PART I.

THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE (IN ENGLAND).

"I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes."

(Tennyson—"In Memoriam" xxvii)

The world with its manifold attractions is too much for man. It is so all-engrossing that it hardly leaves him any leisure to think of anything beyond itself. It deprives him of his innate cheerfulness of spirit and wisdom, and causes him to forget the true mission of his life. It lures him away from the path of virtue and makes him a creature of circumstances, a plaything for vice and temptations, and a tool in the hands of designing men. He feels his misery, but, he is unable to shake off the yoke. His subjection is complete, but, he is altogether powerless to free himself from the fetters which he has imposed on himself by his own folly and weakness.

Time which blunts the edge of all things terrestrial, at last comes to his rescue and takes away the sharpness of his sufferings. He is gradually reconciled to his lot and begins to like,
his own position in life. So bitter is the irony of fate and so much accustomed does he become to the miseries of this life that hell itself seems a heaven to him and it becomes difficult to induce him to think of a better condition of life even as it was difficult to induce the old prisoner to think of returning to his happy home in his native land on his release from the prison,—the prisoner who had passed so many years of his life in the prison and who had grown so inured to his misfortunes that he at last began to like his position in the gaol and ultimately, forgot his home and all his connections there. The prison itself gradually became so dear to him that he would never even think of his release from it, nay, he would turn away from the very idea of exchanging his captivity for his freedom.

Just so with the lot of man on this earth. The outward fascinations of this world make him blind to the inward miseries of life. The temptations of this world are too strong for him. He is led by them so completely that he is incapable of resisting them. The world at last becomes all in all to him; it becomes his dear object of love and his attachment to it grows so strong that he would shudder at the very idea of exchanging it for anything better. He would laugh at the great man who said, "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home." To him Heaven is an Utopia and the glories of heaven are all confined to this earth. He is so much attracted by the temptations of this world that he cannot conceive of anything else. His imagina-
tion is incapable of picturing a better world and a better state of existence.

Medieval Christianity had emphasised on the nothingness of this world and the transitory state of this life and taught man to think of Heaven and the salvation of man from the miseries of this life. It taught him to make light of worldly concerns and think only of his emancipation from the sufferings of this life by austerities and asceticism. It was only salvation that stirred the deep religious thoughts of men of that age and the history of the Middle Ages teems with illustrations of Christians whose lives were a strict school of discipline, who waged a life-long struggle with the common enemy of mankind, won a glorious victory and a still more glorious position in heaven—a position, which, in its very essence, is eternal and which transcends the glories of this earth.

The Renaissance, however, brought about a complete change in the thoughts of men, the idea of heaven and salvation vanished from their minds and the pleasures and attractions of this world began to stir the imagination of poets and the thoughts of men in general. The Renaissance is the period (in the fifteenth century) at which the revival of arts and letters took place marking the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world. This is known to be the Pagan Renaissance which marks the development of the imaginative faculty and of the thinking faculty. The budding forth of the imagination may be seen in the dramas of Massinger and Ford, of
Webster, Dekkar, and Marlowe culminating in the marvellous productions of Shakespeare. Poetry received its adornment in the hands of Spenser and Science was moulded anew by Sir Francis Bacon who inaugurated the Inductive Method and thus became the Father of Modern Science. Shakespeare, Spenser and Bacon are the three finest flowers of the Renaissance period in the Elizabethan age of English Literature and Science. Science is proud of an work like the Novum Organum, Poetry of her Faery Queen and Drama of her Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and Lear.

This Renaissance was at first temporal in its very essence and it is therefore called the Pagan Renaissance. It affords a striking contrast to Mediæval Christianity. The vision of Peres the Plowman and the glories of heaven no longer find a place in the imagination of poets and of men in general. Men no longer sacrifice the world and the worldly interests for the sake of a glorious heaven as they did in the Middle Ages. The earth now began to seem to them to be very good. The pleasures of this earth attracted them so much that they had hardly any time to think of the pleasures of heaven. So that the Pagan Renaissance, though it was a gain on the one hand, was a loss on the other. It was a worldly gain, but, it was a spiritual loss. Fortunately, however, the Pagan Renaissance was soon followed by the Christian Renaissance which, to a certain extent, made amends for this loss. The Christian Renaissance saw the development of the Reformation which began in the
days of Wycliffe and the Lollards. The sacrifice of this life for an eternal life in heaven again began to stir the thoughts of men so much that they courted death as a welcome guest who would free them from all fears of religious persecution. "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a light as we hope, by God's grace, shall never be extinguished" became the watchword of the day and the history of the Reformation is only a history of saints and martyrs who made light of worldly concerns in the hope of enjoying a glorious, peaceful and blessed life in heaven. The Paradise Lost, the Paradise Regained and other works of the Period breathe the same divine sentiment. Cromwell and his Army, the New Model, who always made a conscience of all they did and who thereby turned the tide of war in favour of the Parliamentarians by dealing the death blow to the proud cavalry of Prince Rupert afford another illustration of the superiority of a religious life over a mere worldly life and the literary productions of this period are saturated with the divine idea of an eternal, all-peaceful, and all-blessed hereafter which constantly reminds us of the nothingness of this world as compared to the glories of heaven.

In watching the course of the dawning of conscience in the Modern Age we need only take into consideration the works of the late Poet Laureate of England, the universally lamented Lord Tennyson who is very aptly called the Representative Poet in England. He has culled the best and choicest flowers of the poetic garden and adorned his poetical works
with the finest specimens of poetry. The beauties of Shakespeare and Milton, of Wordsworth and Shelley, of Dryden and Pope, of Cowper and Chaucer, of Gay and Grey are all seen in their native grandeur in the Poetry of Lord Tennyson. When we think of the following lines,

"Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we can not prove."

(In Memoriam).

We adore Tennyson for his reverence, piety and deep religious faith. Again when we read the following lines

"We have but faith and faith alone, we can not know
For knowledge is of things we see
Yet we trust it comes from thee
A beam in darkness, let it grow."

we understand the relative importance of knowledge as compared to faith. For, whereas knowledge is confined within the nutshell of the visible world alone, faith gives us an insight into the invisible, unlimited and the unknown. Still, the poet gives knowledge the place it deserves and prays that it may prove to be "a beam in the darkness of our ignorance" and that it may grow side by side with faith.

Of all the poets in England, it is only Tennyson who teaches us how to believe in a personal God and how to make our wills subservient to the will of the Lord. Thus,
"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest holiest manhood Thou;
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

(Idem)

These lines sum up the sentiments of a man who has a firm faith in a personal God, his Saviour, and who prays fervently that he may be so blessed as to live only for the sake of carrying out the wishes of the Divine Father and who prays that his sole bliss may consist in serving the Lord with his whole heart. In other words, the above four lines teach us faith in a personal God and Absolute Resignation.

Tennyson is not only the representative poet of England but he is pre-eminently a deeply religious poet. And in this sense he excels all his predecessors. If Shakespeare stands unique in the dramatic world, Tennyson shines supreme in the religious world. In every line of his prelude to the "In Memoriam" we are enlivened with a new idea which touches a sympathetic chord in the heart of all good men. Tennyson's greatness consists in his deep sense of humility, and his prayer for the good of all mankind. For instance, when he says

"We are fools and slight;
We mock Thee when we do not fear;
Yet help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light."

(Idem)

We feel inclined to fall at the feet of Tennyson and worship him as our spiritual preceptor. He prays
for the salvation of all vainglorious, foolish and sinful hearts and his words breathe the lofty, pure, unselfish and divine sentiment of the Saviour himself. His prayer is so sweet and eloquent that it wears off the hard crust of materialism and makes us sensitive to the feelings of a faithful heart, the faithful heart of the faithful servant of the All-merciful Lord. His firm faith in the efficacy of prayers shines forth with the greatest lustre when he solemnly sings

"Thrice blessed whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher loves endure,
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?"

(Idem)

Again,

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

(Passing of Arthur)

England has seen many a religious poet. But Tennyson stands foremost among the rank. His excellence lies in the boldness of his poetic imagination, the clearness of his poetic conceptions, the depth of his religious sentiments, the sincerity of his beliefs, the purity of his thoughts, the loftiness of his ideas, the sweetness of his temper and the natural and harmonious combination of all the poetic graces in
his great poems. His style is so simple and at the same time so eloquent that it commands the admiration of all his readers. He would always be dearly remembered for his deep and sincere religious faith and his "In Memoriam" would always continue to hold its head very high as one of the loftiest monuments and one of the finest specimens of architecture in the region of poetry. We may trace the course of the Dawning of Conscience in every line of this great *work. Tennyson notices with regret the religious deterioration of his countrymen and he is almost impatient of their want of faith and their tendency towards gross materialism. In this respect he is always at one with Carlyle who is now regarded as an extraordinary phenomenon in England. Carlyle is a Goethe in English garb. It is he who has introduced the Transcendental Philosophy of Germany into England. When he wrote his Hero-Worship, he was fifty years ahead of his contemporaries. It is only to-day that England has learnt how to appreciate the merit of his great works. The Dawning of Conscience may be clearly seen in his Hero-Worship, specially in that part of the work where he depicts his hero in the form of a prophet. Carlyle bemoans with more than Byronic despondency the irresistible movement of time and the spiritual decay of the age. He is loud in his complaint that faith and religion are both at a low ebb in his time and that the people are all blindly running into the vortex of impiety, irreverence and irreligion. Both Carlyle and Tennyson did their best to save England from the
risk of running into Atheism and Materialism, both of them achieved success in their honest endeavours in this direction and both of them set noble examples to their countrymen. Their actions were only the outcome of the Dawning of Conscience.

To sum up what has been said above. The Dawning of Conscience is first seen in England in Langland's "Vision of William concerning Peres the Plowman" and in the attempts of Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, to convince men that they can be saved from their sins only by taking a good care of their conscience. Throughout the Middle Ages, men thought of salvation only and made light of this world. They tried to obtain their salvation by a regular course of self-denial, by a systematic practice of austerities and asceticism, and by following a life of spotless purity. During the Pagan Renaissance, men in general were so much led by the attractions of this life and the temptations of this world that they took little or no notice of their conscience. Fortunately, however, this period did not last long. Nature is never an indulgent mother and those of her children that disregarded her inviolable laws had to pay dearly for their folly and it was not long before they discovered how they had yielded to the charms and pleasures of this world and how they had been led astray from the path of virtue. With the dawn of the Christian Renaissance conscience awoke, men became deeply religious and the glories of Heaven again began to stir their imagination so deep that men died by thousands by preferring
the life of a martyr to that of religious stagnation. In
the modern age, the Dawning of Conscience alters its
guise and appears in another garb. The thought of
man's duty to his neighbour and other fellow-creatures
takes the place of the thought of individual salvation.
The noble lives and examples of Miss Florence Nightin-
gale and of Sister Dora (Miss Pattison) teach men
how this life may be sweetened by sacrificing it in a
noble cause,—that of relieving the distress of mankind.
The lives of Blake and mighty Nelson, of Walpole
and Pitt inspire men with the idea of sacrificing their
lives in the noblest cause, namely, the performance of
their duties. The noblest example set by Nelson in
the Battle of Trafalgar when he ordered the memor-
able signal, "England expects every man to do his
duty," to be hoisted and when he faced death like a
hero saying "Thank God, I have done my duty” are
lessons which teach the world how to perform their
duties and how to cherish the memory of Nelson
with deep love and gratitude. In the Middle Ages
men were sick of this life and this world, and thought
only of ascending heaven by penances and mortifica-
tions. In the modern age, this world itself seems to be
very good inasmuch as it affords ample opportunity
of distinguishing ourselves by a noble self-sacrifice.
Man is no longer sick of this life but he has learnt
how this life may be profitably employed in serving
mankind. Man's duty to his neighbour and other
fellow-creatures is now of greater importance than his
individual salvation. The modern age, therefore, has
its bright side as well as its dark side. Those who
think that it is merely an age of moral deterioration and degeneration, should remember that it is also pre-eminently an age of spiritual evolution. The philosophers of to-day are all anxious about the general welfare of mankind. Most of them are busily engaged in comparing the philosophical systems of to-day with those of ancient times and they are all anxious to know how the ancient Sages of India tried to solve the difficult problems of life. They have begun to study side by side Plato, Aristotle, DesCartes, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Martineau, Sully, Sankaracharyya, Madhvacharyya and the great Ramanuja.

The philosophers of these days do not waste their precious time in mere idle speculations. They are not merely dealers in theories. But it is practice with which they are essentially concerned. How to be a philosopher in practice, how to improve the condition of mankind in general, has become the question of the day. They do not think so much of their own salvation as they think of the salvation of others. They teach men the great lessons of Self-help and Brother-help.

As it would be a very interesting study to learn how the deep problems of life were solved by the Sages of India, and as the solutions arrived at were all the outcome of the Dawning of Conscience, we have now come to the point where the discussion of the subject matter really begins, namely, “The Dawning of Conscience in India.”

India received its light of wisdom and civilisation at a time when all other parts of the world were
steeped in the darkness of ignorance. The *Rig Veda*,
the most ancient monument of Aryan Literature, has
been calculated by the western scholars to have been
compiled at least forty centuries before Christ (*Vide
Sayce—Introduction to the Science of Language*). The
peculiar position of India and the natural advantages
which it has always enjoyed made it the birth-place
and fit habitation of many a *Mumukshu* (मुमुक्षु) or
salvation-seeker, and of many saints and sages. How
they attempted to solve the difficult problems of life
will form the subject of discussion in the following
chapters.
PART II.

THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE (IN INDIA).

CHAPTER I

The happiest moment of a man’s life is that when his conscience awakes; in other words, when he rouses from his long sleep in the cradle of ignorance, when he is roused to a state of self-consciousness and when he realises to himself the true mission of his life. This is the turning point of his life, turning away from the wrong to the right path—the path to eternal heaven. At this point, he repents bitterly for having wasted a precious life and feels an ardent desire to atone for his past misdeeds by repentance and resignation. He turns to his All-merciful Father, throws himself unconditionally at his Holy feet and implores his unconditional pardon. Absolute Resignation is followed by Absolute Grace and he now becomes an altered being. He is, as it were, born anew. The tears of repentance that flow profusely day and night wash off the impurities of his heart and he shines like a bright sun emerging from a dark cloud. Now that he is roused from his stupor, he resolves to pass the remaining few days of his life in carrying out the dearest wishes of the Lord of Heaven who has reclaimed him.
after a long period of separation. He feels the truth of the idea contained in the following lines:

“चनादिमाधवाः सुन्तः यदा जीवः प्रवुच्छते।
पांडामन्त्र यदा वैति तदा भवति मोचमाक्।”

(Commentaries on the रघुनाथवर्णम् by
Vara-Vara-muni Swami)

The substance of this sloka has been given in the above paragraph.

It has been said ‘he is roused to a state of self-consciousness and he realises to himself the true mission of his life.’ Now, what is this mission? It is only the servitude of the Lord of the universe and of the Lord’s devotees. All living beings are in their very essence the servants of the Lord. There is no other distinguishing mark of a finite creature. So long as he lives on earth he lives only to carry out the wishes of God. When he attains salvation and is translated to the blessed abode of the Immortals who enjoy without cessation ‘the bliss immense of endless servitude Divine’ (Cf. Sruti—“सदा प्रप्यान्ति सुरयः दिवोव चच्चरातम्”
), there also does he share the blessings of his divine companions, the transcendental joy of serving the Lord of Heaven. Thus,

“दाशभूता: सतः सर्वें द्वारामन: परमात्मः।
नायाब्या लघुमं तीष्म वन्मे मृदि प विषते।”

(Idem)

The Dawning of Conscience is the result of Absolute Divine Grace:—When a man is continually and
repeatedly being ground down in the wheels of fortune, when he feels his misery to be complete, he cries piteously for Mercy. Thus, "Have pity on me, O All-merciful Father, Thou who givest shelter to those who find shelter nowhere, Thou who hast power to forgive the eternal sins of mankind. I freely confess I am the king of sinners. If Satan himself be multiplied hundred times over, he will not equal a grain of the mountainous heap of sins which lie ingrained in me. When I look at my own sins I am filled with a sense of deep despair. It seems to me that the hells that already exist will not suffice for me. A new hell more horrible than that which imagination can conceive must be created to receive a sinner like me. I am altogether powerless to describe even faintly what a hideous monster of a sinner I am, a shameless, fearless and never-repenting monarch of the deadliest of sinners." Thus,

"पापे छाते यदि भवन्ति भयातुतापकः
बल्ला: पुनः करणमस्व काचं घटेत ।
मोहेन मे न भवतोष्ठ भयादि लेभ
ख्रात्यु पुनः पुनरर्चं यतिराज कुवर्वे ॥"

(वतिराजविविष्टि by the great Vara-Vara-muni)
So, when I look to myself and my own sins I am in a gulf of despair. But, when I am reminded of an All-merciful, All-forgiving Father, a father who is ever ready to welcome a sinful child like me, I am filled with unbounded hopes. I realise fully that it is only for a sinner like me that my Divine Father
exists, my father, who has power to forgive all sins and who has spared no pains to reclaim a rebellious son like me. My heart now beats with joy to think of my father, who sums up in himself all the virtues, namely, Mercy, Affection, Love, Tenderness, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Grace and countless others. For instance,

"स्वाबिकानवधिकानिवय—ज्ञानबललिङ्गवैर्यविशिष्यत्वः—
सीढीश्वराविवर्तास्मात्कण्डीकास्तीम्यकाव्य-माधुर्यमाध्विङ्गाधारिद्धार्य-
चारुरस्यस्यश्रीरियराक्षसस्यकाम-सहस्रसंकल्प-सन्तस्तताय-
मंगीयकक्षागुणक्षीमहार्ष्यः"

(ताजत्तथ—by Ramanuja)

These lines enumerate some of the countless good graces and attributes of God.

When I am reminded of the infinite virtues of my Divine Father, I am at once purified and I feel that my father has received me unto His bosom and will never more part from me, whom he now regards as the dearest and most affectionate of all his children even as the new-born calf is to the cow. My joy is now unbounded, and my hopes are also unbounded. I feel more than anyone else that it is only a crowning act of Divine Mercy on me that I should be thus reclaimed by my father and that it is only His Absolute Grace which has now won me over to His side and has united me to Him for ever. Thus,

"एवं संचति चक्ररे भामयमि सुहुस्मुः|
जोवे सुङ्गाकुस्विषौ: तपाकापमुक्तायते"

(Commentaries on पद्याद्य रस्स्य of Ramanuja Swami)
The substance of this sloka is contained in the foregoing lines.

The Dawning of Conscience, therefore, is evidently the result of Absolute Grace ("श्रवण वाज्यिति" i.e. वाज्यिति विश्वासा निर्भेतुको श्रवण।)

CHAPTER II.

Now, if this Dawning of Conscience be the result of Absolute Grace, why does not this Grace descend upon all? Simply because all do not wish for it. Those who ask for it receive it. Those who do not require it do not receive it. Thus,

"अब्धेष्टपोषे द्वेषेण भस्मास्वास्वाधिकः स।
संसारात्मक्वाशिवात् रक्षिष्वाशामपेषते॥"

(सुपुष्पण्ड्डियां by Lokacharyya Swami)

i.e. No doubt the Lord is all-knowing or omniscient, no doubt he is all-merciful, yet, as the good of the whole universe, consisting of myriads of worlds, hinges on His hands. He can only give a good thing to him who asks for it. If He give it to one who never wants it, it is sure to be thrown away. Grace and Mercy taste sweet only to those who feel keenly their necessity and ask for them. Food tastes sweet only to a hungry man, but, it is poison to one who is not at all hungry. For, "प्रजोती मोजन विषम्।"

(रसस्वभाव by Lokacharyya Swami)
Again it is only a truism that "what is meat to one is poison to another." As such, a good physician bears this fact always in his mind and never prescribes the same food to all his patients. God is never unkind and partial. Those who cry for His Mercy receive it and understand what it is. They find it to be very sweet simply because they hunger after it.

Does then God show no mercy to those who never ask for His mercy? Certainly he does. He dwells within their souls and thus saves them from perishing. He would never allow any soul to perish.

Thus, "जलतिथामिश्वानसः सत्तार्चान करोति।"

(Idem).

Those who never ask for His Grace and Mercy are His rebellious sons. But He never suffers even his rebellious sons to perish. He always spreads His protecting hand even upon them. Thus, no soul is ever allowed to perish however rebellious it might be. And, God is always anxious and eager to reclaim a rebellious soul, just as a father is always anxious to reclaim his rebellious son.

"मठमोजयितां पिता रक्ष ।"

(Idem).

In southern India, when a son becomes rebellious, deserts his father's house and runs away, the father, in his tender solicitude for the welfare of his son, gives previous intimation to the heads of the Mathas (monasteries) where his boy is likely to have his
meal. A Matha is a charitable house in the Deccan where strangers and other hungry and forlorn creatures find food and drink gratis. The rebellious son runs away from home and goes wherever fancy leads him and when he feels hungry he turns to one of these Mathas where he is sure to be welcome and where he is sure to find a ready meal. Now, the father, out of his natural affection even for a rebellious son, gives previous intimation to the heads of these Mathas so that his rebellious son may be well taken care of and find a ready meal whenever he may happen to go there. If, then, such be the solicitude of an earthly father even for a rebellious son, it is easy to imagine how much more it is with God, the Universal Father. For in the capacity of Antaryami or Dweller in the heart, God always accompanies them wherever they go, takes every care of them and sees that their souls may not perish. Thus we see that God is not unkind even to the rebellious souls. But, it is only when they are redeemed and reclaimed, do they feel and understand what Grace and Mercy actually mean. So that "unkindness and partiality" can never be attributed to the Divine Father who never suffers even a rebellious soul to perish and who spares no pains to reclaim him. It is in ourselves that we are thus and thus,

"श्रेष्ठरे नेतृप्तवेष्यान्द्रियापरि: किदापि न युष्माति"

(Idem).

But, honest labour needs must have its reward and those who show special merits must necessarily have their special rewards from the Heavenly Father.
IN INDIA.

To return to the subject matter. When we are continually and repeatedly being crushed down by the miseries of this world we turn to our Heavenly Father and cry for Mercy and we have it at once. All other things in this world are to be had after due exertion. There is only one thing which can be had for the mere asking. It is Mercy. The mercy of God comes down upon us whenever we ask for it. It is always ready to appear and satisfy all our honest desires whenever we cry for it. How encouraging is this idea! So precious a thing, and given away for nothing—for the mere asking. Yes, Divine Mercy can always be had whenever we cry for it.

CHAPTER III.

Absolute Grace follows Absolute Resignation, but, Repentance precedes Resignation:—The deeper the consciousness of sin, the truer the spirit of religion; and the deeper the sense of humility before the feet of our Lord, the surer the chance of attracting His sympathy and affection.

"न ध्येयनिषोधिः न चामवेदी
न भक्तिमांस्क्षरणार्थविन्दे।
चक्षुभूषोधनयाःगति: यशरखं
तवत् पादमूलं यशरूपं प्रपचे॥"

("Al-mandar" by Yamunacharyya Swami).
i.e. "Lord, I do not practise any virtue; I have not a true knowledge of self.* I am altogether wanting in any feeling of reverence for Thy lotus-like holy Feet. I have literally nothing to please Thee and I am destitute of all means of saving myself. As Thou art the sole shelter of the shelterless, I surrender myself unconditionally before Thy Almighty's Holy Feet."

"न निष्ठितं कर्म तदपि लोके
सहस्रगो यज मया यज्ञायि ।
वोहं विपाकपथे सुकुम्र कन्धामि संप्रत्यागतितः वाचे \"

(Idem).

i.e. "There is no mean, ignoble, unworthy or wicked act in this world but I have committed it myself; nay, I have committed the most heinous of all offences by thousands. And, now that my sins have reached their climax, now that they are followed by painful and unbearable stings of conscience, now that I find no one else who can save me at this crisis, I only cry for Mercy before Thee, O Lord, Thou Who hast power to save all, and Thou Who art the giver of all goods—the giver of सुख्ति (Bhukti) or happiness that we enjoy here as well as सुक्ति (Mukti) or Salvation.

A Query:—You say you are the king of sinners—you say, if Satan himself were multiplied hundred

* A true knowledge of self includes a knowledge of God inasmuch as the relation between the two is as inseparable as the relation between the Soul and the Body.
times over, or, better, if the Progression—Satan + Satan² + Satan³ + Satan⁴.....were summed ad infinitum, the sum total will not bear comparison to a grain of the infinite unpardonable sins that lie ingrained in you," how can you then hope for Mercy and pardon? You freely confess, your sins are all unpardonable, how can you, then, hope for pardon? You say Satan himself multiplied ad infinitum can not equal you. Well, one Satan only has not been pardoned yet, how can the sum total of infinite Satans, then, be pardoned?

Answer—Satan has not been pardoned simply because he never repents and never asks for pardon. He has not yet been the object of Divine Mercy, only because he never prays for Mercy. He is the ideal of a rebellous soul who never repents for his folly and who never asks Heaven for Mercy. It is not so with me. I am a truly penitent king of All-Satans. Like Satan, I have been so long waging an eternal warfare with God, how long perhaps God himself does not remember, much less can I say with precision. I can only say that I have been a rebellous soul for a very very long period, from the very beginning of time, from the very beginning of the awakening of my consciousness and so far as my consciousness goes, I can also say that imagination can not conceive a greater rebel than I am. Still, I hope for pardon simply because I ask for it and simply because I know what Mercy means. God's mercy is meant only for a sinner like me. Paradoxical as it may sound, even God himself, though He is all-knowing, does not know the exact measure and limit of His Mercy. God
the All-knowing, does not know where His Mercy begins and where it ends and how deep it is. Divine Mercy is simply an unbounded ocean having no limit and no bottom. And God's Omniscience does not at all suffer in consideration of the fact that He does not know the limit and measure of His Mercy. A thing which does not at all exist can not be said to exist, and it is only meet that the Omniscience of God should know that there is a thing which does not exist at all, —the thing, namely, the limit and measure of His Mercy. For, if anyone were to say that he has really seen "a castle in the air," everyone would think there is something wrong in his brain. Thus,

"देव, तन्त्र करणाविच ने मनुष्य नापि खया ब्राह्मणे।
वर्षयेव समापि नैव भवतां सर्वेश्चता हीयते॥
वर्षाक्षेत्र नदेशतः मनुष्यं सर्वेश्चताय: बिदु।
श्रीमान्योजयमित्या खुलविदन् स्मालोऽभिमिथुषयते"॥

("Sayings and Prayers" of Koores Swami).

It is clear, therefore, that the gulf of difference between Satan and me is very wide and that although he has not been pardoned, a king of all-Satans like me is sure to be pardoned. Satan is Satan only by virtue of his rebellion and only because he never repents and never asks for God's Mercy and Grace. I am, however, all penitent. I have surrendered myself unconditionally at the Holy Feet of the Almighty. And surely the All-merciful King of the virtuous and the good, will show mercy upon me, the king of sinners; nay, receive me with honour inasmuch as I am a
fallen hero. I have been till now heroically committing all kinds of sins and combating successfully against the King of Heaven. He is the all-glorious King of the Virtuous and I am the infinitely more glorious King of the sinners.

He, more than anyone else, is keenly aware how powerful and troublesome an opponent I have proved myself to him, and now that so mighty a hero surrendered himself unconditionally at His Holy Feet, He is sure to receive his heroic, now-submissive and reclaimed son unto His bosom with pride, affection, love, joy and glory.

A second Query:—You say, You are the king of sinners and vice personified. As such, your words must all be necessarily tainted with hypocrisy, insincerity and dissimulation. Your words are all false. Your repentance is not at all permanent and sincere, but only skin-deep and momentary. It does not arise from the bottom of your heart. Your repentance and resignation are only insincerity and hypocrisy in disguise. How should you, then, hope for Mercy, pardon and grace?

Answer:—True, my words are all insincere and full of hypocrisy and I do not at all desire at heart what I wish for by words of mouth only. I am full of those evils which cause a man always to turn away from God. My prayers breathe only insincerity and dissimulation. Still, I pray that the All-tolerant Lord, out of his Absolute Grace, would make pure what in me is impure and would teach my insincere
heart to become truly sincere and my rebellious mind to become obedient and submissive.

I am fully aware that everything in me is impure and what I say is all insincere. But, as I am now praying before the throne of the All-pure and the All-sincere Lord in a spirit of deep humility and absolute resignation, I have every hope of becoming free from all my impurities and insincerities through His Absolute Grace. Just as a very powerful philosopher’s stone (fabulous though it is) can readily convert a base mineral into gold, so the All-pure Lord has the power of making an impure and insincere heart pure and sincere.

Again, just as a mountain of magnetism has the irresistible power of attracting towards it even a heavy mass of iron, so the infinite goodness of the Lord has the power of drawing towards Him an iron-hearted blockhead like me with all his weight of sins.

Besides, I have something which others have not and which makes me hope that I am the most deserving recipient of God’s Grace. When a man approaches the Lord he always takes with him some rich presents to please the Lord (for instance, कर्म, प्राण, मन्त्र, श्रवण, साधना i.e. Virtuous acts, Wisdom, Reverence, Indifference to worldly things, Piety, Devotion and the like, these being the objects which are worthy of being offered as presents to the Lord) in accordance with the principle, “रितं रजस्तेन कोपितस्तु राजाम् श्रवदेवतम्” i.e. “Never approach the king, the
spiritual preceptor or the Diety empty-handed.” But I have none of these, neither virtue, nor wisdom nor piety, nor reverence, nor anything else to please the Lord. Rather, I am full of their very opposites, namely, vice, impiety, irreverence and the like. Again, a man tries to save himself by his own merits. But I can boast of none. I have nothing to please the Lord and I have nothing to save me. My only possession is a pair of “Nothings” (मार्गित्वसंवि and घरणामिति) I have that which none can boast of. This precious pair of jewels, (the pair of Nothings,) this invaluable possession, I offer to the Lord when I approach His august presence, and, as none has offered such a rich present to the Lord ever before, it is only natural that of all others, I should be able to court the very best of all the Divine favours. Up to this, the Lord has not come across so great a sinner as I am. And surely the Lord has now a golden opportunity of bestowing his favours upon. I am the best and the most deserving candidate for His Absolute Grace. And surely the Lord would have cause to repent if he reject such a worthy candidate and send him away disappointed. In fact, the Lord has not up to this time come across anyone on whom he might exercise his great virtues namely, Absolute Grace, Infinite goodness, Infinite Mercy, Infinite affection, love and the like, which have been so long rusting as it were for want of exercise. I am such a man, and the fittest object of exercising his infinite virtues upon. Surely the Lord will not lose such a capital opportunity of bestowing
his blessings and favours upon one who is the best and
the most deserving recipient of them. So that I may
say without pride that I am a proud man to-day inasmuch as I have presented to the Lord two such
things, which, up to this time, no one has been able
to make a present of, namely, a pair of “Nothings,”
which, in the estimation of the Lord is the most
valuable of all gifts that a sinner can offer to Him.
For, it is said,

“Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure,
Richer by far is the hearts adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.”

And surely, I am the most poor of all his creatures,
for, I am poor in everything (“पक्षबनोदित”). Have
I not, then, every hope of receiving His Absolute
Grace and Mercy when I am the best object of His
Grace and Mercy? Ask the Lord Himself and He
would resolve all your doubts.

Thus the awakened man, at the dawn of his
Conscience repents bitterly for what he has done and
then resigns himself to the Absolute Mercy of the
all-forgiving, all-merciful, all-beneficent and all-
protecting Father, Who is only too glad to reclaim
him and Who is ever ready to receive him into His
Kingdom, where he is to enjoy eternal happiness by
singing the glory and praise of the Almighty Father.
CHAPTER IV.

True Resignation or Absolute Resignation, as it is called, immediately bears golden fruits. But it is necessary fully to understand what Absolute Resignation really means. The beautiful lines of the great sage, Yānunachāryya Swami, give us a vivid idea of the thing. Thus,

"निरामक्षापिन लावडुस्मः
सहें हातुं तत्पादपंकजं
वषु निरस्वोपिन श्रुतस्यनभयो
न जातु महतुशरणी जिन्नासति"

("Al-mandār" or Hymn of Hymns by Yānunachāryya Swāmi).

In the above sloka, the blessed being who has resigned himself absolutely to the mercy of the Lord and bowed down before His Almighty’s Holy Feet says:—“Mighty Lord, I implore Thy forgiveness and earnestly entreat Thee to receive a fallen creature like me unto Thy favour; my resignation is sincere, for, even if Thou goest so far as to spurn at me, I will not dare to forsake Thy Lotus-like Feet. If a mother be ever angry with her suckling baby and throw it aside in a fit of momentary disgust, what does it do? It only cries piteously and turns to its mother’s feet again. It never thinks of forsaking its mother’s feet. Just so with me, O Lord. Shouldst
Thou even spurn at me I would not dare to forsake Thy Holy Lotus-like Feet. I would rather cling to It all the more.

This gives us a true picture of Absolute Resignation. It produces the desired effect at once. For, the Lord immediately receives the fallen creature unto His bosom and showers upon him all His affectionate blessings, just as the mother, in the case cited above, lifts up her baby, kisses it again and again, and bathes it in her tears of affection and love.

It must be noted here that the Holy Feet of the Lord emblematically represents the Saviour Himself—the Saviour of mankind, who alone has the power to take upon Himself the burden of sins of all creatures and thus save them and reconcile them to the Lord. The Lord may reject a sinful creature out of a consideration of his enormous sins, but, His Holy Feet can never do the same. As soon as he falls at His Holy Feet, all his sins are forgiven and he is reconciled to the Lord. The Holy Feet is the Mediator between the Lord and the sinful creatures. The Holy Feet has the power to reconcile them to the Lord. And the rationale is not far to seek. It is a fact that when we fall at the feet of the person whom we have offended we are at once pardoned. It may be seen at any moment in the Law Courts, especially in Bengal. Old and experienced lawyers, in compoundable cases, generally cause the offender or the accused to fall at the feet of the complainant and ask his forgiveness, and, the parties are immediately reconciled
to each other. When we can please even a hard-hearted man by falling at his feet, no wonder we should be able to please our Almighty Father, who is very well described as the Ocean of kindness, by falling at His Holy Feet. The Holy Feet is thus the Saviour of sinners.

We are indebted to the Visistádvaita System of Philosophy for this grand discovery in Theology. This system of philosophy as propounded by the Great Ramanuja and his predecessors firmly assures us that the Holy Feet of God are no other than the two Saviours of mankind, namely, (1) the Great Alvár, Sathakopa Swami, and (2) Ramanuja Swami, the first being the incarnation of Visvaksena (विष्वकृष्ण) who is the controller of the whole universe, the second being the incarnation of Anantadeva or the Ideal Servant of God in Heaven. If we read the Lives of Sathakopa Swami and of Ramanuja Swami with the help of the sacred records that are preserved in Tamil and interpreted in the light of the superior wisdom of the modern saints of Southern India, we shall at once find that they justly deserve the title of the Saviour.

The following lines also give us an idea of Absolute Resignation.

विन्दुस्वरूपसिद्धे देव यहुँ रत्नोऽसम ।
"पापद्ववसंस्कृते भगवद्भुजबिनीते ।
जयो रामस्वमभाव कर्मिं बहुःश्लूः ते ॥ १ ॥
वर्ष रामसमाचार घापवस्वमृद्भवम् ।
पंचव सम द्वारस्वव पाचि मां जात्मानतमः ॥ २ ॥

5
THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE

तापप्रयासोऽथ दशमानं सदा विभोऽ.
पाणि मां पुष्यदीर्घाकाने गृहवं ज्ञापया तत॥ १॥
ज्ञानत्वकुञ्जराय्याप्रिु धनंसमस्मदेशिनम्।
पालयाय दण्डादेव तव जान्मकम्भगया॥ ४॥

"दृष्टियाँवि मया जीतुमयकं गुणवोत्तम।"

शरीरं मन्त्रदेव बाह्यविरवि परिपोषितम्॥ ५॥
मनो मे पुष्यदीर्घाकाने बिशयानीव धार्मिक।
वायी मम ज्ञोकेग सिद्धारामुण्ड दृष्टिता ॥ ६॥

पवं साधनदेवोषि किं कारवासि केवल।
रच मां ज्ञापया देव मन्वानो परितं सदा॥ ७॥

"कपराद सहस्रानन्त सच्चमधुतं तथ।"
प्रवेंद्रं वाड्यमंदिरं कहनांवेचे चम्क ने॥ ८॥
शान्तपरां प्रत्यानकस्यानातु पुष्यदीर्घां।
पद्मं मम देवेग ततू वैं चन्दुमन्निषि॥ ९॥
पद्माकूण्डल्यकल्पानां आयुष्यमानातु।
शान्तारांक पारणं चन्दुमन्निषि मां विभो॥ १०॥

यज्ञवन: प्रशूति मोहवं मतेन।
शान्तप्राप्तस्माचारितं मया ते॥
पत्तवंति सक्तं तरपम्मतोपिपि।
चन्दुं लम्हसं श्रेणं कव्यावरणं॥ ११॥
कमचशं मनसा वाचा या चेत्ता ममनिवभ:।
केहवाराधने सा ज्ञानासागातिरिपि॥ १२॥

"(ृति श्रीपश्चराणि गमि महीपनिवदि नमष्टन्ते धीमद्याचाधकले"

"जितने दोले" Quoted from "Mahopanishada—
Pancharattra—Jitante—Stottram)."
The purport of the above quotations may be thus given:—"Deign to listen to my humble prayers, O Lord, Thou who art the Giver-of-all-goods. 'The time is out of joint. Religion is at a discount in these days. Virtue is ostracised and virtuous acts are expunged from the list of Duties. Worship of the Lord, Faith and Reverence, Devotion, Piety and Servitude of the Lord's devotees are things altogether unknown, or, if known at all, altogether discouraged. Virtuous men are being hard pressed on all sides these days. Such is the state of things and such is the time when I am born. And I myself am the father of Sin. The word Satan occurs only in books, but, if anyone were so curious as to see what Satan actually is, let him only turn to me and he will at once see Satan in all his glory. I am literally the king of infinite Satans and I am really a hell of nuisance. Is it possible, then, that a creature like me should be able to adore Heaven?"

The answer is, of course, twofold; "No, impossible," "Yes, possible". This, again, sounds like a paradox, but, it is nevertheless literally true. When I turn to myself and my own imperfections, the answer would be in the negative. But, when I turn to the Lord and the Infinite goodness of the Lord, the answer would be in the affirmative. Though my imperfections do not allow me to turn to the Lord and adore Him, yet, as the Lord is all-merciful and all-forgiving He would, out of His Absolute Grace, receive me unto his favour by freeing me of all my
imperfections. Such is my own strong conviction. A sinner like me is the best object of Divine Grace.

"Lord, as I have surrendered myself unconditionally at Thy Holy Feet and to Thy Mercy, I hope Thou wouldst receive me unto Thy favour and teach me how to adore Thee."

'Most Gracious Lord, I am being constantly consumed in the flames of three fires, which reach the spirits inner deeps, and, which are the source of endless and unforseen agonies—mental, spiritual and physical. Thus I am the most miserable wretch in the universe. Save me, O Lord, by casting a kind glance upon me. Thy kind and affectionate glance sprinkles nectar, revives and re-animates drooping souls and confers happiness on a sorrow-stricken heart. Let Thy Absolute Grace shield me from all dangers.'

'Again, let thy kind look which is pregnant with mercy, nourish and develop a poor helpless creature who is a prey to the afflictions arising from birth, death, disease and old age.'

'The highest, holiest manhood Thou, O Lord, wouldst Thou very kindly listen to my prayer? I humbly submit that I am utterly incapable of subduing my abnor mal passions and my rebellious sense-organs, the diseases that flesh is heir to eat into the very marrow of my bones; my mind is ever running after the pleasures of this world and would never turn to Thee; and, my speech is defiled by untruth and harshness.'
'Thus I am destitute of all virtues and utterly unworthy of Thy holy servitude. I am like

"An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light
And with no heart but a cry."

'Have pity on me, then, O Thou All-merciful and let thy mercy save a creature who is being continually tossed about in the ocean of this life of miseries.'

'Forgive my sins, O Lord, Ocean of Mercy as Thou art,—my sins which are beyond all reckoning and unpardonable in their very nature.'

'O All-excellent God of gods, kindly forgive the foolish acts of a foolish creature. All-powerful and All-forgiving as Thou art, an all-foolish and all-ignorant creature like me is the best object of Thy mercy and forgiveness.'

"Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth;
And in Thy wisdom make me wise."

(Tennyson—In Memoriam.)

'My sins are defects of my blood; they have their origin in my ignorance, weakness, and my ill-nature which is constantly brooding over evil thoughts. All these sins deserve Thy pardon, seeing that I have now surrendered myself absolutely to Thy mercy.

'O Destroyer of all dangers, O Almighty Lord, kindly forgive all my sins, the sins which I have been committing day and night. Cp,
"Forgive what seemed my sin in me;
What seemed my worth since I began;
For, merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

(Tennyson—In Memoriam).

'My sins are threefold in their nature, mental, vocal and physical, and they have their roots in my error and illusion. I am accustomed to them from the very beginning. I commit them at all times and by thousands and in so doing I always ignore Thy Omnipresence. Forgive all my sins, O Lord, out of Thy Absolute Mercy.' Cp.

"I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure."

(Tennyson—Passing of Arthur).

CHAPTER V.

The Function of the Lord's devotees—their importance and position in the sphere of self-reformation.

The foregoing lines give us some idea of the attitude of a man who has learnt Absolute Resignation. Absolute Resignation and Absolute Grace are correlative terms. Absolute Grace reveals itself in the form of the Saviour. In other words, as the immediate result of Absolute Grace we meet with our Saviour, who shows us the path to eternal heaven, who takes upon himself all our sins and who reconciles us to God. When our conscience awakes and
when we come to feel that we have been, so long rebellious souls and when we cry to heaven for mercy, God immediately comes to our help in the form of a godly man whose duty consists in helping us in being reconciled to our Heavenly Father. Such a godly man is called a Saviour. The original Saviour lives in the heart of the Lord's devotees, and it is these latter that are the present and immediate Saviours of mankind.

"Strong son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove."

(Tennyson—In Memoriam).

These lines teach us that we that have not seen the face of the Saviour embrace Him by faith and faith alone, and that so far as his miraculous acts are concerned, we are only to believe what we can not prove. And as the Lord's devotees have implicit and firm faith in the Saviour, it is very easy to approach the latter through the former. Our faith is very often dry and very often we are found to be wanting in faith altogether. It would be better for us, therefore, to seek the help of the Lord's devotees, who would readily reconcile us to the Saviour. The Saviour is styled as our Acharyya (Cp. "पाचाये मां विज्ञानीयः"—again "पाचाये मां विज्ञानीयः" &c. Sruti) and six things are absolutely necessary for a man to enable him to meet with his Saviour. 1. Love of
2. Providential Virtue i.e., virtuous acts performed by a man under the guidance of Providence.
3. Absolute Grace of God.
4. The state of being absolutely free from jealousy.
5. Advancing continually towards God.
6. Communion or Intercourse with the Lord's devotees. Thus.

"सङ्गरसः स च विश्वासः यद्यकााहुकतं तथा ।
विश्वासः काराच संहेश: पारमिकत: च सालिकेष् ।
स्वाभावः यन्तरापि चापायमापितिश्च।"

(सत्तुवाप्से—Commentaries thereof by Vara-Vara Muni Swami.)

The six successive steps that lead us immediately to our Saviour are the following:—

1. प्रेमसः सोहादः or Love of God or Intimacy with God.
2. यद्यकााहुकतं—यादिः चिव्य, प्रावेगिको शुक्ति or Virtuous acts performed by a man unconsciously and merely under the guidance of Providence.
3. विश्वासः or Absolute Grace of the All-pervading God.
4. चंद्र: or Absolute Freedom from Jealousy or Envy.
5. पारमिकत: or Perpetual Advancement Towards God.
6. सालिकेष्: स्वाभावः or Frequent Communion with the Lord's devotees.

The one leads to the other.
These six things are the immediate cause of a man’s Attainment of the Saviour (शाॅत्राध्याय्यानातः). In other words, they lead us to our Acharyyya or Saviour.

From the above passage it is evident that communion with the Lord’s devotees (साहिकेय: सम्भावनं) is the immediately next step towards the attainment of the Saviour.

As the Saviour dwells in the heart of all true servants of the Lord, He is called the Holy Spirit by some people. It signifies very little, however, by what name we call Him. It is enough for us to remember that we can be saved only through the mediation of the Lord’s devotees, who would uproot our old habits and teach us how to acquire good and useful habits. Our old habits only strengthened our attachment for a sinful life, whereas the new habits show us the shortest approach to Heaven and teach us how to meet with our Heavenly Father at the nearest future. The Lord’s devotees therefore, are the direct mediators between the Saviour and the sinners, and also, the indirect mediators between God and the sinners. Their number is very limited. But they do exist everywhere and they are always at our service. Thus,

“सत्वं सह च वर्तम्ने सृष्टेः दीनवेत्वक्षा”

(Idem).

Men do not see them simply because they do not require their services. Men are anxious only for the
pleasures of this life and of this world, and, as such, they seek the company of those only who would help them best in attaining their earthly objects. The Lord’s devotees, on the other hand, would always teach us how to forget for ever the fleeting shows and fascinations of this world and always keep in view the glories of Heaven. They would teach us that the true mission of our life is the servitude of the Lord, that so long as we live on this earth we are to pass our days in doing only such acts as would please Heaven most, and when we quit this world for good we are to serve the Lord in Heaven. That is to say, eternal servitude of Heaven in this life as well as in the life to come is the very essence of our being.

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This great lesson is being constantly inculcated on our minds by the Lord’s devotees. They would draw us away and away from our sins, lead us nearer and nearer to God and teach us how to lead a godly life. They would convert sinners into saints. But we sinners are grown so much accustomed to our sins that we always like the company of the sinners and keep ourselves at a safe distance from the Lord’s devotees. The path that we follow is diametrically
opposed to that followed by the Lord's devotees. Our path leads us to eternal hell, theirs to eternal heaven. The former takes us farther and farther away from our Father, the latter brings us to Him at once and unites us with Him in such a way as to dread no separation. As the two paths are opposed to each other, it is only natural that we sinners never come across the saints and sages. But, whenever we turn to them and pray for their help, we find them at hand and at our service and ready to help us in every way.

Saints and sages send up their ceaseless prayers to Heaven that they may have the pleasure of enjoying the blessed company of the Lord's devotees even in the form of an insect in their holy abodes. The Saint Yāmanacharyya who flourished in Southern India some ten centuries ago thus sings in his "Hymn of Hymns" or श्रावणमद्यार "*

"तद्श्रावणमद्यारसंगीता, महाविष्णुपि कौटज्जय मे।
रत्नावस्थापु माहायुद्धि में जया चतुरुमंझलमम्॥"

"O Lord, I would always pray that I may be born even as one of the insects that dwell in the houses of the Lord's devotees, rather than as a Lord Paramount of this universe, or the Four-faced Brahma."

And why does the Saint seek the life of an insect in the house of the Lord's devotees? Simply because anyone, whether a beast, a man or a bird, connected in any way with the Lord's devotees, is sure to be saved by the Lord and ascend the highest heaven by virtue of that connection only.

* Al-mandár is the Tamil name of this excellent Hymn.
"प्रभुलव यथा यथा व वैष्णवसंस्कार यतः।
तत्त्वात् ते प्रयास्तित ताधिशोऽर्थं पदम्॥

(श्रीचन्द्रन्यूत्त्व by Lokacharyya Swami)

Even immovable objects like trees and others are saved by virtue of their relationship with the Lord's devotees, for, "whomsoever the Lord's devotee may chance to cast his sacred glance upon, or to lay his holy hands upon is sure to be saved by the Lord even though he may be no better than an immovable object like a tree, not to say of those whom he calls his friends." Thus,

"यं यं सुशाल वाचिन्यां यं यं प्रभृति चचुः।
ख्यातरााष्टिगु तुष्टे फिं युनवाम्बवानः॥

(İdem)

If we be so fortunate as to gain the favour of one of these Lord's devotees, we are sure to find in him a guardian angel to shield us from all dangers whatever. Even if we happen to be far away from him, we shall feel that we are being constantly protected by his blessings. "The Lord's devotees foster and nourish their favourites even as the fish, the tortoise, and the bird develop their respective eggs."

"हर्षन्धान संप्रभृति मद्भग कूम विद्यापरमः।
पृष्ठाला ज्ञानविद्यानि तथैवाचार्यमाः॥

(Commentaries on र्पाचत्र by Vedanti Swami).

A fish hatches its eggs with its eyes only; it would look on and on its eggs till they are hatched. In this instance, it is the visual organ that is the developing agency. A tortoise hatches her eggs with
her mind only. She would lay her eggs somewhere, very carefully of course, and then go far away from them. From that distance she would think of them,—think on and on till they would be hatched. Here, it is the mental organ that is the developing agency. In the case of the bird, it is the organ of touch that is the developing agency. She would sit on and on her eggs till they would be hatched. Similarly, the Lord’s devotee nourishes and develops his young favourites sometimes by looking kindly and affectionately on them with his sacred glance, sometimes by laying his holy hands upon their heads and thus blessing them, and, when far away from them, by praying for them in his mind, and thus invoking the blessings of God upon them. He protects his favourites in every way.

Thus we see that if we be so fortunate as to win the favour of anyone of the Lord’s devotees, we are sure to be saved from all dangers. For, he would always protect us like a guardian angel. Unfortunately, however, we never pray to heaven for such a guardian to protect us. We are so busy with the trivial objects of the world that we never turn to Heaven; we never repent for our sins; we never ask for his Grace; we never think of the destiny that awaits us, and we have virtually no connection whatever with the Lord and his devotees. We are wasting a precious life in doing nothing.

Principal Fairburn thus expresses the feelings of everyone who reflects seriously on life:--
"Man has noble instincts and impulses that impel him to seek the true, to admire the lovely, to worship the good, to feel after and find the Infinite Perfection in which the true and right and beautiful blend into a divine and personal unity. Man has deep moral convictions of rights that are his due, of duties that he owes, of an eternal law he is bound to discover and obey. Man has sad and remorseful experiences, the sense of unfulfilled duties, of wasted hours, of sorrows that have turned the anticipated joys of his life into utter miseries, of mean and unmanly sins against conscience and heart, against man and God, of losses unredeemed by gain, of the lonely anguish that comes in the hour of bereavement and throws across life a shadow that no sunshine can pierce. And out of these mingling instincts and impulses, convictions and experiences, rise man's manifold needs, those cravings after rest, those gropings after a strong hand to hold and trust, those cries for pardon, those unutterable groanings after light shed from a Divine face upon his gloom, in which lie at once the greatness and misery of man."

In the above lines, Principal Fairburn speaks of our "gropings after a strong hand to hold and trust." Such a helping hand is always offered to us and always ready to save us from all dangers whenever we cry for it and whenever we turn to Heaven for Mercy. The ears of the all-merciful Lord are always open to the softest cry for help and his all protecting hands are ever ready to relieve the distress of the wretched sinner who cries for pardon. Whenever we are in
distress and pray for Divine help, the Lord immediately deputes his devotees to save us from our dangers. He always lives in the heart of His devotees (for, ‘the upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell’) and he always urges them on to help those who cry for His Mercy.

CHAPTER VI.

The Duties which must be performed by a devoted Servant of the Lord.

It has been said that whenever we turn to Heaven, repent bitterly for our past life and cry for Mercy, praying fervently to the Lord kindly to save us from the temptations of this world, the All-merciful Father readily comes to us in the form of one of His devoted Servants, who gradually leads us on and on to the path of virtue and finally unites us with our Heavenly Father for ever. He would at once initiate us into the duties, the regular performance of which converts a sinner into a saint. An exhaustive list of these duties will be detailed in this chapter.

He who wants to become a devoted servant of the Lord must be very regular in the performance of those duties that are absolutely binding on him. These duties are nothing more than the purificatory acts that purify his body and soul by bringing all his sense-organs to the right path. He has abused his
sense-organs by allowing them to turn away from God. They now require to be turned to Him in order that they may be rightly used. Thus,

“भगवद्वहिमुखांखितेनिन्द्रयवर्ज्ञः देव्यरामिसुखी करणम्”

(बेदाध्यसारसंग्रह by Ramanuja).

The purification of the ten sense-organs and of the mind, or, the purification of our करणत्व (karanattraya) or of the three instruments of our actions, namely, the mind, the body and speech, is of paramount importance and the Primary Duty of his life. The purification of self means the purification of these three sides of the human nature.

This purification of the three phases of our nature is effected by the regular and steady practice of those virtues that are essential to a devoted servant of the Lord. Our nature has been rotten to the core by following a systematic course of actions altogether unworthy of and uncongenial to our nature. And to restore it to its native grandeur we need only practise those great virtues that purify our heart and make it the favourite abode of God. For, as Novalis and Carlyle have it, the upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell. So the performance of the following purificatory acts is indispensable to purify the heart and to make a man a truly devoted servant of the Lord, namely,

“तापः पुष्पः तथा नाम मन्नो यागथप्रथम ।
भमोह प्रस्थंस्कारः परमेकालिन्धितः॥”

(षष्ठादशरूप by Ramanuja)
That is to say,

1. Bitter repentance for our sins and cry for Mercy.

2. Seeking divine protection against the temptations of the Devil.

3. The noble ambition of earning a name worthy of a true servant of the Lord and of being counted as one of his holy and devoted servants.

4. The holy thoughts and ideas which we should always cherish in our mind, which banish all evil thoughts from our mind and thus save us from the sins of the day.

5. The sacred routine of life which will keep us far above the high water-mark of the world's contempt and ridicule and beyond the reach of the miseries of this world. In other words, a routine of life which is calculated to make us lead a supremely happy and blessed life here as well as in the next world.

Let us now analyse each of these five purifying agencies separately and see what they really mean.

I. The First Purification:

Bitter repentance for the past sinful life and then to become strong in the Armour of God:—Cp. “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.” (The Bible—Ephesians VI, 13). The Armour of God alluded to in the passage quoted above refers to the defensive arms to stand against the Devil, which are thus enumerated by Paul, the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Ephesians:—(1) The Girdle of Truth (2) the
Breast-plate of Righteousness (3) The Shield of Faith (4) the Helmet of Salvation (5) The Sword of the Spirit and (6) the Shoes of Peace.

The Saints and sages of Southern India think of God as holding in His hands the Pāṇchajanyā Sankha or the Holy Conch, and the Sudārsana Chakra or the thousand-spoked wheeled instrument to defend and shield His men from all harms and dangers. God himself needs no arms to defend His own person. But He is always armed cap-á-pie to defend His devotees from the attacks of the Devil. The sound of the sacred Shell, Pāṇchajanyā (पाञ्चजन्यं), rends the hearts of the demons whose wicked design is only to give trouble to the saints and other favourites of God, and the supernaturally sharp edged sacred wheel, the Holy Sudarṣaṇa Chakra (सूदार्षणचक्र) is ever busy in cutting to pieces the enemies of God’s men and attendants. The sacred function of these two arms of God is to protect His men from dangers of all kinds. The Lord’s devotees, therefore, bear the Badge of the Lord, these two armorial bearings—the Sacred Shell and the Wheel, simply to be reminded of the great truth that the Lord is ever anxious to shield His men from all injuries. “Be strong in the Armour of God” is the motto of all godly men and the ethical significance of representing the Lord as holding His arms ready to destroy all the enemies of His devotees is to make His devotees feel that they are always strong in the Armour of God. We should always bear in mind the esoteric meaning of representing the Lord as holding
the Holy Wheel and the Sacred Shell in His Hands. The Wheel reminds the Lord's devotees that they have no fear whatever of being ground down in the wheels of Fortune and in the wheels of Time and that they are not at all subject to the laws of Time and Fortune. They are the devoted Servants of the Lord at all times, in all places and under all circumstances, and they consider themselves to be extremely fortunate in being blessed with the servitude of the Lord. As such, the ordinary laws of Time and Fortune have no hold on them. Cp.

"सर्वेषु देशकालेनु सर्वविवाचं चाप्तु।
किंकरोदित्स्तम विषोक्षिप्यः महोमुखोदित्तमयिकिंकरः।"

(दृशि वीणवारात्रागमे महोपनिषदि रेवानमवे वीमद्याशरदवे
जितमेष्टीने चतुर्धार्याधि पञ्चदमः स्योः)

The sacred shell, on the other hand, reminds the Lord's devotees that they have nothing to fear from the false charges that are continually being brought against them by the followers of the Devil. The awful and solemn sound of the sacred shell silences the voice of all opposition and rends the heart of the enemies of the men of God. The voice of God coming through the Conch causes the cunning serpents to recoil and hide their faces whenever they dare to stifle the dictates of pure morality by the fire of their own words. Milton has tried to give us a graphic picture of the attempts of Comus, the wicked follower of the Devil, to cause the virtuous lady to listen to his fallacious arguments. But the lady was
strong in the armour of God and was a proof against the attacks of the wicked monster.

“If virtue weak were, Heaven itself
Would stoop to her.”

*(Milton’s Comus)*

are the concluding words of consolation uttered by the great poet of England. Milton’s Comus is the type of the followers of Satan who are ever trying to entice Virtue and win her over to their side by a flood of irresistible arguments. She is however so strongly protected by Heaven that she successfully exposes the fallacy of all those arguments and shows to them the infinitely superior strength of her own position.

The sacred shell of the Lord symbolically represents the solemn sound of the Voice of God that bears down all opposition and silences the sinners who are never ceasing in their attempts to bring false charges against the followers of the Lord.

The above paragraph gives the esoteric significance of the symbolism or the representation of the Lord as holding the holy wheel and the sacred shell in His hand. We now understand the meaning of the first purifying agency, namely, “ताप.” Self-reformation requires that the reformer should, in the first place bear the armorial bearings of the Lord, that is, the roots of both of his arms should be marked with the figures of the sacred shell Panchajanya and the holy wheel Sudarsana to remind him that he is a devoted servant of the Lord and that as such he is free from
the fear of being ground down in the wheels of Fortune and Time and also from the fear of being crushed down by the weight of false charges that are ever being brought against him by the enemies of the Lord's devotees.

II The Second Purification:

We now come to the Second Purifying Agency, namely, Pundra (पुर्ण), or Protection against the temptations of the Devil.

2. Particular parts of the body should be held as the seat of particular manifestations of the Divinity. The forehead, for instance, is the seat of God as manifested in the form of Kesava, or a Protector of His protege (लक्ष्मी श्रीकृष्णि श्रीमति). The forehead, therefore, should be regarded as the favourite abode of the Lord in His manifestation as (कृष्ण:) Kesava. Cp.

"कृष्णा: पुर्णा: लोके ध्वं छद्दि न कृष्णा:।
कृष्णासिद्दबलमेव: न शर्या: न पुनर्वशा: ॥"

i.e., "Which are those persons that are actually dead though living? They are those persons in whose heart the Lord Kesava does not dwell. And those that have resigned themselves absolutely to Him, those who move and live and have their being in Him (i.e. in the Lord Kesava) are neither dead nor destined to be born again. The Lord in His manifestation of Kesava, i.e. protector of His protege, or, the Lord who is ever thoughtful of protecting those who seek His protection, should be thought of as protecting the forehead from all wicked thoughts."
(Cp. Sin originated from the forehead of Satan). The Sanskrit quotations on this subject are all taken from *Narayana Sara Sangraha* (नारायणसर संग्रह) by a distinguished saint of Southern India.

The belly is the seat of the Lord in His manifestation as Narayana (Cp. "नारायणमयोदरे"—*Idem*) or support of the universe; the breast of Madhava or the Lord of Lakshmi, the universal mother ("वचखबे माधवं च""); the throat of Govinda or the Giver of all delight ("गोविन्दं कष्टकृरले"); the right side is the seat of Vishnu, the All-pervading God who is the Preserver of all ("विषुध दिचिये कुली") ; the right arm of Madhusudana or the destroyer of all dangers ("वाहीण मदुसुदनम्") ; the right shoulder of the Lord Trivikrama, the Mighty Lord who in three strides measures the three worlds—the abode of the blessed immortals, the region of the mortals and the region of the nether world ("त्रिविक्रम अंख्यरे तु") ; the left side, of the Lord Vamana, or the all-kind and all-affectionate Father who sees that His good sons may not in any way be disturbed by His wicked and rebellious sons ("वामनं वाम पाठ्यं""); the left arm is the seat of the Lord Sridhara, the Lord who combines in Himself all the good graces and blessings and who showers them with a lavish hand upon His devotees ("श्रीधरं वामवाही तु") ; the left shoulder of the Lord and Guide of the sense-organs and of the mind i.e. of the Lord Hrishikesa ("हरिशिकेयं तु कंजरे") ; the back is the seat of the Lord Padmanabha or the Original Fountainhead of the creative power ("पद्मनं तु प्रभागमं च") ; the neck of the Lord Dāmodara or the
Almighty and All-independent Lord, who however is always dependent upon His devotees and whose will is always subservient to the will of His servants, ("बिश्व माणोरं व्यसन्त्"). And, finally, the head is to be thought of as the seat of Vásudeva or God who dwells everywhere ("वासुदेवेति सूर्वकृति").

Here, no less than thirteen manifestations of the Divinity are contemplated of and the Holy Feet of the Saviour is thought of as being imprinted on the particular parts of the body alluded to above, like so many precious ornaments which lend a grace to the body, and, as protecting them from all harms and injuries contemplated of by the partisans of Satan.

The ethical and esoteric significance of the thing is that the Divine attributes, which are brought to our mind when we contemplate that particular parts of our body is the seat of particular manifestation of the Divinity, only serve to purify our heart, which after all, is the favourite and the true abode of the Lord. And, when we remember that God dwells in our heart, we are inspired with fresh courage, fresh energy, and fresh hopes which enable us to overcome the temptations of the Devil against which we are to wage a life-long struggle.

Moral courage does not consist in charging atilt against all that seems to us to be wrong in our neighbours. We have our own enemies to fight. For instance, pride, evil-speaking, malice, lust, anger, envy, covetousness, illusion and the like,—enemies who never slumber and who can only be subdued by
constant watchfulness and a never-flagging zeal. Victory must begin at home and we have so many powerful enemies to fight that we have hardly any leisure to think of the errors and defects in others and find fault with them. A great moral courage is necessary to combat successfully against those ever-recurring vices that are every moment dragging us to our ruin.

And, how can we acquire this moral courage? We can acquire it simply by turning to our heart and seeing there the Lord seated in all glory, the Lord who shields us constantly against all our dangers. When we feel that we are always being protected by Him from all evils whatsoever, we find ourselves safe and secure even as a child in the bosom of its mother. It is this sense of security and it is this consciousness of the presence of the Almighty in our heart that supply us with unusual moral courage and enable us to withstand all temptations whatever. He dwells in our heart and it is He alone Who by His Absolute Grace saves us from our sins. But, then, it is to be borne in mind that we must always be conscious of the presence of our All-protecting Father in our heart. So long as we are conscious of Him we are all safe. But the moment we forget him, we find ourselves in the midst of hell fire.

Cp.

मार्क्स्केय इद्याः

“श्याहि सागरपूर्णां सा भानि सा च बिलिया।
वसुब्रह्मे च स्वयं तापि वास्तेष न चिन्तयेत्।”
From this couplet it is evident that our greatest loss, greatest error, greatest disfigurement and the greatest opportunity that we afford Satan to possess us, is when we forget the Omnipresent Lord. This forgetfulness is the cause of all our miseries. And the only means of escaping the miseries of this world is to remember the Lord at all times everywhere and under all circumstances and to pray to Him fervently that He may help us in carrying out His best wishes.

In order that we may never forget the Lord, we must always think of the Divine attributes and the glories of the Lord. We think of particular parts of our body as being the particular Seat of a special manifestation of the Divinity, simply because we are reminded of the infinite kindness, infinite goodness, infinite affection, infinite care, infinite love, infinite tenderness and the infinite other good graces of the Lord who dwells in our heart. We feel how close He is to us, how accessible to all, and how very anxious He always is to reclaim us, and how ready He is to forgive all our sins, unpardonable though they be in their very nature, to receive us once more unto His favour and to shower all His blessings upon us.

We now understand fully the ethical significance of the second purifying agency. How it purifies our soul by ever reminding us of the presence of the Lord within us.

III. The Third Purification:—

3. Let us now turn to the third purifying agency, namely, the noble ambition of earning a name worthy
of a true servant of the Lord—a Dāsyanāma (दास्यनाम) or Tirunāmam (तिरु नामम) as it is called in Tamil.

A man had once the good fortune of going to the Deccan and visiting there the most important place, the seat of learning and the seat of saints. When there, one day an old venerable looking gentleman thus accosted him. “Tiru namam? (तिरु नामम) i.e. “May I ask you your blessed name?” The stranger at first failed to understand the meaning of the question, for the epithet “blessed” puzzled him. He had a name no doubt; but what was it a “blessed” name? This thought threw him into anxiety, and, for a while he returned no answer. But, when the old man repeated the same question again, his venerable appearance commanded such respect, the words he uttered were so solemn in their tone, so sweet and affectionate, and, above all, his manners were so graceful that the stranger could no longer keep silent. He mechanically uttered something, which, however, fortunately for him, proved to be the right answer. He had two names; one, by which he was popularly known, and the other, which was given to him by his own affectionate spiritual preceptor. The venerable appearance and the simple and familiar manners of the old man recalled to the mind of the stranger the image of his own affectionate preceptor and he involuntarily and unconsciously answered the question put to him by the old gentleman by uttering the name given to him by his own preceptor instead of giving out that by which he was ordinarily known
to all. And, he had returned the right answer. For, the epithet "blessed" prefixed to the word "name" signifies that the man who has a "blessed name" has become the object of Divine favour inasmuch as he has been favoured by his own spiritual preceptor with a term of endearment to signify that he is really very dear to his preceptor. And, when a man is so fortunate as to become the special object of affection and favour of his godly and venerable spiritual preceptor, he is sure to be blessed by God also. The spiritual preceptor, properly so called, stands in the position of the Saviour himself. Very naturally, therefore, he deserves to be served in a spirit of unflinching devotion. It is our first and last duty to show him every respect and attention and always regard him and remember him with reverence, awe, and veneration. When we serve him with all our heart, God is served and when we please him, we please God himself. If, therefore, a man serve his spiritual preceptor with unswerving devotion and undivided attention and succeed in pleasing him so much as to become the object of his special favour, the mission of his life is fulfilled and the end of his existence is achieved. His preceptor, then, calls him his own, gives him a name of endearment and showers upon him his choicest blessings. The name by which he is affectionately called by his preceptor is, therefore, very aptly said to be "a blessed name." For, he is blessed alike by God, by his preceptor, and by all good men.

The third purifying agency, then, is the invalu-
able possession of "the blessed name." It is called a "Dasyanáma" (दास्यनाम) inasmuch as it is the result of a devoted practice of the doctrines of Divine servitude and acquired after repeated trials. Such a name preserves the moral integrity of our nature and acts as a powerful protection against the danger of yielding ourselves to the temptations of flesh and blood, by reminding us constantly that servitude of God and of godly persons is the very essence of our being and the end of our existence, that a life of spotless purity is inconsistent with any attachment for the trivial objects of this world, and that man is man only by virtue of his victory over his animal nature and only by virtue of the sway of Conscience in all the actions of his life. The noblest ambition of our life should be directed towards the attainment of the honourable distinction of being called a 'Servant of the Lord.' How often has a good name saved a man from the current sins of the day by setting before him a high ideal of life, which unconsciously lures him away and away from all lusts and temptations of this world and urges him on and on towards the goal of his ambition, and how often has it served as a beacon house to warn him of the Scylla and Charybdis which have only too often engulfed unwary and unsuspecting ships steering across the ocean of this life.

The noble thought of being counted as one of the Servants of the Lord inspires into the mind the hope of our being born anew, the hope of our being dead to the associations which cause us to be ever alive to the ignoble objects of this life, the hope of raising
ourselves in the estimation of all good men and of being ranked among the favourites of Heaven and this acquiring a name so blessed in its nature as to purify our whole being. Nothing can be a more worthy object of our ambition than to have a holy name—a name of endearment which proclaims to the world that we are being dearly regarded by Heaven and the heavenly beings.

CHAPTER VII.

IV. The Fourth Purifying Agency.

We now come to the fourth Samskara or Purificatory Act, namely, Mantra (मन्त्र:). It is so called because it redeems and saves the man who cherishes in his mind the holy thought concealed in it. Thus

"मन्त्रारं मनुसम्यानारं पायति रति मन्त्र:"

(सुतुप्प्कः Mūmūkṣhūpādi by Vara-Vara-Muni Swami).

We should always bear in mind that the Holy Mantras are not meaningless words, but, they are the very essence of the holy thoughts and feelings cherished by the holiest of the Lord's devotees. The Pranava (प्रणव), for instance, is the very essence of the whole Veda. The Vedas only aim at the solution of the five greatest problems of life, or the Artha
Panchaka Vijnana (पंचप्रक्ष्णविज्ञान), as this solution is called. Thus,

"प्रायोग ब्रह्मचर्यं फुर्यं, प्रामुख्य प्रख्यातमः।
प्रायोगाधि फलं प्रातः, तताप्रातिविरोधी च।
वद्वा, स्वाभाविक पूराणम्।
सुनयब्ध महाज्ञानं वेदवेदांग पारगः।"

"Artha Panchaka"—one of the "Pancha-Rahasyas" by Lokacharyya Swami)

i.e. "The Srutis, the Smritis, the Itihasas, the Puranas, the Munis, the Saints and those that are masters of the Vedas and the Vedangas all say unanimously the same five things—their drift is the same, namely, the solution of the five greatest problems of life which are thus enumerated,

1. The Essence of God, the Goal.
2. The Essence of the finite Beings, who are running the race of life.
3. The Means by which the runners may reach the Goal (God).
4. The Result of Reaching the Goal (God).
5. The Obstacles in the way to the Goal (God).

It is the solution of these five problems which forms the sum and substance of the Vedas, the Smritis, the Itihasas and the Puranas. And the Munis and Mahatmas or the Saints and Sages and the Masters of Arts and Sciences all sing the same great truth. The aim, the drift and the theme of them all is the solution of the five greatest problems of life. So that, when we say that the Pranava
(प्रावन) is the very essence of the whole Veda we mean that the Pranava also contains in it the solution of the same problems and when we sing the Pranava we only sing the solution of the solemn problems of life. *Ipso facto*, then, the Mantra, Pranava, is a very holy thing containing only holy ideas and, as such, it should not be regarded as an inanity or an array of mere idle words.

We see now the ethical significance of the fourth purifying Agency which initiates us into the holiest of all Mantras, the Pranava. When we sing the Pranava we only sing the solemn truths underlying the word. For, the Pranava is the essence of the Eight-lettered Mantra, which, in its turn, is the essence of all the Vedas, the Vedas which are the embodiment of all the Truths. Thus,

"सर्वार्थं भेदगमीखा:, वेदार्थाशाचे खिनां:।
प्रावनर्तु प्राववे ह्यकारे प्रावव: खिनत: ""

( *Rahasyatrīyā* (रहस्यत्रय) by Loka-Desika-Swami)

The Fourth element in the Panchasamskara Ceremony, then, inaugurates the thoughts and feelings of the Lord’s devotees. When we are roused to a sense of duty by the awakening of our Conscience, when we feel that we have been so long wasting a precious life, when we repent bitterly for the past, when our sins are washed off by the tears of repentance and when we acquire a new life, the first thought that crosses our mind is, How to be re,
conciled to our Heavenly Father? Rebellious sons that we are, how are we to approach Him? We are reminded of the gravity of our offences and how very troublesome we have proved ourselves to be to Him. We feel that the very serious nature of our offence will not allow us to approach our Father, and, even if we do approach Him at all, we feel that He will not pardon us readily and that our prayer for Absolute Pardon and Absolute Grace is not likely to be heard. Even if our repentance be very bitter and sincere, He would, at least, wait for sometime in order to be perfectly convinced that our repentance is deep and permanent in its nature and not merely superficial and momentary. And, inasmuch as we have been rebellious for an indefinitely long period, our Father in his tender solicitude for the welfare of His sons may also very naturally postpone judgment and sentence for an equally indefinite and long period simply to see us reformed and reclaimed permanently. Should we then continue to be penitent and wait on and on patiently till He is moved at the sight of our miseries? We should; but, we cannot and we dare not. We feel that our nature is corrupted to the very core of our being and that as such we are in danger of reverting to our former sinful life every moment and that there is every likelihood of our sins recurring unless we are providentially made proof against all attacks of the Devil. So much afraid are we of the temptations of the Devil that we become impatient to find shelter in a place where we may be beyond the reach of our moral and spiritual
enemies. Such a place of shelter is undoubtedly the Holy Feet of the Lord, but we find it to be barred against us owing to our being rebellious souls. Meanwhile, we are being hotly pursued by our never relenting enemy, the Devil, who is fiercely and constantly crying out to us "Perdition catch your souls!" What then are we to do at this crisis? Our repeated cry for Mercy is not responded to simply because it does not reach Heaven at all. And, how can we make our cries reach our Father? We are unable to find any solution of this difficult problem. Still, we never cease to cry for Mercy; we cry again and again and all the more piteously. Luckily, however, a very pleasing and hopeful idea flashes in our mind at this juncture. We are suddenly reminded of our Divine Mother and we suddenly hit upon the idea of winning the favour of our Divine Father through the mediation of our ever-affectionate Divine Mother. The problem, "How can we make our cry for Mercy reach our Father?" which seemed insoluble so long now solves of itself. Our Divine Mother would convey our cries for Mercy to our Divine Father and compel Him to respond to them. Although a rebellious son has no chance of being readily received by his father, he has every chance of being received affectionately by his mother who is never unrelenting like his father. For, it is said

"कुपो जातिन बारिच्द्रि कुमाता नो भवित"

However wicked a son may be, he is always dear to his mother; and he has always free access to her
when he has no access whatever to his father. A son may be the very image of the Devil. Nevertheless, to the mother, he would always appear to be Innocence personified and she would never cease to be kind and affectionate to him. Rather, she would be infinitely more partial to such a son. Should a long-rebellious son ever choose to return to his mother, she would readily forgive him all his faults and she would be so importunate in her requests to her husband to receive the son once more into his favour, she would plead so eloquently and successfully in behalf of her child that the father would be moved at once, forget and forgive all his faults and be once more happy to reclaim a child that has been so long lost to him. It is clear, therefore, that although a rebellious son can never make himself heard by his father directly, he can win his favour easily through the mediation of his mother. The mother would always stand between her husband and her son and help to reconcile them to each other. When she is with her husband, she wins him over by her accomplishments, charms and graces and when she is with her child, she corrects it. This dual position of the mother makes her eminently fitted for the almost impossible task of reconciling a rebellious son to his father by standing as a Mediatrix between them.

This peculiar function of the mother as a mediatrix at once encourages us and strengthens us with the hope that we sinners have every chance of winning the favour of our Divine Father through the media-
tion of our Divine Mother. If we bend down before Her lotus-like feet and entreat her to plead on our behalf before our Divine Father, we are sure to be forgiven by Him and received back into His favour.

The Divine Mother, therefore, is always easy of access. We can always approach Her direct without the help of anyone else, and, she herself needs no intervention to have her own children introduced to her. Thus,

"अवाधित पुरुषार्थानं हृदय सुखतिया"

(अवधुनम्—Sri-vachana-Bhushana by Lokacharyya Swami).

The Divine Mother is very aptly styled as Sri (श्री:) by the followers of the great Ramanuja. The word, according to them, has a sixfold derivation. Thus

"श्रीशान्ति भविष्यान् द्रोणान् श्रीशान्ति च गुरी जैगत

श्रीमति चाक्षुर्लिनिः श्रीमति च परं पदं.

श्रीमतीं श्रीमानाः च श्रीमतीं श्रीमतीमंगलप"

(श्रीमतीं—.ishta-sloki by Bhattaraka Swami).

From the derivation of the term Sri (श्री:) given above, it would appear that the Divine Mother called Sri (श्री:) has the following functions, namely,

1. She corrects the weaknesses and imperfections of all creatures,

2. She causes their virtues to increase continually. She lends her own charms, graces and accomplishments to the whole world.

3. She affords shelter to all and at all times.
4. God Himself is Her shelter. God always preserves Her in His very heart for the tender solicitude she always betrays for Her weak children and for her helping Him in redeeming them.

5. She is both a supporter and supported—supporter of the universe and supported by the Lord of the universe.

6. She is at once the Appellant and the Appellate Court inasmuch as she hears the appeals of Her children as well as she appeals to God on behalf of Her children.

And, surely, these are virtues which recommend Her to all and specially to God who is proud of being called Her Husband (श्रध्य: पति:) and who always holds Her in His heart of hearts with so much tenderness, love and affection as to know no separation. Cf.:

“निल्खेत सा पिया पति विपिनालिनिखानपाविनि।”

(Sri Sukti of Bhāttaraka Swami.)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Divine Mother. Her Function as a Mediatrix between God and all others.

Let us now see a little more closely into the thing, I mean, into the function of the mediatrix. When a rebellious son repents for his sins and is
anxious to be reconciled to his parents he goes to his mother at first. He knows very well that if he go to his father directly, he would not receive him at all, he would not even so much as look at him, he would rather spurn at him at first. But the case is altogether different with the mother. She would accord a very different treatment altogether even to a rebellious son. Should such a son return to her and ask for her pardon and request her to help him in being reconciled to his father, she would at once receive him into her bosom and bathe him in her tears of affection which flow profusely, for, her joy is unbounded; the son has been reclaimed after an eternity, as it were; the days of separation from her son seemed to her as so many Ages. So that now that she has reclaimed him once more, she considers herself to be very happy—very very happy; the tears of joy gush out in torrents; She covers him with her kisses and heaps all her blessings on him. Also, she advises him not to see his father till she wins his pardon for him and obtains permission for him to see his father.

She now stands as the mediatrix. In the first place, she wins the heart of her husband by her charms and graces. Next, she sings the praises of her husband so sweetly as to have him entirely in her possession. She, then pleads eloquently on behalf of her child which may be put in the form of a dialogue. Thus

Mother—O dearest lord of my life, do you ever remember that you have a child?
Father—Yes, I do. But what of him? He is as good as lost to us for ever, and, the less we think of him, the better. For, to think of him is only to make ourselves unhappy.

Mother—True; but, there is another side of the thing which is still more unpleasant. The conduct of a child is a reflection on the reputation of the father. People would always say, “the son of so and so is such and such.” The father is always held responsible for the conduct of the child. Do you not see, therefore, that it is a stain on your spotless name to be called the father of a wicked and rebellious child?

Father—I do. But there is no help for it. We have done our best to reclaim him. But all our efforts have been of no avail. He would never even come to us. What can we then do for him?

Mother—But if he do come to you at all, would you like to receive him? Would you forget and forgive all his faults and treat him with kindness as you used to do before?

Father—Certainly I would. I should be only too glad to receive him and reclaim him. If he only come to me I shall do everything for him.
Mother: —And would you thank me if I can make him come to you?

Father: —Thank you? I shall be indebted to you for ever.

Mother: —Do you promise me you would receive him into your favour for good?

Father: —I do; I do promise; I do more than promise.

The mother is not, however, quite satisfied with this assurance and she wants to be thoroughly convinced that the father is really ready to receive his child with all his faults. She is aware that the faults of the child are too many to be reckoned and too serious to be pardoned; and that the father, though he is so anxious to see his son today, may turn him out again and only tomorrow for his faults. She, therefore, puts the steadiness of the father to the severest test simply to make herself sure that the promise of the father never more to part with his son is really solemn and sincere. As, when we want to fix a post deep into the mud, we only move it backwards and forwards, again and again, to make it go down and down, till it becomes deep-seated and firm, so, in order to make the father firm in his purpose and promise, the mother gives his nature a rude shock by enumerating in detail the vices of the child and she expatiates on the multiplicity, complexity, and the gravity of the defects of the child. The father, however, proves himself equal to the occasion and says that he does not at all believe in her statements, that the child is
altogether incapable of committing such offences, and that even if they be real, he would tolerate them all and live with his son alone, if not with anyone else.

The mother is now perfectly convinced that the father is really sincere in his promise and she therefore presents the child at once to his father, who receives it with thanks and is united with it for ever. The mother as a mediatrix thus reconciles the rebellious son to his father.

The above consideration reveals a very pleasing and important truth. It gives us an insight into the nature and essence of the attributes of the father as well as of the mother and the part taken by each in the production, growth and development of the child. The father is only the source of the seed. He supplies the seed. The mother is the fertile soil where the seed is sown, where it germinates, grows up and finally bears fruits. The mother, however, has to bear infinite pains in bringing forth, nourishing and developing the child. Her sufferings for ten long months during which the child passes through its embryonic stage, the sufferings of childbirth and the difficulties she has to face in bringing up the child can more easily be conceived than described. Her patience and endurance are put to the severest test when she has to pass through this ordeal and she generally gives evidence that she is an image of both these qualities combined with many others, namely, love, affection, tenderness, care, kindness and the like. The child engrosses all her atten-
tion and she is always in anxiety for the well being of the suckling baby.

The growth and development of a child depend entirely upon the care, affection, and attention of the mother. It is woman alone that can bring up and nourish a child. Man is utterly unfit for the task. Again, the qualities or virtues of a woman far excel those of a man. She is the living fountain, as it were, of all the sweet and tender graces and virtues which are essential to the growth, development and continuity of life. She is the preserver of our life and she is the embodiment of all those qualities that a man can never boast of. The mother, therefore, is infinitely superior to the father in her feminine virtues. She is always approachable direct, while the father is not. We (children) can approach the father only through the mother. We can never approach the father directly specially when we are guilty of any offence. The mother is always partial to her child and blind to the weakness and defects of her child. When the father is angry with his child she would always stand between them and reconcile them to each other. In the function of a mediatrix, therefore, she always shines supreme and in all her native grandeur.

Let us keep this fact always in our view and proceed to the consideration of the important question of our redemption and salvation. We sinners are all guilty children in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. We can therefore never approach Him straight. If we do approach Him at all, it would be of no conse-
quence. He would take no notice of us. But then, if we are anxious of being reconciled to our angry Father in Heaven, let us only seek the protection and help of our Divine Mother. She is always ready to receive all her children even if they be no better than the deadliest of sinners. She would always listen to our miseries with the deepest sympathy, give us the most salutary instructions, impart Her virtues on us, afford shelter to us when we are shelterless, win Her Lord over by Her infinite charms, plead strongly on our behalf and finally reconcile us to him for ever.

The Divine Mother, as a Saviour.

The Divine Mother is, therefore, our Saviour. She is the Mediatrix between God, her Lord, and her sinful children. Even when her rebellious children never think of her, she pleads for them unasked before the Lord and entreats him to reclaim them through His Absolute Grace. A mother is more in anxiety for her unwise children than the father. The Divine Mother, therefore, is the unhappiest of all when she thinks of her infinite children who all need to be redeemed and reclaimed. And how does she reclaim them? She wins the heart of the Lord by her infinite charms and when she feels that the Lord is entirely in her possession, she sings so sweetly the praises and glories of the Lord and rouses the Lord to such a keen consciousness of His countless Divine virtues,—Mercy, Grace, Love, Care and Affection, Goodness and the like—that the Lord becomes completely charmed and impatient to please Her by
promising to fulfil all Her wishes. She, then, shows Her anxious care and tender solicitude for Her rebellious children by praying to the Lord that He may be moved to redeem His children by an act of Absolute Grace only and bring them back to their normal condition, that is, to a condition in which they may enjoy a life of Divine Servitude for ever. Thus

“भगवद्गुरुंपूर्वमाया यथा निर्वचनानां न खात्, तथा ज्ञाता
कर्तर्वात्। तद्विप यथा यथामायाम खाताय ज्ञाता कर्तर्वात्।”

[This memorable and unparalleled passage is quoted from the Introduction to the “Tiruppavai” “निर्वचनानां” sung by Srimati Gomámbá (गोमाम्बा) or Andal (अंदल) (Tamil name)—the daughter of the great Alvár, Bhattanath (भात्तानाथ) and incarnation of Mahá Lakshmi (महालक्ष्मी)—or, the Incarnation of the Divine Mother simply for the sake of the redemption of the sinful creatures of the whole universe].

This admirable passage reveals the crowning glory of the Divine Mother who prays incessantly to Her Lord to redeem His sinful children by a crowning act of Divine Mercy and Grace only. She sings the glories of Her Lord and rouses Him to a keen consciousness of His Divine virtues—infinitely merciful, infinitely loving, infinitely affectionate, infinitely good and the like —and then prays to Him to prove His greatness by exercising these great virtues upon His sinful children and by redeeming them and blessing them with His Divine Servitude.
The Indebtedness of the Lord to the Mediatrix or the Divine Mother.

Of all her charms it is this constant prayer of the Divine Mother for the redemption of her sinful children that endears her most to the Lord and He shows His indebtedness to Her by enshrining Her in His very bosom and embracing Her eternally with divine fondness, affection and Love.

Naturally, the mother is the preserver of the child in every way. The Divine Mother is also very naturally the Saviour of Her children. So long as we do not seek Her help and protection we live unfortunate and ungrateful and suffer miseries untold. Thus sings a Saint of Southern India, alluding of course to the Divine Mother and the Divine Father:—

“When my Mother is angry with me, my Father intercedes and pleads on my behalf and pacifies her. Again, when my Father is displeased with me, my Mother shields me from his wrath. How blessed am I to have such a kind Father and such an affectionate Mother. May all creatures be as blessed as I am. May all blessings attend my Mother, my Father and all my brothers and sisters. (Amen.)

The Conception of the Divinity both as Father and Mother.

The Vedas proclaim that the Goddess of this universe is the all-glorious and all-excellent wife of the All-pervading God, Vishnu. Thus,

“शक्षेखाना नि जगति विष्णुव्य ज्ञाता नि।”

The rationale of this Holy text is fully given in the preceding pages. The diverse good graces of
the Divine Mother proclaim that very aptly. She deserves to be called the Goddess of this universe, who preserves and saves the whole universe. She is really and certainly the highest, holiest and the most glorious Goddess of all. The gist of the holy text cited above is that it is not the Divine Father but the Divine Mother who is really the Goddess of the whole universe.

Of Man and Woman, the latter is always said to be the better half. And, the virtues of man are only an image of the virtues and sweet graces of woman. This truth holds equally good in the case of the Divine Father and the Divine Mother. The virtues of the latter far outshine those of the former. This holy idea would be fully expanded in the concluding lines of this chapter. Meanwhile, we are to remember that the Dual conception of the Divinity, both as our Father as well as our Mother is productive of immense good and of important results. The two words “Father” and “Mother” are correlative terms, and there is an inseparable connection between them. To think of the father as apart from the Mother, or, vice versa, to think of the Mother as apart from the Father, is a monstrous incongruity in nature as well as in Logic. If we only think over the subject again and again, it would be evident that the relation between father and mother is so strong and close, and so sacred and natural at the same time that if we think only of one of the two we shall never understand it fully. A thing is thoroughly conceived of only when it is
considered in its entirety. To look upon one side of it only is to have only a partial view of the whole thing. We must turn it over and over again and examine it minutely in all its details to be able to comprehend it fully. The conception of God as father only is therefore naturally incomplete. If we call Him as our Father, naturally we are led to think that there must be some one whom we may call as our Mother. If there be a universal father who is the Lord and the Progenitor of all creatures, there must be a Universal Mother to take care of all His children. The Father is thoroughly incompetent to nurse and nourish His children. That onerous responsibility devolves upon the Mother alone and that peculiarly difficult task can be performed by her alone and by no one else. The bringing up of the child is the business exclusively of the Mother. When we think of the Divine Father and His countless children who are all sinful and rebellious in their very nature, we naturally conclude that God alone, without the help of the Divine Mother is utterly unfit for the work of saving so many sinful children. We can hardly imagine how difficult it is to take care of only one rebellious child. And the task of redeeming so many sinful souls must therefore be infinitely arduous in its very nature, and, if it be at all possible to save them all, it must be the Universal Mother, who alone is really competent and capable of doing it. We must bear in mind that we are always speaking here of the Father and his children and of the difficulty of saving so many sinful children at the same time. Why not introduce the
other element, Mother, and cut through the Gordian Knot at once? Father, mother and children are all inseparably related to one another and the mother always occupies the middle position between them. If we think of God and His sinful children alone and never think of the Divine Mother, there is always a wide gap left between them. The connecting link would be always found missing. This wide gap can never be filled and this missing link can never be supplied by anyone else except the Divine Mother.

Another awe-inspiring and at the same time very pleasing truth is that the father, in some points, can be corrected by the mother alone. The father himself is never altogether free from his faults and he needs constant correction in respect of them. And it is the mother alone who is capable of correcting him. As on earth, this truth holds good in Heaven also. Though it sounds like a paradox, and though it may seem to be a sacrilege to say so, the Heavenly Father also has His faults which we cannot deny. His fault is the undeniable fact that He is too much independent, He is all uncontrollable, He has no one to take Him to task and call Him to account for His actions, He is the eternal enemy of sins and is therefore impatient of punishing the sinful, He can not tolerate the intolerable vices, He is the father of infinite sinful children and so on. These are the defects of the Lord and they are facts which admit of no doubt or question. In these respects, the Lord needs correction Himself and it is the Divine Mother alone who can really correct
him of all His faults. And how does she do so? The Divine Mother first wins His heart by Her infinite charms, graces and virtues and then she sings so sweetly the infinite glory, praise and perfection of the Lord that He forgets himself altogether and comes so completely within her control that she corrects Him of all the faults enumerated above and compels him to redeem and reclaim her rebellious children by an act of Absolute Grace only.

The Divine Mother, therefore, is the natural saviour of her sinful children. To a truly penitent sinner of this earth, this idea is naturally very pleasing, encouraging, hopeful and very far-reaching in its effects. It is productive of important and very great results in the region of self-reformation. That we have an all-kind, all-forgiving and all-affectionate Divine Mother, who is ever blind to all our weaknesses however unpardonable they may be in their very nature, and who is ever ready to receive us unto Her bosom and who is ever anxious of uniting us with our Heavenly Father in such a way as to know no separation is an idea so pleasing, hopeful and encouraging to a penitent sinner that it hardly finds a parallel anywhere.

And, how does the Divine Mother reconcile us to our Divine Father? It has already been answered above and only a word is necessary to add that the Divine Mother is never satisfied till she is perfectly convinced that the Lord has really received His children back into His favour with all their faults and vices and that for ever.
Completely won over by the charms and graces of the Divine Mother when Her Lord promises to redeem her penitent children and when He actually receives them back into His favour, she puts His constancy and firmness to the severest test by enumerating in detail the countless sins of her children and she expatiates on their weaknesses and imperfections. The Lord, then, thus answers her:

‘क्षम हासा: एवं न कुर्वेन्ति, कुर्वेचेत्, कुर्वेन्तु नाम’

(Rahasyatraya)

i.e. “I do not at all believe in what you say. They have turned penitent, they have first sought shelter at your feet and finally they have approached me as my servants. Well, my servants are altogether incapable of doing such acts as you complain of. And even if I were to admit that what you say are all literally true, if my servants really do anything wrong, let them do so. It is only a question between me and my servants. If they commit a fault, I alone am affected by it and no one else. So, I always forget it, I always forgive them.”

The Divine Mother is now thoroughly convinced that Her Lord has really received her children back into His favour with all their vices and imperfections.

Let us now sing the greatness and the glories of our Divine Mother. The all-blessed and all-holy Sri Parasara Bhattaryya (श्रीपराशर भट्टार्य), one of the greatest saints of Southern India, who flourished some seven or eight centuries ago, thus sings the glories of the Divine Mother in his memorable work, the Sri Guna Ratna Kosa—“श्रीगुणरत्नकोष :”
i.e. O Mother, Your dear Lord is ever busy in doing good to those who are full of sins, even as a beneficent father. But should He ever feel disgusted at the sight of their constantly recurring sins which seem to be like a never stopping current, you would at once step in and stand between them and your angry Lord and pacify Him in thousand ways. Thus, “Ah! What is that, my Lord? The All-merciful Lord, and angry? Anger should hide his face in the presence of the Ocean of Mercy. My dearest Lord, let me only remind you that the world is, in its very essence, wicked, and, who can ever boast of being altogether free from faults in a wicked world like this? Even if your blessed servants, Your august Lordship, and, my humble self were to live in a wicked world like this for a moment only, we would surely betray many sins in ourselves. The defect lies in your world and not in these poor creatures.”

O dear Mother of the Universe, Your appeal to the Lord seem to Him to be so strong and well grounded, your arguments appear to Him to be so convincing and irresistible, the cause you fight for seem to Him to be really so noble and the manner in which you plead for it is so eloquent and persuasive as to cause him to forget all the faults of the sinful creatures and receive them for ever as objects of His