

Rāmānuja & Vaishnavism

A LECTURE

BY

Prof. M. RANGACHARYA, M.A., Rao Bahadur,
of the

Madras Presidency College :

DELIVERED

*on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary
of Rāmānuja's birth-day in connection with the
Śrīnivāsa-Mandīram and Charities in Bangalore.*



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Śrīnivāsa-Mandīram and Charities, Bangalore City.*

AN APPEAL.

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A. GOPALACHARLU, Manager,
Srinivasa Mandiram & Charities,
Bangalore City.

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FOREWORD

BY

Śrīmān A. GOPĀLĀCHĀRIU,

Founder and Manager

of the

Śrīnivāsa-Mandiram and Charities :

Bangalore City.

It is now more than a quarter of a century since the Śrīnivāsa-Mandiram and Charities were established in Bangalore, with the aid of the generous support given to the Founder by many Maharajas, Rajas and other philanthropic gentlemen of light and leading. The aim kept in view from the beginning has been to make the Śrīnivāsa-Mandiram a kind of small model temple of Viṣṇu, well suited to serve the social, moral and religious requirements of the modern age. The part which temples have played in the progressive history of the Hindus is indeed very large and interesting. Till very recently religion has been the lever of Indian uplift in thought as well as in life : and temples have accordingly served as noteworthy centres for the free and abundant outflow of spiritual light and social and moral guidance. But, owing to a variety of causes, many of them have now ceased to be centres of such beneficent influences, and have become mere by formal places of worship and pilgrimage. They do not now effectively serve the ends of spiritual elevation, moral guidance, intellectual enlightenment and social improvement. Therefore the Śrīnivāsa-Mandiram and the associated Charities have been planned so as to make the temple here serve all these ends

as far as possible. The Orphanage, the Library and the Reading Room, and the Ladies' Gatherings and Lectures, associated with this Institution go to show the comprehensiveness of the liberally conceived religious work that is being from day to day conducted therein. In the way of taking a further step in the direction of advancement along the lines above indicated, I have been fortunate enough to organise the delivery of a public lecture in English in connection with the annual festivities associated with the duly religious celebration of the birthday of Bhagavad Rāmānujāchārya in the Srinivāsa-Mandiram. This lecture on Rāmānuja and Vaishṇavism is the second of the series, and was delivered on the 24th of April last in the spacious Hall built by Sāhukār Janopakāri Doddappa. There was a very large and appreciative audience of more than 2000 persons on the occasion. Every part of the big Hall was closely packed with eager listeners; and on the platform almost all the leading Hindu gentlemen of Bangalore were present, including the Dewan Mr. **T. Ananda Row**. A fairly large number of Hindu ladies were accommodated in a big room attached to the Hall. It took about two hours to deliver the lecture; and during all that time it was listened to with the closest attention, and the audience appeared to be spell-bound. The reader will find that the lecture is well worthy of such attention: it is highly learned and yet simple, it is comprehensive and at the same time very highly suggestive. I look upon it as my special good fortune that on this occasion Mr. **H. V. Nanjundaiya** M. A. and M. L., the learned Councillor of the Mysore state, kindly undertook to preside. Both he and Professor **M. Rangacharya** have long been known as two of the most highly cultured sons of Mysore; and the highly liberal views and intelligently appreciative remarks of the,

President formed a very pleasing and appropriate sequel to the lecture. With my heart full to overflowing with gratitude, I thanked both the Lecturer and the President in the Hall on the occasion ; and ever since I have been daily feeling that I can never adequately repay the debt I owe to them. It is hoped that the publication of this lecture will draw wider attention to the humble work that is being done here in connection with the Śrīnivāsa-Mandiram and Charities, and will thereby enable me to do that work more fully and more effectively, and also show to others a direction in which useful work of great national importance may very well be done.

Bangalore,
8th Sept., 1909. }

A GOPALACHARLU.

RĀMĀNUJA AND VAISHNAVISM

A Lecture by

Prof. M. RANGACHARYA.

Mr. H. V. Nanjundaiya M.A., M.L., Second Councillor of the Mysore State, who presided at the lecture, introduced Professor Rangacharya to the audience in the following terms :—

Gentlemen,

The way in which this hall is crowded this night tells me that it is quite unnecessary for me to introduce Mr. Rangacharya to you. I am sure you are not at all mistaken in the belief and the expectant hope which have led you to come in such large numbers to this hall to-night. Mr. Rangacharya is going to address you on the life of the great Śrī-Vaishnava saint Rāmānujāchārya. It is our belief as Hindus that all great men, and especially great men who have worked in the religious world, partake in particular of the divine essence. That Rāmānujāchārya was such a great man, I have no doubt whatever. I can well assure you that Mr. Rangacharya will place the subject of his lecture before you in an interesting and edifying manner. With this short introduction, given as a matter of mere formality, I request Mr. Rangacharya to deliver his lecture.

After this brief introduction Mr. Rangacharya spoke as follows :—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I am afraid that rather high hopes have been excited in your mind by the remarks of the Chairman, under whose friendly auspices I have looked forward to prosper

this evening ; and I request you not to take his very kind words about me to be literally true. I shall, however, try to do my best in placing the subject of my lecture before you, and if my best falls short of your expectations and his prophecy, the fault certainly cannot be wholly mine. The partiality of old friendship often expects too much ; and if such partiality is sometimes disappointed, I think it has to blame itself. With these few words of reservation I crave your indulgence and kindly attention for a while, and proceed to place before you some of my ideas regarding the subject on which I have agreed to discourse here this evening. However, before I do so, I have to say that, if it had not been for my knowledge of the enlightened work of charity which Mr. Gopalacharlu has been conducting strenuously for so many years in this place, I would not have made bold to come before you in Bangalore to address you on a topic like the one I have been asked to choose for my lecture. When a man like him does disinterested work of great public utility, and tenaciously compels you to be of some help to him, and the help sought involves only the spending of the breath for a few brief minutes, it is not easy then to say—no—to such a request. And yielding to what appears to me to be a somewhat common human weakness, and wishing really to be if possible of some help to him in the work that he has been so long and so strenuously doing, I have come before you to deliver the lecture he wanted ; and if I cannot satisfy you in the way of fulfilling all the expectations roused in your mind, I am at least certain that the importance of the subject of the discourse will make ample amends for many of my shortcomings. And this subject is, as you know, Rāmānuja and Vaishnavism.

Vaishnavism is a very old form of religion known to the history of civilization in India. How old it is,

it is not now possible to determine ; but it is certain that its sources may be traced to the Vedas. Vishṇu in Vedic literature is seen to be a solar deity, and is conceived as an all-pervading god. It is in accordance with a very widely accepted Indian derivation of the word to interpret Vishṇu as a pervader ; and the conception of this same god as Trivikrama—as the god who was able to cover the whole universe in three strides—is also distinctly Vedic in origin. Moreover, as a god he is said to have his place in the supreme heaven, in *Vishṇoḥ paramam padam*, as it is called in the Vedas. Modern European scholars consider that this *parama-pada* of Vishṇu is, in all probability, the position of the sun in the zenith. This is obviously the highest position conceivable that may be occupied by any object during the day. Thus Vishṇu was of old a solar deity who occupied the highest heaven, and was at the same time capable of pervading with his light and life all the three worlds making up the visible universe, the earth-world, the mid-world and the sky-world. The all-pervading god and the god who occupies the highest heaven—such evidently is the conception underlying Vishṇu in Vedic literature. From this conception as its source has arisen Vaishṇavism, which, in its various forms, is now recognised to be the most predominant and the most popular religion among the Hindus. To ascertain and describe the position occupied by Rāmānuja in relation to the progress and development of this great religion is the main aim which I intend to keep in view in my lecture this evening.

The primary conception underlying the original deity is a matter of great importance in determining the course of development of the religion associated with that deity. This can be amply illustrated by means of instances that may be gathered from the history of religions.

There is, for instance, another solar deity in Vedic literature, who goes by the name of MITRA ; and this god Mitra, understood as the Sanskrit language requires, is the sun-god conceived as a friend. This Mitra is not merely a god of our Vedas, but is a god known to the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees as well. He seems therefore to have been a god held in honor by the Iranian as well as by the Indian Aryas even before they separated from each other. That separation must of course have taken place very very long ago. It may well be that this Mitra was a deity worshipped in Persia before Zoroaster taught his religion—the modern religion of the Parsees. A great French savant, Ernest Renan, has solemnly remarked that, if Christianity had not gone to Europe, in all probability Mitraism would have become the religion of Europeans. In saying this he evidently pays a very high compliment to this religion of MITRA, and draws our attention to the tendency of that religion to be helpful to man in the way of encouraging in him purity, love, piety and righteousness. He even seems to grant that the moral influence of that religion could indeed have been in no way inferior to that which Christianity has had among Europeans and Americans. Now, can it be said that the original conception of this god as a friend has had no power or part in determining the really superior moral merit of Mitraism ? Surely its friendly god must have done a great deal in determining the line of development of that religion.

So it must have been in connection with the religion of Vishnu also. Moreover, we find here that, in very early times, another idea more prominently brought to light in connection with another Vedic deity, Bhaga, came to be associated with the religion of Vishnu. That other idea is in fact the conception of god Bhaga as a bestower of auspicious blessings. This god Bhaga is perhaps

an older god than even Mitra. God Bhaga appears to have had an Indo-European history. He was known to the ancient religion of the Slavonians, to the ancient religion of the Parsees, and also to the ancient religion of the Aryas of this country. As the bestower of auspicious blessings, Bhaga seems to have been very highly honoured and held in great reverence as a typical god. This word *bhaga* in later Sanskrit literature came to assume many meanings. It may now mean the sun, but very frequently means good blessings and auspicious qualities and great powers. Thus the name of the sun-god, looked upon as a bestower of blessings and of auspicious powers, may easily be seen to have undergone a deterioration in meaning, so as to import not the god but the physical object symbolising the god, or those blessings and those powers whereof the god was originally conceived to be the bestower. When in this manner the earlier meaning of this word as the name of a god became almost forgotten among the people, the other later meaning naturally gained ground. It must be in consequence of an identification of the god himself with the power of goodness that he possessed, that the word *bhaga* ceased to be the name of the god and came to denote chiefly his power of goodness and grace. After this took place, we observe a change in the structure of the name of the god: that name is no longer Bhaga but Bhagavat. This changed word means the possessor of those beneficent qualities and auspicious powers which have come to be represented by the word *bhaga*. In that way there arose a religion in which the worship of the Bhagavat was the chief element; and in it the Bhagavat came to be looked upon as the Supreme God. The religion which has been based on this worship of the Bhagavat is called the Bhāgavata religion. It appears to be distinctly described in the *Mahabharata*. And even European and

American critics seem to be fairly in agreement in holding that the *Mahabārata*, in its present form, must have been well known in India not later than the 4th century before the Christian era. The *Mahābhārata* is rightly conceived to be a work that could not have been produced at any one time by any one man. Although in the epic itself its authorship is ascribed to Vyāsa, there is ample indication in it of frequent additions having been made to it in later times : and this sort of growth in size must have gone on with it for some centuries. If it is true that this growth reached its culmination about the 4th century before Christ, and if we have distinct references to the Bhāgavata religion in the *Mahābhārata*, then the worship of the Bhagavat must have been current for a fairly long time before that in India. That the Bhagavat may well be traced to the Vedic Bhaga is a point which does not seem to me to be in any manner improbable. There is some reason to believe that Śrī-Kṛishṇa was probably the originator of the Bhāgavata religion; and Megasthenes is considered to have been well aware of the prevalence of Kṛishṇa-worship in his days in North India. Now, if Viṣṇu and the Bhagavat are to be identified, as they seem to have been identified from very early times in this country, thereby Vaishṇavism is naturally bound to become more comprehensive and to acquire a more expanded and more lovable moral meaning. Accordingly Vaishṇavism came to mean in due time the worship of an all-pervading God, who is in the highest heaven, and is at the same time the bestower of all auspicious powers and benevolent blessings. Here, in this combined conception of God, we have the very heart, so to say, of Vaishṇavism. From this central idea arose all the later developments of this religion, as also all its later adaptations to the needs of progressive Hindu life.

In the same manner as Vaishṇavism, Śaivism also may be traced to the Vedas—to the deity Rudra so well known in Vedic literature. Viṣṇu is a solar deity in the Vedas, as I mentioned to you already. Rudra is therein conceived to be Agni—the fire-god. From the Vedic conception of Rudra as the god of fire arose Śaivism, even as from the conception of the sun-god arose the later worship of Viṣṇu as the one Supreme God. Why did these later developments and modifications in religion come into existence in this country, one may very well ask. Why was there the gradual overthrow of the old Vedic religion of sacrifices, and why the introduction of the later religions based on the *Upanishads*, the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas*, and *Āgamas*? That is indeed an interesting question to ask. The development of thought in Indian civilization made it necessary that the old Vedic religion of ritualism should be superseded by another religion, which had more of real life in it, and was more capable of satisfying the religious needs and aspirations of the human heart, irrespective of all considerations of race, caste and social status. Nevertheless, this new religion could not be altogether new. In fact the progress of religion is so effected in the history of all civilizations that no new religion can be absolutely or unmixedly new. When a new institution or a new idea has to be introduced among a people for their immediate benefit, it invariably happens that this new institution or new idea becomes implanted upon something that is really old. And the new idea or the new institution, growing in the midst of old surroundings, absorbs and assimilates a great deal of what is old from its environment : and in the result, the old and the new together sprout up in a new form so as to make the new product, viewed as a whole, more comprehensive, more beautiful and more helpful to the advancement of culture

and character and civilization among the people. That is the way of progress everywhere. Whether we trace the origin, for instance, of Buddhism or Christianity, or trace the course of civilization in China or Japan or France or England or India, we invariably find that new ideas and institutions grow in the midst of old environments and under the impulse of old forces which are still alive and actively in operation. We thus learn to see that every new growth is largely the result of the assimilation of much that is old with something that is new.

In the course of the development of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas, the influence of the priests at one time became so markedly preponderant that the gods themselves almost began to disappear from the vision of the sacrificers. And what loomed largely before their eyes was the performance of the sacrifice in accordance with the strict letter of the law. Another thing which also must have loomed largely was the rewarding of the sacrificial priests by the payment of valuable *dakṣiṇā* or honorarium to them. To what extent such a decline of the true religious spirit took place may be made out from the fact that some of the later *Mīmāṃsakas*, when dealing with the question of who the *Devatās* are, to whom sacrifices are offered, hastily dismissed the question itself by giving out that we need not at all trouble ourselves about who the *Devatās* are. They went quite so far as to say that the *Devatā* is simply that thing the name whereof is seen inflected in the dative case in sacrificial formulas like *Indrāya svāhā* for instance. "Who is Indra?" is the question asked, let us suppose. The reply is—"Don't ask who he is. He may be anything or nothing. He is simply that thing the name of which is here in this formula inflected in the dative case." When such an answer is given to such a question, we may at once make out

what relative importance must have been attached to the question of who or what the gods are, as compared with the numerous and complex details of the sacrificial ceremonial. When mere sacrificial details became too much all-absorbing, all considerations regarding who or what the deity is, what its powers are, why we should worship it, were thrown into the back-ground. In fact these and other more interesting details bearing upon the question of godhood rapidly went behind the curtain. As all thought bearing upon the vital question of godhood in religion disappeared in that manner, what happened to be left behind was nothing more than mere form overloaded with numerous complicated and unattractive details involving much useless expenditure of time, wealth and labour.

Naturally the common human heart would be prone to rebel against such a religion. There can indeed be no real life of any kind in an over-encrusted and fossilised shell of religion. There is nothing in it to touch the heart, and make it burn with the magic fire of spiritual fervour and moral emotion and sympathetic exaltation. It is too dry and too mechanical, too much of a sham to satisfy the deep religious longings of the aspiring and uplifted heart. In the early stages of its development Vedic religion was not like this either in its aim or in its practical use. From the very beginning it was indeed an earnest endeavour to rise from nature to Nature's God. In the hymns and prayers and chants addressed to the numerous nature-gods of the Vedas, a careful student may easily observe a growing tendency towards the realisation of what is sometimes called personal monotheism. The many gods of an earlier age become merged in the one God and are identified with Him: and this one God does not lose His divinity or His personality. Many consider that such

a really divine and personal God has to be an essential element in all truly satisfying religions. Anyhow there must be for the common man in his religion something to grasp and to worship as a Supreme Power and Personality, who would lovingly come to help him in times of difficulty, and to whom he might with complete confidence surrender himself in all conditions of trial and sorrow and suffering. Religion has even been defined as a kind of self-surrender, as the surrender of themselves which men make to a Higher Power, feeling unable to look after themselves in this world of troubles and turmoils—in this world, wherein even the most thoughtful man feels that he is blindfolded and tossed about without any aid from any really capable and truly knowing guide. Such a puzzling thing is indeed this world of ours! It is in fact so full of mystery and so full of pitfalls to the earnest and thoughtful man that he naturally feels that it would be good for him to seek and obtain the support of a Supreme Power, so that he may throw himself entirely on the mercy of that Power and derive unerring guidance from It, and take safe refuge with It, whenever necessary. It is very proper that this kind of feeling should come to the human mind most commonly and most readily, particularly in times of great danger and difficulty. When such a trying hour comes, how will the over-formal sacrifice, with all its elaborate details of ritual, help the aching heart of the man in trouble? How will the idea that the deity may be nothing other than what happens to be represented by the word, which is inflected in the dative case in a sacrificial formula, help him? You can all easily see that a conception of the deity, such as this, will give him no help, no support, no comfort. It is therefore very natural for the common man not to take into account the definition of the deity as given by these sacrifice-loving

latter-day *Mīmāṃsakas*. He wants his God to be real, to be supernatural and transcendental, and to be possessed at the same time of the requisite love and power to be ever near him and help him effectively.

In this way more than one of the prominent gods of the Veda began to be personally worshipped, otherwise than through the old over-formal sacrifices, gods such as Indra, Rudra, Brahmā and Vishṇu. We have enough evidence to indicate that many Vedic gods came to be so worshipped independently. In the course of this process some people chose one deity for their worship, while others chose other deities. Besides this, we have to take note of the fact that the Aryas who brought their Vedic religion and Aryan civilization into this land were new-comers from outside: and they were comparatively few in number. Before they came to this land, other people were dwelling therein, whose language and civilization were different, and whose ideas and institutions were different, from those of the Aryas. These original inhabitants were, as far as we can make out with the help of available evidence—which is, however, hostile—a rather wild people who, nevertheless had a real civilization of their own, and had also an ordered social organization of their own. They were often found to be very powerful and clever in their conduct of affairs. Above all they had also a religion of their own, although this religion of theirs is declared to have been comparatively of a much lower kind than that of the Aryas. The religion that was then current among them is understood to have been characterised by the worship of the phallus, of serpents and trees and other things of that kind; and by reason of the magic and witch-craft associated therewith, it appears to have been a primitive magical religion as well. These and other primitive elements of religion must have been found to exist among

the original inhabitants of India, when the Aryas came in with their comparatively higher and more potent civilization. At that time these comparatively less cultured and less civilised original inhabitants could not of course grasp the meaning and aim of the Vedic chants and of the sacrificial religion of the victorious Aryas. And the Aryan priests, who were responsible for the proper conduct of the Aryan sacrifices, considered, as it was very natural in those days, that only the Aryan people were entitled to perform those Aryan sacrifices. So the sacrificial religion of the Aryas could not easily be made to spread among the non-Aryan inhabitants of the land. In addition to this the common human tendency of these non-Aryans in favour of a personally responsive deity must have to a noticeable extent told against the fatal completion of the sacerdotal process of ceremonial fossilisation in religion.

This sort of exclusiveness in religion is nothing very strange or very peculiar in the history of human civilization. Those of you that know anything about the religion of the Jews may remember that, till a very late period in the history of Judaism, it was an exclusive religion. It was a religion to adopt which the Jews alone were, by birth, entitled, but the Gentiles were not. Later on, however, the Jews also began to take in converts to their religion: they did not, however, allow these converts to enter freely the Holy of Holies in their Temple at Jerusalem. These converts were allowed to go only as far as the gate; and for this reason they went by the name of the Proselytes of the Gate. And even this became permissible, as I told you, very late in the history of Judaism. In the earlier stages of its history, Judaism was a rigorously exclusive religion. So also, if you go to the early history of Rome and of Greece, you will find there the same religious

exclusiveness. The religion of the Latin tribes was distinctively exclusive. Nobody, who did not belong to any one of those Latin tribes, had any right to take part in the public worship which they conducted from time to time. Among the Hellenic people of Greece also, those, who did not by birth belong to the Hellenic fraternity, were not allowed to take part in their public worship. In fact, in connection with the development of every historically evolved religion, we find that at one time, in the early stages of its evolution, it must have been exclusive. And yet the exclusiveness of the sacrificial religion of the Vedas has been, in modern days, made the theme of much harsh criticism directed against the ancient Brahmanical priests of India. The chief complaint against these priests is that they managed to keep all higher religion and higher social privileges to themselves, and that the sense of human equality was smothered by them and kept away in the region of the improper and the impossible. This is an accusation based on ignorance in relation to the exact conditions of historic evolution in religion. We have to bear in mind that, in the progress of human civilization, most early religions are characterised by exclusiveness at first. We generally start with the exclusive religion of the tribe; and this sometimes develops into the religion of a group or federation of tribes, which again may, under favourable circumstances, grow into the religion of a nation. In all these stages religion has to be largely exclusive; and it is only at last that we arrive at the universal religion. If we bear this great fact in the history of religion in mind, we may see at once how the bottom of this accusation against the ancient Aryan priests of India can be knocked off with the greatest ease.

Much of what I have said regarding early religious exclusiveness may look like a digression; but you will see

that it is not without its bearing on the important question of the forces that gave rise to that universal religion, which has come to be known by the name of Vaishnavism. In the course of its natural development, religion in our country also became more and more universal; and with the growth of universalism in religion all distinctions of race, caste and creed had to disappear in the matter of men's religious eligibility for the attainment of the highest good of soul-salvation. I say advisedly that even differences of creed disappeared in this matter under the benign influence of the larger religious universalism in the country, because universal Hinduism has proved to be so comprehensively tolerant as to admit readily the title of all mankind for salvation, and to take away from life much of the unwholesome bitterness of feeling generally arising from differences in religious creed and opinion. This is a point in relation to Hinduism which can indeed be very fully demonstrated to be true.

Here, I may, in passing, point out that even so early as the time of Vasishṭha and Viśvāmitra the sympathetic and expansive tendencies of liberalism seem to have struggled to come up in the sphere of religion in India. Viśvāmitra was a liberal seer, even as Vasishṭha was a conservative sage, who wanted the Vedic religion to be confined solely to the Aryas. That Viśvāmitra desired even this religion to be made universal, seems to be borne out by the well known story of Trīṣaṅku. Whether you approve of this view regarding our ancient Aryan liberalism in religion or not, this much is clear, that in later times the sacrificial religion had, in spite of its having been more or less expanded and allowed to spread, largely to disappear, partly on account of its own over-luxurious and redundant growth, and partly on account of its notable unsuitability to satisfy the earnest cravings in the heart of

man after a real, hearty and living religion. And when it thus naturally faded away, we find that three deities known to the Vedas came to hold a prominent position in the popular religion of the Hindus—Rudra, Vishṇu and Brahmā.

With this natural decadence of the overburdened Vedic ritualism and its many and multiform sacrifices, we observe two religious forces making themselves more and more markedly effective and acting in consonance with each other in the evolution of further religious progress. The germs of philosophic speculation found in the Vedas grew rapidly and culminated in the production of our justly famous *Upanishads*: and the popular force in favour of the personal deity also asserted itself as against the weakened sacerdotalism of decadent Vedic ritualism. It is in fact as the result of the operation of these two forces that the idea of the Hindu trinity of gods came into existence, so as to serve well the demands of religious philosophy on the one hand, and the felt religious needs of the advancing popular mind on the other. When these gods of the trinity came to hold a prominent position in Hindu religion, even then the old spirit of the religion of the Vedas, that among the gods there is none higher and none lower, that each god as he is worshipped may well be looked upon as supreme—that spirit of *henotherism*, as Max Muller called it—persisted among the thoughtful people: and with its persistence it was impossible for them to declare that any one was higher or lower among these three gods. In the meanwhile philosophy had, as I have already hinted, begun to produce more notable results than in the earlier days of the religion of the Vedas. I don't mean to say that in the Vedas we do not see the real beginnings of Hindu philosophy. It would be very wrong if I said so. On the other hand, there is ample evidence to show that potent germs of early philosophic thought are found in

great abundance in the Vedas—particularly in the *Rig-Veda* and in the *Atharvāna-Veda*. That these germs should have grown well and produced large and highly valuable results is very natural indeed among a people so notably prone to be speculative and religious as the Hindus have been for centuries. The *Upanishads* are sometimes called the *Vedānta*, which means literally the end of the Vedas. If it is not thus literally interpreted to mean the last portion of the Vedas, it may be made to denote the aim or purpose of the Vedas, that for the attainment of which the Vedas seem to have steadily striven. Whatever the interpretation of the word *Vedānta* may be, we are able to trace in the treatises going by the name of the *Upanishads*, the sources of the later systems of Hindu philosophy known as the *Sāṅkhya*, the *Yoga* and the *Vedānta* systems. Even Buddhistic and Jaina philosophy are held by some to be traceable to them. Those treatises themselves do not give any definite expression to any particular system of philosophy. They are not the work of one mind like the systems of modern philosophers, such as Kant, Hegel, Mill, or Spencer. Although not systematised as in modern philosophic works, the thoughts in them are strikingly luminous, often very piercingly and gloriously luminous. These thoughts take us to the farthest limit of all philosophy and impel us to go even beyond, and are expressed in language which is most enthralling and highly sublime. I believe my philosophic friend in the chair will support me, if I say that, after all, there is much deadening influence in system-making. As soon as we put together our philosophic thoughts into a system, there is a natural tendency for that system to lose spontaneity and originality and to become lifeless and hidebound. They lose their power to expand, and the germ of originality in

them become crushed under the great pressure of the mechanical forces of systematisation. Luckily, therefore, for us, the authors of the *Upanishads* were not like modern philosophers: they did not endeavour to build up systems. They must have felt that their function as teachers was simply to give free expression to what they from time to time saw like seers. They left system-making to their later and weaker followers. That is why we have had in this country a profuse growth of pure and highly aspiring philosophy out of our *Upanishads*—of philosophy which has flourished in various forms and under various names, and has been systematised in various ways by various scholars and sages and saints.

Among the systems of philosophy that arose out of the luminous thoughts of the *Upanishads*, the very first was in all probability the *Sāṅkhya* system of Kapila, which is considered by Brahminical tradition also to be one of the oldest systems of orthodox Hindu philosophy. Then came the *Yoga* system; and later on still, by combining, as I believe, the *Sāṅkhya* and the *Yoga* together, came the *Vedānta* system. And when these systematised philosophies began to flourish, they too had of course their part to play in shaping the growth of religion and in modifying the general conception of God among the people. I told you that, in response to the inevitable cravings of the human heart, the sacrificial religion of the Vedas had to be set aside in favor of a religion wherein there was a God who was a real support to the worshipper, a God with whom the worshipper could take refuge, and from whom the worshipper could obtain love and help in times of trial and hardship. I also said that, among the Vedic gods, three came to occupy prominently the personal position which the human heart required that its gods should occupy: and these are *Brahmā*, *Vishṇu* and *Śiva*.

In the early days of the origin of this Hindu Trinity, the old henotheistic idea was evidently operating powerfully enough to prevent any such differentiation in rank among these gods, as later controversy brought into existence in later times so as to embitter the religious feelings of the Hindus very much. Such a differentiation in rank between Vishnu and Śiva, for instance, we don't see much of, even about the time when our famous poet Kālidāsa flourished. In dealing with these three gods, Kālidāsa looks upon them as though they were very nearly equal, and shows no kind of partiality to any one deity at the expense of another, although there is very good reason to believe that he was himself a worshipper of Śiva. When he happens to offer his prayers to Śiva, he offers them as to the Supreme Deity; and when again he has to offer prayers to Vishnu, he offers them similarly as if to the Supreme Deity; and the language of philosophic description and praise he applies to Vishnu in one place is almost identical with the language of adoration he applies to Śiva in another place. And he honours Brahmā almost equally with these two gods. But how long is it possible for this religion of the equal Trinity to go on unchanged? How can you have three Gods, and consider each of them to be Supreme? It is inevitable for a question like this to arise after the mind begins to philosophise a little. If you do not philosophise—the god whom you for the time being consider to be supreme—your heart naturally goes forth in adoration to that god; and in his worship, you forget every thing else. But if you philosophise, you are led to become more and more circumspect. In such circumspection there is both safety and danger: and philosophical circumspection made the later attitude of India one of inquisitive doubt regarding this equal position of the *Trimūrtis*. What I have called philosophical circumspection made it in fact

necessary that the assumed position of equality among the gods of the Hindu Trinity must be accounted for in some reasonable manner. Thus there was naturally an apportionment of functions to these gods; and all the three gods making up the *Trinurtis* were held to be different and partial manifestations of the one great God of advancing Hindu philosophy. Thus Brahmā became the creator, and Vishnu the sustainer, and Śiva the destroyer.

Why is it that one of these gods came to be looked upon as creator, another as sustainer, and the third as destroyer? We have to note here firstly the effect of the germinal force underlying the ancient conception of these gods. The word *Brahman* is often used to denote the Vedic prayer that is offered to Vedic deities. Such Vedic prayer has been personified as a deity, and declared to be powerful enough even to create. This conception of *Brahman* in the Veda resembles in many respects the Greek idea of the *Logos*. The relation between language and the meaning underlying language has played a great part in the development of Hindu philosophic thought, particularly in the matter of explaining the relation between the visible universe and the invisible reality that is behind it. Often enough we find Indian philosophers saying that the visible universe is something like the audible world of language; and that the invisible foundation of the universe is like the power of meaning possessed by language—the power of meaning which we cannot perceive with any of the senses. The relation between the word and its meaning has indeed been long held by our thinkers to be representative of the relation between the phenomenal universe and the reality which is behind it, forming its enduring basis and everlasting support. That is indeed one of the noticeable ways in

which we find higher Indian thought growing, developing and expanding. Moreover, in Vedic literature, in the *Upanishads* in particular, we have it stated that the Creator willed, and thereby created the world. If you will, how do you give expression to your will? You do so either by means of the language you speak, or by means of the deed you do. Hence the language, which gives expression to the will of the speaker, may well become identified with the will itself. And when the creating will is seen to be really responsible for the creation of the universe, we may very well maintain that it is the word, which gives expression to the will, that is responsible for such creation. Hence the expression बहु स्वाम्, being representative of the will of the Creator, naturally came to be recognised as the immediate cause of the production of creation. If we understand that the idea underlying *Brahman* is distinctly that of the 'word', and if we also bear in mind the relation between the word and its meaning, as well as the relation between the will and the 'word' which gives expression to it, we may very easily realise how natural it is for the idea of creation to become associated with the Vedic *Brahman*. Thus arose Brahman the creator in the Trinity; and philosophy also differentiated and assigned to him the function of creation.

Now how about Śiva? He is, as you have been informed, the Vedic god Rudra, and as such the god of fire—Agni. This Agni as Rudra is declared in Vedic literature to have a *śānta tanuh* and also a *ghorā tanuh*—a form which is lovely and peaceful and a form which is terrific and fierce. In the fierce form which he has, we have to look upon him as a destroyer; and a destroying god becomes naturally the punisher of faithlessness and evil-doing. Such a god can be considered neither strange nor unwanted among the essential elements of a complete religion. In this

universe of ours, we may see the processes of creation, sustentation and destruction always going on side by side. We surely cannot think of the world as being at any time free from decay ; if we could do that, the world would certainly cease to be what it is. I don't know if there is any poet who can command a sufficiently strong and clear imagination to pourtray the condition of the world as **altogether unassociated** with destruction and dissolution. If **destruction** disappear from the midst of the world, **there would be no room in it at all for renovation**. And will not most young men protest against such a situation ? The stage of the world would then be quite fully occupied by very superfluous veterans ; and when the world's stage becomes so overburdened with exhausted veterans, the young men can surely have no scope there for life and for growth. Naturally the condition of the world would then be very different—so different indeed as to be quite **incapable of being consistently conceived**. Destruction is thus **an essential element** in the universe as we know it. Whether it is possible to have a universe without destruction and decay therein, is a question which we need not at present discuss ; for we know only one universe, and there can be no good at all in troubling ourselves about the possibility or otherwise of another way of organising another universe. Let us take into consideration the one only universe which we know—that, wherein we have to live from day to day, even as we have to die when the hour for it comes : and this universe is characterised by decay and destruction. Destruction is as essential a part therein as creation and sustentation are. Hence—to whom this essential function of destruction is to be assigned—is a question which philosophy has every right to ask. And the fierce Rudra as Śiva came to be recognised as the most competent god to take upon himself the responsibility

for performing this function of destruction in the universe.

Then there is the work of sustentation to be performed and looked after in the universe. Some god must take care of that work. With the idea underlying the conception of god Viṣṇu, there came to be the association, as you know, of the idea of the Bhagavat. There had thus come into existence the conception of a god as an all-pervading source of light and life, of a god who, occupying the supremest position in the universe, is ever helpful to mankind as the bestower of beneficial powers and gifts and blessings on them. As Viṣṇu became such a god, it was quite natural that he was made responsible for looking after the work of sustentation in the universe. In the midst of the birth, decay and death, which are everywhere evident in the universe, we also see that things endure in a more or less marked condition of steady well-being for shorter or longer intervals of time. It is this endurance of things in the condition of comparative well-being that has been designated as sustentation. And the god, who has to look after such a function of sustentation, must obviously be a god of love. The creating god Brahmā has merely to deal out the barest justice to all beings in accordance with the law of *karma*. The importance of this function of Brahmā in the universe cannot at all be gainsaid ; but his function is not designed to make him a suitable object of either religious fear or religious love. In the manner in which the fierce Rudra became quite appropriately the destroying god and an object of religious fear to his worshippers, Viṣṇu became equally appropriately the protecting god and an object of religious love to his worshippers. Śiva, as the austere god of fear and unrelenting rigour, could easily become Mahādeva or the ' great god ' among the people. But Viṣṇu alone could be always *Śāntākāra*,

full of peace and benignity, so as to love his worshippers and be really loved by them in return.

In this way the functions of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity became distributed among them. At any rate I can offer no better explanation of why Brahmā became the creator, Rudra the destroyer, and Viṣṇu the protector. Old Vedic tradition and comparatively later philosophic thought thus gave rise to the religion of the *Trimūrtis*. This religion was, however, from the very beginning lacking in the element of finality even for the time being, as its three gods were looked upon as mere functional aspects of the one only God of the universe, the God of all gods. It is the tendency of the aspiration of religion to look up, always, and to endeavour to rise to higher and higher levels of worship and realisation. Therefore, after conceiving the one only God of the universe, in whom there has to be the natural and final synthesis of all the other gods, the heart of the worshipper cannot be at ease, if he is ever called upon to worship any being who is in any manner less than the sublime and almighty fulness of his one only God, the God of all gods. Śiva and Viṣṇu, who had already become popular gods, rose under this impulse to represent the one only God of true philosophy, in as much as popular imagination and its predilections and prejudices would not very naturally be in favour of the adoption of an entirely new deity to represent this one only God of philosophy. Indeed Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism appear in this light in the *Mahābhārata*, although we cannot fail to notice therein a very marked tendency in favour of looking upon Viṣṇu as the one only God of true philosophy. It is true that our great poet Kālidāsa was not a narrowly sectarian bigot in his worship of Śiva as the Supreme God; but we cannot therefore say that he was unaware of Vaiṣṇavism as an

independent religion in which Viṣṇu happened to be the Supreme God. By the time the gradual growth of the *Mahābhārata* came to its end, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism had already assumed their distinctive shapes, and had come to be accepted among the people as different forms of one and the same religion derived from the same scriptural and philosophic sources.

In the meanwhile, that is, in the interval between the grand climacteric of *Upanishadic* thought and the culmination of the age-long growth of the *Mahābhārata*, a new force of great significance came into existence in the religious and social atmosphere of Indian civilization; and that is none other than the momentous force of Buddhism. Buddhism was really a revolt against the overdone sacerdotalism of the Vedic sacrificial religion of the Brahmins. Probably it was also a revolt against the aristocratic isolation of the Brahminical priests and their monopoly to serve as the clergy, that is, as authorised teachers of religion and philosophy. When a revolt against any established order of institutions is started, it is found, in the history of all countries and civilizations, that the revolt as revolt invariably goes too far. Indeed the process is comparable to the oscillation of the pendulum in this respect : men first go to one extreme in one direction, and then they go to the other extreme in the opposite direction. Since Buddhism operated as a revolt against the excesses of Brahminical sacerdotalism and clerical monopoly, Gautama the Buddha tried to establish beyond doubt that he was as much entitled to be a teacher of religion as any Brahmin born, and taught that the mechanical religion of over-formal ceremonialism and life-taking sacrifices does nothing more than merely cause unjustifiable injury to innocent animal life. He felt sincerely that such a religion cannot purify a man's life, cannot satisfy the deep spiritual

longings of his heart, and cannot make his life's burden of sorrows and sufferings lighter or his hope of final freedom and salvation surer and more cheerful. In accordance with the tendency of the age, the Buddhistic revolt itself had to be based upon and guided by philosophic speculation; and the philosophy on which it was accordingly based is now recognized by most scholars to have been derived from the luminous and inspiring thoughts contained in the *Upanishads*, and probably also from some of the later systems of philosophy built up with their aid. We have both *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* elements in Buddhistic philosophy, and also a large number of ideas and doctrines directly traceable to the *Upanishads*. The most notable feature in Buddhistic philosophy is that it does not cause men to trouble themselves about the question of the final philosophic reality. It does not ask—"Is there a God, and if there is, what is His relation to the universe?" This aspect of philosophy, Buddhism purposely ignored. It started with the proposition that life in this world is ever full of sorrow and pain and misery, and that to get out of such a life of grief and pain and misery once for all, so as to go back to it no more, has to be the chief purpose of life—its very *summum bonum*.

How is this purpose to be accomplished? The problem is one of practical ethics, and its solution was found out to be in the annihilation of *trishṇā*—of the thirsting after the pleasing objects of the senses and the agreeable delights of life. It is this *trishṇā* or thirsting after the pleasing things of life which is declared to be really responsible for the bondage of life—I won't say, for the bondage of the soul, because the question of the soul appears to have been left undecided in Buddhism. If we get rid of this *trishṇā*, we get rid of bondage; and then we become free. And what becomes of us when we so become free? We attain

nirvāṇa as the Buddhists say. But Buddhist *nirvāṇa* is not in all respects the same as the Hindu salvation of *moksha*. On the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, man's continuously recurring mundane life of pain, sorrow and misery—of birth, growth and decay and death—is declared to disappear altogether. What there will be after all this misery disappears, Buddha does not want people to enquire into and examine. His ideal lay altogether in practical ethical life. “Look to the ethical life, don't waste your time in vain metaphysical wranglings regarding the nature of the *Brahman* or the destiny of the soul”—he is known to have declared more than once. Whether the soul is real, whether it is something separate and apart from or the same as God, he did not care to consider. These discussions are, after all, such as cannot lead to anything like really final and irrebuttable conclusions. Indeed we cannot satisfactorily solve these metaphysical problems and give to their solutions the character of finality. Philosophy would cease to be philosophy if there were to be real finality about all its conclusions : and Buddha obviously thought that this absence of finality made metaphysical discussions useless for the practical guidance of life. There may or may not be a *Brahman*, and this *Brahman* may or may not be related to the universe. We may or may not have a soul that remains and endures even after the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. These problems were to him practically insignificant. His concern evidently was to free human life from the net of over-wrought metaphysics as much as from the redundant overgrowth of ritualism, and to make it practically pure, blissful and serene. Such is a brief statement of the more important aims of Buddhism. You may see here how, in his revolt, Buddha went to the other extreme. It is true he has not denied God. He has not denied the soul either. But he has distinctly told all

those that seek guidance from him that there is no good in trying to solve problems about God and the soul, and that ceremonial worship and sacrifice as elements of religion and aids to conduct are very much worse than meaningless mockery.

That is how Buddha's work came to figure in the field of Indian religion, and he naturally interfered with the even progress of old Hindu thought. He had therefore to be met. After Buddha, his followers laboured with exemplary zeal to make his religion spread. Although they took much sincere and earnest trouble, their work, like that of all propagandistic workers, made them indulge rather feely in that kind of low activity, in which their chief aim turned out to be not so much to spread the good teachings of Buddha in regard to the necessity of making human life here on earth pure, unselfish, holy and helpful, as to see that other religions were subjected to harsh criticism and were made to lose their influence in the world. They therefore freely found fault with the ancient Vedic religion of the Hindus. Some of the old criticisms of the Buddhists are even now repeated by other modern critics of Hindu religion and Hindu scriptures. The attempt to meet these criticisms in earnest gave rise to a religious revival among the Hindus. In the case of this revival of Hinduism also, the process was indeed like the oscillation of the pendulum. When Buddhism went to one extreme, the Brahminical revival went to the other. When Hinduism started afresh to assert itself against Buddhistic opposition, it was the *Mīmāṃsaka* who at first came forward to vindicate the Hindu religion. He relied upon and worked for establishing the infallible authority of the Vedas. According to him the Vedas are self-produced and eternal, they are not the result of any inspired vision of any seer, they are not even revelation

which is limited in time; but they are eternal and self-existent, they have always been and will ever be. With the aid of such an eternal, self-existent and infallible Veda, it was his aim not so much to establish any form of theistic ethics and rational religious worship, as to resuscitate the nearly dead ritualism of the old Vedic religion with its many and multiform sacrifices. That was the position which the *Mīmāṃsaka* held. It was on this ground that he took his stand against the Buddhist. But we know that such a position, resting solely upon the eternality and infallible authority of the Vedas, cannot be made to tell effectively against the purely ethical practical position taken up by the great humanitarian teacher Buddha. When the argument of the *Mīmāṃsaka* against his Buddhistic critics could not thus have the desired effect in rehabilitating Hinduism, then there arose the necessity of meeting philosophy by philosophy and ethics by ethics. This could be done quite easily, because the human heart cannot go on for ever in pleased satisfaction with a religion that does not take God into consideration, and does not take the soul and its final destiny into consideration. The religion that entirely relies upon a more or less empirically determined discipline of ethical conduct in life, must be, from the very nature of the case, an unsatisfying religion. My learned and esteemed friend in the chair will, I am sure, corroborate me when I give expression to the view that the true foundation of all enduring ethics has to be found in metaphysics. That ethics which is not founded upon metaphysics is certain to be shaky ethics. That is what I understand all true philosophy to teach. That is also what the human heart evidently feels from its very bottom. It is all very well to say that our lives must be pure, and unselfish and sinless. But why should they be so? We are all prone to know the better and do the

worse. As St. Paul has put it, there is a double nature in every one of us. There is a certain something in us which always prompts us to do that which is right and good; and there is also a certain something else in us which prompts us to do what is not right and good. Between these two prompting forces in the heart of man—there is a struggle going on incessantly. If, in the course of this constant struggle, the force prompting us to do the right is not supported strongly by religion and by philosophy, then naturally the force which prompts us to do the wrong will overpower us and make our lives altogether faulty and unworthy. Even with the aid of the support derived from the helping hand of philosophy and religion, do not **so many of us give way before the force which always tempts us to do evil?** Therefore this purely ethical, and **agnostic and empirical religion** could not satisfy all the **religious cravings** of the human heart. It could not uphold religion and morality so sufficiently or so completely rationally as to make them stand on their own legs and enable us to declare with the unfailing authority of reality that the life of righteousness is alone for ever and ever the proper life for man.

Accordingly, it became necessary that the religion, which strove from a theistic standpoint to counteract the agnostic influence of Buddhism, should address itself to the work of making the authoritative commandment and justification of morality and unselfishness more satisfactory than Buddhism could ever prove them to be. The work of the *Mīmāṃsakas* in establishing the divine authority of the Vedas and their everlasting character could not, as we have seen, give rise to this result. And so something else had to be done to bring about such a result, and thereby establish the high value and worthiness of Hindu scriptures and Hindu tradition in vindicating

morality and in satisfying all the high spiritual requirements of religion. This work had necessarily to be done; and it was taken up by Śaṅkarāchārya in right earnest. That such was the need of the hour had been made out by the famous Gauḍapādāchārya even before the time of Śaṅkara. Indeed Gauḍapāda had already succeeded in formulating a scheme of thought whereby the humanitarian ethics of Buddhism might very well be evolved out of the *Upanishadic* metaphysics of Hinduism. Many of us are not conscious of the manner in which we are hour after hour moulded by our environments; and often enough we feel that we are absolutely free agents in all that we think and do. But if we carefully examine the processes of history with a view to find out why it is that in one and the same country the leading men of one age think in one manner, while those of another age think in a different manner, we are sure to find out that there are natural forces which tend to produce such variations in thought and aim. It is in consequence of these forces that they think and act as they do in history. If we bear this well in mind, we may quite easily discern how very unconsciously Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara must have adopted the line of reasoning they did, for the purpose of overcoming the unwholesome sceptic effects of the agnosticism of the Buddhists. One of the chief ends to be gained in this conflict was the establishment of the authority of the Vedas, which meant the same thing as the establishment of the authoritativeness of the old long-cherished religious thoughts and traditions of the country. Another such object was to derive that same purity and sinlessness and selflessness of life, as was advocated by Buddha, from the teachings of our old Vedic and Vedāntic religion. These are indeed among the practical historical results of the philosophical doctrines taught by Śaṅkarāchārya.

During his all too short a period of life, his thoughts as a philosopher and his work as a religious reformer produced very marked and momentous results. While accepting the *Mīmāṃsaka's* views regarding the eternity and infallibility of the sacred scriptures of the Hindus, Sāṅkara had to contend against his exaggerated faith in the sacerdotal ceremonialism of the Vedas. There is very good evidence to show that he fought this fight with very remarkable success. On the strength of the eternity and infallibility of the Vedas, he had further to establish that the agnostic ethics and humanitarianism of Buddhism, though very high in their then moral value, were really inferior to Vedantic ethics and Vedantic humanitarianism. How well he accomplished this, the later history of Buddhism in India abundantly demonstrates. In the course of his endeavour to re-establish Hinduism unshakably on its ancient foundations, he of course worked most nobly and heroically for purity as well as unity in human life and human society.

If he had lived longer he might have given us much more of the treasure of his thoughts, and might have enlightened many more dark corners in the great field of Indian philosophy and Hindu religious aspiration. And yet, what he did in the short span of his life is more than enough to immortalize him a thousand times. His great success in carrying out the object, which he obviously had in view, is evident from the fact that his teachings put an end to the effective opposition of Buddhism against Hinduism, and promoted in a notable manner the forward progress of Hinduism along the lines of a highly improved ethical universalism. His object was evidently to win back those pious and earnest and thoughtful people, who had strayed away from the old fold of Hindu religious tradition and Hindu philosophic thought.

Consequently Śaṅkarāchārya's religion had to be based on the philosophical foundation of the higher pantheistic monism; and it thus became pre-eminently the religion of *jñānin*. His teaching is, as you know, that the Supreme *Brahman* is identical with the soul, and that everything in the phenomenal universe is an illusory manifestation of that *Brahman* who is in fact the one only reality. Such being the position of Śaṅkarāchāryā, he had naturally to propound highly metaphysical problems and theories, and had to prove that the soul is in fact a part of this one great reality in the universe, and that becoming absorbed into it in the end is indeed the great salvation of *moksha*. When that aim of becoming absorbed into the *Brahman* is accomplished, souls get out of the bondage of *samsāra* at once and as a matter of course; and in this state of *moksha*, every soul comes to its own enjoyment of unlimited light and eternal bliss and peace. It is not difficult to make out how these teachings of his tend to give a firmer and more rational metaphysical foundation even for Buddhistic ethics. In this we have the greatest historical achievement to be placed to the credit of Śaṅkarāchārya. He saw, and made others also see distinctly, that the moral fruits of pure Buddhistic life were more fully capable of being derived from Vedantic Hinduism. When this became evident, how could Buddhistic critics decry any longer the old religion of the Hindus with justice? When before Śaṅkarāchārya the *Mīmāṃsaka* had worked effectively to establish the eternal and infallible character of the Vedas, and when Śaṅkarāchārya later on demonstrated the high ethical value and humanitarian purpose of the teachings contained in those same Vedas, the position of the religion of the Hindus, as founded upon their ancient scriptures, became altogether impregnable. It certainly can not be amiss to point out here that there is very good evidence

in the writings of Śaṅkarāchārya to indicate that he was himself an ardent Vaishṇava: he may well be made out to have been a great Bhāgavata. Although his achievements in relation to the great work of strengthening the philosophical fortifications of Vedāntic Hinduism have been comprehensively general and non-sectarian in character, it is abundantly clear that he must have felt that his higher pantheistic monism was in no way seriously incompatible with Vaishṇavism even in its form as the accepted religion of the ancient Bhāgavatas.

It has, however, to be observed that the large body of the Hindus in the country could not easily comprehend Śaṅkarāchārya's Vedāntic religion, since it was too philosophical for the common human mind. The common man could not indeed derive sufficient religious satisfaction from it. His need even then was to have a God who would love him, who would come to help him and render protection unto him whenever he got into difficulties—a God at whose feet he might throw himself unreservedly so that He in His divine wisdom might do with him whatever He chose. The sense of man's dependence upon God, his instinct of love to God, and his felt need for an always unfailing divine support could not be easily satisfied by the sublimely impersonal God of Śaṅkara's pantheistic monism. What wonder, if soon afterwards there arose among the people the desire to see where else they could obtain their religious satisfaction? The old religion of the Hindus was distinctly marked by the supreme dominance of a loving and saving divine personality in it. Even before Buddhism there was, as it appears, the religion of the Hindu Trinity. And after Buddhism lost its great influence in India, the popular position of Vedāntic Hinduism became very highly improved. This religion had by that time been proved to be in no way

inferior to Buddhism or any other religion, in the matter of establishing the obligatoriness of pure ethical conduct as based on sinlessness and selflessness in life. And yet the need was felt for a personal God, and for a more emotional and less intellectual religion than that of Śaṅkara. This more emotional and less intellectual religion had in fact been known well to the people of India before. Such a religion is clearly traceable in the pages of the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Purāṇas*. And after Buddhism and Śaṅkarāchārya, this old emotional religion was felt to be more and more wanted. Accordingly religious reformers arose and came forward to supply the felt need of the hour. Among those who so arose in India to give this needed emotional turn to the re-established and freshly progressive Hindu religion, Rāmānujāchārya certainly played a very important part, and produced very notable results as a fearless and faithful worker in the field of Hindu religious and social reform. There have been others who also endeavoured in their days to do this kind of work ; but among all such, Rāmānujāchārya may be made out to have been undeniably the most famous and fruitful worker. Rāmānujāchārya had of course his predecessors, who had prepared the way for him, as the history of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava religion distinctly shows. And in carrying out this requisite reform in Hindu religion, that is, in making it a religion of loving devotion to an all-powerful and all-merciful God, what Rāmānuja mainly did was that he combined the old religious views of the Bhāgavatas with the Vedāntic ideas of Śaṅkara's higher pantheism, so as to make his *advaita* or absolute non-dualism become *viśiṣṭādvaita* or qualified non-dualism. Rāmānuja's aim was evidently to emphasise the religious value of devotion and service and self-surrender to God, but not to make the realization of the oneness of God with the soul

of man and with the universe the basis for moral conduct, and the means for the attainment of the sublime salvation of *moksha*. The need for moral conduct, for purity, for sinlessness, and for selflessness in life has been believed in and proclaimed by all great religious teachers in India as in every other part of the world. But they have differed as to the question of how this sinless life is to be realised in practice. Is it to be made dependent upon spiritual and philosophical realisation, or is it to be made dependent upon the culture of the tender and benevolent emotions, has in fact been the practical problem at issue. There can be no doubt that both the processes are capable of yielding the fine fruit of pure and noble conduct. However to most men and women the culture of the emotions happens to be easier than the achievement of spiritual and philosophic realisation.

Rāmānujāchārya accordingly declared *bhakti* to be the most suitable means to achieve purity, sinlessness, and selflessness in life; and hence this same *bhakti* was according to him the truest and the most unfailing means for the attainment of the salvation of *moksha*. The emotion of *bhakti* is said to be a feeling akin to love; it is indeed deep devotion and love. Even in our common daily life, we may very well realize what a potent factor love is in encouraging morality, and in establishing purity and selflessness and sinlessness in life. Imagine a young man who is entirely absorbed in himself, who does not care to think of anybody or anything other than himself, — imagine further that, either as in India or in the fashion of Europeans, he marries a beautiful and worthy damsel, and becomes day after day more and more attached to her in love. Suppose this young man of the above description goes to the Bangalore fruit-market and sees rows of fine luscious fruits exposed for sale there. His

mouth of course waters, and he buys some choice fruits among them. Does he eat them himself? He would probably have done so in those old self-centred days of his uniquely single blessedness. He does not and cannot do so now; for his love to his wife is so true and so deep that, although at the very sight of the fruits his own mouth profusely watered, he carries them home to his wife and gives them to her in preference to himself. And if in course of time he becomes the father of a number of children, and then goes again to the same market and sees similar fruits, his mouth probably will not then water at all (laughter). He will have by that time become too much of an altruist, that is, too much of a true lover of others, and his mouth will surely have learnt not to water on seeing even the best of fruits. Nevertheless, he is certain to buy the fruits, in the belief that those fruits will be even more delicious and agreeable to his children than they were to him in those old days when his mouth freely and fearlessly watered in his own interest at the sight of the sweet fruits. He buys them and takes them home. To whom does he give them now? Evidently not to his wife, who is now to him no more than the worthy and respectable mother of his dear children. But he gives them to the children. This clearly shows how potent love is in expanding our sympathies and in killing our selfishness. And by killing selfishness, we in fact kill all that is calculated to encourage sinfulness and impurity in us. With the disappearance of selfishness, every temptation that tends to make our lives unrighteous and faulty disappears at once. In this way love may be made out to be a very potent factor in giving rise to purity and unselfishness in life. If this feeling of love is steadily and carefully cultivated in the human heart, if it is made to find its object not merely in the wife and

the children, but in that great Being, who is the very life and foundation of the universe, and from whom comes all that is good and true and beautiful in the universe, if that Being is made the object of our love, then there will arise, as they put it in Sanskrit, *anurāgādvirāgaḥ*—that is, through intense attachment to that divine Being, there will arise in us absolute non-attachment to ourselves.

This idea is sometimes illustrated in Hindu literature by taking the example of an uncontrollable illegitimate attachment which a man may have to a mistress, although he is morally bound to bestow on his own wedded wife all his love and attachment. As his illegitimate love grows in intensity, that is, as the object of his illegitimate love becomes more and more dear to him, his lawfully wedded wife may be seen to be discarded by him more and more. Thus his *virāga* or want of attachment to the wedded wife bears an inverse ratio to his *anurāga* or loving attachment to the illegitimate mistress. This example is not a very happy one morally : nevertheless as an illustration it is very telling. And what I want you to understand from it is, that, if we make God the object of all our attachment, then everything else ceases in time to have the power of attracting our love. With the growth of such a full God-love in us, our love of pleasure, of wealth, of beauty and of power disappears like mist before the rising sun. The only love that then endures is our love of God. And the full import of this God-love depends upon our conception of God. If it be realised that everything that is in the universe has come from Him, and in due time goes back to Him—if such is the conception which we have of God, then, when He becomes the object of our love, all His creatures also become the objects of our love as a matter of course. How will it be possible for us to live a life of selfishness, when God and all His creatures have thus be-

come the objects of our true and devoted love? Such a thing is indeed impossible. We cannot love God and His creatures sincerely, and love also at the same time our own sweet little selves. The love of man's sweet little self fades away in the larger presence of the love of God and His creatures. Here therefore is an efficient and worthy means placed at the disposal of man, by which he may overcome his tendencies in favour of selfishness and sinfulness—and that means is man's loving devotion to God, which is in Hinduism known by the name of *bhakti*. Here also *anurāga* or loving attachment to God and all His creatures gives rise to *virāga* or the feeling of non-attachment in relation to one's self. It is not merely that love expands our sympathies and kills our selfishness: love indeed does more—it stimulates in us self-sacrifice and impels us to wear ourselves away cheerfully in serving those whom we love. Our love of God—when it is indeed real and hearty—is fully capable of turning us into earnest and sincere servants of all His creatures. In fact it is in serving His creatures that our love of God finds its satisfaction and makes itself alive and visible. And it is actually maintained in the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism of Rāmaṇuja that to love and honour and serve the Bhāgavatas is even more meritorious than to worship the Bhagavat. Loving devotion to God has been and is undoubtedly a great moral force in human history.

Thus with the aid of *bhakti* we may annihilate selfishness, and thereby realize *moksha*. The obligatoriness of *bhakti* is therefore an unfailing authority in favour of pure ethical conduct and high nobility of purpose: it is indeed an unfailing means to help us always to attain real success in living the righteous life. Moreover it is easier for us to command *bhakti* than to obtain that transcendental spiritual wisdom and the realisation

of the unity of reality which Śāṅkarāchārya's philosophy demands of all its followers. The tendency to love is altogether natural and is implanted in the heart of all persons. There is in fact no person of any kind who has not a natural aptitude to love and to be moved by love. The only point to be attended to in respect of this natural emotion of love is to make it expand so widely and so comprehensively that it may have the great God Himself and all His creatures for its object. And the tendency of love to have itself lavished upon the beloved is very frequently seen to be against the conception of absolute oneness between the lover and his beloved. The function of philosophy consists largely in realising the unity of reality, while that of *bhakti* or the emotion of God-love and divine devotion is in the realisation of union through service and self-sacrifice. When it is found that the path of *bhakti* leads the devotees of God more easily and more naturally to the attainment of *moksha* through the realised relation of God-union, than the path of wisdom or *jñāna* does through the realisation of oneness with God, then as a matter of course the easier path of *bhakti* will be followed by many so as to make it become the really popular road of religious aspiration and attainment. Rāmānujāchārya, whose aim obviously was to make as many as possible come under the saving influence of God-love as comprehended in Vaiṣṇavism, made *bhakti* the basis of all religious life; and to him *jñāna* itself came to mean the same thing as *bhakti*. In fact it is in this light that he has interpreted the *Vedānta-Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa. Accordingly, making *bhakti* as before the pivot of popular religion was one of the most important points in the life-work of Rāmānujāchārya. It is fully worthwhile noting here that the Sanskrit words *bhaga*, *bhagavat*, and *bhakti* are all of the same origin etymologically; and it cannot therefore be an alto-

gether unfounded assumption to hold that the word *bhakti* must have, almost from the very commencement of its religious history in the Sanskrit language, meant the means of worshipping Bhagavat in the spirit of true love and devotion as the one Supreme Lord, the God of all gods. There is other evidence also to prove that the doctrine of *bhakti* is undoubtedly an ancient element in the religion of the Bhāgavatas. Anyhow there can be no doubt that the all-pervading and all-enlivening Viṣṇu, who, as Bhagavat, is the loving bestower of all auspicious boons and blessings, and is, as Nārāyaṇa, the abode of all life and the internal controller—*antaryāmin*—of all beings, is most appropriately approached through *bhakti*. The most glorious delight of love is ever in experiencing the response of love to love. Therefore to a loving God, what can be more delightful than the confident and trustful love with which His devotees respond to His love? And is not Viṣṇu, the bestower of light and life and of all auspicious boons and blessings, a loving God? When we think of our own unworthiness to be the objects of His love, and contrast it with His infinite benevolence and the immense value of all His divine gifts, how can we conceive Him to be other than a really loving God? On the certainty of His all-merciful and omnipotent love is based another doctrine of the Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas, which is closely allied to the doctrine of *bhakti* and may even be said to be a natural development of it. I refer to the doctrine of *prapatti* or absolute self-surrender to God, which is also spoken of sometimes as *saranāgati*. This doctrine of self-surrender is based mainly on the last teaching given by Śrī-Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā*, and it is hence held to be as authoritative as the *Gītā* itself. I told you a little while ago that there are some modern philosophers also who maintain that man's sense of dependence on a higher power has to be an

essential element in all religions. Whether it really has to be so or not, we need not discuss now. But it is evident that the doctrine of *prapatti* is based on such a sense of dependence on God—a dependence which is complete and unquestioningly trustful. Rāmānuja's views regarding this doctrine come out most beautifully from his *Śaranāgati-gadya*, which is a highly pathetic prayer in Sanskrit prose embodying his great faith in God as his sole refuge and only saviour.

There is another point in the work of Rāmānuja in connection with Vaishṇavism, which is brought prominently to view by the name Śrī-Vaishṇavism, which has been given to the religion he taught and upheld. It is sometimes called Vaishṇavism of the *Śrī-sampradāya*. Rāmānuja's religion has been called Śrī-Vaishṇavism, because Śrī, that is, the goddess Lakshmi, is made to have an important function to perform in it. When man, by means of his *bhakti*, endeavours to attain *moksha*, it is found that he often feels helpless and hopelessly forlorn on account of his knowledge of his own culpable unworthiness to be blessed with the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, as also on account of his very natural conception of God as a just and impartial apportioner of the fruits of *karma* to all His creatures. When we deal with a great question of religion and morality like the fitness of God's creatures to be saved and lifted out of the thralldom of *samsāra*, and base its solution on our metaphysical conceptions of God and of the will of God, we cannot help thinking of Him as a hard task-master, who is systematically bent upon seeing that all His commandments are duly obeyed by all His creatures, and that His will is always honoured by them as law. With such an absolutely just God, who is very rightly and very naturally apt to become deeply disappointed with us whenever we violate His commandments,

our chances of attaining salvation are indeed infinitely small. When we calmly measure our own capacity to conduct our lives in complete consonance with the will of God, the result is certain to fill us all with great despondency. Since the moral law is based upon the will of God, we are all bound to live our lives in accordance with the moral law. But when the weakness that is in us unnerves us and we become a prey to temptations, how can we then manage to live the life that is morally faultless? And if we break down under the heavy pressure of trying temptations, are we thereafter to have no hope of any kind regarding the attainment of the bliss of soul-salvation? In this manner we are led to face the old problem of how the mercy of the loving God may be reconciled with the strict impartiality of the absolutely just God. It is in a situation like this that we naturally feel the need for the kindly interposition of a suitable intermediary between us and our great God,—an intermediary, who on the one hand is willing and able to excuse our faults and can on the other hand effectively approach our almighty God with the petition for mercy in behalf of His weak and erring creatures. It is not here in India alone that the help of such an intermediary has been sought by pious and God-fearing people. Other religions also than this Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism seek and postulate an interceder between God and man, between the ever just and almighty God and the weak and erring human being, so that this weak and erring being may be made to have the full benefit of divine mercy. Some make their religious *Guru* such an interceder; others, like the Christians, make a divine incarnation serve as such an interceder; and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism looks upon Lakṣmī, the divine Mother of the Universe, as such an interceder. To bear well and without harm the burden of moral and religious responsibility belonging

to weak and erring mankind, some such interceder between the judging God and the human beings to be judged is very rightly recognised to be necessary by more than one wellknown religion. Now, in the religion taught by Rāmānujāchārya, this interceder is, as you have been already told, the goddess Lakshmi. The conception of Lakshmi as the divine consort of Vishnu is also an old one in Hindu religion. It is known to later Vedic literature, and has a philosophical meaning underlying it—this meaning being nothing other than the true representation of the relation between *prakṛiti* and *Parama-purusha*. *Prakṛiti* is conceived to be the wife of God, who is the Supreme Being. According to what is called by some *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*—which is the same as the *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila, with the exception that, in the *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*, a Supreme Soul is postulated and made to have the same relation to the universe as a whole as the various individual souls have to their respective embodiments—according to this *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*, it is maintained that *prakṛiti*, which is in fact the source of the created universe, is obedient to the will of the Supreme Soul and gives birth to the universe in consequence of His close association with it. Hence *prakṛiti* is looked upon as the wife of God and the Mother of the Universe. Both Vāishṇavism and Śaivism have recognised the appropriateness of this conception of the relation between God and Nature; and in Śaivism we have *prakṛiti* and *Parama-purusha* even blended together in the conception of the *Ardhanārīśvara*—the God who is represented as half man and half woman. If we understand that Lakshmi represents in Vāishṇavism the power of *prakṛiti*, we may easily make out the meaning and fitness of the function assigned to Her in Śrī-Vāishṇavism. Even according to the *Sāṅkhya* of Kapila, *prakṛiti* is conceived to undergo all her modifications with

a view to liberate all bound souls from their imprisonment in matter, and is for this reason compared to a kind and loving mother. In *Paurāṇika Sāṅkhya*, Mother Nature happens thus to be the obedient and loving consort of Father God. Please note here that the feminine gender of the word *prakṛiti* in Sanskrit has not been without its influence in making Nature the kindly Mother of All, even as God is the great Father of All. Looked at in this light, what does the propitiation of Lakshmi really signify? It means this—that before we succeed in propitiating our God who is above and beyond Nature, it is necessary for us to propitiate Nature, if we are indeed anxious to get on well in life as well as after life. Those who want to live their lives happily and harmoniously for themselves and for others have to see that they do not foolishly violate the laws or oppose the irresistible forces of Nature. Hence the propitiation of the powers of Nature is always required in our own interest. Our ancestors of thousands of years ago achieved marked progress in religion by passing from Nature to Nature's God. In Rāmānuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaita* philosophy, the oneness of the ultimate reality is not the result of any form of essential identity, but is based upon an organic union of the component entities making up the reality. Hence according to him the path of philosophic ascent is inevitably from Nature to Nature's God. And the function of mercy-seeking intercession in behalf of weak man, which is assigned in Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism to Lakshmi, the merciful Mother of All, enables us to see further that, in Rāmānuja's view, the path of religious realisation also is in proceeding from Nature to Nature's God.

When philosophy taught our ancient sages how to analyse the universe, and their constructive imagination led them to conceive the relation between God and Nature to be like that between a husband and his wife, it became

perfectly natural for Vaishṇavism to make Lakshmi the wife of Vishṇu and the merciful Mother of the Universe. You know that the progress of religions takes place not unoften by the infusion of new ideas into old institutions. A great Arabic scholar writing about the religion of the Semites pointed out some years ago, with many examples, the tendency that there is in human societies to conceive their divinities almost unconsciously in the light of their own social organizations. If we have a community of people whose society is matriarchal in organisation, and among whom the mother is therefore the most prominent person in the family, their most natural conception of the deity happens to be as a goddess. They look upon the high supernatural being or beings at whose hands they seek sympathy and support as a mother. In other communities wherein the social organization is patriarchal, where the father is the most authoritative figure in the family, the divine being is looked upon as a father. This state of affairs in human civilisation is indeed very well known to students of anthropology. And we are able to make out with various kinds of evidence that the Dravidian people of South India possessed in the early days a matriarchal organization of society, that among them the mother was accordingly the most important figure in the family, and that consequently the worship of the village goddess as *amman*—that is, as mother—came to be very prevalent among them. If we have a people among whom goddess-worship is prevalent, and if we want to introduce in their midst a newer and a higher religion, it turns out to be necessary to find a real place for a great goddess in that newer and higher religion. This was probably one of the reasons which led to the enthronement of Lakshmi in the religion of Rāmānujāchārya as the world's Merciful Mother, who is the ever loving and ever successful

mediatrix between Her Lord God and the individual souls seeking the salvation of a perfected re-union with Him. Rāmānuja's predecessors in the line of Śrī-Vaiṣṇava teachers had already given a prominent place to Lakṣmī in their religion, probably because it happens to be a characteristic feature of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism that it arose in the Tamil land and obtained its fresh nourishment largely from the inspired thoughts and sentiments of certain well known Tamil poets and saints. The thought-influences proceeding from these poets and saints were taken up by Brahminical teachers, and were woven into the philosophy of Vaiṣṇava Vedānta in a very remarkable manner. Such a mutual in-weaving of pious poetry and sublime philosophy is probably not seen in the literature of any other religion. The Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas often speak of their sacred literature as *Ubhaya-Vedānta*, that is, as a double Vedānta consisting of the Sanskrit philosophic Vedānta and the Tamil poetic Vedānta. And the association of Lakṣmī or Śrī with Viṣṇu as the intermediary between weak man and almighty God must also have been postulated in this manner in response to popular needs and influences; and it led to various consequences. Thus it is in all probability that Vaiṣṇavism became here a religion in which Mother Lakṣmī has to intercede for mercy between God and His children. And who are His children? All mankind—nay, all living beings. If all mankind happen to be His children, and if Mother Lakṣmī intercedes between weak and suffering mankind on the one hand and almighty God on the other, we can easily understand how in this religion none can be kept out of the Holy of Holies, and none can be looked upon as unworthy to receive the grace of God. If out of a family of a number of children, a mother keeps away any one child from sharing the kindly and merciful favour of the

father, she certainly deserves to be characterised as an unnatural mother. Therefore in this religion there is an all-comprehensive divine graciousness which knows no exclusion. The reciprocity and the universality of divine and human love, as known to this religion, has in no small measure been the result of the Mother of All being made in it to intercede between God and all His children so as to temper His serene justice with tender mercy.

I have thus tried to indicate to you in a very brief outline the position occupied by Rāmānujāchārya in the development of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism in our country. Vaiṣṇavism, when adopted by Rāmānuja, had already become Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism. In it the old Bhāgavata doctrine of salvation through *bhakti* had been re-asserted and developed beyond into the doctrine of *prapatti*. The decision to utilise the *Ukhaṃ-Vedānta* of Sanskrit philosophy and Tamil Vaiṣṇava poetry as the basis of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism had also been arrived at and practically carried out to a large extent by the predecessors of Rāmānuja. Accordingly he was in no sense the pioneer of the popular religious movement out of which Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism arose in South India. He may be said to have come on the crest of the wave of this movement; and it received its final seal of authority and rational sanction in his hands. That he secured for it the full support of the Sanskrit Vedānta, and proved it to be a worthy means for the exaltation of the social virtues and the uplifting of the masses, is abundantly demonstrated by the events that filled his long life of courageous conviction and enduring sincerity and comprehensive humanity. Let me refer in illustration of this to the single instance of his having admitted the *paraiyas*—the *holeyas* as you call them here—as worshippers into the famous Viṣṇu temple at Melkote, which is, as you all know, situated within your own Mysore

State. The humanity and the courage involved in this noble act are both highly remarkable, and worthy of the enfranchising religious movement which attained its consummation through his work. After him others carried the stream of Vaishṇava thought in various ways into various parts of this holy land of ours; and new forms of Vaishṇava faith came into existence under new conditions. But these are matters which cannot be included within the scope of the present lecture. The popularisation of the ideas of the Fatherhood of God, the Motherhood of Lakshmi, and the Brotherhood of Man in India is indeed in a notable degree due to Rāmānuja and his work in life; and it is now a fact of history that to him may be traced more or less largely the beneficent religious influences that have proceeded from Rāmānanda, Kabir and Nānak. So far, Rāmānuja's work in connection with the immemorial and ever progressive religious life of India has shown itself to be like the work of the prescient sower who sows good seeds in good soil: and we may therefore feel well assured that, under the quickening stimulation of the heavenly light of God-love, the harvest of the love of man to man as man will in due time be quite abundant and full of further hope and further promise in this our ancient and historic country, wherein he lived so well and laboured so nobly. (CHEERS).

THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

Gentlemen,

You have listened to a very elaborate, and very highly luminous lecture from my friend Mr. Rangacharya this evening. I am really glad that I cannot pass any adverse criticism on it, as there is very little in it for me to disagree from him : in fact I heartily agree with almost everything that he has said on the various aspects of the subject he has so well handled. There is also very little about that subject which I can put either in better language or in a more luminous manner. So, you see how he has cut off the ground under my feet very badly. Countless men like ourselves, who have neither the deep erudition of my friend nor his clear insight, take religion just as it comes to them when they come into the world. We are in this matter like little birds living their brief lives on a large tree, eating of its fruit, and receiving its protection and support, and then disappearing. But when people, who have thought about the subject a great deal, tell us details regarding the history of such trees of religion, regarding the way in which their roots have gone deep down into the soil, and regarding also the large wealth of attractive and helpful natural elements that surround those trees, it is then that our eyes are a little opened ; and then it is that we begin to feel that the tree, we have been so long living on, partakes indeed of the infinity of the universe with all the glory of its omnipresent divine life. It is indeed under circumstances like these that we pay attention to what is valuable in our beliefs and practices. Thus we are led to go back into the recesses of antiquity, and impelled to examine the past history and the present significance of our everyday religious experiences. We Hindus

are sometimes declared to be idolators. I think all people have to be idolators in religion. The great thing is, that we should make our idols as good as we can possibly make them. That is, there should be no difference between our highest ideal and the idol that we worship. Man's conception of God is very much moulded by his own culture and conception of himself. He makes his God what he can, with the aid of his own goodness and knowledge of truth multiplied to infinity in the sanctuary of his inmost heart. And so, as our knowledge of truth and our conception of goodness advance in the line of progress, it becomes necessary for us now and again to have our ideals examined and purified, to have them brightened and heightened. The more we approach and assimilate the better ideals, the greater will be their influence on our own lives. To-day happens to be the Śaṅkara-jayanti day; and our friend, intending to give a lecture on Rāmānujāchārya, has given as luminous and as edifying a lecture on the value of Śaṅkarāchārya's life-work as on that of Rāmānujāchārya. In fact, I do not know of any person who could have given a better estimate of Śaṅkarāchārya's life-work. That both Śaṅkarāchārya and Rāmānujāchārya have been spoken of in such high terms and without the least disparagement to either by my highly cultured and thoughtful friend, shows how absurd are the bigotted ideas, which we, in some of our weaker moments, indulge in about them and their work in life. After all it is only human nature to take different views of things. It may be that, to certain minds, Śaṅkarāchārya's view, though abstruse and highly philosophical, appeals more strongly. To other minds Rāmānujāchārya's view may appeal more strongly, inasmuch as it is on *bhakti* and the practical and popular aspect of life and religion that he has laid stress. There is quite room enough for all these

divergencies in the great sphere of religion; and whatever a man's belief may be, he has to try always to acquire better and nobler ideals, and endeavour more and more to approximate to those ideals in his own life. For myself I must say that I am quite willing to fight my battle of life under the banner of any great and worthy religion. Narrow and intolerant sectarianism is not at all to my taste; and I believe it to be unreasonable and altogether unjustifiable. Let each of us have his own religion and his own philosophy of life. But let not this lead any one of us to be unjust or uncharitable to others. I feel that a word of praise and recognition is due to the enterprise of Mr. Gopalacharlu in having induced my friend Mr. Rangacharya to come all the way from Madras to entertain us with this highly interesting and instructive discourse. There are many ways in which Mr. Gopalacharlu has shown that he can do useful public work in this big city of Bangalore. But I can appreciate nothing that he has done more than the enterprise which enabled him to bring, on this auspicious occasion of the anniversary of the Śrinivasamanthirā, my friend Mr. Rangāchārya hither to deliver this very eloquent and edifying address.—(CHEERS.)

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