as the mouths of the beasts were shut by the Lord. This is, of course, in our old *Puranic* way. There is a psychological and scientific way to view such miracles. Daniel's and Appar's trust in God was so great that they were completely delivered from all fear, and because of this the wild beasts could not hurt them. 'The total overcoming of fear means the complete overcoming of the thing that we fear.' This is really a rare spiritual achievement.

'A MAN IS A MAN FOR A THAT'

In our July—August 1957 issue (No. 11) appeared an article from the well known mystic and author, Sri Sadhu Vaswani, dealing with the life and message of Mother Lal, the Saiva Mystic of Kashmir. By some extraordinary coincidence, her Guru and her chief disciple were both Muslims. The latter's name is Sheikh Nuruddin.

Nuruddin is popularly known as Nanda Rishi, and his memory is ever green in the minds of Kashmirians, both Muslims and Hindus. His tomb at Chrar is a place of pilgrimage to both these communities. The following incident reveals the greatness of this saint, and the unique manner in which he practised and preached brotherhood and equality.

He was once invited to a banquet by a rich man. When he presented himself at the banquet hall dressed in a tattered robe, he was not admitted in. He returned home, put on a costly garment and went to the house of the host for the second time. He was cordially admitted and served with food as others. The host and the guests were however surprised to find that he was not eating anything. He sat quiet, placing his shirt sleeves and the lower ends of his overcoat on the food. When the people pressed him to explain his strange behaviour, he replied that the food had been served to his clothes, not to him. The host regretted for his folly, and the questioners learned an unforgettable lesson from the incident.

A YOGI, IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

The great world teacher, Paramahansa Yogananda entered *Mahasamadhi* on March 7, 1952, at Los Angeles, after concluding his speech at a banquet held in honour of H. E. Binay. R. Sen, Ambassador of India.

He had demonstrated both in his life and death the value of *Yoga* (scientific techniques for God-realisation). Weeks after his *Mahasamadhi*, his body remained unchanged, and his face shone with the divine lustre of incorruptibility. The following extracts from a notarized letter sent to the S. R. F. centre by Mr. Harry T. Rowe, Director of Los Angeles Mortuary and Forest Lawn Memorial-Park, are sure to interest our readers:—

“The absence of any visual signs of decay in the dead body of Paramahansa Yogananda offers the most extraordinary case in our experience. No physical disintegration was visible in his body even twenty days after death. No indication of mold was visible in his skin, and no visible desiccation (drying up) took place in the bodily tissues. This state of perfect preservation of a body, is, so far as we know from mortuary annals, an unparalleled one.”

“The physical appearance of Yogananda on March 27th, just before the bronze cover of the casket was put into position, was the same as it had been on March 7th. He looked on March

27th as fresh and as unravaged by decay as he had looked on the night of his death. On March 27th there was no reason to say that his body had suffered any visible physical disintegration at all. For these reasons we state again that the case of Paramahansa Yogananda is unique in our experience."

We wish to recall here another similar experience recorded in religious history. We refer to St. Theresa who died on 29th September 1582. Her body was interred at Alva. A month later, an enthusiastic Roman Catholic Father had her grave unearthed, and to his surprise found the body as fresh as it was at the time of death. There was also a sort of sweet fragrance emanating from the body.

A PROPHET OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE

The twentieth century has seen many extraordinary men whose philosophy exerts a humanitarian influence throughout the civilized world. Of these, the most amazing personalities are Gandhi and Schweitzer. Both are noted for their dedicated service of the poor and down-trodden.

How Dr. Albert Schweitzer came to be interested in the welfare of the negroes of Africa is a fascinating story in his life. As a small boy living at the parsonage of Gunsbach, where his father was a minister, he had heard of the existence of the negroes in Africa from the latter in one of his Sunday sermons. As he grew up, he went to Colmar, the capital of Haut-Rhin in N. E. France, where he saw the statue of the 'Negro' by the sculptor Beethholdi, who became world famous as the maker of the statue of 'Liberty' which we see at the entrance of the New York harbour.

The sad and lonely expression in the face of the statue of 'Negro' made such a tremendous impression in the heart of young Schweitzer. He made it a habit to go on regular pilgrimage to Colmar to see this statue, and the unfortunate plight of millions of negroes living in Africa became a haunting memory to him.

As a talented singer and musician, his services were greatly in demand. After passing his doctorates in Theology and Philosophy, he became the principal of a Theological College. More than one university

offered him a chair in philosophy. But there was divine discontent in his heart which was aspiring *to work without having to talk*. For many years, he had tried to settle what meaning lay hidden for him in the saying of Jesus Christ: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospels shall save it." He was 30 years old when the answer was found in the following manner:

One morning he found on his writing table in the Theological College, a Magazine published by the Paris Missionary Society reporting its activities. A certain young lady had placed it there, under some divine inspiration, during his absence. He mechanically opened the Magazine, and his eyes caught an article under the title 'Les besoins de la mission du Congo', (The needs of the Congo Mission). The author of the article concluded it with the expression of the hope that his appeal would bring some of those "on whom the Master's eyes already rested" to a decision to offer themselves for this urgent work. The last sentence ran: "Men and women who can reply simply to the Master's call, 'Lord, I am coming', those are the people whom the Church needs." "Having finished the article", writes Dr. Schweitzer, "I quietly began my work. My search was over."

Much against the wish of his relatives and the advice of his friends and admirers, he entered the medical college in 1905 for five years' study. Some thought he was quixotic and eccentric, and many concluded that too much of book-knowledge had made him mad. And a few were so unkind as to allege that

some unfortunate love experiences must be the actual reason for his decision to go to the primeval French Equatorial African jungle. It is also said that at the time of his admission, the Dean of the medical faculty would have liked best to hand him over to his colleague in the Psychiatric department. When Gandhi adopted an untouchable child in his family, the orthodox Hindus thought in a similar way.

Accompanied by his wife, Dr. Albert Schweitzer arrived at Lambarene in 1913, and he is still there. He attained his ninetieth year on 14th of January 1965. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1952, and the Hon. O.M in 1955. An American visitor to Lambarene in 1946, Dr. Emory Ross, writes: "At 7.30. the bell ran for breakfast, and we came out into the strange world Under the house and around it, is a veritable menagerie: chickens, geese, turkeys, cats, dogs, antelope, birds, etc He is truly another St. Francis of Assisi."

His view of Reverence for Life is ethical mysticism. It allows union with the Infinite to be realized by ethical action. In reply to a question, whether he was a pessimist or an optimist, he answered "my knowledge is pessimistic, but my willing and hoping are optimistic."

TRUE SOCIALISM

A group of fifteen students came to see Gandhiji one day. He was at the moment observing his Monday silence. They called themselves Socialists. Gandhiji wrote out replies to their questions on slips of paper. The first step towards Socialism, he scribbled, was to shed sloth and aversion to physical labour. "Now tell me how many of you have servants in your homes?" he asked. They admitted that altogether there was at least one servant in each home. "And you call yourselves Socialists while you make others slave for you!" Gandhiji told them. "It is a queer kind of Socialism which, I must say, I cannot understand. If you will listen to me, I will say, do not involve yourselves in any ism. Study every ism. Ponder and assimilate what you have read and try to practise yourself what appeals to you out of it. But for heaven's sake, do not set out to establish any ism. The first step in the practice of Socialism is to learn to use your hands and feet. It is the only sure way to eradicate violence and exploitation from society. We have no right to talk of Socialism so long as there is hunger and un-employment and the distinction between high and low amongst us and around us."

REALITY

Witnessing the divine play of Lord Buddha staged, Sri Ramakrishna said: "It was certain that Buddha was an incarnation of God. There is no difference between the faith founded by him and the Vedic Path of knowledge. Do you know what 'Buddha' means? It is to become one with Bodha, Pure Intelligence, by meditating on That which is of the nature of Pure Intelligence. It is to become Pure Intelligence Itself."

"Why should Buddha be called an atheist? When one realizes Svarupa, the true nature of one's Self, one attains a state that is something between 'asti' 'is' and 'nasti' 'is not'".

Narendra: "It is a state between 'existence' and 'non-existence'."

Sri Ramakrishna: "This 'existence' and 'non-existence' are attributes of Prakriti. The Reality is beyond both."

"I MUST GO TO MY BROTHER'S AID"

Sadhu Sundar Singh is a Christian mystic of this century. His ancestral religion was Sikhism, which is a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. It is a blend of all that is best in both the religions. As a student at the Mission school in the Patiala state, he was a leader of some young men who called themselves the enemies of Christianity, and who took pride in insulting the missionaries. However, Sundar Singh was a keen student of the New Testament.

During the Christmas week of 1904, Jesus Christ appeared to him in a vision. About an year later, he became a Christian and had his baptism at Simla. Donning the yellow robe of a Hindu Sanyasi, he travelled far and wide as an evangelist. He did not belong to any particular school of the Christian thought, nor was he a reformer. He merely glorified God's power and mercy as manifested in Jesus Christ.

In his sermons, he was fond of repeating the following sentiment:

"We Indians do not want a doctrine, not even a religious doctrine. We have enough and more than enough of that kind of thing; we are tired of doctrines. We need the Living Christ. India wants people who will not preach and teach, but workers whose whole life and temper is a revelation of Jesus Christ."

There is hardly any country in the world to which he had not carried this Gospel of the Living Christ.

We heard it direct from his lips when he stopped in Colombo on his way to Europe.

He had to face many hardships during his travels in Tibet, and on his pilgrimage to Mount Kailash, where he is said to have met a Maharishi. On one of his trips in Tibet, he had as his companion a Tibetan Buddhist monk. Finding that a terrible storm was rising before their very eyes, they hastened towards a certain monastery to take shelter. When they passed a precipice, they heard a groaning voice coming from the bottom. Looking down they saw a fallen man, badly injured and unable to move. The monk said:

“In my belief, here we see Karma; this is the work of Fate, the effect of a cause. This man’s doom is to die here, while I must press on upon my own errand.”

But the Sadhu replied:

“In my belief, I must go to my brother’s aid.”

The monk ran towards the monastery to avoid the storm, while the Sadhu went down the slope and lifted the injured man on his back. As he reached the road leading to the monastery, he was dripping with perspiration. Then he stumbled and almost fell over an obstacle on the ground. To his dismay and amazement, he found that the obstacle was the body of his companion, frozen to death by the icy wind. Thereupon, he realized that because of his hard exercise in carrying the injured man on his back he had kept his own body warm and saved his life. In other words, it was a case of saving one’s own life by going to save a brother’s life!

HOW HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF!

We read in the Bible that after condemning the scribes for their "show" of religion, which was fundamentally hollow and hypocritical, Jesus was, one day, watching people putting their offerings into large boxes that were kept in the part of a building open to Jews only.

After the rich people put in their gifts, there came a certain poor widow, who offered two mites, the smallest unit of coin in use. Jesus pointed to the significance of the contrast. Since then the "widow's mite" has become a phrase in common use, because that widow had little, but gave much.

In November 1927, I had a personal experience of this "widow's mite." When Mahatma Gandhi visited Ceylon for the first time, collections were made for his Khaddar Fund. At Nawalapitiya, where I had him and his party as our distinguished guests, collections were made. The committee in charge decided to give every one a chance to contribute his or her mite, true to the principles enunciated by Gandhiji over these collections.

At Ambegamuwa Road, there lived a poor widow who was making her livelihood by baking hoppers for the railway workmen. The day we went for collections was a Sunday, and the workmen were away at their homes. The poor widow had no earnings that day. Since she had nothing on hand, she expressed

regret. As we were stepping out of her shanty, she stopped us. She was in the habit of putting a cent or two daily in an earthen till-pot, to meet any emergency. Two days earlier, she had broken it, and replaced it by a fresh one. She took that pot and dashed it on the ground in our presence. She was full of smile when she observed six cents rolling out from the broken till. She handed all of them for the Fund. We included her name, 'Podi Nona' and the amount in the list.

On the way to the Reception Hall, where the presentation of the purse was to be made, I handed the list to the Mahatma and whispered to him about Podi Nona's sacrifice. I was in tears, and he too was visibly moved. In his reply to the Reception address and the purse, he made touching reference to the poor widow's contribution, which, he said, was a striking example for the rich people to emulate. During his vast travels in Ceylon, this was the only occasion when he made a personal reference. There were cases where the contributions were in four and five figures, but he made no mention of any of those gifts from the wealthy.

How prophetic were the words of Rev. J. H. Holmes of America! Over forty five years ago, in paying a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, he said:

"When I think of Rolland, I think of Tolstoi. When I think of Lenin, I think of Napoleon. But when I think of Gandhi, I think of Jesus Christ.

The parallel with Jesus constantly presents itself. The Nazarene was a divine personality: he taught the law of love and laid a programme of non-resistance for its fulfillments; he sought to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth by dethroning Mammon in favour of God. So also did Gandhi."

THE PROPHET IN LEATHER BREECHES.

George Fox was only nineteen years old when he abandoned his shoeshop at Leicester, with a determination to steer the world "from the waters of death into the waters of life." At that time (1643) the Thirty Years' War was devastating the Continent of Europe, and in England King Charles I was amusing himself by sticking the heads of his enemies upon a picket fence, and his unjust taxation led to civil war which resulted in his being beheaded in front of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall six years later.

Fox and his followers were militant pacifists, the bravest soldiers that ever fought for human freedom. They called themselves the Society of Friends. Their opponents nicknamed them 'Quakers', because "Fox made his enemies to quake and tremble at the word of the Lord."

For telling a group of people, "stop **disputing** about Jesus and start **obeying** him", Fox was sent to prison. But he continued to rebuke the priests for their ignorance and arrogance, and the judges for their cruelties and injustice. Thus he earned the wrath of both the Church and the State. Fox made for himself a suit of leather as a protection against storm, rain and snow when he embarked on his life-long pilgrimage to teach all men the ways of peace. Paying a tribute to this leader of the Quakers in the suit of leather, Carlyle wrote that "the Leicester shoeshop, had men but known it, was a holier place than any Vatican."

Fox spent a greater part of his life in prison. It is recorded that he had to undergo not less than sixty arrests. After Oliver Cromwell became the Dictator of England, Fox was accused of fomenting a revolution against him. In a letter addressed to Cromwell, the latter "denied the wearing or drawing of any carnal weapon against him or any other man." He was ordered to see the Dictator in his palace. He went there as ordered, and on entering the Hall of the palace, uttered his customary salutation, "Peace be to this house". After discussing with him at length on religion, politics, war and peace, they were pleasantly surprised to discern that they had many things in common. As revolutionists, they were after the self-same thing,—a freer, saner and friendlier relationship between man and man. The only and radical difference was that the Quaker leader was "guiltless of his country's blood", unlike Cromwell.

As Fox was about to leave the palace after the interview, Cromwell caught him by the hand, and with tears in his eyes said, "Come again to my house; for if thou and I were but an hour of a day together, we should be nearer one to the other. I wish no more ill to thee than I do to my soul."

The shoemaker-prophet left the presence of the soldier-prophet after giving a final advice that Cromwell should take care "to keep his heart free from the hardness which was likely to overtake it."

William Penn, son of the British Admiral, was the most famous of Fox's followers. It was he who, in 1612, went to America and founded the State of Pennsylvania, on a special grant obtained from King Charles II.

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD

While Prophet Mohammed was bathing in a stream, he observed a scorpion carried away by the current. He took pity for the struggling scorpion, and rescued it. Instantly it stung him in the hand that picked it up. It was again carried away by the current. The Prophet repeated his act of compassion, and was stung once again.

As the Prophet was attempting to save it for the third time, a passer-by who was watching the incident, observed: "O Prophet, the scorpion is wicked. It does not want to give up its wickedness. It has returned evil for good twice. Why do you want to save it? Why not allow it to die?"

With great composure, the Prophet replied:

"Brother, the scorpion does not want to give up its wickedness; it is its nature; then why should I give up my goodness?"

THE GOD OF THE POOR

Narottama was one of the disciples of the great Bengali Saint, Gauranga (b. A. D. 1486). He was the son of a multi-millionaire. He was in his teens when he renounced his palace and princely state and went on foot to Vrindavan.

The king of Mathura had built a great temple with golden dome for Lord Krishna at Vrindavan at the time. On arrival at Vrindavan, Narottama took his residence under a big tree on the road side. Thousands used to collect near him to listen to his discourses on Divine Love. The temple was deserted. On hearing from the minister that none turned up for worship at the new temple, the king had an announcement sent out that those who attended the temple twice a day would be given one gold *mohur* each.

None was tempted by this offer, and the temple remained empty as before. The king then invited Narottama to take his residence at the temple. The latter rejected it saying that his Lord was not residing there. The king felt annoyed, and went direct to the saint and told him: "You know not, O Saint, that I have spent crores of rupees to build the new temple; and it has been consecrated to Krishna with costly rites."

Narottama quietly replied: "Sire, I know your temple has cost crores of rupees, but it is not beautiful for Krishna is not there. It is but a bubble of vanity.

After their houses were destroyed by the recent floods, thousands of your people stood at your palace door and begged for food. You turned them out. And the Lord told me in a vision that the king who turned the poor out had turned him also out of his temple. I cannot therefore come to your temple.”

In great anger, the King ordered the saint to quit his realm. The latter departed from Vrindavan with a gentle smile, saying, “Sire, I go where dwells the God of the poor.”

A LESSON IN CHARITY

Rev. Peter Miller was one of America's leading theologians of the 18th century. He was a patriot, humanitarian, scholar and mystic. He was a trusted friend of General George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Penn, and other great personalities. He rendered immense service to the cause of freedom. He had the printing of the first American money done free of charge at his Community's press at Ephrata Cloisters. The buildings of these cloisters were also converted into a hospital at his instance to nurse the wounded soldiers of Washington's army.

In his early life, Miller was a minister in the German Reformed Church of which Michael Widman was one of the superintendents. When Miller quitted that church, and embraced the principles of the Seventh Day Baptists, the latter got displeased, and treated the priest with contempt, and habitually spat in the old man's face whenever he passed his way.

When Michael Widman attempted to betray his country to the British army, he was arrested and condemned as the greatest traitor next to Benedict Arnold. On hearing that Widman was to be hanged for his treachery, Miller hurried to Valley Forge to plead for his life with Washington. The latter was deeply moved by his entreaties, but mindful of his responsibilities, he refused to grant the prayer. The General actually thought that the old minister was pleading for a friend.

“Friend” exclaimed Miller, interrupting the Commander-in-chief, and throwing up his hand. “He is my worst enemy—my incessant reviler. For a friend I might not importune you; but Widman being, and having been for years, my worst foe, my malignant, persecuting enemy, my religion teaches me: “To pray for those who spitefully use me.” In the words of Dr. John Palo of New York, from whose writings these facts are gathered, “Anticlimactic to what followed may be, it furnishes a unique chapter in the human side of American history.”

On hearing Miller’s words, Washington cried. Taking the aged priest by the hand, he said, “My dear friend, I thank you for this lesson of Christian charity. I cannot resist such a manifestation of our divine religion; the pardon shall be granted on one condition that you be the bearer of it yourself, and hand it to the commanding officer at Turk’s Head in Widman’s presence.”

The old mystic carried the pardon order, covering a distance of twenty miles on foot during the late hours of the night. He was exhausted by the fatigue of the journey, but yet hurried to the blockhouse early morning, where he found Widman standing, with the rope adjusted round his neck. As the post commander was perusing the order from the Commander-in-chief, Widman caught sight of Miller and, in a truly repentant mood, made an attempt to beg for forgiveness for all his wanton maltreatment. The commanding officer interrupted him to announce the pardon. Turning towards Miller, he said to Widman, “Here is your deliverer.”

Peter Miller died in 1796 at the ripe old age of 86. Ehprata Cloisters where this revered mystic lived is today a place of regular pilgrimage for the Rosicrucians and their friends.

IN SHA' ALLAH—IF GOD WISHES.

Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawi is reputed as the greatest Muslim saint of the present century. He was born in 1869 at Mestaganem in Algeria and was the head of an Order of *fakirs* from the death of his Master in 1909 until his own death in 1934.

Though he has written ten highly instructive volumes between 1910 and 1930, dealing with spiritual questions, he is hardly known outside the precincts of Islamic mysticism. Messrs. George Allen and Unwin the London publishers of this saint's spiritual heritage and legacy by Mr. Martin Lings, claim that "for those who place the spiritual above the temporal and who are prepared to accept the validity of a religion other than their own, the Shaikh Al-'Alawi must rank with Shri Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai as one of the few truly great men of this century."

There are many incidents in the life of the Shaikh which are of special significance to all spiritual aspirants. Here we wish to refer to one of them. He had a partial heart attack in 1932. His devotees summoned a Frenchman, Dr. Marcel Carret, who was a friend and admirer of the saint for some years. When the doctor arrived, the patient's pulse was imperceptible, and he had lost consciousness. An intra-veinous injection brought him round. When he opened his eyes, he looked at the doctor reproachfully.

“Why did you do that?” he said. “You should have left me go. There is no point in keeping me back. What is the good?” The doctor rose equal to the solemn occasion. He replied as follows:

“If I am at your side, it is because God willed it so. And if He willed it so, it was in order that I might do my duty by you as your doctor.” Thereupon, the Shaikh said: “Very well, in sha’ Allah.”

Two years later, when the same doctor called on him during his last illness, the Saint clasped his hand feebly and closed his eyes, while his lips murmured: “I am going at last to take my rest in the Presence of God.”

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

There is a misconception in the minds of many Western writers that the goal of life as taught in Hinduism and Buddhism is one of contemplation in solitude for individual salvation and happiness only. Even so late as 1947, one Mr. A. G. Hogg of London expressed the erroneous view that the Hindu thought had no idea of a cosmic community, ignoring the rejoinder of Sri Aurobindo that "the greatest of the mystics have always given a luminous lead to men and never acquiesced in a mere passive enjoyment of their bliss, steeped in their solitary contemplation."

"All those sins of the world, let them fall on me; let the world be saved." is a statement attributed to Lord Buddha in the *Tantravartika*. We hear the echo of this noble ideal in Sri Ramakrishna's rebuke to his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda, about seventy nine years ago.

Narendran (Vivekananda's former name) one day begged of his great Master to bless him so that he might remain in perpetual *Samadhi*, enjoying bliss. Sri Ramakrishna who was surprised with such a selfish idea coming from the lips of his chosen disciple, addressed him as follows:

"How can you ask such things? I thought you were a vast receptacle of life, and here you wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man. This realization will become so

natural to you, thanks to the Mother, that in your normal state you will realise the Unique Divinity of all beings; you will do great things in the world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor."

Vivekananda fulfilled in later life the above prophetic utterance of the Master, and proclaimed to the world that the only God in whom he believed was the sum total of all souls, and that above all, he believed in his God the wicked, the miserable, and the poor of all races.

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

A certain boy was bitten by a cobra, and his mother took him to Sri Sai Baba, the famous Saint of India, residing then in Bombay state, and begged him to give some holy ash, but he did not give it and the child died.

Sri Dixit, one of the oldest and devout followers of Baba, could not stand the weeping and wailing of the woman. He implored him: "Baba, her crying is heart-rending. For my sake, revive her son." Based on previous experiences, the devotee had absolute faith that the Saint could do this.

Sai Baba replied: "Do not get entangled in this. What has happened is for the best. He has entered another body in which he can do specially good work which he could not do in this one. If I draw him back into this body, then the new one he has entered will have to die for this to live. I might do it for your sake, but have you considered the consequences? Have you any idea of the responsibility and are you prepared to assume it?"

The devotee understood from this reply that death to one form is always birth to another, except for the Enlightened Ones, and did not plead further.

IS THAT SO?

The Zen master, Haku-In, was praised by his neighbours as one living a pure life.

A beautiful Japanese girl whose parents owned a food store lived near him. Suddenly, without a word, the girl was with child.

This made her parents angry. She would not confess who the man was, but after much harassment at last named Haku-In.

In great anger the parents went to the master. "Is that so?" was all he would say.

After the child was born, it was brought to Haku-In. By this time he had lost his reputation, which did not trouble him, but he took very good care of the child. He obtained milk from his neighbours and everything that the little one needed.

A year later the girl-mother could stand it no longer. She told her parents the truth that the real father of the child was a young man who worked in the fish market.

The mother and father of the girl at once went to Haku-In to ask his forgiveness, to apologize at length, and get the child back again.

Haku-In was willing. In yielding the child all he said was, "Is that so?"

A REMARKABLE ANSWER

Rishi Dayananda, the Founder of Arya Samaj, is one of the great pioneers and prophets of Modern India. His reverence for Truth, was unequalled. In his passion for Truth, he was not afraid of being ridiculed as 'an inconsistent Teacher.' He gave up Saivism to become a Vedantist, and did not hesitate to leave Vedantism for Vedism, when his search for Truth compelled him to do so.

He had a wonderful control over his body by the practice of *Yoga* and *Tapas*. He used to sleep in open ground with sky as the canopy. One day, at midnight, certain devotees went to see him on the bank of Ganges, where he used to take his rest. It was a very chilly winter night. He was observed lying on the sand, with only a loin-cloth. He had no blanket on, even in that bitter cold. One of the visitors asked him:

"Swamiji, it is very cold. How is it that you don't feel it?" The revered Yogi gave the following illuminating reply:

"You don't feel cold on your face! Remaining always exposed, it has become its nature to bear cold and never to feel it. So, too, it has become natural for my body to bear cold without feeling it."

THE CONVERSION OF THE KHALIF

Egypt, which was once the spiritual teacher of Greece and Rome, became a province of the Khalif of Baghdad during the Muslim era. Nevertheless, it was famed as a homeland of friars and *fakirs*. It was during this period that the great Master of Wisdom, Junnuna Misri, appeared to spread love and peace in the land. In his teachings, we hear the echo of the Wisdom embodied in Gita, Upanishads, &c.

The transformation of Misri is recorded as a revolution. He had to go to many ascetics and *fakirs*, and learn something striking from each of them before the transformation took place. Declared as a heretic by ignorant Mullahs, Misri was brought before the Khalif, who sentenced him to forty days' imprisonment.

On the date of his release, a large crowd of disciples and devotees gathered at the jail-gate to receive the Master. Seeing him worn-out and exhausted, their joy at his release was turned into sorrow and tears. The Khalif who observed this touching scene from his mansion walked up to Misri and offered him a seat. The following conversation took place between both:

Khalif: Junnuna, you are now free. But see that you teach nothing subversive of the state or the social order.

Junnuna: I teach as I have been taught.

Khalif: What have you been taught?

Junnuna: This, O ruler of men! That if a society would have life, it must live by the Law of Love, and that if a state would be strong it must be ruled by the guardians of the moral law, and they must live a simple, frugal life as lived the early Khalifs. They revealed Allah, the Eternal, in daily life; their aspiration was not long prayers but communion with the Divine in Silence. They were the friends and guardians of the people! they were the sons of Light.

The Khalif was moved to tears as he listened to these words of wisdom from the lips of Misri, and fell at his feet, uttering the words: "Master, Forgive me. And accept me as Thy disciple." The Great Master accepted the Khalif as one of his disciples, and stayed for some time in his palace before he returned to Egypt.

His parting message was: "If thou hast met God, He is enough,—the one true Friend in life; if thou has not met Him, meet them who are His friends; and thou will be happy."

Such miracles have happened, again and again, in the lives of Saints and Sages, and they are not confined to any particular region or religion.

GOD LOVETH THE BENEVOLENT

Karbala, once the sacred city of the Shiites in Iraq, is even today a great centre of pilgrimage for the Muslims. It became famous by being the home town of the Martyr-Saint, Hussain.

Hussain sat at dinner, served by his slave. By an accident, the latter dropped a hot dish, which fell on the master's knees. The slave got frightened and felt nervous, but under some sudden inspiration he recited the following verse from the Holy Qur'an:—

“Paradise belongeth to him who restraineth his anger.”

And Hussain answered:—

“I am not angry.”

The slave continued:—

“Paradise belongeth to him who forgiveth his brother.”

And Hussain added:—

“I forgive you.”

And the slave said the last line of the verse:—

“For God loveth the benevolent.”

Thereupon, Hussain declared:—

“I give you liberty. No longer are you my slave; and I give you 400 pieces of silver.”

Yes, God loveth the benevolent. God loveth them who serve the poor.

SURRENDER TO GOD

Saint Thirunavukkarasu is one of the four great preceptors of Saivism in South India. He is one of the foremost saints who helped in the re-establishment of this ancient religion in the land of its birth, during the seventh century A.D.

His original name was *Marul-Neekkar*. When he left his parental religion and joined a Jain monastery, and became its head, he was honoured by the title, *Dharmasena*. Through the prayers of his sister, *Thilakavathi*, who was a great devotee of Lord Siva, he was re-converted to his original faith, and the name *Thirunavukkarasu* (the Prince of divine utterance) was bestowed on him through Siva's grace.

Many miracles are associated with his name. He had to undergo numerous trials and persecutions at the hands of Jains whose wrath he aroused by deserting their faith. They had the Pallava Emperor, Mahendra Varma, on their side. But through a life of absolute surrender to God, and practising the ideal of Ahimsa, the Saint overcame all difficulties, and ultimately converted the Emperor himself to Saivism.

The boy saint, *Thirugnanasambandar*, was a junior contemporary of *Thirunavukkarasu*. He had the unique privilege of receiving Divine Grace at the age of three, and his name became a household word in the whole of Tamil land. On one occasion, the boy Saint was travelling to the village of

Thirunavukkarasu, with a wish to meet him and to pay his respects. When the news of this proposed visit reached the ears of *Thirunavukkarasu*, he quietly walked in the direction in which the young Saint was travelling, carried by his followers on a palanquin, and unrecognized by any one in the crowd, took the place of one of the palanquin bearers. A little while later, the procession stopped when the prodigy enquired: "Where is *Appar*?" The word '*Appar*' in Tamil means father. The elder Saint answered:

"I am here, blessed in the service of carrying you, Lord!" Immediately *Thirugnanasambandar* jumped down from the palanquin, and embraced *Thirunavukkarasu*, with eyes moistened with tears. In the incident, we find a unique example of humility, with holiness as the symmetry of the soul. "It is no great thing to be humble", says St. Bernard, "when you are brought low; but to be humble when you are praised is a great and rare attainment."

The name '*Appar*' has stuck to him with devotion and reverence for the last fourteen centuries. This is the most miraculous feature in his life of wonders and miracles! His poems, running into thousands, are gems in the Tamil devotional literature. Deep philosophical thoughts are beautifully embodied in them.

THE UNIQUE MESSAGE

“Go ye forth, my brethren, for the gain of many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, preach you this doctrine, which is glorious in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. Preach you a life of holiness, perfect and pure. There are some beings whose eyes are not completely covered with dust; they will perish if they do not hear the truth.” This is the unique message of Lord Buddha to the 60 Arahats of his time.

Punna, an earnest follower of the Enlightened One, was presumably not one of the sixty. He went to the Master and asked him for permission to carry His message to a race of wild and lawless people.

The Buddha replied to Punna, “If you go there, those men will abuse you.” “Master,” said Punna, “I shall think of them as good people because they only abuse me.”

“But”, said the Buddha, “they will assault you,” and Punna replied, “I shall still think of them as good people who only assault me.” “But Punna,” said the Buddha, “They will kill you.” “Master, I shall still think of them as good people because they only put to death a body that must one day die.” was Punna’s reply. Whereupon, the Buddha said to Punna, “You are, indeed, one worthy to carry my message to those people.”

We hear an echo of these teachings in the dialogue between St. Francis of Assisi and his disciple, Bro. Leo.

A PATRONESS OF DAZZLING PURITY

St. Agnes is one of the greatest women-saints in the Roman Catholic tradition. She is revered as a special patroness of purity. Thomas-A-Kempis refers to this fact in his works, and also relates many miracles wrought and graces received through her intercession.

She was noted for her beauty and wealth, and many noblemen of Rome vied with one another to win her hand in marriage. She rejected all their addresses with the one firm reply that "she had consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ, the heavenly spouse." Her suitors complained to the Governor. The latter first employed mild tactics and kind promises, but finding the young lady determined in her resolve, displayed before her terrible fires, hooks, racks and other instruments of torture. She did not betray the least symptom of fear. So, the Governor threatened her that he would send her to a public brothel, with liberty to all persons to abuse her person at pleasure.

This threat brought the stern rejoinder from the girl: "You may stain your sword with my blood, but will never be able to profane my body, consecrated to Christ." Incensed at this reply, the Governor sent her to the brothel as threatened. There many young profligates tried to molest her but the luminosity of her dazzling purity kept them at a distance. When one of them went near to outrage her modesty, he was struck blind by lightning and felled to the ground. His companions carried him to Agnes and prayed for

pardon. The virgin knelt and prayed to Christ for the restoration of his sight and health. The prayer was readily granted.

The Governor got highly exasperated when he heard the above news. He condemned her to be beheaded. Agnes received the sentence with joy, and, to quote the words of St. Ambrose, "went to the place of execution more cheerfully than others go to their wedding," And naturally enough, death trembled and humbled itself before the fiery determination of her soul. With a trembling hand, the executioner cut off her head at one stroke. She was only thirteen years old at the time of her martyrdom.

Her body was buried at a small distance from Rome, and later a church was built on the spot in the time of Constantine the Great. It was repaired by Pope Honorius in the seventh century. Another beautiful church stands today at the place where her chastity was exposed. It was built at the instance of Pope Innocent X. The day of her feast was once a holy-day for the women of England.

To cultivate the bridal love in the soul's relation to the Lord is one of the most difficult spiritual practices, but the religious history of the world records many instances of some divine souls in human garbs who had achieved perfection through that practice. In the Hindu tradition we had Andal of South India and Mira of North India. In the 20th century itself, before our very eyes, we have the shining examples of Sree Ananda Mayee of Benares and Mother Sree Rama Devi of Mangalore. In Ceylon too, only about a century ago, we had the unique example of Princess Balasundari of North India, whose chastity was saved by the grace of Lord Skanda of Kataragama, when the king sent an armed military detachment to forcibly remove her to his palace from the holy temple where she resided.

THE DIVINE MEANING OF BOOMERANG

Trailinga Swami of Benares is one of the most famous Yogis of India in the last century. He weighed 300 pounds and his age was claimed to be 300 years. He was reputed for his miracles which were many and varied. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who visited him in the year 1868 had left on record that "his presence itself had made the holy place of Benares holier."

The Master Yogi was a Mouni, one who observes silence. He used to be without food or drink for weeks. He had such a wonderful control over his body to stand extreme heat and extreme cold. He broke his long fasts by taking potfuls of clabbered milk lovingly offered to him by devotees. There was one sceptic who thought that all that show was a fraud, and that people were silly in believing that the Swami was actually living without food. He wanted to expose him as a charlatan. On one occasion he placed before him a large bucket of calcium-lime mixture, used in white-washing walls, as his gift of clabbered milk for breaking the fast.

The Swami drank, without any hesitation or question, to the last drop the bucketful of burning lime. Immediately, the evil-doer fell to the ground in agony. He cried out: "Swami, help me. I am on fire. Forgive my wicked test." Breaking his habitual silence, the Yogi said, "Scoffer, you did not realise when you offered me poison that my life is one with your own. Except for my knowledge that God is present in my stomach, as in every atom of creation, the lime would have killed me. Now that you know the divine meaning of boomerang, never again play tricks on any one." Healed by these loving words of the Master, the sinner went away as a better and wiser man.

WHAT! RISE AT THE EXPENSE OF ANOTHER?

During his spiritual mission in United States between the years 1895 and 1897, Swami Vivekananda was taken to be a Negro by some Americans, particularly in the Southern States, where even today the white-negro differences cause so much of worry to the authorities in Washington. He was refused admission to certain hotels, restaurants and barber-saloons.

On one occasion when he alighted at a railway station, all the prominent people of the city turned up to give him a hearty welcome. A negro porter working at that station, who mistook him for a fellow negro, felt elated and proud that one of his own race had become so great as to be honoured thus by the white people. He walked up to the Swamiji and asked for the privilege of shaking hands with him. The great Master extended to him a warm and cordial handshake saying, "Thank you! Thank you! brother."

Some years later, one day when the Swamiji was in a reminiscent mood, he related these incidents to one of his Western disciples. The latter asked him why, in order to correct the wrong impression in the minds of the people, he did not tell them that he was not a negro but a Hindu. The Swamiji's quick and indignant rejoinder to the disciple was: "What! Rise at the expense of another? I did not come to earth for that." This brief but significant teaching is sufficient to solve all racial problems in the world today.

Vivekananda was always proud of his race and complexion. In the words of his devout and devoted disciple, Sister Nivedita, "he was scornful in his repudiation of the pseudo-ethnology of privileged races". "If I am grateful to my white-skinned Aryan ancestors," he told her once, "I am far more so to my yellow-skinned Mongolian ancestors, and most of all to the black-skinned negroids."

MIRACLES DO STILL HAPPEN

There are certain psychic events which cannot be explained away in rational knowledge. Ordinarily, we call them miracles. The great English philosopher, John Locke, defines miracle "to be a sensible thing, which being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine." Since it is a work beyond the power of any created agent, it is considered to be an effect of the divine omnipotence.

We read in the life of Mr. Harry Edwards of Guildford, the doyen of England's psychic healers, that he was miraculously saved from a tragic motor accident when he was about thirty years old. He stepped off a tram-car in the middle of the road without looking on the two sides for the moving vehicles. A lorry was coming towards him at great speed. He had no time to jump out of its way, nor had its driver the time to apply brake. He was certain to be crushed to death, but suddenly an unseen hand lifted him up and hurled him across the gap in an instant, to the astonishment of the spectators and the driver of the lorry. We understand that it was this miraculous saving which prompted him to utilize the healing powers latent in him for the service of suffering humanity.

Such miraculous escapes have taken place recently in many others' lives. I wish to record here two instances that took place in two different countries,

700 miles apart, almost at the identical moment. It was on the 14th April 1950, the day of the Maha Samadhi of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Vallimalai Swami, a great Saint of South India, and an ardent admirer of the Maharshi, was residing at Madras. On receipt of the latest report of the latter's failing health he hurried to the Madras Egmore station to catch the first available train so that he may be at Tiruvannamalai for the Maha Samadhi. Finding the train already on the platform, about to start, he took a short cut via rail road without climbing the stairs to get to the proper platform. Just in front of him came a shunting engine at full speed. Within a second an unseen hand got hold of him and lifted him to the adjoining rail road, which was unoccupied. From there he got into a carriage of the train that was moving out. This was exactly at 7.45 p.m.

At the identical time, another miracle took place in front of our own house at Colombo. Mrs. Ramachandra and myself had gone to Sri Ramanashram in time for the Maha Samadhi, summoned in a mysterious way a week ahead, making an English sister, Elizabeth of London, the human agency for the purpose. On arrival at Tiruvannamalai, I had a vivid vision of Bhagavan's Maha Samadhi on 14th April at 7.45 p.m. Immediately I sent a Post Card to our Doctor son to observe Sri Ramana day at our home shrine. Many friends and devotees had gathered together. Our neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. A also joined the congregation with their daughter of three years. When that family was returning home, after the prayer was over, the child ran ahead, and a passing car completely

went over it. Before the shocked parents could shout aloud, the child got up and ran to the mother unscathed, only her clothes dirtied by the dust of the road. The father, mother and daughter are today ardent devotees of Bhagavan, though none of them had seen him personally, nor visited the Ashram even after his Samadhi. This is how his tremendous spiritual influence works all over the world, among all earnest seekers after truth!

DEEPER, LONGER AND MUDDIER

This happened in 1934. Dr. Frank Buchman and his Oxford Group had gone to Norway at the invitation of Carl Hambro, the President of the Norwegian Parliament.

Most of the Norwegian churchmen were so pre-occupied with scoring theological debating victories over ecclesiastical rivals that they failed to recognise the moral defects in the country and in their church itself.

Buchman poured himself out unceasingly to help the churches of Norway to live once more for the people. He had to meet much opposition and criticism. Once a priest complained that he had not gone deep enough in his diagnosis of the theological matter. With a chuckle, Buchman retorted: **“I find that some of you people when you get on to a theological point go down deeper, stay down longer and come up muddier than anybody else I know.”**

DIGNITY OF MANUAL LABOUR

During one of his tours in Bengal, Mahatma Gandhi happened to be the guest of a rich Zamindar at his palatial mansion. There were liveried servants running hither and thither at the master's commands.

As was usual with Gandhiji, evening prayers were held at the place of his residence. The terrace of the mansion was selected for the purpose. At the first such prayer meeting hundreds of people had assembled to have **darshan** of the Mahatma. The terrace was fully occupied when the host brought his exalted guest for the prayer.

It was the custom with Gandhiji to have the lights switched off before the evening prayers. So he said, very softly, "Lights off please." The switch was just above the head of the host, who was seated on the carpet, heavy and solid. Without getting up to do it himself, the Zamindar, as usual, gave an order in loud voice for one of the servants to come. Gandhiji lightly sprang to his feet and switched off the lights before his host could realise what had happened. Then he gave word for the prayer to begin.

In the course of the discussion that evening, Gandhiji dealt with the dignity of labour, quoting a verse from Gita. As later events proved, the little incident relating to the switching of the light became a turning point in the life of the rich Zamindar.

FROM BASE-METAL TO GLISTENING GOLD

The Poet-Saint Thyagaraja of South India enjoys today an All-India reputation. He was born in 1759 A.D. and had the unique distinction of having composed 24,000 devotional songs, dealing with not less than two hundred tunes or **ragas**. He rightly represents the very synthesis of culture and religion as expressed by devotional and divine music.

His father was a Telungu Brahman of pious nature who worshipped Sri Rama as his favourite deity. The image of this Ishta Deva was the legacy inherited by Thyagaraja from his devout father, and its worship formed the one and only concern in his life. His elder brother who was not pleased over the youngster's craze for Rama wanted to reform him. One night he stealthily removed the image from the shrine room, and buried it deep down in River Cavery sands. As usual Thyagaraja went to the shrine room in the morning, and finding the image of his cherished hero missing, he became grief-stricken. For days together he was without food or sleep and remained in prayer, tears rolling down his cheeks. One night Sri Rama appeared in a dream and revealed to him the exact spot where He lay buried.

At day-break the saint hurried to the river bed, dug out the sands and recovered the image, which was, to his great surprise and joy, changed from the original base-metal to glistening gold. The whole town of Thiruvaiaru came to hear of the wonderful happening and proclaimed Thyagaraja as an **avatar** of God. The brother too was converted, and became one of the ardent devotees of the saint. He attained Samadhi in January 1847, and a cultural-cum-religious festival is held annually at the spot where a fine temple has been built and the image of the saint installed for regular worship.

NOVEL FAREWELL PRESENTS

Ven. Ekai Kawaguchi, Rector of Gohyakurakan Monastery of Tokyo, was a saintly and scholarly Shramana. He is the author of the famous book, **Three Years in Tibet**. The following incidents reveal the unique manner in which he practised Ahimsa.

On the eve of his departure in May 1897 from Japan in search of the **Saddharma Pundarika Sutra** (the Aphorisms of the White Lotus of the Wonderful or True Law) in original Sanskrit and Tibetan translations, his friends and admirers wanted to give him some donations and presents. He declined to accept any of them and wanted them to make the presents in the form of some solemn pledges. From those addicted to liquor, he exacted the promise of absolute abstinence, from smokers the immediate discontinuance of their bad habit, etc.

In Tokyo, he had a friend, Mr. Takabe, a wealthy man whose joy and pastime in life was fishing by 'shot-net'. When Kawaguchi went to his house for wishing goodbye, he found him in a despondent mood as the result of the death of his three year old child. His wife and himself were grief-stricken. The saintly Shramana addressed him thus:

"Do you really find it so hard to bear the death of your child? What would you think of a person who dared to bind up and kill a child of yours, and roast and eat its flesh?" "Oh! devilish!

The devil only could do that" answered Mr. Takabe. The Shramana quickly rejoined: "You are a fiend then, at least, to the fishes of the deep" Thereupon, the friend promised to give up fishing as a sport.

Another friend, Mr. Ogawa, a noted sportsman with both gun and nets, made the farewell gift of a pledge with the following words: "I will never more take the lives of a other creatures for amusement; should I prove false to these words let 'Fudo-Myo-Oh' visit me with death."

THE BEST WAY OF SQUEEZING THE ORANGE

Among the intellectuals of U. S. A who came under the influence of Swami Vivekananda during the latter's stay in America, Mr. Robert Ingersoll, the famous agnostic and orator, occupies an important place.

Both discussed religious and philosophical subjects on several occasions. On one occasion, the agnostic cautioned the Swamiji not to be too bold and outspoken. When asked for the reason, Ingersoll replied: "Forty years ago you would have been hanged if you had come to preach in this country, or you would have been burned alive. You would have been stoned out of the villages, if you had come even much later."

The difference between these two great men was that while Ingersoll antagonised all religious ideas, Vivekananda, though presenting a new order of spiritual ideas, was tolerant of all religions. The following incident reveals the contrast in their outlook on life:

One day, in the course of a class talk, Ingersoll remarked "I believe in making the most out of this world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all we are sure of." Spontaneously came out the following illuminating rejoinder from the lips of Vivekananda:

“I know a better way to squeeze the orange of this world than you do; and I get more out of it. I **know** I cannot die, so I am not in a hurry. I know that there is no fear, so I enjoy the squeezing. I have no duty, no bondage of wife and children and property; so I can love all men and women. Everyone is God to me. Think of the joy of loving man as God! Squeeze your orange this way and get ten thousand fold more out of it; Get every single drop.”

This reply created an ever-lasting impression in the mind of the agnostic.

ORTHODOXY AND MODERN SAINTS

The Jaffna district in North Ceylon, where the Tamil Saivaites live, is noted for its high intellect and learning going hand in hand with lack of faith and devotion to modern Saints. Of course, the orthodoxy there has its sixty three Nayanmars (Medieval Saints) of South India, some of whose Guru-Poojah days they observe. Till about the closing quarter of the 19th century, the land produced no Saints nor established any saintly tradition.

Like a bolt from the blue, an individual, who was a Saint, Yogi and Siddha combined, appeared on the spiritual scene. He had no fixed abode. Nobody could get any information about his name, his mother country, caste or creed. As he was able to understand Tamil, the language of the people, they took him to be one hailing from South India, In the present conditions of Ceylon, he would have been arrested as a "sly entrant" and deported to India.

He was of a bizarre type, thoroughly unconcerned about others' opinion in regard to his dress, food and lodging. He used to roam about the streets of Grand Bazaar, uttering some crispy sayings about God, Soul and salvation. Many treated him as a crazy man and took no notice of him, but soon a few were attracted by his healing powers, which he occasionally exercised. They called him "Kadayit Swami",—Saint of the Bazaar.

One of these faithful group invited him to his humble cottage for lunch. On arrival at his place the Swami said that he was thirsty and wanted a glass of water. The host had no pure drinking water at the time, and so he served him with a glass of sweet toddy. The visitor felt quite pleased with the drink, and said: "The water of this country is sweet and invigorating." This remark spread all over the area in no time, and wherever he went he was served with sweet toddy. In his meals too, he observed no restriction of any kind. He ate anything that was lovingly served to him, including fish and meat; and he did not hesitate to visit homes of the depressed and oppressed classes.

The orthodox section of the Saivaites could not tolerate people paying adoration to a stranger who was constantly drinking toddy and eating fish and meat in the homes of low-caste people. They did not realise that he was the true mystic described in the Hindu scriptures, particularly Bhagawad Gita,—one who transcended all man-made codes and barriers, and attained Cosmic Consciousness. The method he adopted to convert some of them is remarkable indeed!

There are numerous miraculous incidents connected with his life. We shall here confine ourselves to two of them: On one occasion, an orthodox Saivaite, Mr. A, Head master of a school, who was one of the strongest denouncers of the Swami and his following was on his way to Vannarpannai in search of the famous scholar, Vidwan P, to have his doubts cleared about the meaning of a verse in a Tamil classic. The Swami, who was proceeding from the opposite direction, saw the Head Master and stopped near him.

He was at that time eating a piece of fish from his right hand. While continuing to eat it, he recited the particular verse and explained its meaning in simple words. The teacher understood that it was meant for him, and saw, to his amazement, that the Swami was spitting out the small pieces of fish from his mouth as fragrant flowers. Immediately, the teacher fell at the Saint's feet, and became one of his ardent followers.

The other incident relates to his healing powers. There lived in Vannarpannai a courtesan, who was middle-aged. For nearly thirty years, she had been suffering from chronic asthma. All treatments she took proved futile. Having heard of the many miraculous cures effected by Kadayit Swami, she too was anxious to go to him, but the memory of her past sinful life kept her way from his holy presence. One day, after spending a sleepless night in agony, meditating all the time on the revered Swami, she was seated on her door steps facing the street. To her happy surprise, she saw the Swami passing just in front of her cottage with a number of followers. She rushed to him and kneeling down got hold of his feet, and washed them with her tears. Raising her by his right hand, he took her to the cottage. Just at that time, the next door house was being renovated and a mason was seen white-washing the outer walls. Taking a drinking vessel from the courtesan, the Swami walked up to the mason and got a glassful of lime-mixture from the drum. As it was a bit too thick, he diluted it with water, and directed the asthma patient to drink it. Without the least hesitation or any kind of questioning,

she drank the full glass in his presence. She had such tremendous faith. She was completely cured from that day and her whole life was transformed thereafter.

After blessing the land of his adoption in this manner for a number of years, the Swami attained Mahasamadhi in October 1891. Regular worship is done now at the Shrine built at the spot where his body was interned. The Guruparamparai started by him still continues. Sri Yogar Swami, who attained Mahasamadhi in March 1964, is a disciple of Sri Sellappa Swami, who was one of the direct disciples of Kadayit Swami.

DISCUSSION IS USELESS

How a simple village urchin called Gadadhar developed into a Paramahansa and attained the supreme status of a World-Teacher is the greatest miracle of the last century.

At a certain stage of Sri Ramakrishna's life, there were doubts in the minds of the educated Bengalese about his spiritual make-up and achievements. At the instance of Yogini Bhairavi Bhrahmani, a meeting of Pandits was summoned by Mathur Babu to discuss his condition and decide the issue. Two great contemporary scholars were invited to take the leading part. One was Pandit Vaishnavacharan, who was already a convert by conviction to the theory that Sri Ramakrishna was an Incarnation of God. The other was Pandit Gauri of Indes, a Tantric Sadhaka, who was reputed to have acquired certain miraculous powers. He was expected to lead the opposition.

As soon as the meeting commenced, Pandit Gauri got up and said:

“As the Master has bestowed so much grace on Vaishnavacharan, I will not enter into a discussion with him today, and even if I did, I am sure to be defeated, for he is fully armed with divine grace today. Moreover, I am of the same opinion as himself in regard to the glory of Sri Ramakrishna. A discussion is therefore useless in this case.”

Thus the meeting came to an unexpected end.

Thereafter, Pandit Gauri became a regular visitor to the Master. On one occasion, the latter addressed Gauri thus:

“Look here, Vaishnavacharan called this (himself) an Incarnation of God; can this be so? Please tell me what you think”

Assuming a solemn and serious mood, Gauri replied as follows:

“Does he call you an Incarnation? I should consider his estimate very low. My conviction is that you are HE, from Whose parts Incarnations come down to the world from age to age, to do good to humanity, and with Whose Power they accomplish that work of theirs.”

The learned scholar then started quoting evidence from the Sastras.

The master, like an innocent and embarrassed child, tried to silence him by saying: “You say so many things; who knows what it is? I don't know anything at all.”

The Pandit, however, had the last say. He replied: “Quite right. The Sastras also say ‘Thou does not know Thyself’. So, please say, how others can know you. If you have compassion for any one, and let him know the Truth, only then he can know it!”

THERE IS NO POWER BUT GOD

Mr. Joel S. Goldsmith is one of the great Christian mystics of modern times. His books dealing with Prayer, Meditation, Spiritual Healing and other means of living the Infinite way, have enabled thousands of people all over the world to deepen their knowledge and finally to discover the secret of inner liberation of spiritual maturity.

In particular, he has been a great healer of alcoholics, not through the understanding that there is no power of evil in alcohol but through the knowledge that there is no power for good in alcohol. The following interesting and instructive story is taken from his book, 'The Thunder of Silence':

Some years ago a woman went to him in tears and self-righteous horror and complained that her husband was an alcoholic, who refused to work. She had to work for supporting the family, and from her hard-earned money, spent for his weekly supply of whisky. After listening to her tale of woe, Mr. Goldsmith got into an inspired mood and said:

"Do you know something? It comes to me that your husband is not an alcoholic at all. You are the alcoholic."

The poor woman expressed surprise at his remark, and Mr. G explained, "Well you seem to be more afraid of alcohol than your husband is."

Partly agreeing with this statement, she said: "Every day I see what it is doing. My husband doesn't think it is terrible; he likes it."

"There is a difference of opinion there. You really believe that alcohol is bad. Don't you? I can put it to you this way: Suppose your husband wanted to use your money to buy ginger ale, would you object?"

"No, I'd gladly go to work, and he could have all the ginger ale, he wanted."

"So, ginger ale is good, but alcohol is evil... Now let's see who is at fault in this, your husband or you. He thinks alcohol is good and you think it's evil, so you are deadlocked, I guess, and that is where you are going to stay for awhile unless you can begin to see what I see and that is that actually ginger ale isn't good, and whisky isn't bad, that there is no power in either one, if **all** power is **in** God. That's the vision and the way I see it. God is the infinite all-power and besides God, there is no power for good or evil."

When asked what she was supposed to do in the circumstances, she was directed by Mr. G to go home direct and tell her husband that she had made a serious mistake all this time in thinking that whisky was a terrible thing, and that from now onward he could have all the whisky he wanted from her earnings.

She was shocked with the remedy suggested, but having come to a desperate plight, she agreed to give it a trial.

She went home, and when her husband demanded whisky, she said: "Oh, yes, sure here it is." He was surprised at this unusual behaviour on the part of his wife, but made no comment.

A few days later the husband came home complaining: "You know there is no use drinking this stuff. They're making that wartime whisky again, and it has no punch, no effect—there is no power in the stuff." And that is how he was ultimately freed. With the realization that alcohol is not good, his taste for it disappeared.

Commenting on this particular case, Mr. Goldsmith concludes:

"Watch this carefully. Do not make the metaphysical mistake of declaring that evil is not power, but believing that good is. Be quick to recognize that there is no power but God."

WITHOUT DEMANDING ANY RETURN

A little girl who always demanded attention from her family visited Sri Sarada Devi (Holy Mother) in Calcutta. One day Holy Mother, who was about to leave for her native village, asked her 'Darling, do you love me?' 'Very much,' the girl replied. When the Mother asked her how much, she stretched her arms as wide as she could. Holy Mother then inquired if she would still love her when she is away. The girl assured her that she would. When the Mother asked her how she should know it, the girl asked how she could let her know. 'I shall be sure of your love,' Holy Mother said, 'if you can love everyone at home.' The girl promised to do so and said she would not be naughty any more.

Next Holy Mother asked her how she would love all equally and not some more and some less. The girl asked what she should do to love all equally. Holy Mother replied, 'Let me tell you how to love all equally. Do not demand anything of those you love. If you do, some will give you more and some less. In that case you will love more those who give you more, and love less those who give you less. So your love will not be the same for all.' And the little girl promised to love all without demanding any return.

DUALITY OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

There is a remarkable story about Moses in the Jewish legends. His fame had spread far and wide after the Exodus. The king of Arabistan was keen on possessing a portrait of the great man. The best painter in the land was entrusted with the work.

When the portrait was brought to the palace, the king gathered together all his sages who were wise in the science of physiognomics, and requested them to define the character and other qualities of Moses from the portrait before them. They were all unanimous in the view that the portrait was that of a cruel, haughty, and greedy man, who possessed all vices in creation.

The painter challenged their verdict, and a bitter dispute arose. The king was puzzled and perplexed. He set off for Israel to decide the issue by personally seeing Moses. At the very first glance of the face of Moses, he was convinced that the artist had faultlessly portrayed his character, but he could not still understand the reason for the very unkind attitude of his wise men. He knew that they were all men of vast experience.

The king then explained to Moses the purpose of his visit, and to the surprise and enlightenment of the former, the latter came out with the following frank and faithful reply:

“Both the painter and the physiognomists are men highly skilled, and both parties are correct in their views. All the vices mentioned by the sages have been assigned to me by nature. But I struggled hard with my vices by long and intense efforts of the will and gradually overcame them, until all opposed to them became my second nature. And in this lies my greatest pride.”

We find in this interesting story a striking illustration in regard to the duality of human personality.

GOD PROVIDES

A sceptical youth, wedded to reason and argument, by the name Maganlal, attached himself to Swami Ramdas of Anandashram when the latter was staying at Muchukund cave during his travels as a wandering Sannyasi.

Maganlal used to take a cup of milk and a few plantains daily, morning and evening, for the use of the Swami. One day he changed the routine in order to stay with the Swami the whole day. He forgot the evening supply of milk, and both went out for a long walk.

As they were returning to the cave, Ramdas observed Maganlal rather worried and unhappy. He enquired from him the reason for it. The latter replied that he had forgotten about the evening meal for the Swami and that he must immediately go home to bring it. The Swamiji replied that there was no need at that late hour for him to bring a meal and that he was not feeling hungry. But Maganlal's sense of doership was so great that he would not listen. Thereupon, Ramdas said: "Ram (God) provides for everybody." Prompt came the reply from the youth: "Quite true, Swamiji; but it is Ram in the form of Maganlal in this instance, and how can Maganlal ever forgive himself." In his usual sweet manner, the revered Swamiji came out with the following reply:

“What do you say, Ram? Ramdas eats what Ram brings him. Don’t you make any mistake about that!” (Swami Ramdas always speaks in the third person)

Even this stern rejoinder did not stop Maganlal’s argument. He retorted: “Today at least, if I do not bring anything, you are sure to go hungry.” Ultimately, the Swami asked him to be quiet, and to wait and see what Ram did. This made Maganlal to suspect that the Swami had kept back for his evening use a part of the morning meal, and he was determined not to leave him and return home, just to see the fun of it.

A little while later, a Sadhu living in one of the adjoining caves came up to them and offered a parcel of plantains and a cup of milk, saying that a visitor from the town had left them for the use of the Swami.

Swami Ramdas smiled and shared the milk and plantains with Maganlal and others nearby, but Maganlal went out in search of the stranger and returned disappointed. The world is, no doubt, full of Maganlals, but it is also blessed with a few Ramdases, whose surrendered lives form an inspiration for all earnest seekers after God-realization.

MAHATMA'S PRAYER FOR EARLY DEATH!

The English version of one of Mahatma Gandhi's last letters has come out in certain Indian Journals. In the one addressed to his follower, Shri Anusuya Prasad Pathak, dealing with such questions as National language, Khadi, Harijans, Untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, the Creed of non-violence, etc, Gandhiji had expressed his anguish over the fall of his followers from the high ideals taught to them; and he wrote as follows;

“But where are they? Consequently, I have given up my desire to live for 120 years, and prayed to God to take me away soon. You do not know after experiencing what pain, I took this decision. Leaders who have always supported me began to disregard my wishes after reaching seats of power. They began to call it the ravings of old age. What I said was laughed at. Then I saw that it is not good to remain here.

It is another matter that if I wanted, I could overthrow all the leaders, but they were mine, the people were mine. They also belonged to the people. If I too become like them, I lose faith in God like them. I left their company. I see everything, but time will do this work, not me.”

DISBELIEF SPRINGS FROM OBSTINACY

The great prophet and sage of Russia, Tolstoy, wrote nearly a hundred volumes before he passed away in 1910. Today the books about him and his teachings run into thousands.

One of the famous ones under the latter group is from the Russian revolutionary, Gorky. He was an atheist, who was not versed in any of the Indian scriptures. In his eyes, India was a land of pessimism. But in Tolstoy he found the man of mankind. He wrote once: "And I, who do not believe in God, looked at Tolstoy very cautiously and a little timidly; I looked and thought:— 'The man is God-like!'"

One day Tolstoy asked Gorky as to why he did not believe in God. "I have no faith" was the prompt reply of the revolutionary. Tolstoy corrected him by saying "It is true. By nature you are a believer and you cannot get on without God. Your disbelief comes from obstinacy, because you have been hurt: the world is not what you like it to be . . ."

"Faith, like love, requires courage and daring. One has to say oneself, 'I believe', and every thing comes right. A non-believer cannot love. The souls of such men are living barren lives; that is not good. But you were born a believer, and it is no use thwarting yourself."

After meditating on the profound thoughts embodied in the above words, the revolutionary returned home with a changed attitude towards religion.

TO FIND SELF IS TO FIND GOD

A certain European lady interviewed Shree Anandamayee on 21st January 1961, when Her Holiness was staying at New Delhi. Amongst other things, the visitor asked:

"How does the love of God come?"

Mataji: Does it not happen that you make friends with utter strangers and come to love them? To love God, which is your own Self, is natural. If you feel drawn to a particular form of God, such as Christ or Krishna, contemplate that form of His, repeat His Name constantly, think of Him, read about His greatness and His glory, let your mind constantly be occupied with the thought of Him.

Visitor: *Suppose one does not feel attracted to any particular incarnation of God, how should one proceed?*

Mataji: Sit perfectly still and dive into yourself, trying to find out who you are. To find your Self means to find God, and to find God means to find your Self.



CLING TO GOD MORE THAN EVER

A devoted friend of H. H. Swami Omkar, (Head of the Santi Ashram, South India,) residing at Hongkong, wrote a letter recently, enquiring from the beloved Swamiji as to what the Saints and Sages of India were doing to protect the world from the evil effects of the conjunction of the eight planets in February. (1962)

The revered Swamiji sent the following interesting and instructive reply:—

“Dear Brother! As for the meeting of the planets, *Ashtagrahams*, in the coming February, personally I am not at all worried. Everyday is the same to me. The same God exists in all the days, whether the planets meet or not. Of course there may be outer changes as per the laws of Nature—*Prakriti*. In spite of all the drastic changes, those who cling to God are ever safe.

Do you have hand-made grinding stones in Hongkong? Did you ever see it? The grinding stone is very common in every home in India.

It seems a devoted lady was grinding rice and shedding tears over it; when a Sadhu saw it, he asked the cause of her weeping. She said that her life is being wasted and being powdered like the rice, between the two stones of life and death. Then the wise Sadhu asked her, to lift the upper stone and said:—

Look at the rice clinging to the peg, around it. They are never hurt or even touched by any amount of grinding. So let us cling to God more than ever to the Peg—the **light** within and all is going to be safe always.

The restless and ignorant people get upset over these predictions. Whereas the God-men for the Peace of all, wishing the welfare of the world, cling to God more than ever, forgetting the outer world and its inevitable changes—the ups and downs of life. Thus day by day let us meditate on the Light within going deeper and deeper! May Peace be unto all. Om! Om! Om!

It was Swami Ram who said:

Better have a bullet in your heart than a doubt.

I take joy in saying:

Better have an atom bomb in your heart than fear.”

ACCUMULATE TRUE RICHES IN THE IMPERISHABLE KINGDOM OF GOD

Poonamalle, near Madras, is famous as the birth-place of one of the Acharyas of Vaishnavism in the tenth century A.D. There lived then a Chettiar by the name Veeraraghavar, who had amassed abundant riches by trading. He had four sons, the youngest of whom, Nambi, grew up as the pet of the family.

Following the Hindu traditions, the Chettiar divided his wealth equally among his sons, and retired from active trade, advising them all to follow in his footsteps and do independent business. A few years later, the father summoned to his presence all his sons, and enquired how they had fared in their respective business.

The first two replied that they had doubled and trebled their capital by buying and selling goods in the local markets, and the third reported that by taking up to export and import business by ships he had made immense profits. The father who was so pleased with these reports, turned to his favourite son and addressed him thus:

“I know well your honest ways. By righteous means you must have easily won the confidence of the public, and hoarded plenty of wealth. Where does it accumulate?”

Nambi quietly replied: “There in the Kingdom of God, father.”

Unable to grasp the true meaning of this answer, the old man questioned the son further. Nambi then explained how he had moved from one temple to another spending all his wealth in the service of God, and His devotees. Thereupon, the father, in a mood of indignation, uttered the following words:

“You have no place in the family of merchants. You may continue to carry on your commerce in the temple and with God.”

Nambi took his father's admonition as the command of God, and renounced his home and worldly life, and surrendered himself at the lotus-feet of God Varadaraja of Kanchipuram. He had the vision of the Lord often and experienced his grace in many ways. Ultimately, he became one of the preceptors of the incomparable Ramanacharya, the Messiah of Vaishnavism. Nambi's fame as Thirukachi Nambi, spread far and wide, and reached the ears of his aged parents, Veeragahavar and Kamala. Struck with remorse, both hurried to Kanchi where the Saint resided, and offering him their humble apologies for their rude behaviour in sending him out, invited him to visit his ancestral home and to bless the people of the locality by showing them the way of accumulating true riches in the imperishable Kingdom of God. On receiving a negative reply, the aged parents begged of him to accept at least their accumulated material wealth to flow along the channel of his chosen divine service. The old couple experienced the greatest bliss in life when that offer was accepted, along with their surrendered lives.

STRANGE ARE THE WAYS OF HOLINESS

In Arabia, there was a town named Nishapur. A merchant of this place had a wife who was wonderfully beautiful. The merchant had to move out for some days to recover sums from a trader. But the merchant had first to arrange for the board and lodge of his wife. She was so beautiful. He must not leave her in her lonely house; he can only leave her in the house of a pure, trustworthy man.

He remembered there was one such man in Nishapur. They called him Abu Usman. He was a *tapasvin*, a man of self-control. The merchant's wife came and lived in Abu Usman's house. One day, Usman saw her beautiful face and was bewitched. Usman's mind got agitated. He went to a religious teacher, Hafiz, and opening out his heart, said to him: "Save me, in Allah's Name!" Hafiz sent him to Yusuf.

Usman moved out to meet Yusuf. He lived in a far-off town. There, Usman fell into the hands of some of the detractors of Yusuf. They said to Usman:- "You are so good. Your life is pure. You are a *fakir*, a *tapasvin*. Strange that you wish to go to Yusuf! He is not pure and he mingles with the drunkards. Meet him not! If you go to his house, your reputation will suffer. Return!"

On hearing this, Usman returned to Nishapur. He was afraid of what the people would say if he went to meet Yusuf.

And Hafiz sent Usman back to Yusuf.

Usman heard again wild reports against Yusuf. Usman was firm. He found out Yusuf's house. What did he see? In the house, near the door, sat a man, advanced in age. His face was beautiful: his eyes were radiant: his words were sweet. Usman said:— "Here is a king amongst men!"

Usman saluted Yusuf. Yusuf saluted Usman in return and said to him:— "Welcome, come, brother! sit down!"

Then Yusuf talked to him of spiritual life, of the treasures of wisdom, of the vision of His Face that illumines the day, of the peerless King who is exalted above description and explanation, of the beauty of the Beloved whose vision emancipates the heart, of the Light of Love that calleth all heavenwards.

Usman was thrilled. Usman looked, again and again, into Yusuf's bewitching eyes; and Usman looked around. Usman found that near Yusuf was a bottle and a cup; Usman was surprised. He said to Yusuf:— "Your face is so beautiful. Your eyes are lit up with light. Your tongue is sweet as the song of a nightingale. Your talk is captivating. But why have you kept near you this wine-bottle and a cup?"

Yusuf said:— "Listen brother! I live in holy poverty. I have no money to buy a vessel for water: so I have cleaned this bottle, and I have filled it with pure water, and if a thirsty man or woman cometh, I offer him or her water in a cup!"

Usman was amazed. He said:— “O, the sinners! They talk ill of you. Why do you let them censure you? Why don't you behave differently?”

Yusuf replied:— “Usman! I behave as I do that scoffers may censure me! When I become notorious as a bad character, no one will leave his beautiful wife in my house. So shall I be freed from temptation. And my soul shall rejoice in Allah alone!”

Usman understood that in Yusuf's words there was a reference to him. Usman fell down at the feet of Yusuf and said:— “You are the Moses of our day. You are a singer of Allah. And in your songs is a wealth of the Wonder of the Beloved and His Divine Love. Accept me as a disciple!”

HOW HE GAVE UP COUNTING BEADS

Shah Abdul Latif is the first and foremost of the Pancharatnas (the five jewels) of Sindhi literature. His works, of which *Risalo* forms a precious legacy to humanity, belong to the first half of the 18th century. He was a contemporary of Saint Thayumanavar of South India. Though separated by language, religion, race and space—a distance of nearly three thousand miles, the poems of both these Poet-saints deal with almost similar themes. Their poems are universal in outlook and suit all ages. They have not grown old for the last two centuries.

Shah Latif's life story, as written by Sri Tirithdas Hotchand of Sind, West Pakistan, reveals the successive stages he went through, from poet to sage and ultimately to sainthood. There are many incidents in his life which are of great significance, and the following is one of the most striking:

Latif used to go to a grove for quiet meditation, with the rosary in hand for counting the beads. There was a well in the grove to which the village girls used to come with their pilchers for fetching water. One day when Latif was busy with his usual religious practice, the girls started gossiping. One of them said to another, "O sister, tell me how many times you have met your sweet-heart." The latter replied: "A dozen times". There was another girl who asked the same question from some other girl, to which the

reply was: "Sister, does one keep account of meetings with one's sweetheart?" All of them went away home giggling and in a mercy mood.

Latif who had heard all their talk, started soliloquizing: "Even the yonder woman has kept no account of worldly love-meetings whereas I am keeping the account of my repetitions of the Name of God by telling the beads of my rosary." The incident had such a tremendous effect on him that he gave up the use of the rosary from that day.

THE MUSIC OF THE STONE

A stone lay in the path Sri Ramananda often trod to take his bath in the Ganges water. And a disciple picked up the stone and flung it away, saying:—“Thou dead stone! will thou obstruct the path of the saint?”

And Kabir said:—“Say not so! Call not this stone dead! The blessed feet of Sri Ramananda have touched it, again and again. This stone is not dead. This stone glows with the light emanating from the feet of the saint. This stone is more alive than many whose hearts are cold, irresponsive to the call of love that cometh from the heart of the saint. This stone is not dead; it has a heart; it beats in love and reverence for the saint. Say not this stone is dead! This stone sings the melody of Sri Ramananda’s song of *Rama Nama*. Say not this stone is dead! It is dear to the saint as a flower,—a lotus or a rose,—that touches the feet of the saint as he walks, singing *Rama Nama*,—the mystic Name of the Lord!” Later Kabir became the foremost disciple of Ramananda.

DIVINE WISDOM COUPLED WITH JOKES

There is a mistaken idea that Saints and Sages should be solemn, serious and devoid of wit, humour and laughter. Some people do not realise that a good laugh is sunshine in any place, whether in a private home or a spiritual centre.

Sri Ramakrishna's witty remarks used to prove the truth of the saying that true humour springs from the heart, where its essence is love and compassion. Among the modern Saints, Swami Ramdas is noted for his humour and laughter. His anecdotes are full of wisdom coupled with jokes, which make the listeners roll in laughter.

The mystics of Taoism in China were all noted for their wit and humour. Among them Chuang-tse who belongs to the sixth century A.D. (Liang dynasty) is highly reputed for his jokes. One day he had a dream that he was a butterfly fluttering among the flowers. When he awoke, he said: "Now am I Chuang-tse dreaming of being a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming of being Chuang-tse?"

As the announced day of his transition approached, his disciples went about making elaborate preparations for a ceremonial funeral. He advised them not to do so, saying: "When heaven and earth are for my coffin and shell, with the sun, moon and stars as

my burial regalia, and with all creation to escort me to the grave—are not my funeral paraphernalia ready at hand?"

The disciples were not happy. They feared that the body of their revered Master would be exposed to the carrion birds of the air. Divining their thoughts, the great teacher came out with the following gentle and humorous rejoinder:

“Above ground I shall be food for the kites; below I shall be food for ants and worms. Why rob one to feed the other.”

**BETRAYED BY MAN BUT SERVED
BY RAVENS WITH LOVE AND
GRATITUDE.**

Among the noted centres of pilgrimage in the continent of Europe, the Abbey of Einsiedeln in the Black Woods of Mount Etzel near Zurich in Switzerland occupies an important place. It is hallowed with the memory of the great Saint Meinrad of the ninth century A.D.

Two ravens figure in the coat of arms of the Benedictine monastery of Einsiedeln, but many outside this Order do not know today its true significance. St. Meinrad's life is a thrilling and inspiring one. He was a born comtemplative. After training in the monastic school of Reichenau, he was entrusted with a monastery at Benken. He found the duties of an Abbot an obstacle to his higher spiritual practices. He wanted to be completely free to devote his whole time in the communion of the Lord. Resigning his post, he settled down in a hut between the summit and a lower elevation of Mount Etzel. He spent seven years in solitude and contemplation, and his fame spread far and wide. People of all stations in life started going to him for enlightenment and inspiration. Daily he had a crowd of people disturbing his silence and solitude. His soul aspired for a still higher life of perfect renunciation and of greater solitude.

So, he left that spot and went into the forest then called 'Black Woods' which was far less accessible to men, and built there a hut with a small oratory, through the generosity of Abbess Heilwige. He passed twenty five years in absolute solitude, until one day in January 861, two criminals, attracted by the charitableness of the great Saint, the fame of which had spread to the adjoining villages, smote him down with a dudgeon, after enjoying his loving hospitality. They thought that he had some treasure buried in his hut. During the above twenty five years, two ravens had kept constant company with the Saint, sharing his scanty meals. From the top of one of the trees above the hut, the two birds saw what had happened. They followed the murderers with woeful croaking to the town of Zurich, and helped the people to detect the murder. The two criminals had to expiate their heinous crime at the stake.

In due course, the little hut where the murder took place developed into the present monastery of Our Lady of Hermits. The skull of the Saint, which still bears the mark of the treacherous blow, with which his love was requited, is kept in a tabernacle at the foot of the carved figure of the Lady of Hermits, to whom the Chapel is dedicated. It is exposed every year during the octave of the feast of the Saint. The gratitude of the two birds is remembered with gratitude by millions of people by their figures being placed in the coat of arms.

THE ROBBER WHO BECAME A BHAKTA

Fudayl was his name. He was a robber,—the captain of a band of robbers. He ran after pretty girls and persecuted them.

One night he said:—"I must catch that girl! I am determined to gratify my passion." He moved out to assail her purity and honour. On the way he heard a pious man reciting a verse from the *Qur'an*:—"Is it not high time for you to open your heart to repentance?"

The words went into the heart of this Muslim robber. He turned back and spent the whole night in prayer and penitence. Over and over again, he repeated the words from the *Qur'an*:—"Is it not high time for you to open your heart to repentance?" And every time he uttered these words, his eyes rained tears.

Then he said;—"Yes, Lord! It is high time! Lord! I repent! I repent! I repent! Help me,—Thine unprofitable servant!"

The next morning he distributed his ill-gotten gold and all his goods among the poor, saying:—"I, too, am one of you. Bless me!"

He became a *Bhakta*. For many a year he wept by day, he kept awake and wept by night and prayed:—

"Have mercy on me, O Lord! Have mercy on me,—a sinner!"

He proved a true disciple in the maturity of manhood, became a teacher of men and women and a healer of broken hearts.

‘NO IMPORTANCE FROM THE SPIRITUAL POINT OF VIEW’

This happened during the thirties, long before Sri Aurobindo's **magnum Opus**, 'The Life Divine', was published in U.S.A, U.K, &c. Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan was anxious that the message of Aurobindo should spread in the West. He wanted a philosophical article from him so that he may introduce him to the West. Aurobindo declined. "So occupied, not a moment for any other work, can't undertake because he might not be able to carry out his promise" was the excuse sent by Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, one of his ardent disciples.

Sir Sarvapalli was not satisfied with the first refusal. He wrote again to Dilip to induce him, and the latter implored his Master to comply, saying, "Your name, Sir, is not yet known to the West, and Radhakrishnan will give you wide publicity, fancy that! Besides, he is right and rational, etc." Sri Aurobindo's spirited reply to his favourite and famous disciple is a classic one. It is one to be read, re-read and digested by all those who are keen on helping the world by starting spiritual centres and enrolling members by lakhs. We give below a few striking passages from that frank but dignified rejoinder:

"I was never ardent about fame even in my political days; I preferred to remain behind the curtain, push people without their knowing it and

get things done. It was the confounded British Government that spoiled my game by prosecuting me and forcing me to be publicly known as 'leader'.

Then again I don't believe in advertisement except for books, and in propaganda except for politics and patent medicines. But for serious work it is poison. It means either a stunt or a boom, and stunts exhaust the thing they carry on their crests and leave it lifeless and broken, high and dry on the shores of nowhere. . . . Hundreds or thousands of useless people join and corrupt the or reduce it to a pompous farce from which the Truth that was coming down recedes into secrecy and silence. It is what has happened to the 'religions' and is the reason of their failure."

You will find the same ideal expressed in 1935 in a letter Aurobindo addressed relating to a devotee who had mentioned about certain Gurus inviting 'eminent disciples.' In that connection, he wrote: "Well-known or unknown has absolutely no importance from the spiritual point of view. It is simply the propagandist spirit. We are not a party or a church or religion seeking adherents or proselytes. One man who earnestly pursues the Yoga is of more value than a thousand well-known men."

HISTORY THAT IS CHANGELESS AND UNDYING

The life of Father Damien, the Roman Catholic priest from Belgium who had settled down at Molokai, Hawaiian Islands, as a lover of the lepers, during the 19th century, is an inspiration for many. He had enriched the meaning of 'Sacrifice' by his selfless service and heroic death. Exactly in the same way as in the case of St. Francis of Assisi, Madonna Poverty was exalted in a glorious manner in Damien's life. Though separated in time by 663 years, both these noble souls form parts of a history that is changeless and undying.

The last words of Father Damien are worthy to be repeated a million times. The future of his mission in life entrusted to three Franciscan nursing sisters who had just arrived in time, as if by some Divine Plan, he was preparing himself for the final deliverance. He said, "I am no longer necessary to the lepers, so I shall go up yonder." Hearing these words, one of the priests standing close by said: "Father, when you are there, you won't forget those whom you are leaving orphans?" "Oh, no," came the reply. "If I have any credit with God, I shall intercede for all."

Fr. Wendelin, who received his confession, and who in turn made his own confession to the dying priest, made another request: "Leave me your mantle like Elias, that I may inherit your great heart." With a suggestion of his native humour, Damien answered: "But what would you do with it? It is full of leprosy."

It is recorded that on death, all trace of leprosy vanished from his face and his hands were perfectly dry of their wounds.

A MASTERPIECE IN THE ART OF LIFE

In his famous poem called the Cantic of the Creatures or the Cantic of the Sun, St. Francis of Assisi speaks about his brotherhood with the sun and moon, and with fire and water. He had a fanciful instinct for seeing the differentiation of sex even in inanimate things. In this matter, he was not at all influenced by any ancient mythology, but was creating a mythology of his own.

He addressed Fire as his brother who was fierce, gay and strong, and called Water his sister, pure, clear and inviolate. He singled out the Sun with a more courtly title, besides that of a brother. There was some deep meaning in his saluting sun as Mr. Sun.

Due to his constant fasting, and other severe austerities in life, the Saint became prematurely old and lost his eye-sight. This was a hard trial for a man of his loving nature, who felt so much about the beauty and glory of the earth and sky, and who saw each tree, bird or beast as a separate and sacred thing. The remedy suggested to cure his blindness was worse than the malady, and the physicians who proposed to cauterise his eyes, without an anaesthetic as under modern conditions, guaranteed no cure. However, the great man agreed cheerfully to the fiery ordeal of his living eyeballs being burned with a red-hot iron.

When the burning rod was taken from the furnace, he stood up and spoke thus: "Brother, Fire, God made you beautiful, strong and useful; I pray you be

courteous with me." His one and only thought at the moment was his fancy from the songs of his youth where he had addressed the Flame as the most glorious and gaily coloured flower in the garden of God. True to his life, he hailed it from afar like an old loving friend, even though it came to him this time in the shape of an instrument of torture.

Commenting on this unforgettable incident, G. K. Chesterton writes "If there be any such thing as the art of life, it seems to me that such a moment was one of its masterpieces. Not to many poets has it been given to remember their own poetry at such a moment, still less to live one of their own poems."

A GREAT REDEEMER OF THE FALLEN

Sri Ramanucharya is one of the greatest Masters of the Vaishnava religion. He is one of the few Tamilians, whose life and teachings had influenced many religious movements in North India. He had provided the love of God with an enduring philosophy, and philosophy with an abiding love of God. He belonged to the 11th and 12th centuries. He is also highly reputed as a redeemer of the fallen.

It was the day of the Annual Garuda festival at Srirangam, and the time was 12 noon. Thousands of pilgrims had assembled to have Darshan of Sri Ranganatha on Garuda Vahana (Eagle Vehicle). The procession was headed by elephants and hymn-singers, and on both sides of the streets, worship was being offered by the residents of the locality. The whole atmosphere was thus surcharged with vibrations of piety and devotion.

In that vast crowd there was a handsome man who was walking with a beautiful young lady, fanning her with his right hand, and holding an umbrella by the left above her head to protect it from the rays of the sun. This was a shocking sight to the priests and worshippers, but the man whose name was Dhanurdasa, was not conscious of the surrounding. He was all the time drinking in with his eyes the beauty of his lady-love.

Just at that time Sri Ramanucharya happened to pass that street with his disciples. His attention was drawn to the shameless behaviour of the young man.

The Master sent for Dhanurdasa, and pointing out to him that his conduct on such a solemn occasion was unbecoming, enquired what nectar he had found in his partner for him to lose all sense of decency and shame, and to become the laughing stock of such a vast concourse of people.

Dhanurdasa replied in all frankness that the bright eyes of that lady were the most beautiful things he had seen in life, and that the lady was the famous courtesan Hemamba. Thereupon, the Master enquired whether if he was shewn a set of more beautiful eyes, he would give up his infatuation for the woman. The man replied that he would certainly adore such a thing if shewn.

As arranged, the Master took him to the great Temple for the evening Poojah. In the light of the camphor lamp waved in front of Maha Vishnu, Dhanurdasa saw the supreme beauty of the two large lotus eyes of the Lord, and immediately fell in love with them. Tears of joy flowed from his eyes, and he remained immersed in beatitude for some time. Coming out of the Temple with the Master, he thanked him for the blessing.

On reaching the courtesan's home, he explained everything to Hemamba, who was astonished to see the transformation in the man. She begged of him to take her to the Master. This was done and the gracious Acharya freed her too from her slavery to the senses. The bond of lust between them was turned into a bond of love, pure and unselfish, and they became disciples of the Master, taking residence near his Monastery. In later life, the great Teacher used to quote their noble example for the enlightenment of the Brahmans who were proud of their castes and customs.

ST. AUGUSTINE RECEIVES THE CALL

When St. Augustine of the 4th century, who was a man of many temporal ambitions, decided to renounce the world and enter the church, he had the idea that such renunciation implied avoiding the honours and the cares of priesthood as well. Accordingly, he gathered round him a few faithful friends and organised a sort of monastic community, with the hope of spending the rest of his days in recollection, asceticism and the deepening of his vocation. He was careful not to go to a town where the episcopal See was vacant, fearing the risk of it being offered to him.

But God had other plans for his future and for the future glory of the Catholic Church. One day he went to Hippo (now Bona) and as he entered the church, he heard Bishop Valerius of Greek origin exhorting his flock to choose a priest who would help him by preaching in Latin. The people who had noticed Augustine in the crowd cried as one man 'Augustine for priest!' He was "seized and pushed forward up to the chancel, and despite his protests and tears he was commanded to be ordained."

"To this call, which obliged him to change his whole life and abandon his dearest hopes, Augustine responded, sad but resolute, with a wholly surrendered heart! Responsible to God for a whole community, he opened his heart more widely to real problems, to the knowledge of life and of man."

IN VAIN, HE SEEKETH LONG

Here is a small incident in the life of the Buddha with a great meaning. Once a great scholar, noted for controversial disputes, came to the Enlightened One with the sole purpose of embarrassing him with questions on metaphysical abstractions.

After listening to the visitor's philosophic pedantry for a little while, the Buddha turned to the crowd surrounding him and addressed the gathering as follows:

“This man wishes not that which he sees. He seeks what he cannot see. He shall seek long in vain. He is not satisfied with what he sees around him and his desires are limitless. Greetings to those who have renounced desire.”

The scholar felt crest-fallen, and left the place in shame.

THE SAINT AND THE NEGRO

The great Muslim Saint, Khwaja Hasan, was humble by nature. As a rule, he never considered himself superior to others in moral and spiritual life. While standing on the banks of the river Tigris one day, he saw a negro seated with a woman on his side, and a bottle in front. Hasan said to himself: Perhaps I am better than he, for I am no drunkard, neither am I immoral with women.

As this thought passed through his mind, he saw a boat with passengers caught by a strong wind, and capsizing in the waters of the river. Seven men were seen struggling for their lives. The negro jumped in and saved six of them one by one. Turning to Hasan, he said "Come and save the seventh for thou thinkest thyself better than me, O Hasan. I am not a drunkard. The bottle contains only water, and the woman whom thou seest is my mother."

Hasan never afterwards considered himself better than any of his fellow creatures.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS IN ECSTASY

In front of the altar St. Thomas Aquinas stood, one day, his eyes concentrated on the crucifix above him. He gazed and gazed on the cross until he lost all consciousness of himself and passed into communion with the Life Divine.

A friend met Thomas in the evening and asked him when he would complete the **summa**,—his great work in theology.

Thomas shook his head, then said:—"No more work, Reginald!"

When Father Reginald pressed the point, Thomas spoke about his experience of ecstasy, saying:—I will tell you what I can. Secrets were revealed to me this morning, Reginald! All I have written appears now to be of little value. All my books seem now to be straw!"

REHEARSAL OF DEATH

Sri Sai Baba attained Mahasamadhi forty seven years ago, but he continues to appear in dreams and visions to countless devotees throughout India and grants their prayers. The following incident is unique in his life.

He was thirty years old when he had a rehearsal of his death. At the time (1886), he was living at Shirdi in a mosque, with only one disciple, named Mahalsapathy, residing with him. One day he called this disciple and said: "I am going to Allah. Take care of this body for three days. If I return I will look after it myself. If not, bury it in that open land over there and put up two posts to mark the place."

His heart stopped beating, and the breathing also stopped. He was pronounced dead by the civil authorities who held an inquest, and the disciple was ordered to bury or cremate the body, in accordance with the law which prevents a body being kept longer than twenty four hours. Mahalsapathy refused to do so. On the third day, breathing began again, and the Saint slowly opened his eyes and returned to life.

After his miraculous event, his fame spread far and wide, and thousands of people used to visit him daily from all parts of India, forcing pomp and ceremony on him much against his inclinations. But he continued to go out and beg his food.

GURU AS HARD TASKMASTER

In most of the recorded histories dealing with the relationship of Masters and Disciples, both ancient and mediaeval, we read that the latter had to go through great ordeals, and pass severe tests, before given initiation by their Masters. But the Great Tibetan Yogi, Milarepa's experience at the hands of his Guru, Marpa, is an extraordinarily hard ordeal.

Milarepa had in early life practised Black Magic, and was reputed as the 'Great Sorcerer'. After passing through different Lamas, he surrendered himself to Marpa to obtain Religious Truths from him by every possible means. He served him most loyally and faithfully, but received in return scoldings and beatings. Marpa would promise initiation after each trial and test, but kept on postponing it.

Mother Damema (Marpa's wife) took pity and arranged for a forged letter with the seal of Marpa for Milarepa to get initiation from another Lama who was devoted to Marpa. To make the forged letter genuine, she sent with it the relics of Marpa's Guru, Naropa. The initiation was actually obtained.

Marpa became enraged when the news reached his ears, and sent for all the three concerned in the matter. Before the assembly of disciples and devotees, Milarepa was kicked and chased out. Driven to desperation, the latter decided to commit suicide. On hearing this, the Guru sent Mother Damema to bring

the pupil back. The latter came back with fear and trembling, but, to his happy surprise, he found the Master full of love and mercy. Addressing the assembly, he said:

“Religious anger is a thing apart; and, in whatever form it may appear, it hath the same object—to excite repentance and thereby to contribute to the spiritual development of the person . . . Had I had the chance of plunging this spiritual son of mine into utter despair, he would have been cleansed thoroughly of all his sins. He would thus not have been required to be born again.”

“He hath been subjected to eight deep tribulations, which have cleansed him of the heavier sins; and he hath suffered many minor chastenings, which will purify him from minor sins. Now I am going to care for him and give him those teachings and Initiations which I hold as dear as mine own heart.”

Addressing the Disciple, the Master then said:

“My son, I knew thee to be a worthy Shishya from the very first. The night before thine arrival here, I had a dream which predicted that thou wouldst be one who would serve the Cause of Buddhism very efficiently. My Damema had a similar dream which corroborated mine.”

The assembly was dumb-founded. They did not know which to admire most in the Master,—his sternness and inflexibility while chastening the disciple, or his wisdom and sagacity in all deeds, or his mercy and kindness towards the pupil. They recognized him to be a Buddha Himself.

A BRIGAND MADE BLESSED

St. Bernard of the 12th century was a great Roman Catholic Priest. He was Abbot of Clairvaux in France. Bernard means 'Blessed of God', and 'Valley of Light' is the meaning of the word, Clairvaux. As the champion of evangelical poverty, he was the precursor of St. Francis of Assisi.

One day, as he was going to the court of the Count of Champagne, he saw a party of soldiers leading a prisoner (a highway brigand) to the scaffold. Touched with emotion, the Abbot took hold of the robe by which the man was to be hanged, and appealed to the soldiers to hand over the man to him. He said: "I will execute him with my own hands. I know he is worthy of death. Instead of suspending him on the gallows I will fasten him to a cross whereon he shall live in suffering for many years."

Bernard's plea was placed before the Count, who let the brigand; the Abbot marched him off to his monastery. The man proved grateful. After spending thirty years in the practice of penance, he died the death of the just, and earned the title of Blessed.

In this connection, we wish to quote below one of the oft-repeated teachings of St. Bernard to his monks on 'Religious Life':

"Yes. Religious life is a blessed life. It is a holy state in which man lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more speedily, walks more cautiously; it is a state in which man is bedewed with the waters of grace more frequently, rests more securely, dies more confidently, is cleansed more quickly and rewarded more abundantly."

THE PRIDE OF WEALTH

Guru Govind Singh was once sitting on the bank of the Jumna saying his prayers. It was evening. Raghunath, a rich disciple, came and bowed, saying: "Sire, pray accept this trifling present in token of my love." So saying, he held at the feet of the master two gold bracelets, inlaid with rare gems. The Guru accepted the ornament; and, as if to display his pleasure, he began to play with one of the bracelets, tossing it in the air and catching it in his palm. Suddenly, he let the bracelet slip and fall into the river.

Raghunath took it to be a sad accident. He jumped into the river to recover it. He began to search for it. The Master sat all the while absorbed in meditation. Late in the evening Raghunath returned from his futile search, with downcast eyes. He said: "Master, I am sorry, I have failed to find the jewel so far; but can still get it if you will only point out the exact spot where it fell."

Knowing, as he did, all that passed in the mind of the disciple, the Guru took the other bracelet and threw that too in the river, saying: "Raghunath, it was just there."

Raghunath stood stunned and bewildered at this deliberate act of the Guru. He was unable to divine the Master's meaning in casting away the second ornament also. But, after a few moments, the Master slowly went to him and flooding him with kisses said, "Raghunath, I got rid of the bracelets on purpose. I saw how your mind was attached to them and they were a screen between you and me. Get rid of your pride of wealth."

Raghunath now realised his folly. He fell at the feet of the Master and from that moment he was a changed man.

THE SUPREME DUTY

Pratap Mazumdar, a co-worker of Keshab in the Brahma Samaj Movement of Calcutta, was an ardent admirer of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, though not a disciple or devotee in the accepted sense. One of the finest tributes paid to Paramahansa during his lifetime was from the facile pen of Mazumdar.

In turn, Ramakrishna also appreciated Mazumdar's religious zeal and intelligence, and became interested in his spiritual progress. One day the revered Master advised him to give up lectures, controversies and dissensions, and to devote his whole mind to spiritual practices. Mazumdar replied that he could not do so as he was doing all those things to preserve Keshab's name. Thereupon, Ramakrishna retorted as follows with a smile on his lips:

“You don't have to perpetuate Keshab's name. Through God's will his work was established, and through God's will it is disintegrating. What can you do? Your duty is to give your mind completely to God.”

The prophetic touch in the above reply was revealed to the world in a few years' time.

EGOISM PERSONIFIED

The Saiva Siddhanta is one of the finest flowers of Indian thought, and the Tamil land claims the credit for it. Meykanda Devar was the person who systematised this great philosophical system in the 13th century A.D. He was initiated into Saiva faith by Paranjothi Munivar of North India.

Meykandar's father was a pious man who received his religious instruction from a great scholar, popularly known as Sakala Agama Pandithar (Pundit in all Agamas). He became jealous when he heard that his own disciple's young son had composed the *sutras* of Siva Gnana Bodham, and been accepted by the people as a teacher.

Later, when he observed that his students were deserting him in order to learn spiritual truths from Meykandar, the Pandithar was enraged. One day he went to the place where the young teacher was conducting his class with the idea of defeating him in debate and proving his own superiority. At that time, Meykandar was explaining to his students Anava Malam (the causal ignorance). The Pandithar angrily asked him to show the Anava Malam. Meykandar quietly pointed his finger at him and said: "There it is." Thereupon, the scholar felt humbled and prostrated at the young Guru's feet, begging for his pardon and grace. The latter blessed him with the name, 'Arul Nandi' and taught him Siva Gnana Bodham. In due course, Arul Nandi was inspired to write the famous commentary Sivagnana Siddhiar elaborating in it the Siddhanta doctrines taught by his Master.

THE WRITING OF 'SRI' BRINGS SHOWERS OF BLESSING

We now hear from the lips of many in Tamilnad the words, 'Om Suddha Sakthi' in chorus-singing. The saint responsible for preaching the supreme power of Pure Sakthi in the 17th century was Sri Raghavendra Tirtha Swami of South India. His earlier name was Venkata Bhatta. He received his *sanyasa* from the celebrated Saint Sri Sudhindra Tirtha at Kumbakonam, and became his most favourite disciple. Under his inspiration he wrote several books, the most important one being the commentary on *Nyaya Sudha*, the scholarly work of the illustrious Saint Sri Jaya Tirtha of the 14th century.

Many miracles are attributed to Raghavendra. One of them relates to the famine in Tanjore kingdom during the middle of the 17th century. There was a severe drought, the river Cavery went dry, and people were dying of starvation, as the State Granary was empty of food grains: The ruler who had heard of the glory of Raghavendra Swami, went to his Ashram and begged of him to drive away the famine and to save the people.

The Saint accompanied the ruler to the capital, and with his own hand wrote the word 'SRI' in Sanskrit on the door of the State Granary. He stayed there for some days, daily repeating the writing of 'SRI', and doing Japa. The response from the

heavens was prompt and in plenty. Following heavy rains, Cavery was filled with water, the farmers had a bumper harvest, and the famine was thus averted. 'S R I' is Beejakshara, and its supreme power cannot be adequately expressed in words.

Raghavendra attained Maha Samadhi in 1671 A.D at the exact time mentioned by him and in the tomb planned by him ahead. Before entering into the tomb in flesh and blood, he told his followers that he would live there for 700 years, granting relief to all those who pray to him for his blessings. Even to this day, he is accordingly worshipped, and as if to remove the doubts of modern critics who indulge in ironic smile over such belief of people, he gave Darshan in 1900 A.D to Sir Thomas Munro who was the Collector of the area and even conversed with him. The incident is recorded in the Madras District Gazetteer, Vol. I, Chapter XV, page 213, relating to Adoni Taluk in Bellary District.

GOD'S WILL FULFILLED BY CONTRARY WINDS!

The Antonian miracle-stories are numerous and picturesque. They are mostly *post-mortem*. In fact, out of the forty-six miracles accepted by the Commissioners, seven centuries ago, only one was treated as *ante-mortem*. Today the figure runs into millions. Hardly a day passes without some taking place at different parts of the world. The writer of these lines has experienced this great Saint's help and guidance more than once. He is also personally aware of hundreds of not only non-Catholics, but even anti-Catholics who seek his aid when they are in distress, despair or difficulty. 'Consoler of the Afflicted', 'Medicine of the Sick', 'Hope of the Despairing', 'Father of the Poor', 'Deliverer of the Captives' are some of his glorious titles.

But very few are aware of the extraordinary circumstances under which Canon Fernando of Lisbon became St. Antony of Padua, and of the eastward wind which helped in fulfilling God's Will towards one of the greatest of His Saints. Born in Portugal, he had spent thrice as much time in his native country as in Italy, and only about two years at Padua, which was his death-place.

Young Fernando became a Canon of Saint Cross (Augustinian) at the age of 15. After remaining in that Order for ten years, missionary zeal urged him to become a Friar to proceed to Morocco for preaching

the Gospel and dying as a martyr. Antony is the new name he received as a neophyte from the Franciscans whose poor friary at Coimbra was named after St. Antony of Egypt.

On landing in Africa, he fell a victim to some virulent type of malaria, and became an invalid. A savage death at the hands of the Moslems for preaching the Gospel did not seem to be his destiny. On medical advice, he was sent back to Portugal for recuperation. But the ship in which he travelled was driven to Sicily by the eastward wind, contrary to all calculations and seasons, and at the port of Messina he met some Friars who were proceeding to Assisi to meet St. Francis, who had then returned there after his Eastern tour. Antony also joined them, and met St. Francis. This was how God's Supreme Will was fulfilled in the life of St. Antony. And eventually, St. Antony became one of St. Francis' most beloved and trusted colleagues. "One of the thirteenth century's bequests to posterity was those *fioretti*—'little flowers'—of St. Francis in which St. Antony is not the meanest or the least fragrant bloom".

THE UNCOMMUNICATED IS FAR MORE THAN THE COMMUNICATED

The Buddha was one day staying at Kosambi, in a Sinsapa Grove. Taking a few Sinsapa leaves in his hand, the Blessed One said to his disciples, "What think you, my disciples, what is more, these few leaves I hold in my hand, or the remaining leaves in the Sinsapa Grove?"

The disciples replied as follows: "The leaves the Blessed One holds in his hands are few in number; far more are the leaves in the Sinsapa grove above."

Thereupon, the Buddha preached: "Even so, disciples, what I have perceived and not communicated to you is far more than what I have communicated to you. And why, O disciples, have I not revealed this to you? Because it does not contribute to the higher life . . . And what have I communicated to you? That which is suffering, the source of suffering, the cessation of suffering."

LOVE AND THE ROBBER

The Holy Mother (Sarada Devi) was once travelling on foot with a party from her village to Dakshineswar, probably in 1877.

Their path led through a lonely area which was notorious for its roughs and robbers.

Evening had fallen, and the party was anxious to reach the next village, Tarakeswar, before night set in.

But the Holy Mother, too tired to keep pace with the others, was soon left behind, and missing the path, she found herself alone.

Just as it began to get dark, she saw coming towards her a tall man carrying a long staff on his shoulder. It was one of the robbers.

The Holy Mother stood still.

Seeing her, the robber called out in a harsh voice, "Who is this standing here alone at this time of night?"

In a gentle tone the Holy Mother replied, "I have lost my way in the dark. Will you, my father, help me to find my companions?"

Soon a woman came up, apparently the robber's wife.

The Holy Mother went up to her and taking her by the hand, said simply, "Mother, I am your daughter, Sarada. I am in great distress. It is lucky for me that I have found father and you here; otherwise I wouldn't have known what to do."

Husband and wife both responded to the sweet words of the Holy Mother.

With loving parental solicitude they looked after her that night, and were deeply moved when she left them the next morning to continue her journey with the rest of her party!

A TRUE FOLLOWER OF ST. FRANCIS

Among the followers of St. Francis of Assisi, the earliest were Bernard da Quintavalle, Peter Cathani and Giles. Bernard was a rich merchant, who distributed all his wealth to the poor before he took up the begging bowl. Peter was a doctor of laws, who gave up his scholarship of Bologna fame in order to join Francis' school of love as a pupil. Giles was a peasant's son, rustic in his physical appearance and mental make-up but a heroic character. He was a mystic of high order, and his colleagues paid him the tribute of being "one of the most glorious religious whom the world has ever seen in the contemplative life." He is also noted for his shrewd and witty advice to those who went to him.

After the death of Francis, he spent his life in contemplation in a small cell close to a church on the top of a hill from which he could have a clear view of Spoleto, Portiuncula and Assisi closely associated with the life of his revered Master.

On one occasion, two cardinals visited him in his retreat. They asked him to pray for them. He said, "What need, my lords, that I should pray for you, who have more faith and hope than I?" "How so?" they asked. "Because," said the old mystic, "whatever of riches, honour and success this world can offer, you possess, and hope to win salvation; whereas I, in spite of hardship and adversity, fear to be lost hereafter." This caustic reply transformed the cardinals.

He was against all the pomp and show associated with the Church, and he never hesitated to give free expression to his convictions.

The following saying of his is worthy of constant meditation:

“Blessed is he who truly loves and desireth not be loved again . . . Blessed is he who loves God with all his heart and with all his mind, who labours and suffers with mind and body for the love of God, and yet seeks no reward under heaven, but accounts himself only to be his debtor.”

THE BOOMERANG

A naive man learning that the Buddha observed the principle of great love and returned good for evil, came and abused him.

The Buddha was silent, pitying his folly.

When the man had finished his abuse, the Buddha asked him: "Son, if a man declined to accept a present made to him, to whom would it belong?"

The man answered: "In that case it would belong to the man who offered it."

"My son," said the Buddha, "you have railed at me, but I decline to accept your abuse, and request you to keep it yourself. Will it not be a source of misery to you? As the echo belongs to the sound, and the shadow to the substance, so misery will overtake the evil-doer without fail."

The abuser made no reply, and the Buddha continued:

"A wicked man who reproaches a virtuous one is like one who looks up and spits at heaven; the spittle soils not the heaven, but comes back and defiles his own person.

"The slanderer is like one who flings dust at another against the wind's current; the dust does but return on him who threw it. The virtuous man cannot be hurt, and the misery that the other would inflict comes back on himself."

The abuser went away ashamed, but he came again and took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.

PART II

MEDITATIONS

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SRI YOGAR SWAMIGAL—DELIGHTFUL MEMORIES

The appearance of Sivathondan Silver Jubilee Souvenir brings to my mind many delightful memories in connection with my close contact with Sri Yogar Swamigal. Today I meditate on one or two of the most important ones.

About three decades ago, the revered Swamiji was in the habit of staying at regular intervals, for a few days, at Peradeniya where he had a devout disciple in the person of Mr. A. K. V, a Tamil scholar and poet, and a very good friend of mine too. And many like myself used to run to Peradeniya for a week-end Retreat. On one such occasion in 1935, the Swami directed all others to go back to their work, most of them from Kandy, and singled me out for three days' meditation in the Botanical Gardens. It was an unexpected blessing and joy to me, and we spent two blissful days. It was during this time that in consultation with our host, the proposal to launch Sivathondan, as a Tamil Monthly journal, took some definite shape. I was requested to be the contributor on 'Astronomy and Astrology'.

On the third day, Mr. A arrived in his car from Wellawatte, with a Sanyasi. Neither of them had any mood for silent meditation. They were keen that the beloved Swamiji should pay a visit to Colombo devotees in their car. Swami turned down the proposal in his characteristic brunt manner. Our host and

myself were very happy. After lunch, the visitors repeated the prayer, and Mr. A was in tears. He had some illness and other worries at home. His beseeching moved the heart of the Swami who agreed to start at 3 p.m., on condition that the night was spent at our new house at Nugegoda. When the car was brought to the portico, he got into the rear seat, and the Sanyasi took the seat by his side. I took the front seat next to the friend who was at the wheel. When the car started, the Swami shouted: 'Stop'. He ordered the Sanyasi to exchange seats with me. This was done, and we had a pleasant journey upto Kegalle.

At Kegalle, near the Post office, the road was cut across to allow the flood water to run, and the open space was covered with gravel. At the time our car passed over the damaged portion, a rattle snake was resting at full length. The moment the car passed over it, it raised its head and tail on either side. This was enough to unnerve Mr. A who was well known as an unsteady man at the wheel. In fact, a Dr. friend of his had warned him not to drive. Observing my friend speeding up in order to reach home before dark, I warned him twice. At Peliyagoda Junction our car came in head-on collision with another car. Both cars were badly damaged, and the drivers of both cars had cuts in their foreheads by the broken glasses, and the Sanyasi also shared with them the same fate.

I got down to find out the position of the cars, and to see the fate of the occupants of the other car. Simultaneously, three Buddhist monks got down from the other car unscathed like our Swamiji and myself. In time, the Swami and myself warned Mr. A not to

lose his temper, and to keep cool. I found that our car was definitely on the wrong side. Seeing the yellow coloured robes on both sides, I could not control my laughter. The beloved Swami who was then standing by me, said in mild and whispering voice:” நல்ல ஆளடா நீ; அவர்கள் இரத்தஞ் சிந்தி அழுகிறார்கள். நீ சிரிக்கிறாய். (You are a fine fellow; they are bleeding and crying and you are laughing). Then I replied to him: “What can we do, Swami? It is all their own seeking. They came and disturbed our meditation and peace.” Thereupon, he remarked: “Who knows it might have been worse for them!”

It took years for me to grasp the full significance of this apparently casual remark. How the Saints take upon themselves the burden of other people, and save them from serious consequences of their Karma, came clear to me from this incident. In the 20th century itself, we have seen such loving-grace in the lives of Sri Seshastri Swami of Tiruvannamalai, and Sai Baba and his disciple Upasani Baba, all three of whom are identically of the same temperament like Sri Yogar Swamigal's. (22 - 1 - 62)

INGERSOLL—THE LOVING 'INFIDEL' WHO STRENGTHENED THE AUTHOR'S CONVICTION OF A SUPREME POWER

A young Buddhist couple joined us at Prayer & Meditation on last Wednesday, and stayed for dinner. After dinner, the gentleman had a chance to read two of my recent Diary entries. He was much impressed, and enquired whether I liked Rationalists like Voltaire or Ingersoll. I said 'Yes' and he was very happy. My thought today is thus on Ingersoll.

The churchianity has condemned him as a 'notorious infidel'. But I treat him as one of the great Free-thinkers, who have made the Church to give up many of its nonsensical ideas and silly dogmas. He was a lover of liberty and justice who had aspired for a better social state. Above all, he had reverence for truth. His definition of Truth stands supreme. He said, 'the noblest of occupations is to search for Truth'. This is what Mahatma Gandhi did a few decades later. He (Ingersoll) had dreamt of a "grand temple of the future—of all the people, wherein, with appropriate rites, will be celebrated the religion of Humanity." The Temple of Understanding at Washington sponsored by Mrs. Judith Hollister, Dr. Radhakrishnan, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and others is definitely such a Temple.

It is therefore wrong to call such a man atheist or infidel. He was a theist of the highest order, though, as an honest and out-spoken man, he might have used

strong language and excessive emphasis. He never claimed that he was inspired. When he was described by an arrogant Church as a 'vulgar infidel who caricatured all that is holiest in their faith', he was forced to retaliate. He felt that a milder treatment would not serve the purpose he desired to attain. Furthermore, the fact that he was the son of a Presbyterian Minister has a special significance. In making reference to this, Mr. Charles T. Gorham, the Publisher of his selected works, says that the Christian clergy have rendered great service in providing recruits for Rationalism, and concludes that there is probably 'a law of nature by which theology carries its retribution in its own bosom.'

The following passage from one of his masterly addresses reveals the true reformer in him. The Time-Spirit got him to say it so eloquently:

"While utterly discarding all creeds, and denying the truth of all religions, there is neither in my heart nor upon my lips a sneer for the hopeful, loving and tender souls who believe that from all this discord will result a perfect harmony; that every evil will in some mysterious way become a good, and that above and over all there is a Being who, in some way will reclaim and glorify every one of the children of men."

Here we find the mature thought of an honest and sincere seeker after Truth. It is sinful to call such a man 'an infidel' for his devotion to science and reason. It seems to me that the words quoted above would prove prophetic before the present decade ends. Who can deny that reason is a better guide than fear? Voltaire

gave to the Christian world the philosophy of history; he said: "To transmute iron into gold two things are necessary—first, the annihilation of the iron; second, the creation of gold." Ingersoll raised a super-structure on the foundations laid by Voltaire. Both are great humanitarians. No lover of **true religion** will lose anything by reading their lives and writings. I read them when I was thirty years of age, and at 67 I feel wiser for having read them. Instead of weakening my faith, that study has strengthened my conviction about a Supreme Power, which is Truth and Love combined.
(23 - 2 - 62)

INGERSOLL—PRAYER FROM SHAKESPEARE

My thought today is on a Prayer from King Lear of Shakespeare, which Ingersoll selected as the theme for his address before the Congress of the American Secular Union, New York, in November 1886. He considered this to be one of the noblest prayers that ever fell from human lips:-

“Poor naked wretches, wheresoe’er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your unhoused heads, your unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you,
From seasons such as these? O’ I have ta’en
Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou may’st shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.”

This was uttered by King Lear as he was coming suddenly to the place of shelter, after he has been on the heath, touched with insanity. To the smiter of all religious hypocrisy, and the relentless enemy of every kind of superstition, Shakespeare was the greatest genius of the world. Commenting on the above prayer Ingersoll says that if nobody has too much, everybody will have enough.

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Valluvar, the author of the famous Kural, devoted 22 Chapters to deal with the essentials of an Ideal State, but another great Poet, Kamban of Tamil Nad,

who belonged to the Sectarian Period of Tamil Literature (A.D. 950 - 1200) has given expression to the same theme in the most exquisite language. He reduced the whole teachings to one single stanza of four short lines: வண்மையில்லையோர்.....கேள்வியோங்கலால்.
(நாட்டுப்படலம் 53)

The following is my free rendering of this unique poem in the whole world-literature:

There was no chance for beneficence,
 as there was absolutely no poverty in the land;
 There was no grandeur of heroic deeds,
 as there were no enemies to fight against;
 There was no glory for the virtue of Truth,
 since none addicted to falsehood existed there;
 There was no name or fame for learnedness,
 for all men were free from ignorance by their
 contact with the wise men of the land.

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Who can deny that among the three great Poets quoted above, Kamban is undoubtedly the greatest Prophet? He had anticipated the coming Golden Age of humanity, by expressing the Ideal as Real, nearly eight centuries before the advent of Marx, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Gandhi and Vinoba. Accumulated wealth is a curse on humanity; it is the mother of the most of the crimes, as they are born of necessity in the first instance. Currency must always be current in its circulation, if civilization is to be saved from stagnation and stench. All-war-motivated economic theories must go to the rubbish heap. Sooner or later, this is bound to happen as predicted by Kamban. (24 - 2 - 62)

AUTHOR'S MOTHER—FAITH CAN MOVE MOUNTAINS

Today my thought is on Faith. It was my exceptional fortune to have been brought up by a mother of intense faith and devotion. My father was a practical man of the world, opposed to all orthodoxy of the family from which she hailed. But he never interfered with her devotional practices.

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There was one instance in her life where the magic of faith shone in a superb manner. I was ten years old then and the incident left an unforgettable impression in my unsophisticated mind. For nearly six months, my mother could not take any food. She was subject to chronic dyspepsia. English treatment was first tried at Jaffna town. Finding no cure, she was placed under the treatment of a famous native physician of Pannakam for six weeks. It only made her illness worse, and she was reduced to skin and bone. As the last resort, she was admitted to the Green Hospital, Manipay. There was no change in her condition after four weeks' stay.

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Our family astrologer having predicted that my ruling stars at the time were inimical to her health and life, my father had decided to place me by her side wherever she was taken for treatment. It was my

mother's wish as well. Two Bible women used to visit the wards of the patients and pray for them. The couple used to come regularly to our room as well. They had come to know that my mother was the eldest daughter of the Manager of the famous Nagabushani Temple of Nagadipam. One day, taking advantage of my mother's depressed mental state, one of the Bible women put the suggestion to her that since all medical treatment had failed so far, the only alternative left to her was to surrender to their Saviour Jesus Christ, who had cured many such hopeless cases. I was standing by the bed on which my mother was seated. I was a very shy boy, although by that time I had studied many Saiva scriptures, epics, including Periyapuram and Skandapuram.

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In an inspired mood, I came out with a dignified and respectful reply to the Bible women, pointing out that such cures through Faith was not peculiar to Christianity, and quoted the example of Appar Swamigal, who was cured of his colic by the fervent prayers of his devoted sister, Thilagavathiar, who was a great devotee of Lord Siva. My reply annoyed the Bible women. They left the room after making the remark: "This young chap is too much for his size and age". However, my rejoinder had a tremendous effect on my mother. When the Doctor in charge came on his usual round, a little while later, she told him that she was leaving the hospital on the following morning and to have the bill ready. The Doctor who did not know what had happened between his two visits for the day, readily agreed, expressing regret

that their treatment had done no good to her. Accordingly, we left the hospital and returned home at Nainative. My father had gone to Kurunegala on business, and was not likely to return for another month. My mother felt that it was also blessing in disguise. This gave her full freedom to have her own course of treatment.

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She called to her side my elder sisters, and brother, and told them that she had not returned from the Hospital to stay with them at home for any further treatment. She said, with tears rolling down her cheeks, that she was going to take residence at the small Murugamoorthy Temple owned by her parents for their own private worship. She sent for the visiting priest of the temple and explained to him her programme of worship there. She added that my six months' education was lost, and there was no harm in my loosing study for two more weeks. The Head Master of the school did not object to my keeping away to make my mother happy. So, we both took residence in the temple. My food was sent from home, but my mother decided to take a little of the Prasadam offered to the Deity, and in the evening to take a cup of milk after offering that also to the Lord.

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The temple had no image in the Holy of Holies. There was only the Vel, the lance of Lord Muruga. Something wonderful and miraculous happened on the ninth night of our stay. It was midnight. I used to sleep by the side of my mother in the same mat,

in the hall adjoining the inner shrine. There was ringing of bell, and the door which was left closed by the priest in the evening was found fully opened. The waving of Camphor light was going on. My mother put me up, and pointed out to me the young handsome Lord Muruga, who was standing in the place where we used to see only His Vel, and raising His right hand in blessing. The whole thing looked like a dream, but it was really the Immediate Presence of the Lord to whom my dear mother was so devoted. Two days later we returned home. And I do not think that my mother had any illness for the next twenty eight years.

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This is what Faith can do. It can move mountains; even the Himalayas, which represents faith in its unshakeableness. Unfortunately, the present generation has no such faith. It has lost faith in faith, due to the wrong type of education and the influence of Western sensate culture. My early life has been one full of sufferings and sorrows, trials and tribulations but the faith planted in my tender heart by a devout mother has blessed me to be what I am today.
(7 - 1 - 62)

TO SEE GOD FACE TO FACE

My thought today goes back to 27th of November 1927 when I had the unique privilege of hearing from the lips of Mahatma Gandhi the quintessence of Bhagawad Gita, under my own roof. I have already mentioned earlier that he and his party were our honoured guests at Nawalapitiya during their Ceylon tour.

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There were hundreds of people who had collected to have his Darshan. Rajaji, his Secretary, who had some idea of my respect for punctuality and my devotion to any settled programme, at the reception given to the Mahatma at Katugastota by the Diyawadana Nilame, left everything in my hands. He was busy looking after the comforts of his colleagues, while Kasturbai and Lakshmi (later Mrs. Devadas Gandhi) were busy preparing the dinner for Gandhiji, assisted by Mrs. R, the hostess.

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In the meantime, eight Buddhist Bhikkus came and sought an interview. Gandhiji said he was prepared to spare fifteen minutes for the interview. The leader—Ven. K. Thero, had some knowledge of English, but not sufficient enough for a religious discussion. After reciting some Pali Sutras, in the form of a blessing, the leader addressed the Mahatma thus:

“Oh, great man, why are you working like this, under-going a lot of suffering, fast, prison life, &c, Why? Why?”

With his characteristic smile, Gandhiji replied as follows:

“I am a humble seeker after Truth, and bent upon finding it. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. All my activities, whether social, political, humanitarian, or ethical, are directed to the goal of seeing God face to face.”

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The leader explained the meaning of the reply to the others, one of whom then raised a supplementary question in Sinhalese. The leader could not repeat it in English, and with my limited knowledge of Sinhalese I translated it for Gandhiji. The question dealt with metaphysical subjects like God, soul, prayer, etc. I felt that the Mahatma had already divined the thoughts of the interviewers from their first question. His reply was directly in reponse to those thoughts. However, he was good enough to supplement that reply with the brief statement that we cannot know the meaning of God and prayer unless we reduce ourselves to a cipher, and that there is something infinitely higher than intellect that rules us. The interviewers withdrew when I specially mentioned to them that 6.00 p.m. was the time for the Mahatma's dinner.

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Twelve years later I found that the identical questions were repeated at Abbottabad, Lahore, by a Hungarian Buddhist, Dr. Fabri, who was then working

as assistant to the famous archaeologist, Sir Aurel Stein. It was a long discussion, as the Mahatma had a lot of time to spare on that day (19.8.1939), and a few sentences from the concluding part of the dialogue deserve to be recorded here.

Dr. Fabri, who described himself as 'one of those cursed with an acute critical faculty', pointed out to Gandhiji that he was aware that there were many highly developed people to whom belief in God gave incredible comfort and help in the building of character, but there were some great spirits that could do without it, and commented: "This is what Buddhism has taught me."

"But Buddhism is one long prayer", rejoined Gandhiji. Dr. Fabri retorted: "Buddha asked everyone to find salvation for himself. He never prayed, he meditated." To which the Mahatma quietly replied: "Call it by whatever name you like. It is the same thing. Look at his statues." (25 - 2 - 62)

JANE ADDAMS— NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER

I meditate today on the Life Mission of the noble woman, Jane Addams.

She was born in 1860 and lived for 75 years. Her father who had exerted considerable influence on her early life was a friend of Lincoln. The epitaph on her tombstone at Cedarville, Illinois, reads as follows:

“Jane Addams of Hull House and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom; and it is as an internationalist and a statesman that she ranks among the world’s great leaders, with Lincoln and Tolstoy, Gandhi and Albert Schweitzer.”

It is recorded that at the age of six she made the declaration that “she would live in a big house in the midst of little houses.” This proved prophetic in her life. The Hull House, founded by her at the age of 29, stands as a perfect representation of an adult answer to her childhood reaction to the problem of poverty, with all its sordid living, juvenile delinquency etc in the industrial society of Chicago.

The period of 25 years -1889 to 1914- was actually one of preparation for the higher role she was to play at the international level. During that period, she had to endure much vilification, misrepresentation, and isolation. At its close, she emerged as the one Statesman in the world without portfolio, with constructive

ideas towards permanent world peace. In due recognition of her valuable services, she was awarded the Noble Peace Prize in 1931. Margaret Tims writes that if the peace treaty could have been made at the Hague Conference by Jane Addams, Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, Dr. Aletta Jacobs and others, the second World War might have been avoided.

The warning Jane Addams gave about the second World War was repeated by another lady-winner of Nobel Peace Prize in regard to the possible third World War. I refer to Emily Greene Balch, who, at the time of receiving the Prize at Oslo in 1946, spoke as under:

“I have spoken against fear as a basis of peace, but what we ought to fear is not that someone may drop atomic bombs on us, but that we may allow a world situation to develop in which ordinarily reasonable and humane men, acting as our representatives, may use such weapons in our name.”

These are words pregnant with a serious meaning. This is the danger the world is facing today, with the piling of nuclear weapons by both Power Blocks!
(11 - 3 - 62)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA— AN INCARNATION OF GOD

Meditation on Sri Ramakrishna leads me to the idea of Avatarhood, the state of being an Incarnation of God. During his life time itself, whether he was one such was hotly discussed. In fact, a conference was fixed up by Mathur Babu at the suggestion of Yogini Bhairavi Brahmani. Two great contemporary scholars were specially chosen to take the leading part, but something miraculous happened when the leader of the opposition got up and announced that Sri Ramakrishna was definitely something higher than an Incarnation of God and that there was no purpose in debating that issue.

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In Sanskrit, the word Avatar means a descent or coming down of the Divine below a line which divides the divine from the human. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "It is the manifestation from above of that which we have to develop from below; it is the descent of God into that divine birth of the human being into which we mortal creatures must climb; it is the attracting divine example given by God to man in the very type and form and perfected model of our human existence."

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In Chapter IV of Gita, it is said that "Whenever Dharma fades and Adharma rises up, then I manifest myself for the protection of the good, ~~for the protection~~

of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, and for the establishment of Dharma" (7-8). In taking the view that the upholding of Dharma in the world is not the only object of the advent of an Avatar, Sri Aurobindo makes a wonderful exposition in stating that there are two aspects of the divine birth, One is a descent, the birth of God in humanity, the Godhead manifesting itself in the human form and nature; the other is an ascent, the birth of man into the Godhead, man rising into the divine nature and consciousness, **madbhavam aagatah**. It means a second birth for the soul, which Avatarhood and the upholding of the Dharma are intended to serve.

The advent of Sri Ramakrishna was clearly a response to the needs and the challenge of the times in which he took birth. The beginning of the 19th century was one of the most critical periods for India. The birth of Ramakrishna coincided with, or rather created, the advent of the Indian Renaissance.

(9 - 3 - 62)

SAINT JOHANNES SCHEFFLER—

‘SEATED FIRM IN GOD & GOD IN THEE’

There is always a divinely planned time and place to make a new spiritual contact; either in person or by letter, or to come across a really inspiring book. These come in response to certain sincere aspirations of our hearts, and we go through a wonderful experience at such moments when we get a glimpse of the eternal self of the writer. Our joy is like that of the astronomer “when a new star swims into his ken.”

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I had today the delight of meditating on the Life and Mission of Saint Johannes Scheffler of the 17th century. He is popularly known as Angelus Silesius. A German sister sent me a framed picture of his as Christmas gift for 1960. His name was unfamiliar, and I was not aware that he was a Mystical Poet of Germany. After thanking the good lady for the gift, I kept the picture inside one of my book-cases.

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Two days ago, I received a book, as free gift, from an American sister. To my happy surprise, I found this book containing Selections from St. Johannes. The picture came out of its hiding place for the purpose of comparison of the name. Now it occupies a more prominent place. This Saint was Lutheran by birth

but was admired and claimed by Protestants and Catholics alike. His poems are similar to those of Nanak and Kabir, universal in outlook.

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I selected for meditation today the following poem :

“Man, when both joy and grief
leave thee unmoved and free,
Then art thou seated firm
in God, and God in thee.”

We find here, in pure and simple language, a beautiful exposition of Sthitaprajna as taught in verses 55 to 58 in Chapter II of Bhagawad Gita. There are some other poems of Johannes, which remind us of certain lines of Thirumoolar and Karaikkal Ammaiyar.
(29 - 3 - 62)

**SWAMI RAMDAS,
ONE OF THE GREATEST SAINTS OF
MODERN INDIA**

Yesterday, we observed the Birth-day of H. H. Swami Ramdas, one of the great living Saints of Modern India. The Function was very solemn and sacred. I was requested to deliver a discourse on the occasion. My thoughts went back to my own experiences with the revered Swamiji about thirty years ago.

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Mrs. R and myself had gone on pilgrimage to India, and one of the sacred spots selected for visit was the Anandashram founded by the Swamiji at Kanhangad. This Abode of Bliss was then new, and not known to many. We did not give any intimation to the Ashram authorities. On arrival at Kanhangad railway station, a way-side halting place then, we were told by the Station Master, a Malayalee Brahmin, that he had not heard of any such Institution, though he had been at the station for over six months. It was 12 noon, and there was no roof above our heads to stay until the train for the return trip arrived, which was four hours later. We were hungry and thirsty, and there was no shop or any vendors near about. In the train itself, a Ticket Inspector had warned us that we were on some wrong route. He said that he was working on that section for two years, and not heard of a spiritual centre by the name of Anandashram.

Removing our luggages to the shade of a tree nearby, we decided to rest there till the next train arrived. A youngman who saw our plight took pity on us. He did not understand Tamil nor English. By some hand movements, he made me to understand that there was a small Centre, newly opened, but no cart or car available at Kanhangad village to go there. He suggested that we should walk the distance of three miles and that he would help in carrying a part of our luggage. It was very hot, and Mrs. R was already fatigued by the train journey. We rejected the young man's offer, with thanks, and quietly sat on our bedding. I told Mrs. R that if Swami Ramdas was truly a Saint, he would understand our difficulty. Hardly five minutes passed, the young man returned with an old car which he met on the road. It was a car from distant Kasaragod, belonging to a trader who had come for some business transaction. It was obvious that the young man had explained our predicament and begged of the trader for help. We got into the car, eyes wet with tears, and the young man also accompanied us,

At the time we arrived, the Ashram was full of devotees. celebrating its first Anniversary and plates (plantain leaves) were being laid for the lunch. Leaving us at the gate, the young man went in and announced our arrival from Ceylon. His Holiness was the first to greet us, and his words were: "You both are tired after a long and tedious train journey. Go into the Bath room and wash yourself and come for

lunch without delay." We went in as directed, and after washing our faces and feet, entered the Dining Hall—the long open verandah of the building—To our happy surprise, we found two seats kept vacant for us, and a young handsome lady ready with trays of food for us. This is the most beautiful lady I had seen in my life, and having not heard of Mother Krishna Bai then, I took her to be a visitor like ourselves. I was all the time looking at her face, which was full of spiritual glow and grace, as she was moving up and down, serving food to the other devotees. I could not concentrate on my food, my hunger already satisfied, with the loving kindness with which the Swamiji received us,—utter strangers to him, of course in the worldly sense. The gentleman who sat on my left divined my thought and put the question: "You are all the time worried about knowing who that lady is. Is it not so?" When I replied in the affirmative he said "Oh, she is Krishna Bai, the Mother of this Centre. Her life is just out in English. You will get a copy of it after lunch. Please take your meal now." This gentleman—Sri Krishna Nair by name—became one of my early spiritual brothers in India. He did give me the book as promised, and thus I came across the life and teachings of one of the greatest women who had blessed the sacred soil of Mother India in the 20th century.

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The blessings I and my family had received from this Holy Couple, known to the world today as 'Papa and Mataji', are many and varied. The greatest of them is their advice for me to have Darshan of Bhagawan Sri Ramana, without any loss of time. I had that

blessing, two years later. It could have been an year earlier, had I not doubted Papa's advice as one of testing my loyalty and devotion to him. I was about to accept him as my Guru, but his divine wisdom knew well where my ship of life was destined to anchor, finding the harbour of supreme peace and bliss. The second best blessing from Papa was a 'Command' that I should write in Tamil the biography of Mataji. This was done in 1938 under the direct inspiration of Mataji herself, without an exchange of a single word in any language of the world, and it came out in handy book form in 1938 itself. During the last forty five years, I have written several hundreds of pages, on matters spiritual, and I am yet to find something equal to that book of sixty pages. Many have praised it as "A guide to spiritual aspirants." It was our unique privilege in 1954 to have had these two great personages as our guests in Colombo when they were returning to India from U.S.A after their world tour. Both are personifications of Love Divine. Blessed indeed is the land that produces such spiritual giants for the good of humanity! (29 - 4 - 62)

(The beloved Swamiji attained Mahasamadhi in July 1963.)

O WOMAN! LOVELY WOMAN!

The potentialities of the woman are tremendous. She can transform the hovel into heaven or make hell of a home. In the history of all races, we find that, as mother or wife, she has exercised much influence to reach the heights or the depths. It is often in the role of the mother that she plays the greater and nobler part.

“Behind every famous man, there is always a woman—his mother.” is an often quoted saying. In the tenth century, we had Saint Pattinathar of South India, who sang the praise of the mother in the most touching language. Abraham Lincoln wrote: “All that I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother.” His devout mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, reciprocated this sentiment with the remark: “Abraham’s mind and mine—what little I have—seem to run together.” She was called, ‘The Madonna of Backwoods’. In the recent past, we had the tribute of Mahatma Gandhi to his mother, who was a pious lady. “My mother has left on my memory one of saintliness.” he says.

Though great women had considerable influence over famous men, they have had NO POWER to direct humanity on the right lines. For 2000 years, men have been ruling the world, and we know with what sad results! The time has come for a World Women’s party to be formed to share the power with men, and to lead humanity to peace.

Lord Tennyson belongs to the Victorian era. The Queen was eager to rule, but she was opposed to woman's suffrage. The great poet showed a better way by singing: "Let the man be more of woman, she of man" and concluded "And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time, sit side by side, full-sunn'd in all their powers." His American contemporary, Walt Whitman, went a step further, with his clearer and more farsighted vision of the future, in predicting that the day is near by for "women to become the real rebuilders of what men destroyed". This is exactly what Jane Addams of Hull House fame tried to do for the world in modern times. To me, she was all that is best in Gita and Bible. Ten women of her calibre and character would have turned the world into a paradise. But a wicked world called her 'Red' and its Press had scorned her. Her speech as President of the International Congress of Women at Hague in 1915 had all that was necessary to ensure lasting peace for Europe, but the male-politicians in charge of the big nations had no sense of understanding. They were all muddle-headed, and their successors are no better. In this connection, the words of the famous historian, Hendrick Willam van Loon, are very appropriate. Commenting on the treaty of Versailles, which was writ with the point of a bayonet, he writes, "half a dozen smooth-shaven greybeards, filled with the futile rage of a life-time of frustrated ambitions, sit down around a green table and make ready to judge half a dozen of defenceless opponents who in the heyday of their victory disregarded every principle of law and international decency".

All these ideas are prompted by reading today a letter sent to Mrs. Kennedy by a German mother, Mrs. Marie Schenck of Darmstadt-Trautheim. I understand that a similar letter has gone to Mrs. Kruschev from another mother. Taking the future of the world to be in the hands of these two big Ks, the appeal to their wives is worded in the following exquisite form:

“You share the life of a man invested with enormous power, whose mind lies open to what you have spiritually and emotionally to offer him. Do, therefore, fill the whole of your inner being with the thoughts of love, of faith, of peace and reconciliation—and let your thoughts in their plenitude radiate your surroundings. Let your husband partake of your thoughts, accompany him wherever and whenever possible; let the womanly element, vividly alive in you, permeate the world at large—”

Miss Marion Jones, 103 years old, retired Headmistress of a private school at Cumberland, U.K., looks back and comes to the conclusion that only women can establish lasting peace on earth. She has seen three world wars, and six monarchs. She started her first novel of 30000 words on her 98th birth-day, and completed it in time for her centenary. (27-2-62)

WOMEN—WICKED AND VICIOUS

In yesterday's Minute, I have discussed about women who have helped men to reach heights. As there are women who have dragged down men to lowest depths, I think that I should deal with them as well. The medieval saints all over the world had spoken of all women in disparaging language. This is a general condemnation which is not correct in principle.

Cleopatra was an ambitious woman who had ruined her life and that of more than one influential man. You find her name mentioned frequently in history as well as in some literary works. For example, in 'Antony and Cleopatra' by Shakespeare, and in 'Caesar and Cleopatra' by Shaw. But her life had been a disgrace to womanhood. It had only helped the small poisonous snake, Asp, the Egyptian viper, to gain historical fame, by her allowing it to bite her to death.

But to find clever and scheming women, who became really fiends, we must come to the 16th century. The most notorious character is Catherine de Medici, the widow of Henry II of France. As Regent for her minor son Charles IX, she permitted him to plunge into all kinds of debauchery, so that she might retain the power of rulership. She had the additional misfortune of being blessed with a daughter, who was as infamous as herself. Catherine and Charles IX planned the wedding of that girl with Henry of Navarre, and invited all Protestants. At a given signal during the ceremonies, all of them were massacred mercilessly.

This is known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew on August 24, 1572; and it was continued for a week throughout the kingdom. The Catholic writers of the history of their church repeat **ad nauseam** praises about its civilizing influence on the **savage** Goths and Franks and on the other barbarous nations of Europe and races of Asia, &c, but compared with the savagery & barbarity of the church all over the world, their cruelties fade into insignificance.

Next to this in significance of cruelty, we have the record of Bloody Mary, daughter of the much-married monarch, Henry VIII, by Catherine of Aragon. Married to Philip of Spain at the age of 38, she fell a victim to an incurable disease, four years later, after leading a tragic, joyless and childless life. She reigned only for five years. Her fanaticism to make England Catholic wholesale, resulted in the country becoming more and more Protestant Perhaps, with the solitary exception of Tyrant John, no English sovereign was so universally detested as Mary Tudor. As a kind fate would have it, she was succeeded by Elizabeth, whose ring presented to Earl of Sussex, one of her favourites, became world-famous, when it was sold in London for \$2650 on 12.7.1927. It is now kept on Elizabeth's tomb in Westminster Abbey, at the special request of the purchaser. "England knew her most glorious days", writes a later historian, "under Elizabeth and Victoria—the two women introduced higher ideals of **peace and progress than all the male kings put together.**"

Here is support for my plea in yesterday's Minute that the Leading Women of the World should form a United Party to save the world from the repeated blunders of male politicians! (28 - 2 - 62)

TRUE FREEDOM

Today is Independence Day for Ceylon. My thought is naturally on Freedom. For the last fourteen years, our Home-Shrine has observed the Day of Independence as a day of solemn prayer and meditation for the prosperity, progress and peace of the motherland. It is so today as well.

We cannot discuss 'Freedom' without recalling first the four freedoms, enunciated by President Roosevelt, as the goal of the Allies in the second world war. They are:

1. Freedom of speech and expression ;
2. Freedom of every person to worship God in his own way ;
3. Freedom from want ; and
4. Freedom from fear.

I am here discussing only the freedom from fear. Exactly twenty one years had passed since the above enunciation took place. But what do we find? The fear which the 4th freedom dealt with, has increased a million-fold since the end of the war. Two of the most powerful Allies are in the opposite camps. Both of them, by their propaganda, and the discovery of dangerous weapons of mass destruction, have created fear in the minds of billions of people, all over the world.

In the past centuries, we were afraid of death, disease and poverty, but today most people are afraid to LIVE. The wolfish claws of fear threaten us in all

directions. The so-called peace of the world is held up by the slender cord of fear which might snap at any time. In other words, fear hangs over the head of humanity like the sword of Damocles.

Fearfulness has two aspects: to fear and to appear fearsome. In other words, to be afraid of our opponents and to inspire fear in them. This is exactly what we see in the world in general and our own country in particular. Fear is born of suspicion and distrust. It is a negative thought. It is the greatest curse of humanity. The greatest need of the times is therefore LOVE. As a Buddhist country, we must set the example for others, and not follow their examples. "Hatred ceases not by hatred but by Love", so declared the Blessed One.

The following is my solemn prayer for the day:

"Turn away, O Lord of Compassion,
from this luckless land
All foolish fears—fear of the Police
and the Military,
Fear of conspiracy, fear of assassination
by knives and guns,
Fear of Government, fear of Capitalism
and Communism,
Fear of news papers, politicians and priestly class,
And fear of death—the deadweight
on the hearts of weaklings."

(4 - 2 - 62)

“TEN PER CENT OF GUNS FOR BUTTER”

My Meditation today is on 'Freedom from Want'. This is the third in the order of Four Freedoms enunciated by President Roosevelt in 1941. In the order of importance, it should have been the first. I would call it 'Freedom from Hunger'. The root cause of all the ills of modern world is hunger in the midst of surplus food, poverty in the midst of plenty. Strangely and unfortunately enough, it is being exploited by the Power-Blocks to serve their own ends.

The propagandists of birth-control are frightening people by saying that Mother Earth cannot produce sufficient food for her ever-increasing children. It is said that we have already reached the 3000 millions limit. This is the greatest fallacy of the war-motivated economy. A few years ago, a great thinker and peace-lover, Mr. Stebbins wrote:

“Give me the money that has been spent in war, and I will purchase every foot of land on the globe. I will feed well and clothe every man, woman and child in the attire that kings and queens might be proud of . . . etc. And the voice of prayer and the song of praise shall ascend to heaven.”

Six months ago, Lord Boyd Orr of FAO fame, made almost a similar appeal, when he asked all the nations to cut their military budget by 10%. He felt

that the millions thus saved would abolish hunger in the world. He called this cut **“Ten per cent of guns for butter.”**

Throughout the aeons of time, a kind and loving Nature has ever supplied our needs. Supply and demand have met in time, a thousand thousand times. This will become evident to any sincere and unselfish man who is prepared to study the history of man from his primitive stage to the latest atomic physics, and who closely observes how through the corridors of space and time, grains, fruits, vegetables, animals, coal fields, oil reservoirs, etc, have travelled with man to meet his changing and increasing needs.

We call Mother Earth by the all-inclusive name ‘Providence’ and we spell that word with a capital ‘P’, because it is synonym of Divine Love. But the greed, avarice, and cussedness of man has, for centuries, interfered with the loving and equitable Plan of Providence. Hence, all the hunger and acute poverty. The so-called rich man will suffer until he understands that Plan, and remembers that ‘money is the consolidation of the loving, living energy of divinity’ and that it should be used for the redemption of humanity. There is no purpose in cursing money just because it has fallen into the grasping hands of a few cursed men. The time for them to change their close-fistedness is near at hand, whether they welcome it or not. The Time-Spirit is in a hurry, whether they understand it or not. Let us have patience and faith to witness that great Day! (10 - 2 - 62)

“BURNING CONSCIENCE”

My meditation today is on Conscience. Under modern conditions, particularly after the two world wars, the average man has become so insensitive to his misdeeds that the word ‘Conscience’, which is man’s most faithful friend, the voice of his soul and the oracle of God, needs today an adjective to be fully understood.

The recent publication, dealing with letters exchanged between Claude Eatherly, commander of the plane in the attack on Hiroshima with atomic bomb on 6th August 1945, and the Viennese pacifist Gunther Anders, is thus titled ‘**Burning Conscience.**’ How the sacred functions of a good conscience have been taken over by Cowardice, Expediency and Pride are thereby clearly illustrated. Instead of the question: Is it right?, we have the questions: Is it safe? Is it politic? Is it popular?

On the 6th of August 1958, I was invited to the Army Club of Tokyo for a cosmopolitan dinner, which was meant to bring people belonging to different races together for better understanding, particularly between American and Japanese, who were enemies during the second world war. I was asked to make a short speech on the occasion on Peace. As it was the 13th anniversary of the Atom Bombing, our thoughts were naturally on that unfortunate and unhappy event, which meant the destruction of two big cities with a total population of nearly three lakhs of people. One of the top

officials of the American Air Force, under whom the bombers had served, was in a sad mood. He became one of my intimate friends.

On the following day, he came to my residence for meditating with me, and he continued the practice for nearly ten days. I found that there was a shining divine spark within him. He was so much worried about the sufferings of Claude Eatherly and others. Eatherly forging a cheque and sending the money to Hiroshima and his other crimes were all known to him.

Since Conscience is a fire within us, with our offences as its fuel, there is the natural burning associated with all fires fed with fuels. It is sure to scorch us unless the fuel is removed or the burning heat of it is allayed by penitential tears, as advocated by the American theologian, Mason.

“I am more afraid of my own heart, than of the Pope and all his cardinals—I have within me the great Pope, Self.” said Martin Luther. Scrupulous integrity in small things as well as in great is the most valuable possession for any nation or individual. (19 - 3 - 62)

A MEMORABLE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Last evening I had the privilege and pleasure of witnessing a Memorial Service at the Holy Emmanuel Memorial Church, Colombo, for the late Mr. C. S, a friend of mine who had lived a long, healthy and happy life. He died at the age of 82.

The service was elevating, and the sublime thoughts of Universality embodied in some of the Hymns sung, touched me deeply, particularly the following:

“One in all we seek or shun,
One—because our Lord is one;
One in heart and one in love—
We below, and they above.”

“Those whom many a land divides,
Many mountains, many tides,
Have they with each other part,
Fellowship of heart with heart?”

“Each to each may be unknown,
Wide apart their lots be thrown;
Diff’ring tongues their lips may speak,
One be strong, and one be weak;—”

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The eternal truth, peculiar to Hinduism and Sufism, is also reflected in the following hymn sung that day:

“Saints departed even thus
Hold communion still with us;
Still with us, beyond the veil
Praising, pleading without fail.”

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But when the hymn of last Blessing was sung, I found that orthodox ideas relating to Resurrection, which have since been scientifically disapproved, were repeated. Uniting of the soul with the physical body on the Happy Easter Morning, by all the graves in the world restoring their dead ones, was the theme of the Hymn. It was apparent that locally even the enlightened Christians still cling to some old doctrine, which had been abandoned by many in Europe and U.S.A, and not caught a glimpse of the true significance of Resurrection.

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Resurrection is not a single incident in one's whole life. It is a daily event, waking us to eternity from the valley of death. The meaning of the Latin word 'Resurgam' is 'I shall rise again', i.e. from the mire of matter and mind to the spiritual Realm. The Santhi Sloga of the Hindus, **Asathomam Sathgamaya.....** "Lead me from untruth to Truth, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality"—beautifully explains this idea of Resurrection. During my travels in the foreign lands, where the predominating religion is Christianity, I have met leading Christians who have realised the meaning in this way. (26 - 3 - 62)

THE LEBANON MYSTIC

My meditation today is on Mount Lebanon, a region that has produced many prophets of whom Kahlil Gibran and Michael Naimy are the latest. The former died in U.S.A in 1931, after spending twenty years in that country. The latter is still living, and after long residence in U.S.A, he has returned to his native country. It was my earnest wish to pay a visit to him in 1960, but it did not materialise due to the disturbed conditions there and the absence of a reply from him to my letter.

When I went to Anandashram in 1955, after the return of H. H. Swami Ramdas from his world tour, the beloved Swamiji handed to me an old and worn-out copy of 'The Book of Mirdad' by Naimy, and remarked, 'this is the book of the age.' I finished reading that book the same night; and selected passages from it adorned the pages of our Digest in its first issue itself. Since then he has written many inspired essays on human problems. In one of his latest, he writes:

"If mankind be truly desirous of having permanent peace, let it pool to that end its immense resources of propaganda. In the final analysis wars are made by words much more than by arms and soldiers . . . It is the magic of words that stirs up and fans human passions. Instead of controlling arms, control the radio, the press, the screen, the pulpit, the legislative rostrum and

all other agencies capable of influencing human hearts and minds. Let such agencies fan up those passions of the heart that make for peace among men."

No wiser words have been uttered in recent times. Their significance will come clear to us when we study how propaganda is carried on today by the two Power Blocks.

Monopoly in anything is bad for a society or country. And monopoly of the Press is the greatest danger to the peace and progress of any nation. We have had a foretaste of it in our own small country. But the volume of it in U.S.A and Soviet Russia is colossal. In the latter country, the masses know that the monopoly is under dictatorship, and they accept the news and views with conscious or unconscious mental resistance and reservation. The case is different where a country like U.S.A with democracy is concerned. There are six popular Monthlies there (half of them catering exclusively for women) with average circulation ranging from one and a half to four millions. There are equal number of Weeklies with almost the same influence of circulation. Besides these, there are thousands of daily papers for the mental bombardment of the whole population. It is said that more than ninety per cent of these periodicals and dailies are under the control of Big Business. This colossal concentration of power in the hands of economic and financial groups is not only a positive danger to the peace of the world, but a deadly menace to any democracy. Besides the Press, more than 50 per cent

of the Radio Stations there are also controlled, directly or indirectly, by News paper publishers. It is thus the minds of the masses are poisoned in both hemispheres.

Here I am reminded of the remedy suggested by another great lover of humanity, Dr. Albert Schweitzer:

“A new public opinion must be created **privately** and unobtrusively: that the existing one maintained by the press and other influences must be opposed by the **natural** one, which goes from man to man and relies solely on the truth of that which is expressed.”

This may appear to be a difficult ideal to practice, but there is no other way for permanent peace in the world. The efforts of Journals like ‘Religious Digest’ are definitely towards the realization of Dr. Schweitzer’s noble ideas. (21 - 2 - 62)

SRI PANDIT NEHRU—A POINT OF VIEW

Inscrutable and mysterious indeed are the ways in which the Divine Power ruling this universe corrects people and grants enlightenment to them. I am here referring to Pandit Nehru's wholesale condemnation of prayers, Yagnas, etc about six months ago, relating to the conjunction of eight planets in Capricorn.

His agnostic self-sufficiency exceeded all reasonable limits, and there were protests from different directions. My minute under date 1. 1. 62 appeared in a popular monthly of Bangalore, in the form of a letter to its editor.

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As if inspired by my long and spirited rejoinder to the great statesman, there appears in the Divine Life of July 1962 a highly instructive and thought-provoking article from the pen of Shri R. K. Ramadhyani, I.C.S, the Private Secretary to the President of the Republic of India.

This article makes no reference to Pandit Nehru's repeated declarations on Astrology and his insulting remarks about Hindu practices, but from the following paragraph appearing therein, it is clear that the writer was provoked by those remarks to come out with this dignified retort:

“Everything in this world happens according to His (God's) Will and this is a common principle of Hinduism as well as other well-known religions...

What He has ordained He alone can modify; His intercession is sought by mankind when prayers are offered for rain which has been held off; or Yajna is performed to avert the disaster portended by the conjunction of the planets, or deliverance is sought from a pestilence. God, then, is not only the Master but also the King or the Great Administrator of the world and we are all His subservient subjects apt to go astray or get into trouble from time to time and appeal to Him for succour."

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I express the hope that Shri Nehru has read this article, which has had the blessing of Swami Sivananda and presumably that of Dr. Radhakrishnan as well, and benefited from it. As wisely recorded by Plutarch, "To make no mistakes is not in the power of man; but from their errors and mistakes the wise and good learn wisdom for the future." (10 - 7 - 62)

LACK OF REVERENCE FOR HUMAN LIFE

As we look around us today, we see events and happenings which make us feel unhappy and angry with the world. On every side there are what people call 'things terribly gone wrong'. Some go to the extreme of shouting that they see the signs of the end of a vicious world,—a humanity so wicked as to be beyond redemption.

There have been good and bad, virtue and vice, from the very inception of civilized humanity. The teachings of Krishna, Buddha, Christ and other Prophets explain to us that during their times too there were good people as against wicked ones. But the difference is that in ancient times people felt that they were sinning whenever they committed a wrong act, whereas today the average wrong-doer does not feel so. In him the sense of sin or wrong-doing is absent. Take for example the evil of sexual promiscuity. It is as old as the human race. But society does not condemn it today. The modern highly fashionable groups give it respectability, by saying that it is a social duty for married women to have lovers, or justify it by giving the new psychological term, 'self-expression.'

Many are the factors that have contributed to the modern laxity in moral standards. Where murders are concerned, they are all well-planned and pre-meditated. Strangling the neck of a young and pregnant woman and throwing her body into a ravine is just like strangling the neck of a bird for food. Such callousness

is definitely due to the lack of respect for human life, and human dignity, and we must look elsewhere for its cause. The two world wars are mainly responsible for the development of this abandonment of reverence for human life. How far the soul of leading politicians has departed from the basic reverence for the life is shockingly evident from the news that the scientists are being requested to perfect a bomb that will kill **only** life, but not destroy property! The problem 'how to know what belonged to whom' seems to be a headache for the manufacturers of 'Fall-out Shelters' in U.S.A.

“When the trumpet of war blows, the pretences to civilization disappear and man helplessly reels back into the beast.” says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. It takes no time for these atrocities to spread from the war-time to peace-time, and from the war-areas to other lands. We have the news papers, films, and other propaganda instruments to do it quickly, with all the sensationalism they can command for money-making. In Europe I have seen the Churches, which were turned into recruiting offices. Reverence for human life, nay for all that lives, is the first essential thing needed for building up a more refined and cultured society.
(1 - 3 - 62)

THE MYSTICAL ARTIST

Yesterday my Meditation was on the Lebanon Mystic, Michael Naimy, and his inspired works. Today my thought goes to his good friend, Khalil Gibran, poet, philosopher, and mystical artist. His original works are in the Arabic language. He is considered the genius of his age by millions of Arab-speaking people. His poetry has been translated into more than twenty languages of the world.

He wrote in English only after making U.S.A his home. His book, 'The Prophet' is full of beautiful liberating thoughts. The famous Irish Poet, 'A.E' (G. W. Russell), praises it as the best from the East after the Gitanjali of Tagore, and testifies to the fact that he understood the true meaning of Socrates' Banquet only after studying the Prophet.

Gibran's words on Work, Knowledge and Love, in the most exquisite language, echo the essence of the teachings of Bhagawad Gita. The great significance of Saraswathi worship, by the soldier placing his sword, the writer his pen, the student his books, the smith his tools and the musician his flute, and the genius of the Hindu in introducing this practice, came clear to me only after reading Gibran's words on God and Religion. The following illuminating passages deserve to be engraved in letters of gold for posterity to read:

"If you would know of God, be not therefore a solver of riddles. Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children."

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“Is not religion all deeds and all reflection,
And that which is neither deed nor reflection, but
a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul,
even while the hands hew the stone or tend
the loom?

Who can separate his faith from his actions,
or his belief from his occupations? Who can
spread his hours before him, saying, ‘This for God
and this for myself; This for my soul and this
other for my body?’ ”

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“Your daily life is your temple and your
religion. Whenever you enter into it take with
you your all. Take the plough and the forge and
the mallet and the lute. The things you have
fashioned in necessity or for delight.”

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His words on Prayer, Pain and Death are equally
enlightening:

“I cannot teach you how to pray in words.
God listens not to your words save when He
Himself utters them through your lips.”

“Much of your pain is self-chosen. It is the
bitter potion by which the physician within you
heals your sick self.”

“You would know the secret of Death. But
how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart
of life. For life and death are one, even as the
river and the sea are one.” (22 - 2 - 62)

POWER OF PRAYER OVER PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Last night I was reading an article relating to the Conference held a few months ago at Oxford, with the theme 'Science and Religion', as the main subject. It was attended by many distinguished scientists and scholars from all parts of the world. My thought this morning was on the power of mind over matter, and on the loving couple, Mr. & Mrs. de la Warr, the pioneers and experimenters in this field.

During my visit to England in July 1960, I was to have met them at their laboratory and home, but an unkind fate decreed otherwise. This visit was included along with visits to Mr. Wilfred Wellock, the Gandhiyite, Lady Stafford Crips and Dr. Kenneth Walker, in the second part of my programme, which unfortunately did not materialise, due to certain unexpected changes in the programme for the Continent. I am still looking forward to meeting them.

When I think of Mr. & Mrs. de la Warr, I think of Prof. Pierre Curie and Madame Marie, the couple that became famous as the discoverers of radium. In the early part of their lives, their investigations were subject to much ridicule and opposition. In the same way, Mr. & Mrs. de la Warr too have been treated with indifference, till recently, for their experiments. The British Press had nothing but contempt for their discovery about the power of Prayer over the growth of plants and animals. A miracle took place when the

news reached U.K that one Rev. Pastor has made a similar discovery in California, of course much later than de la Warrs. The twenty years' indifference has now turned into attention and respect.

Today the power of mind over matter has been proved scientifically by evidential demonstration. In India, Science and Spirituality have been considered as the two aspects of the same Truth, from ancient times. The seers had known intuitively this Truth, through their highly developed sense of Awareness. Acharya Vinobha has, during the last two or three years, dealt with this matter frequently, in the same way as a few chosen scientists in the West are making a steady advance in the same direction, from the other end, that is, from physics to metaphysics.

At the Conference held at Oxford, a demonstration took place showing the thought-impact upon the emulsion of a photographic plate of radiations after ceremonial blessings in a sample of Oxford tap-water! Here is an eye-opener to our half educated and muddle-headed scoffers at ceremonies at our Temples, particularly Rudra Abhishekams, and the Navadanya ceremonies. (28 - 1 - 62)

DECAY OF SENSATE CULTURE

In one of my earlier Diary Entries, I have referred, with righteous indignation, to an Encyclopedia, published in England in 1958, which did not consider it right to include the names of such great personalities as Sir Edwin Arnold, Dr. Annie Besant, and Dr. Radhakrishnan and others, while finding ample space for war-mongers like Mussolini, Northcliffe, Beaverbrook, &c. Popes who did such atrocious acts as bless the guns of Mussolini against the innocent and ancient race of Ethiopia find prominent mention, while spiritual giants like Vivekananda and Yogananda, who spent their noble lives as spiritual ambassadors of India to U.S.A find no mention at all.

Last night I got some further and fresh enlightenment about this unholy trend in Publishers' mind, while reading a highly instructive article in an American Religious Journal by Rev. Dr. H. R. Rasmusson of Indiana. It seems to be the latest fashion of publishers all over the world to attach more importance to men who create dissensions and to forces of disintegration than to men of good-will and unifying forces. It is therefore not strange that the world is in a perilous state today. News papers' monopolists have done this with a vehemance in the recent past. This country has not been free from this menace to peace. A film star or a professional woman walking half naked in the streets of Colombo gets a full-page publicity while the arrivals and departures of savants, sages or saints go unnoticed, because it 'does not pay'.

The learned writer of the above article closes it with two questions. His last sentence deserves repetition a million times. So, I quote it below:

“In the first edition of Encyclopedia Britannica in 1768, there were four lines on the atom and five pages on love. In the latest edition there are eight pages on the atom, and no separate entry on love. Is this a prophecy? Is this a warning?”

No sensible man will hesitate to answer both his questions in the affirmative! Here is proof positive of the decline and ultimate decay of the Sensate Culture that has held sway between 1768 and 1961. (3-4-62)

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

The ideas and ideals of the great German philosopher, Count Hermann Keyserling, had engaged my attention during the past one week on account of the visit of his talented son Arnold to Ceylon. The latter delivered two lectures, one at the German-Ceylon Cultural Centre, and the other at the Ramakrishna Mission Hall.

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In quite an unexpected way, it has been my privilege and pleasure to propose a vote of thanks to the learned lecturer on both occasions. At the latter meeting which consisted of more than 95 per cent of Tamil Saivaites, Count Arnold Keyserling spoke on Indian impact on German culture. His address was confined to the influence of Sanskrit culture. This was naturally disappointing to the audience.

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Questions were raised by more than one person from the audience. Observing the unexpected situation, which was rather embarrassing to the lecturer, the Ven. Swamiji who was the chairman of the meeting, invited me to speak, and to propose a vote of thanks. This gave me a golden opportunity to correct the wrong impression in the minds of many by saying that the Tamil culture did influence the German scholars. I mentioned to them the translations of Saiva Siddhanta

philosophy by Dr. H. W. Schomerus in 1912, of Thirukkural by Charles Graul in 1865, and a study of the Names of ancient Dravidians by Von A. Cleman Schoener in 1927. The questioners were happy and satisfied.

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In replying to the question about East Germany, I quoted the following prophetic statement of Count Herman Keyserling before his death:

“The loyal Bolsheviks might become one day more sincere Christians than millions of westerners are and shall be. They experience everything anti-divine in this world and are therefore able to contemplate with greater purity than those, who imagine the devil as a being from beyond and repress it.”

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At the conclusion, the lecturer was full of profuse thanks for my drawing his [attention to his revered father's declaration, which was full of spiritual vision.

When I left Europe in 1960, it was with one great regret, for not having been blessed with the opportunity of visiting the School of Wisdom established at Darmstadt, Vienna. It will be the first place to visit in the event of another pilgrimage by me to Europe.
(8 - 7 - 62)

A VICE OF MANY VARIETIES

My thought is today on 'Exploitation'. Exploitation is a vice of many varieties. We have had the exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the workers by the employers, of the credulous by the priests and preachers in the name of religion, of the ignorant masses by the power-seeking politicians, of the language by the chauvinists, &c. This kind of exploitations is gradually dying out with the spread of new social ideals.

But their places are being taken by other kinds which are of a subtler nature. Mahatma Gandhi once remarked that the exploitation of the culture of one race by another was one of the worst. He did not live to see the development of exploitations of much worsekind.

I am here referring to the exploitation of human suffering for political propaganda. The controversy about the superiority of one kind of anti-polio vaccine over another is a lamentable thing. There is no need for quarrel if the dispute is simply confined to the liquid-form Vs the candy-form. That is a question for medial experts, and no harm is expected from a discussion at that level. The wicked politicians drag in the countries of productions, and the ignorant, unthinking mass of humanity are made to swallow the 'pills', taking sides and spreading rumours of all kinds, which rob the people of their faith in the efficacy of the vaccine itself. News papers with an eye on sensationalism are the worst sinners.

The propaganda machines of the Power-Blocs are ever ready to exploit any and every situation in an undeveloped country, and their Agents are thus kept busy and prosperous. The atmosphere of the long-drawn cold-war is maintained in hot-air all the time, increassing the volume of distrust and misunderstanding between nations and nations. I wonder whether the power-seekers will ever become conscious of their folly before and without the use of the nuclear weapons they are piling up, at the colossal cost of billions of dollars!

(30 - 3 - 62)

APPENDIX

THE UNITY OF LIFE

Dedicated Pilgrims for Peace!

Salutations and greetings to you all from a humble fellow pilgrim from distant Ceylon!

My first duty is to thank the sponsors of this World Convention for the great honour done in inviting me to attend it, and for the opportunity given to address you today. I must confess that I had some misgivings over this invitation, and considerable difficulty in attending the Convention. Though a citizen of the world from my college days, I have never courted public attention or any newspaper propaganda. My work of spreading the Message of Universal Love and Peace, through the pages of the International Spiritual Journal, "Religious Digest", edited and published by me for the last eight years, has been carried on most unostentatiously. Only the realization of the fact that never in my life would I be offered again such a golden opportunity for giving public, profound and prominent expression to my long-cherished ideals and ideas gave me the temerity to accept the honour with gratitude.

"Unity of Life" is the theme of my speech. "The realization of human unity through the awakening in all and manifestation by all of the inner divinity which is ONE" has been, from time immemorial, the noble ideal of Hinduism, the oldest religion in existence.

Centuries before Isaiah, Pythagoras, Mahavira, Buddha and Confucius, the poets of the Upanishads sang the song of 'Self' in all, and all in the 'Self'. This Vedantic consciousness is spiritualized by the ideals of human solidarity, the unity of all life and the oneness of all existence.

The Shanti Sloka (Peace Prayer) as taught in Yajur Veda (XXXVL-17) is as follows:

“Unto the heavens be peace, unto the sky and earth be peace.

Peace be unto the waters; unto the herbs and trees be peace.

Unto all the gods be peace, unto Brahman and to all be peace;

Peace, yea, verily peace.”

It is evident from this Prayer that the unity of life, as seen by our ancients, is not confined to human beings but covers all living beings. The great discoveries made by the scientists during the last quarter of a century have produced new and convincing evidence of the unity of man and nature. At the physical level, we all share one Mother Earth. At the chemical level, we share one pattern of metabolism. At the biological level, we share one life. At the social level, we share one humanity. We are one social species, with some minor variations. At the spiritual level, we share one God or one Reality, or Cosmic Intelligence, to use a term acceptable to all.

Man no doubt stands at the apex of the evolutionary process, but he still remains intimately linked with all that has gone before. A Saiva Saint of Tamilnad (South India) belonging to the 9th Century A.D., Manickavasagar, had beautifully explained in

verse the process of evolution from stone to man. Julian Huxley's wise words: "Man's destiny is to be the sole agent for the future evolution of this planet", fit in very well with the ordered progress revealed in Manickavasagar's Sivapurānam.

"Striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all spires of form."

wrote Emerson, the sage of Concord. Poet Tennyson expressed the same ideas of evolution in the following striking manner:

"The Lord let the house of a brute
to the soul of a man,
And the man said, 'Am I your debtor?'
And the Lord - - - 'Not yet; but make it
as clean as you can
And then I will let you better.' "

The unity expressed by these sages and saints is not a pious hope or religious faith, but a scientific fact at every level of life. In simpler words, we are one with the whole Nature, though we do not normally recognize this fact. Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, President at the Royal Society's Tercentenary Celebration, concluded his illuminating address with the following prophetic words:

"We are all in this together; there is no escape. But the consummation is deferred till we are ready. For the purpose of the universe is to create a new God—and we are that God in the making."

In a letter addressed to the Russian Premier on the 28th of December last, the President of the United States wrote: "If we are to have peace between systems with far reaching ideological differences, we

must find ways for reducing or removing the recurring waves of fear and suspicion, which feed on ignorance, misunderstanding or what appears to one side or the other as broken agreements."

This is a perfectly correct analysis of the present situation, but we are disappointed with the efforts made to achieve that objective. That is why we are assembled here today. FEAR is undoubtedly the predominating and ruling emotion of the time. In the past we were afraid of death, but today we are afraid to live! And the peace of the world is held by the slender cord of TERROR. The wolfish claws of fear threaten us in all directions. In short, fear hangs over the head of humanity like the sword of Damocles. We are prone to ascribe evil intentions to our opponents. We do so because we have not come to terms with evil thoughts and ideas within ourselves. Nor is it all. Some designing people have found the ways and means to make quick money out of this fear complex by manufacturing all kinds of deep underground shelters.

Just before I left Ceylon, I read an article from the pen of Mr. Chapman Pincher in the Ceylon Daily News, under the heading, "When the Hot-line Buzzes." It deals with what would happen if ever the Russians stage a full scale nuclear attack, and refers to the North American Air Defense Command at a beautiful spot of this very State, the Colorado Springs, to be exact. When I had finished reading that interesting article, which is now inside my pocket, I was reminded of the prophetic words of the great woman pacifist, Emily Green Balch, the Nobel Peace Prize winner for 1946. On receiving this prize at Oslo in 1948, she said:

“I have spoken against fear as basis for peace, but what we ought to fear is not that someone may drop atomic bombs on us, but that we may allow a world situation in which ordinarily reasonable and humane men acting as our representatives, may use such weapons in our name.”

This is exactly the dangerous situation into which the world is gradually getting.

No intelligent or sensible man can today deny or dispute the fact that the nucleus of the future civilization is not the individual or even the nation, but the human race as a whole. It is the firm conviction of all enlightened people that the present world conflict will never be solved until the religious problem is solved. It is, therefore, the first duty of all those who are thinking in world terms to see the world's need of religious unity. There are definite signs of movements in all lands towards this ideal. The noble efforts of the late lamented Pope John XXIII are well known to you. In his two great Encyclicals, he speaks of 'human family,' 'sons of God', and the 'Brotherhood of man'.

The methods adopted by Rev. Fr. Dominique Pire of Belgium to instil the ideals into the hearts of graduates and undergraduates of different universities of the world are unique indeed. Since 1960, this Nobel Peace Prize winner organized 'Summer Sessions' for them at the Mahatma Gandhi Peace University founded by him at Huy in Belgium. Having attended the first Session in 1960 and the last Session in 1963, I am in the happy position to state that Fr. Pire is one

of the architects of the 'One World' ideal, through his Dialogue with the youths of the world, who are to be the future leaders in their respective countries.

Among the past rulers of the world, the Buddhist Emperor, Asoka, who reigned in India in the 3rd Century B.C., stands supreme as one who worked for the unity of humanity and the peace of the world. Enunciating his policy against aggression and tension between States, he declared in his Kalinga Edict II:

"All men are my children. Just as I seek the welfare and happiness of my children in this world and the next, I seek the same things for all men. Unconquered peoples along the borders of my dominions may wonder what my disposition is towards them. My only wish with respect to them is that they should not fear me, but trust me; that they should understand further that I will forgive them for offences which can be forgiven; that they should be induced by my example to practice Dharma; and that they should attain happiness in this world and the next."

After the advent of this benign ruler, the Buddhist influence extended beyond Asia. Its ideas contacted the West, during the Greek and Roman Empire periods.

There is a beautiful saying in the Holy Quran, It reads:

"Of human beings no community is left without a warner and a guide. Teachers are sent to each race that they may teach to each race. That they may teach it in its own tongue."

We have had plenty of such warners and guides in all parts of the world. Raja Rammohan Roy of Bengal was one of the great men who had realized the

Unity of Man in the present political sense. He was, in fact, the first to visualize the establishment of a League of Nations on a basis much more real and stable than that on which the League rested. His letter to the French Foreign Minister, written in 1831, is now a historical document. It should prove of considerable interest to the framers of the World Constitutional Convention.

To envisage a single world government administering the affairs of mankind might have appeared Utopian a hundred and thirty years ago, but today conditions are different. The explosive expansion of scientific discoveries and technical devices, especially in transport and communications, has already created a mental climate favourable to new forms of political organizations on a world scale. "The greatest obstacle is no longer a material one; the technical resources are already available to make this possible. The obstacle now lies in man's mind; it lies in the fact that we are still obsessed by age-old fears and enmities," to quote the words of Dr. C. M. Carstairs, Professor of Psychological Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

H. G. Wells wrote in 'The Outline of History', a work that earned for him a world-wide reputation, "A Federation of all humanity, together with a sufficient measure of social justice, to ensure health, education and a rough equality of opportunity, would mean such a release and increase of human energy as to open a new phase in human history."

At the end of the first World War, Woodrow Wilson, as the Head of the Federation of semi-independent States, had the vision of a Federated

World State. He sincerely thought that what proved a great success in the American continent should be equally possible in the continent of Europe. He wanted the people of Europe to learn in 1919 the lessons which Virginia, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts had taken to heart 143 years earlier. He did really believe that in presenting the League of Nations Covenant to the world he had justified his whole existence. But unfortunately his plans failed and his high ambition resulted in deep disappointment. The moment he left the soil of Europe, its politicians went back to their old diplomacy of secret treaties and surreptitious alliances. They had not learned then, and their successors in office have not learned even after the devastations of the second World War, that it is absolutely impossible to progress in terms of the 20th Century by acting and thinking in terms of the 18th Century.

In the course of two lectures delivered at Benares and Karachi in 1945, India's great savant, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, examined with detachment and objectivity the last stages of the second World War and the subsequent peace terms, and uttered the following warning and advice to the politicians then in power:

“Those who represent their nations at the Peace table must speak not only for their countries but for humanity as a whole. We require statesmen who will take a moral view of politics and not politicians who, with their fixed habits of orthodox diplomacy, let us drift into the disasters of this War. The only certain means of salvation from the terrible evil of war and the chaos of the world is the perception that we cannot correct

evil while we are ourselves evil. We cannot reform others until we are remade from within. Great things are accomplished by human worth rather than by legal documents."

"Humanity is the goal and nations are convenient administrative units, and their subordinate character should never be overlooked. The raw material of 'One World' is present; it must become an organized and psychological unity. Science and politics, trade and transport, have produced a state in which different people are drawn together into a unity. No nation can hereafter isolate itself. Let us give to this world, which has found itself as one body, a world's soul. Let us make the mechanical unity into a spiritual concord."

Furthermore, dealing with that particular period of the history of mankind, a famous historian concludes:

"Now behold the world as it has been left in the wake of the orgy of hatred and unreason—a crazy quilt of fantastic new nationalities that may possess some value as historical curiosities but that will never be able to hold their own in a world dominated by coal and oil and water power and wholesale credits—a continent divided by artificial frontiers which look pretty enough upon a child's atlas but bear no relation whatsoever to the urgent needs of modern civilization—a vast armed camp of people in yellow and green and purple uniforms masquerading as feeble imitations of their mythical ancestors but of less practical use to our cotemporary society than any little cash girl that works in the basement of a ten-cent store."

“This may sound a brutal condemnation of a state of affairs that still fills the souls of millions of honest European patriots with gratitude and pride.”

“I am sorry but until the Statesmen of Europe shall be willing to leave the solution of modern problems to people with modern minds can there be any lasting improvement.”

That the world is not devoid of people with such modern minds to solve the dangerous problems of the day is amply demonstrated by this august assembly of great thinkers and earnest peace-makers gathered together from all parts of the world. I see before me many esteemed men and women who have dedicated their lives for the cause of peace in the world. I wish to recall here the prophetic words of one of the promoters of this Convention, Lord Bertrand Russell, which have for over three decades fortified our hearts and given us hope about the future. He solemnly declared:

“Meantime the world in which we exist has other aims, but it will pass away, burnt up in the fire of its own hot passions, and from its ashes will spring a new and younger world full of fresh hope with the light of morning in its eyes.”

“United with his fellow-men by the strongest of all ties, the tie of a common doom, the free man finds that a new vision is with him always, shedding over every daily task the light of love.”

In these words of our esteemed leader, we hear an echo of the voice of the greatest of Scotland's poets, Robert Burns of the 18th Century, who sang:

“The Golden Age will then revive,
Each man shall be a brother,
In harmony we shall live,
And share the earth together.

In virtue trained, enlightened youth,
Shall love each fellow-creature,
And future years shall bear the truth
That man is good by nature."

Serious students of ethics, economics and politics all over the world have been greatly influenced by the utterances and writings of another nobleman, who is also one of the sponsors of this Convention. I refer to Lord Boyd Orr, the late Director-General of F.A.O. His appeal to all nations to cut their military budgets by ten percent, so that an International Development Fund may be established for abolishing hunger and acute poverty from the world, must have moved even stony hearts. The figures quoted by him in support of his pragmatically simple plan for world peace are illuminating indeed!

Besides these warners, your own great country has produced many an inspired guide in the recent past. I wish to refer to the life and mission of one such living personality, a simple woman of illumined head and purified heart, whom I met last week at Hollywood, California, Mrs. Vida Reed Stone. Long before the signing of the Charter of United Nations in 1945, this great woman, undoubtedly one of the Pioneers of the New Age, wrote a series of inspiring Essays and Poems, when some two-thirds of the world were still at war. One of these Essays was entitled—"Can the Nations be United?", and the author made pointed references to the "purging of the nations" and the "peace tables of the world" in the concluding part of the Essay. In every page of her books, you see her prophetic vision. I wonder how many of the participants in the 'Peace Debates' of the United Nations have even heard of the names of her books! Every line written by her on 'Peace' and 'Unity of Mankind' is worth quoting, but I have only space for a few striking passages, selected at random:

“Neither religious, racial and color prejudices nor political differences will disappear as a result of armed persuasion or victories of conquering peoples. Men are trembling; their hearts are afraid. Fear is abroad in all nations, and doubt of the integrity of others. The nations are satiated with dreams of conquest, of selfishness and greed; yet each hesitates to lay down the burden fearing his neighbour will rush in and take the spoils.”

“The great purpose of this hour is for man to realize his oneness with God and therefore with all men. It is not just a resurgence of religious zeal, but something all-embracing, some motivating power that is needed. It is, in fact, the **desire** in men’s hearts for a universal way of life that will be beneficial to all men.”

“The Atom! How this word reverberates the thoughts of men in this hour! The mighty glory it could spread over the earth! The sunshine of good, the power of plenty, the lifting of men’s souls above fear and want and disease.”

“The beautiful, radiant, powerful atom—a veritable saviour of mankind! But man can only know its life-giving radiations as he releases it for the good of all men.”

“Spiritual understanding arises within the heart; its desires are universal and for the good of all men. Those who embody this way of life in their words and actions form a network of Light over the earth and multiply the power of Good.”

“When men treat their fellows as they would be treated, then shall they inherit the earth, no longer to water its fruits and fields with tears and blood, but to sow Seeds of Life and harvest the crops with gladness. There will be food for all, and man will eat with gladness knowing **all** are fed.”

The United Nations Charter begins with the words, "We the people of the World". If this is true, the writings of truly peace loving souls like Mrs. Stone would have been in the hands of people all over the world during the last seventeen years. But what we find in actual practice is that "instead of the world it is the foreign offices of the world which use the assembly often for propaganda for selfish national interests," in the words of Lord Boyd Orr.

In this connection, I will be lacking in my loyalty to Truth and Dharma if I fail to make mention here of the very valuable services rendered to humanity by W.H.O., F.A.O., I.L.O., and UNESCO under the auspices of the U.N.O., and of the sincere and solemn efforts made by its late Secretary-General, Dr. Dag Hammarskjöld, to give a spiritual background for this great Organization. In inaugurating the 'United Nations Meditation Room', he said:

"This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense.

It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer.

People of many faiths will meet here, and for that reason none of the symbols to which we are accustomed on our meditation could be used.

However, there are simple things which speak to us all with the same language. We have sought for such things and we believe that we have found them in the shaft of light striking the shimmering surface of solid rock.

There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in the shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their center of stillness."

Having meditated in this 'Room of quiet' two weeks ago, I am in the happy position to state that the high and noble ambition of its founder is being fulfilled gradually, though the majority of the thousands of people who daily visit the U.N.O. Building do not seem to appreciate the significance of the 'Quiet Room.'

A peaceful world can only be built by peaceful hearts. The sooner the power-politicians of the world realize the truth that power and peace are diametrically opposed and that no man who has not found peace within himself can ever hope to establish peace outside, the better for the world. The man whose heart is filled with love for all is alone capable of making a correct approach to the perplexing problems of the day. We had one such man in Mahatma Gandhi, whose disciple, Acharya Vinobha, is now carrying on his work of peace. We must remember here that the advent of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, with his policy of Ahimsa, or non-violence in politics in the Atomic Age, was not a coincident, incident, or accident, but a definite turning point in the history of mankind according to certain Spiritual Laws governing this universe. "No power on earth can stand," wrote this noble World-server and Way-shower for humanity, "before the march of a peaceful, determined and God-loving people. Non-violence is more powerful than all the armaments of the world. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destructions devised by the ingenuity of man."

There is another great woman in your country who is dedicating her life for peace. She is Mrs. Dagmar Wilson of Washington, who is the leader of the movement, "Women Strike for Peace". She is credited with the wise and witty statement—"that for the first time in history, mere preparation for war is killing people and damaging their health and heredity in great numbers." I am glad to see her name in the list of delegates for this convention.

Women consist half of humanity. It is they who give life to our children. According to biologists, woman has been the pioneer of progress from the beginning. In the upward path from the lower species, she has led the way. Just as woman has led in purely physical improvements, she may lead the way to moral improvement as well. So, let us hope and pray that under her leadership, compassionate love will replace the present materialism and violence. This is the theme of a recent excellent work—"The Philosophy of Compassion—The Return of the Goddess", by Mrs. Esme Wynne-Tyson, an author of international reputation hailing from England. It is therefore proper and fitting that virtuous and brave women all over the world are coming forward in large numbers to work tirelessly against war, for peace and life.

I wish to touch on one more aspect here. We are today earnestly engaged in such an important question as a "World Constitutional Convention." This is a stupendous task requiring all the mental, moral and spiritual strength we possess. Above all these, it also needs the awareness that a mysterious Intelligence is guiding and helping us in the work. We are not alone in the efforts. There is God as a Living Presence, and without the sense of that Living Presence, there can never be the unity we are hoping for. Here I am reminded of a wonderful experience one of America's great sons, Rear Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd, had in connection with one of his Antarctic expeditions. This famous aviator and explorer had, on one occasion, to spend seventy days alone in the wilderness of frozen ice. There was no one to talk to and all of a sudden he got the feeling that he was passing away. Taking a piece of paper, he wrote down his impressions as follows:

“The universe is not dead. Therefore, there is an Intelligence there, and it is all pervading. At least the purpose, the possible major purpose of that Intelligence **is the achievement of universal harmony.**

Striving in the right direction for peace (harmony), therefore, as well as the achievement of it, is the result of accord with that Intelligence. It is desirable to affect that accord.

The human race, then, is not alone in the universe. Though I am cut off from human beings, I am not alone. For untold ages man has felt an awareness of that Intelligence. Belief in IT is the one point where all religions agree. It has been called by many names. Many call it God.”

It is only when we give up selfishness, and think in terms of “thine” and not “mine” that we shall be ready to get the divine perception, and in fact, feel the unity of all life.

In conclusion, we are not calling upon people to work wonders. War is an invention of the human mind. The same mind can easily invent peace and justice instead. So, we are asking every man and woman to make decisions that affect his or her own future and the welfare of their children. In the present conditions of the world, and in the circumstances of the time, what has to be done is within their capacity and reach. We are given the power to think, and the power to influence our environments. Let us make the best use of this great gift, and let us do so before it is too late.

Thank you.

(The text of a Paper read at the World Constitutional Convention, held at Denver, Colorado, U.S.A in September, 1963).

When I am dead,
My dearest

When I am dead
my dearest

Sing no sad songs for me
Plant thou no roses
at my head,

Nor shady cypress tree;

Be the green grass above me

With showers and dewdrops wet
And if ~~thou~~ thou wilt

And if thou wilt forget

I shall not see the shadows
I shall not feel the rain
I shall not hear the
nightingale

Sing on, as if in pain;

And dreaming through the
twilight

That doth not ~~set~~ rise nor
set,

Haply I may remember
And Haply I may forget.

Chuchita Georgina Rossetti

(@. 2004/13/5)

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கணினி மெய்நிகர் போலி
நிபந்தனை

கிடைக்காத காரணத்தால் போலி
பணம் வட்டி இலாபத்தில் இருந்து
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