

THE WISDOM OF
A MODERN RISHI

WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF
MAHADEV GOVIND RANADE

WITH
AN ADDRESS ON
RISHI RANADE

BY
The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, P.C., C.H., LL.D.

EDITED BY
T. N. JAGADISAN

ROCHOUSE & SONS, LTD.
292, THE ESPLANADE, MADRAS

Rs. 1-8-0

PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this Anthology to present together some representative writings and speeches of Mahadev Govind Ranade. They have been chosen both for their intrinsic excellence and their supreme value to the modern reader. The text has been slightly edited here and there, and fresh titles have been given for some of the essays and speeches.

The aim has been to make available in a handy form some of the imperishable wisdom of this Modern Rishi. The difficult task of expounding the life and teachings of Ranade has been most competently discharged by Professor D. G. Karve of Ferguson College, Poona. To his "Ranade, The Prophet of Liberated India," the reader may turn with immense profit.

We have been singularly fortunate in being able to include the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri's address on the occasion of the Centenary of the birthday of Ranade. It combines in inimitable fashion significant biographical touches with interpretation, and serves admirably to introduce the reader to the 'essential Ranade'.

RISHI RANADE

BY THE RT. HON'BLE V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI, P.C., C.H., LL.D.

Speaking once about Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ranade expressed the view that in the case of gods and saints or *rishis* we celebrate their birthdays, while in the case of men we celebrate the anniversaries of their death. He proceeded to justify this distinction on the ground that men's greatness is not fully proven until the last moment. The time of passing away therefore acquires supreme significance and needs commemoration. Till last year the anniversary of Ranade's death was celebrated in Maharashtra. This year, when the day came round, you decided to let it pass in order that two days later you may celebrate the centenary of his birth with solemnity. By this change Ranade takes rank hereafter with Sankara, Ramanuja and teachers of like calibre, whom popular acclaim has enrolled among those to whom *Jayantis* are appropriate but not *Sradhas*. This elevation to sanctity of a dead person is attended in the Roman Catholic Church with formalities calculated to examine and publish the grounds on which it is based. The world is thus furnished with the credentials of the new saint. The proposal is registered before a Congregation of Cardinals, and in the manner of judges trying an important

suit, they proceed to hear arguments on both sides. The objections to the proposal are first stated by an officer called **ADVOCATUS DIABOLI** or Devil's Advocate, who tries to make out that the person on whose behalf the honours of sainthood are solicited is not worthy of them. The Congregation of Rites next hears the **ADVOCATUS DEI** or God's Advocate, who answers the objections and maintains that the proposed elevation or canonisation, as it is called, is fully deserved by the character and pious acts of the candidate, if a dead person can be so called. Ranade's life has been scrutinised over and over again these forty years. Its lights and shadows are known to the last point of minuteness. No fresh evidence or consideration need be waited for. The public, though not assembled in solemn congregation or invested with Papal authority, may well proceed to affirm that Ranade will be gathered unto the brotherhood of saints and prophets of Maharashtra, whose names and deeds he has made immortal. Shall we at this gathering imagine ourselves clothed for a brief hour with the dignity of a Court of Cardinals? Application having been made to Our Eminences that henceforth the 18th of January every year be consecrated as a day of Ranade *Jayanthi*, let us give audience now to the opposing pleader. There he stands in his sable gown, with voice and accent befitting its dignity and betraying no premonition of coming defeat.

The man whom Your Eminences are requested to canonise is no ordinary man. I am not concerned to deny him some good qualities and some good deeds. It is enough for my purpose to show that his character is disfigured by

some serious defects and that certain of his deeds fall short greatly of the standard that should be reached by a brave and unselfish servant of God. For many years he advocated the remarriage of girl widows in his community; but when his wife died and he had an opportunity of acting up to his precept, he took a maid of tender years and sheltered himself behind the command of his father. Having taken tea at the table of European missionaries along with other Hindu reformers, he bowed his head to orthodoxy and underwent *prayascitta* or penance, leaving his companions in the lurch. Professing to hate idolatry, he would visit temples and discourse to casual crowds on the comparatively refined theism of which he was an avowed adherent, thus proving himself a latitudinarian. He had the dirty habit of taking snuff and was, besides, so shabbily dressed that he shocked European observers by the frayed shirt that peeped through his sleeves and the shortness of his trousers. Though endowed with a fine physique, he never kept it up to the mark by regular exercise, but allowed his health to deteriorate; and, as he at the same time worked hard and incessantly, he is believed to have shortened his life. He presented to friends and visitors a stern and gloomy aspect and, being devoid of light or amusing talk, was by no means a pleasant companion. Even at dinner he would start serious topics and ply his guests with hard questions about social and economic conditions in their neighbourhood. While walking, he would fall into moods of meditation and take no note of his companions or surroundings. When he wished to be rid of an unwelcome visitor, he resorted to the harsh

expedient of setting him a literary task, such as summarising a dry Government report, and the unfortunate party could not appear again before him. These counts may appear slight in an indictment on this occasion, but they are evidences of an unsociable temper, which must have prevented Ranade from being a centre of cheerfulness and fellowship. In fact his sensibility seems to have been below par. Seldom moved to an outburst of anger even under provocation, or indulging in a fit of righteous or generous indignation, he seemed almost a pachyderm, and those that approached him scarcely felt the warmth of sympathy or intimate fellow-feeling. In his attitude to money he made no attempt to reach the ideal of indifference prescribed by the requirements of scripture, समलोष्टादमकाञ्चनः which means "regarding gold and rubbish alike," but he was known to measure his charities and gifts with excessive nicety of calculation. Another ethical precept too he practised with an odd inversion of emphasis, तुभ्यनिन्दास्तुतिः instead of remaining unaffected by praise or blame he would be impatient when praise was sounded in his ear, but greedily listen to blame, saying he must profit by it to the extent that it was just. An admiring friend once used this quaint phraseology in putting a favourable gloss on Ranade's inability to enter readily into the feelings of fellow-creatures: "He loved humanity at large, and men in units did not interest him so largely." How could a man with so many oddities and crudities win the affection of those around him? To be admitted into the blessed fraternity of saints, one must have had more attractive qualities and

more lively sympathies than Ranade ever had. If we added together the comfort he gave to widows and orphans, the sympathy and help he extended to suffering neighbours and the tendance he bestowed on the sick and the afflicted, the sum would be small indeed, considering the opportunities and the facilities with which he had been liberally endowed.

I now take the field as God's advocate. I am upheld by the overwhelming strength of my case.

My learned friend has made the most of a bad case. If this is all he can say, my task is easy. Ranade was not a perfect man. What man is perfect? If a man's nature were fully rounded and smooth, other people could scarcely get hold of him at any point, and every time they try to make contact with him they must turn back baffled, as from the touch of a freezing object. Don't we want our heroes to have a few human weaknesses to ensure our kinship to them? If they always did the right thing at the right time in the right way, we should suspect that they were not real, but creatures without blood belonging to the realm of pure fancy. Ranade, I admit without hesitation, had his foibles. I am surprised my learned friend did not mention to the Court that Ranade lost one of his eyes largely through excessive reading in insufficient light and was in later years afflicted with a slight deafness. He generously forbore all allusion to the nickname of Baby Elephant, which his unusual size and awkward bearing earned him among his fellow-students. In the early days he did not join freely in sports and games but was engrossed in his studies, which had an uncommon range and made him an object of awe

and wonder. His friends called him the *enfant terrible* of literature, with pardonable misapprehension of the phrase. Once his Principal, Sir Alexandar Grant, caught him reading aloud from Alison's History of Europe, bare-headed and with legs sprawled on the table before him. Ranade should certainly have disposed of his lower limbs in less barbarous fashion and otherwise also remembered that he was not in his own private place. But if Sir Alexander himself took no notice, why need we? Certain of the shortcomings ascribed to Ranade are only seemingly such, they are really good points for which he must be given credit. For instance, it takes a really big man to recognise that even a rustic has some knowledge and experience which might be of use to the student of village life and village economy, and Ranade was too big a man to miss an opportunity of learning something. Some play was made with his setting tasks to people in order to drive them away. Each one of us knows of one or two fussy friends who have nothing to do and just come into our working room for a chat and will take no hint that you would prefer to be alone. Ranade might make enquiries about the average rainfall of Mahabaleshwar, the number of girls' schools in the Thana district, how Sri Rama disposed of the thousand odd *astras* that he acquired in his travels, the arguments against the *laissez faire* theory brought forward by the German economists or the exact doctrinal differences between the various branches of the Brahma Samaj. If the visitor had nothing to say on these subjects, what was Ranade to do but to take up the latest Govern-

ment report on the Police Department and ask him to come back two days later with a summary under five heads? Each was sure of a long holiday from the other. It is true Ranade showed no mercy to his body and when people spoke of his habit of industry he would say, "Habit! it has become a vice with me." We all wish he had known how to relax now and then, but surely unwillingness to lose even an hour of our brief waking life is not a sin deserving to be punished. He was accused of imperfect sympathy with the wants or sufferings of individuals. It may be true of him as of many others that he loved and cared for man rather than men, but we have Gokhale's unimpeachable testimony that he was by nature kind and sympathetic. Here are his words: "One more great quality of his I would like to mention on this occasion, and that was his readiness to help all who sought his help and especially those who were weak and oppressed. He was accessible to all—even the humblest—at all hours of the day. No one ever wrote to him without receiving a reply. He listened patiently to everyone, whether he was able to help him or not. This indeed was to him a part of his practical religion." If his heart were difficult to touch, how could it be said of him "There is not one man of whom our departed brother was ever heard or known to have said an unkind word?" He readily forgave, harboured no resentment and made no enemies, if he could help it. By his teachings from the pulpit of the Prarthana Samaj and by his incessant social reform activities he incurred the open and unrestrained wrath of the orthodox party, but he was never known to lose his temper and return abuse for abuse. Even during the

violent controversy of 1895 over the venue of the Social Reform Conference his forbearance and equanimity were exemplary. When he made his accustomed speech as President, he mentioned no names, recalled no ugly incidents, avoided all personalities and ascribed the unfortunate turn of events to the fact that in Poona, unlike other places, a variety of methods were adopted instead of one sole method. Of these different methods the one that he most approved was that of persuasion, and the one that he most discountenanced was that of rebellion. To many ardent spirits what they called progress was God's own work, and those that obstructed it were like *rakshasas* whom it was a merit to condemn and destroy. They delighted in war against orthodoxy and thought nothing of separating themselves and forming a distinct group of their own. Social affinities and family ties were consumed by the fire of conviction, and many a young man fancied that, by disregarding parental authority when he heard the call, he was testifying to the sovereign power of social reform. Ranade pointed out that the Brahma Samaj in Bengal and the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, which chose this heroic path, had come to a standstill when the first momentum was exhausted. His own method was to reason, to expostulate and to allure to brighter worlds. The movement would necessarily be slow, but it would be sure and carry forward the whole community. He never forgot, and would never let others forget, that reform was for all and not merely for a few. When compelled by adverse circumstances to halt, he was content to do so, hoping that the next step would be firmer and longer. A few years later this method of persuasion found

a powerful and eloquent exponent in Prof. M. Rangacharya of Madras, who described it as "conciliatory co-ordination." This high-sounding name did not please the ear of Mr. K. Natarajan in Bombay. He was a little more combative in those young days than he is now and called it one of the Professor's characteristic orotundities. At bottom Ranade's heart was gentle and peace-loving. His father was apparently a tyrant and made no attempt to understand Ranade's progressive spirit or his zeal for reform. Occasionally he appears to have adopted questionable tactics to keep Ranade from moving forward. Ranade no doubt struggled and struggled hard, but would not break up his home and go his own way. Many of his friends lamented his failure as an apostasy. But enough has been said to convince those who can judge with charity that Ranade's principle of carrying the community along was the mainspring of his action, and not merely the fear of his father's extreme displeasure. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who was close to Ranade in the work of reform, said of him: "The idea of displeasing anybody was too much for him, and he wanted all to unite and work together. He erred because his soul was gentle, his heart charitable." My learned friend on the other side adopted without reserve or qualification the verdict which the prejudice and passion of the time delivered against Ranade. I have not the hardihood to assert that Ranade was wholly right. But it is safe to assume that, where a complicated question of principle was involved, a man of the moral stature of Ranade struck the balance true and fair and did not allow mere expediency or cowardice to determine his conduct.

Ranade was cast in a big mould in body and in mind. He was a giant. His studies had amplitude and depth far beyond the common. History, politics, economics, blue books, Sanskrit literature and Marathi literature,—these and similar subjects made up his gargantuan fare. His knowledge and experience in the official and non-official sphere were at the service of a patriotism, fervent and sleepless, which comprehended all the sections and elements of our population. Like a true *rishi* he had toleration and mercy for all and planned and laboured for all alike. His Marathi sermons are considered by competent judges to constitute a valuable and inspiring course in the doctrine and practice of theism. He rehabilitated the character of Sivaji and the empire that he founded. Of Indian economics he laid the ground-work, showing how the maxims and principles of English writers would not apply to the conditions of our country unless corrected in great part by the writings of German authorities on the subject. He took a leading part in the growth of the Indian Economic Conference, studied the conditions of agriculture and the peasantry in their various phases and became an unequalled authority on questions of land revenue, land tenure and land improvement. On Indian Finance his views commanded equal attention and equal respect with those of Dadabhai Naoroji. His close study of constitutional and administrative problems of India and other countries was laid under contribution by the organisers and leaders of the Indian National Congress, and it is well known that his advice and guidance were at the disposal of the Subjects

Committee wherever it met year after year. The Indian Social Conference was founded by him in 1887, and at every subsequent meeting of that body during the next 13 years he presided and delivered addresses replete with wisdom, comprehension and insight. His mind was also devoted to problems of Indian education, and his membership of the University governing bodies was signalised by unremitting efforts on behalf of the Marathi language and literature and of the health and longevity of Bombay graduates. In all departments of national endeavour and uplift he was a pioneer, and it would be the bare truth to say of him that he was the most considerable and influential among the builders of Modern India. He himself once enumerated the elements that go to the making of a great man—"earnestness of purpose, sincerity in action, originality, imagination and above all, the power of magnetism—we might call it vital or spiritual magnetism". These he possessed in rich measure. Add to them the achievements catalogued above, and you have a record of greatness so imposing that a teacher or *rishi* of old may be proud to call it his own. The name *rishi* was in his judgment so exalted in import that, when he desired to pay anyone the highest honour for character, he applied the name to him. More than once in his speeches we see Mr. N. M. Parmanand described as "our political *rishi*". Why, Ranade himself was deserving of the title in the eyes of many of his contemporaries. It was surely nothing uncommon in his life as well as afterwards for his admirers to speak of him as the modern *rishi*. A scene vividly comes to my mind when this happened in my hearing. Some time after I joined the Servants of India Society, Principal F. W. Bain

lectured in the Small Hall of Poona, and Sir Pherozezshah Mehta took the chair for him. Mr. Bain, the crusted tory that he was, made some remark deprecatory of the general character of our people or of some particular movement of the time, I forget which. Sir Pherozezshah at the end of the meeting castigated him in vigorous phrases and with emphatic gestures, which were greeted with rounds of applause. But the applause rang louder than ever when he cited for authority "the late M. G. Ranade, the modern *rishi*". The order of *rishis* exercised a powerful fascination over Ranade's mind. In the hierarchy of homage he would accord them the throne of eminence. In the address called *Vasishtha and Visvamisra*, the last in the great series (which Gokhale had to read for him in Lahore) the concluding passage is a paean to the glory of these semi-divine teachers and a devout wish that their line may be continued without end. It is my proud office to-day to plead that Ranade be admitted to this Holy Order and that this celebration be the first of a succession in future which will redound to the benefit of posterity as well as to the fame of the man who came into the world a hundred years ago to-day.

My task is not complete. I have yet to make out that, if our latest *Acharya* had wisdom pure and undefiled, he had also a tongue, eloquent and commanding, with which to proclaim it. There must be a good few here who have sat at his feet more than once and heard his discourses. That good fortune came to me only once. The scene was in Anderson Hall, Madras, and the time was an evening in December, 1898. A great crowd waited ex-

pectantly to hear Ranade on "Southern India a hundred years ago". We felt surprise without a touch of admiration, as a big figure moved forward with slow deliberate steps. As the lineaments became clear, a faint feeling of disappointment rose in our breasts, but we kept it under as somewhat premature. But in a few seconds the figure pulled a kerchief, coloured as I remember, and applied it to the nose which was running and made strange noises. The opening words did nothing to reassure us, and as the handkerchief and the nose persisted in their joint activities, our spirits sank within us. Whispers of dissatisfaction and poutings of lips went round, but scarcely relieved our feelings. Soon, however, things seemed to change. One good remark caught our attention, we strained our ears. Lo, and behold! the handkerchief went back to the pocket, the voice gained distinctness, the sentiments captured our fancy, and as if by magic the face became bright with intelligence. Half a dozen sentences, and our eyes were fixed on the speaker. Thereafter, all through the speech he held us as in a spell. I thought I was listening to a superior being, all aglow with wisdom which seemed a part of him,—so easily, so naturally, so unostentatiously did it keep flowing into me. There was pindrop silence in the hall, I don't think the audience laughed or cheered once. If they did, I didn't hear it.

The published speeches have solidity and mental nutriment which are astonishing. One may go again and again to them with profit. Sir Narayan Chandavarkar's eulogy is not overdone. "Those weighty and eloquent annual addresses, wise with the wisdom of the heart, powerful with all the

power of his great intellect, majestic with the majesty of his lofty and commanding personality." There is no art either in the sentences or in their grouping. You don't come across a light, humorous remark; no passing allusion to the trivialities of thought or gossip. The nearest he comes to a joke is when he asks: "Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany?" The nearest he comes to impatience or indignation is in this passage: "If we were stronger and more manly, more prudent, more abstemious and more thoughtful, millions would not live and breed as if they were members of the brute creation, and not men and women made in the image of God for a higher purpose than to live and die like the butterflies." The joke and the indignation are alike grim and meant to sting, not to amuse and improve. As you read through, you seem to see Ranade slowly assembling the details from one quarter and from another, inviting your gaze to the accumulation, and slowly and patiently leading you to a realization of your duties and prospects. The style is by no means varied, picturesque or pleasing. But it is weighty without being ponderous; profound without being mystic; edifying without being homiletic. One reader complains that Ranade has no partiality for Anglo-Saxon. Another grumbles that grammar and idiom do not get the respect due to them. A third is saddened by the frequent inelegances and solecisms. But all are subdued to attention by the dignity of the diction and the

high level on which the argument moves without once declining on a false or discordant note. When you are lifted above the small and the grovelling, when you are freshened by the gentle breezes of the upper air, you forget the unsightly objects you have left behind and the inconveniences through which you have ascended. Or maybe you feel like a tourist that has been dragged through mean lanes and pebbly tracks, and suddenly finds himself entering a stately edifice with imposing corridors and noble columns and spacious halls, the *ensemble* harmonizing in every part and ravishing his inner soul with a beauty of proportion and symmetry of which he had never dreamed. Criticism is hushed, judgment is awed, and the only feeling left is one of joy and complete satisfaction. To prove that I have not been indulging my imagination, I pray you to listen patiently while I read a certain passage which concludes one of his addresses. It is not the most familiar of the Ranade quotations, but it appears to have flowed without effort from the body of the discourse.

* * * *

“The chief point, however, that is to be considered in this connection is, who should be these Gurus of the future? It is with this view that I have endeavoured to place before you a brief account of the true Gurus of the past, namely the Rishis who were both Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, only distinguished from one another by their individual inclinations and abilities. We must keep that ideal before us, if we mean to prove ourselves the worthy descendants of our earliest ancestors. Of course the teachings and the methods and the

subjects taught in these days must be made to suit our new exigencies and environments, but the spirit animating the teachings must be the same as that which led the first settlers to cross the Vindhya Range, and establish their colonies in the South. By reviving our ancient traditions in this matter we may hope in the near future to instil into the minds of our young generations lessons of devotion to learning, diversities of studies and personal loyalty to the teacher, without which no system of school or college education can ever bear any fruit. This, however, is not all. In addition to these lessons, our new teachers must know how to introduce their pupils to a correct appreciation of the forces which are at work in the wider world outside, and which, in spite of temporary checks or seeming reverses, represent all that is best in human efforts for the elevation and happiness of man. Our teachers must enable their pupils to realise the dignity of man as man, and to apply the necessary correctives to tendencies towards exclusiveness, which have grown in us with the growth of ages. They must see that our thoughts, our speech, our actions are inspired by a deep love of humanity, and that our conduct and our worship are freed where necessary from the bondage of custom and made to conform as far as possible to the surer standard of our conscience. We must at the same time be careful that this class of teachers does not form a new order of monks. Much good, I am free to admit, has been done in the past and is being done in these days, in this as well as other countries, by those who take the vow of long celibacy and who consecrate their lives to the service of man and the greater glory of our Maker. But it may be doubted how far such men are

able to realize life in all its fulness and in all its varied relations, and I think our best examples in this respect are furnished by Agastya with his wife Lopamudra, Atri with his wife Anasuya, and Vasishtha with his wife Arundhati among the ancient Rishis, and in our own times by men like Dr. Bhandarkar on our side, Diwan Bahadur Raghunatha Row in Madras, the late Keshab Chander Sen and Babu Pratap Chandra Mozumdar and Pandit Shivanath Shastri in Bengal, and Lala Hans Raj and Lala Munshi Ram in your own province. A race that can ensure a continuance of such teachers can, in my opinion, never fail, and with the teachings of such men to guide and instruct and inspire us, I, for one, am confident that the time will be hastened when we may be vouchsafed a sight of the Promised Land."

Ever since I gave Ranade a definite place among my heroes, my heart's adoration has gone to him in fuller measure every day. Which one among his qualities grips me most? His elevation and detachment. Wordsworth's immortal line occurs to me whenever I think of him. "His soul was like a star and dwelt apart." True he mingled in men's affairs and strove with all his matchless strength to improve them. His life was one long and unbroken sacrifice. In a pre-eminent sense he was—

Type of the wise who soar but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home.

Nevertheless, after his duties to the world were fully done, there remained a part of him above attachment and clear of taint. There his *bhakti* reigned alone and he kept

converse with his God in his triple nature as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*. Where the air is serene and rare, gross beings cannot follow him. The simple but noble words of Goldsmith are the aptest I know.

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

[Address delivered on January, 18, 1942, at Bombay, on the occasion of the Centenary of Ranade's birthday.]

CONTENTS

	PAGE
RISHI RANADE, <i>By the Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivāsa Sastri</i> ...	i
I. THE HALCYON PERIOD OF INDIAN HISTORY ...	1
II. MEN OF FAITH AND HOPE ...	18
III. REVIVAL OR REFORM ...	37
IV. PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN THEISM ...	56
V. HINDU PROTESTANTISM ...	80
VI. THE SAINTS AND PROPHETS OF MAHARASHTRA	88
VII. STATE LEGISLATION IN SOCIAL MATTERS ...	108
VIII. RAJA RAMA MOHANA ROY ...	128
IX. LIBERATE THE WHOLE MAN ...	146
X. VASHISTHA AND VISHVAMITRA ...	160
THE MESSAGE OF RANADE ...	169

THE WISDOM OF A MODERN RISHI

I

THE HALCYON PERIOD OF INDIAN HISTORY

To-day I find myself far away in the north, surrounded on all sides by the tradition of a civilization older than the oldest known to history, the land of the Aryan race settled in India, tracing its descent from the self-born Svayambhu Manu, where the Solar dynasty flourished for thousands of years, the land of the Ikshvakus, of Dilip and Raghu, of Dasharath and the incarnate hero Rama, with his illustrious brothers and the still more honoured wife Sita, the land where Vashishta and Vishvamitra lived and flourished, the home of all that is beautiful and true, and lovely and godlike in Aryan history. This favoured land of yours gave birth also in later times, to Shakya Muni Buddha, who has been well described as the perfection of humanity in its highest and noblest development, and whose "Wheel of law" still regulates the thoughts and feelings of half the human race in its efforts to attain beatitude. I propose this time to draw your attention to the turn which the Aryan civilization has taken under the influences represented by the conquest of this part of the country by the Mahomedans, nearly a thousand years back. The one factor which separates Northern India from its Southern neighbours, is the predominant influence of this conquest by Mahomedans, which has left its mark permanently upon

the country, by the actual conversion to the Mahomedan faith of one-fifth of the population, and by the imperceptible but permanent moulding of the rest of the people in the ways of thought and belief, the like of which is hard to find on the Malabar or Coromandel Coasts. I propose to draw my materials from the Mahomedan philosophers and travellers who visited India, both before and after the Mahomedan conquest and changed the face of the country. Owing to the absence of the historic instinct among our people, we have necessarily to depend upon the testimony of foreign historians. That testimony is, however, unexceptionable, because it was for the most part given before the Mahomedan domination had effected the separation which distinguishes the old India of the past from the modern India in which we are now living. This domination also separates the line which marks off southern India, of which I spoke last year, from the north, in one of the most representative centres of which we are met here to-day.

At the outset, we must have a correct understanding of what northern India was before Mahmud of Gazni made his numerous expeditions for the plunder of its far-famed cities and temples, at the commencement of the tenth century. Fortunately for us, we have a witness to this period of our history in the writings of Alberuni, whose work on India was written shortly after the time that Mahmud crossed the Indus as a conqueror of infidels. That work has been translated by Dr. Sachau, a professor in the Berlin University, and in its English form, is now accessible to us all. Alberuni was a native of Khorasan, his birthplace being near Khiva. Mahmud of Gazni

conquered Khorasan, and Alberuni had to shift to Gazni which was then the seat of a flourishing empire the rulers of which were great patrons of Mahomedan learning. Alberuni was in special favour with Masaud, the son of Mahmud, and he was thus enabled to travel throughout India, where he spent many years, having mastered the Sanskrit Language. He was a philosopher by profession and temper, and had a special liking for Indian philosophy which he studied with the same care and attention that he bestowed on Plato and Aristotle. His work on India consists of eighty chapters, relating to Religion, Philosophy, Caste, Idolatry, Civil Polity, Literature, Science, Mathematics, Medicine, Geography, Astronomy, Cosmogony, Alchemy and Astrology. He took great pains to give a full description of all that was known to the Hindus under these several heads, and being naturally not a bigoted Mahomedan, his book shows that he wrote his whole work with a single desire to promote the cause of true learning. While Alberuni shows a great regard for the Hindu Philosophy, Astronomy, and Medicine, he was not slow in finding out the weak points of the Indian character. In his chapters on caste and idolatry, in the condemnation he pronounces on the want of practical aptitudes of our people, and in their devotion to superstitious observances, Alberuni did not spare his censures. He contrasted the democratic equality of the Mahomedan people with the innumerable divisions of the Indian races. He notices the helpless position of the women of India, and the filthy customs and habits of the people in those days. He gives praise to the few educated Brahmans whom he separates from the superstitious multitude whose fallen

condition he deploras. Even among the Brahmans, he notices the verbosity of their writings and the word-splitting which passed for wisdom. He notices the greediness and tyranny of the Hindu princes, who would not agree to join their efforts together for any common purpose, and the timidity and the submissiveness of the people who, in his expressive language, were 'scattered like atoms of dust in all directions' before the invading Moslems. The prevailing feeling among the Mahomedans of the time was that the Hindus were infidels, and entitled to no mercy or consideration, and the only choice to be allowed to them was that of death or conversion. Alberuni did not share in these views, but they were the views of his master Mahmud of Gazni and of the hordes who were led by him on these expeditions. Another traveller, Ibn Batuta, a native of Tangiers in North Africa, visited this country about a hundred years after Kutbuddin established the Afghan kingdom at Delhi. Like him, he was taken into favour by the Delhi Emperor, Mahmud Taghlak, under whom he acted for some time as a Judge of Delhi. Ibn Batuta travelled more extensively than Alberuni. He travelled from the extreme west of Africa to the extreme east of China, and went round the coast from Malabar to Coromandel. He was, however, neither a philosopher nor a scholar. His journal of travels is interesting, but he did not observe the manners and customs of the people with the same mastery of details that Alberuni's work shows on every page. The only points which struck Ibn Batuta in the course of his travels through India were the rite of *Sati* of which he was a witness, and the practice of drowning men in the Ganges,

both of which struck him as inhuman to a degree he could not account for. He also notices the self-mortification of the *jogees* and their juggleries, in describing which last he mentions the fact that in the presence of the emperor, he saw a *jogee* raise his body up in the air and keep it there for some time. Another traveller, Abder Razzak visited India about 1450 A. D. His travels lay chiefly in the Southern Peninsula, Calicut, Vijayanagar and Mangalore. The narratives of two other travellers, one a Russian and the other a Venetian, who both visited India in the fifteenth century, are published by the Hakluyt Society, and afford most interesting reading. The general impression left on the minds of these travellers was a respect for the Brahmans, for their philosophy and attainments in astrology, but for the common people, the vast multitudes of men and women, their sense was one of disgust and disappointment. Abder Razzak expressed this feeling in his own words in a reply to the invitation of the King of Vijayanagar. He said to the king, "If I have once escaped from the desert of thy love, and reached my country, I shall not set out on another voyage even in the company of a king."

The abuse of idolatry and caste struck every traveller as the peculiar characteristic of the country, and gave them offence. The practice of self-immolation, or Sati, and of human sacrifices to idols by being crushed beneath the temple car are also mentioned. Finally, we have the testimony of the emperor Babar, who in his memoirs thus describes this country:—"Hindustan is a country which has few things to recommend. The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly

society or of freely mixing together in familiar intercourse. They have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manners, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning and executing their handicraft work, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture. They have no good horses, no good flesh, no good grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no cold water or ice, no good food or bread in their bazaars, no baths, no colleges, no candles, not even a candlestick. They have no aqueducts or canals, no gardens, and no palaces; in their buildings they study neither elegance, nor climate, nor appearance, nor regularity. Their peasants and lower classes all go about naked tying on only a *langoti*. The women too have only a *lang*.' The only good points which Babar could find in favour of Hindustan were that it is a large country and has abundance of gold and silver, and that there is also an abundance of workmen of every profession and trade for any work and employment.

Such was the picture presented to the Mahomedans when they entered India through the passes in successive hordes for three or four centuries. A great portion of the disgust and disappointment felt by these Mahomedan invaders may be set down to ignorance and the pride of race. At the same time, it is always of advantage to know exactly how India appeared in its strong and weak points to intelligent foreigners, such as those I have mentioned above. The question for consideration to us at the present moment is, whether in consequence of the predominance of the Mahomedans for five centuries, which intervened from the invasions of Mahmud to the accession

of Akbar, the people of India were benefited by the contact thus forcibly brought together between the two races. There are those among us who think that this predominance has led to the decay and corruption of the Indian character, and that the whole story of the Mahomedan ascendancy should for all practical purposes, be regarded as a period of humiliation and sorrow. Such a view, however, appears to be unsupported by any correct appreciation of the forces which work for the elevation or depression of nations. It cannot be easily assumed that in God's providence, such vast multitudes as those who inhabit India were placed centuries together under influences and restraints of alien domination unless such influences and restraints were calculated to do lasting service in the building up of the strength and character of the people in directions in which the Indian races were most deficient. Of one thing we are certain, that after lasting over five hundred years, the Mahomedan empire gave way, and made room for the re-establishment of the old native races in the Punjab, and throughout central Hindustan and Southern India, on foundations of a much more solid character than those which yielded so easily before the assault of the early Mahomedan conquerors. The domination, therefore, had not the effect of so depressing the people that they were unable to raise their heads again in greater solidarity. If the Indian races had not benefited by the contact and example of men with stronger muscles and greater powers, they would never have been able to reassert themselves in the way in which history bears testimony they did.

Quite independently of this evidence of the broad change that took place in the early part of the eighteenth century, when the Mogul empire went to pieces and its place was taken up not by foreign settlers, but by revived native powers, we have more convincing grounds to show that in a hundred ways the India of the eighteenth century, so far as the native races were concerned, was a stronger and better constituted India than met the eyes of the foreign travellers from Asia and Europe who visited it between the period of the first five centuries from 1000 to 1500. In Akbar's time, this process of regenerate India first assumed a decided character which could not well be mistaken. No student of Akbar's reign will fail to notice that for the first time the conception was then realized of a united India in which Hindus and Mahomedans, such of them as had become permanently established in the country, were to take part in the building of an edifice rooted in the hearts of both by common interests and common ambitions. In place of the scorn and contempt, with which the Mahomedan invaders had regarded the religion of the Hindus, their forms of worship, their manners and customs, and with which the Hindus looked down upon them as barbarous Mlechas, whose touch was pollution, a better appreciation of the good points in the character of both came to be recognized as the basis of the union. Akbar was the first to see and realize the true nobility of soul and the devotion and fidelity of the Hindu character, and satisfied himself that no union was possible as long as the old bigotry and fanaticism was allowed to guide the Councils of the Empire. He soon gathered about him the best men of his time, men like Faizi, Abul Fazel

and their father Mubarak, the historians Mirza Abdul Rahim, Nizamudin Ahmed, Badauni and others. These were set to work upon the translations of the Hindu epics and Shastras, and books of science and philosophy. The pride of the Rajput races was conciliated by taking in marriage the princesses of Jaipur, and Jodhpur, and by conferring equal or superior commands on those princes. These latter had been hitherto treated as enemies. They were now welcomed as the props of the empire, and Maharaja Bhagwandas, his great nephew Mansingha, for some time Governor of Bengal and Kabul, Raja Todarmal and the Brahman companion of the Emperor, Raja Birbal, these were welcomed to court, and trusted in the full consciousness that their interests were the same as those of the Musalman noblemen. The Emperor himself, guided by such counsel of his Hindu and Mahomedan nobles, became the real founder of the union between the two races, and this policy for a hundred years guided and swayed the councils of the empire. A fusion of the two races was sought to be made firmer still by the establishment of a religion of the Nin-i-Illahi, in which the best points both of the Mahomedan, Hindu, and other faiths were sought to be incorporated. Invidious taxation and privileges were done away with, and toleration for all faiths became the Universal law of the empire. To conciliate his subjects Akbar abjured the use of flesh except on four special occasions in the year, and he joined in the religious rites observed by his Hindu queens. In regard to the particular customs of the people relating to points where natural humanity was shocked in a way to make union impossible, Akbar strove by wise encourage-

ment and stern control, where necessary, to help the growth of better ideas. *Sati* was virtually abolished by being placed under restraint which nobody could find fault with. Re-marriage was encouraged, and marriage before puberty was prohibited. In these and a hundred other ways the fusion of the races and of their many faiths was sought to be accomplished, with a success which was justified by the results for a hundred years.

[This process of removing all causes of friction, and establishing accord went on without interruption during the reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. Shahjahan's eldest son, Dara Sheko, was himself an author of no mean repute. He translated the Upanishads, and wrote a work in which he sought to reconcile the Brahman religion with the Mahomedan faith. He died in 1659.

✓ This period of a hundred years may be regarded as the halcyon period of Indian history when the Hindu and Mahomedan races acted in full accord.] If in place of Aurangzeb, Dara Sheko had succeeded to power as the eldest son of Shahjahan, the influences set on foot by the genius of Akbar might have gathered strength, and possibly averted the collapse of the Mogul power for another century. It was, however, not to be so, and with Aurangzeb's ascent to the throne, a change of system commenced which gathered force during the long time that this emperor reigned. Even Aurangzeb had, however, to follow the traditions of his three predecessors. He could not dispense with Jaisingh or Jaswantsingh who were his principal military commanders. In the reign of his son, whole provinces under him were governed by Rajput, Rayastha and other Governors.

The revival of fanatic bigotry was kept in check by the presence of these great Rajput Chiefs, one of whom, on the re-imposition of the *Zezia*, addressed to the emperor a protest couched in unmistakable terms that the God of Islam was also the God of the Hindus, and the subjects of both races merited equal treatment. Aurangzeb unfortunately did not listen to this advice, and the result was that the empire built by Akbar went to pieces even when Aurangzeb was alive. No one was more aware of his failure than Aurangzeb himself, who in his last moments admitted that his whole life was a mistake. The Marathas in the South, the Sikhs in the North, and the Rajput states helped in the dismemberment of the empire in the reign of his immediate successor, with the result that nearly the whole of India was restored to its native Hindu sovereigns, except Bengal, Oudh, and the Deccan Hyderabad. It will be seen from this that so far from suffering from decay and corruption, the native races gathered strength by reason of the Mahomedan rule when it was directed by the wise counsel of those Mahomedan and Hindu statesmen who sought the weal of the country by a policy of toleration and equality. Since the time of Asoka, the element of strength born of union was wanting in the old Hindu dynasties which succumbed so easily to the Mahomedan invaders.

Besides this source of strength, there can be no doubt that in a hundred other ways the Mahomedan domination helped to refine the tastes and manners of the Hindus. The art of Government was better understood by the Mahomedans than by the old Hindu sovereigns.

The art of war also was singularly defective till the Mahomedans came. They brought in the use of gunpowder and artillery. In the words of Babar, they "taught ingenuity and mechanical invention in a number of handicraft arts," the very nomenclature of which, being made up of non-Hindu words, shows their foreign origin. They introduced candles, paper, glass, household furniture, and saddlery. They improved the knowledge of the people in music, instrumental and vocal, medicine and astronomy, and their example was followed by the Hindus in the perversions of both these latter sciences into alchemy and astrology. Geography and history and literature were first made possible departments of knowledge by their example. They built roads, aqueducts, canals, caravansarais, and the post office, and introduced the best specimens of architecture, and improved our gardening, and made us acquainted with the taste of new fruits and flowers. The revenue system as inaugurated by Todarmal in Akbar's time, is the basis of the revenue system up to the present day. They carried on the entire commerce by sea with distant regions, and made India feel that it was a portion of the inhabited world with relations with all, and not cut off from all social intercourse. In all these respects, the civilization of the united Hindu and Moslem powers represented by the Moguls at Delhi, was a distinct advance beyond what was possible before the tenth century of the Christian era.

More lasting benefits have, however, accrued by this contact in the higher tone it has given to the religion and thoughts of the people. In this respect, both the

Mahomedans and Hindus benefited by contact with one another. As regards the Mahomedans, their own historians admit that the Sufi heresy gathered strength from contact with the Hindu teachers, and made many Mahomedans believe in transmigration and in the final union of the soul with the supreme spirit. The Mohorum festival and saint worship are the best evidence of the way in which the Mahomedans were influenced by Hindu ideas. We are more directly concerned with the way in which this contact has affected the Hindus. The prevailing tone of pantheism had established toleration for polytheism among our most revered ancient teachers, who rested content with separating the few from the many, and establishing no bridge between them. This separation of the old religion has prevented its higher precepts from becoming the common possession of whole races. Under the purely Hindu system, the intellect may admit, but the heart declines to allow a common platform to all people in the sight of God. The Vaishnava movement, however, has succeeded in establishing the bridge noted above, and there can be no doubt, that in the hands of the followers of Ramananda, especially the Kabirpanthis, Malikadasis, Dadupanthis, the followers of Mirabai, Lord Gauranga on the Bengal side, and Baba Nanak in the Punjab in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the followers of Tukaram, Ekanath and Namdev in the Deccan, Babadalis, Pranathis, Sadhs, the Satnamis, the Shiva-Narayans—and the followers of Mahant Rama Charan of the last two centuries—this elevation and the purification of the Hindu mind was accomplished to an extent which very few at the present moment realize in all its significance.

The Brahma and the Arya Samaja movements of this century are the continuations of this ethical and spiritual growth. Caste, idolatry, polytheism and gross conceptions of purity and pollution were the precise points in which the Mahomedans and the Hindus were most opposed to one another, and all the sects named above had this general characteristic that they were opposed to these defects in the character of our people. Nanak's watchword was that he was 'Neither Hindu nor Mahomedan, but that he was a worshipper of the Nirakar, or the Formless.' His first companion was a Mahomedan, and Mahomedan authors pay him the compliment of saying that his teacher was a Mahomedan. The Hindus naturally do not admit this claim, with reason on their side. There can be no doubt that, while calling himself neither Hindu nor Mahomedan, Guru Nanak wanted to establish a union between the two faiths. Lord Gauranga had also Mahomedan disciples. Mahomedan saints like Shaik Mahmud, Shaik Farid and Mahmud Kazi were respected by both Hindus and Mahomedans. The abuses of polytheism were checked by the devotion to one object of worship, which in the case of many of the Vaishnava sects was the Supreme God, the Paramatma, and the abuses of caste were controlled by conceding to all, Hindus and Mahomedans alike, the right to worship and love the one God who was the God of all.

If the lessons of the past have any value, one thing is quite clear, viz., that in this vast country, no progress is possible unless both Hindus and Mahomedans join hands together, and are determined to follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time, and were his chief

advisers and councillors, and sedulously avoid the mistakes which were committed by his great-grandson Aurangzeb. Joint action from a sense of common interest, and a common desire to bring about the fusion of the thoughts and feelings of men, so as to tolerate small differences and bring about concord—these were the chief aims kept in view by Akbar, and formed the principle of the new divine faith formulated in the *Din-i-Ilahi*. Every effort on the part of either Hindus or Mahomedans to regard their interests as separate and distinct, and every attempt made by the two communities to create separate schools and interests among themselves, and not to heal up the wounds inflicted by mutual hatred of caste and creed must be deprecated on all hands. It is to be feared that this lesson has not been sufficiently kept in mind by the leaders of both communities in their struggle for existence, and in the acquisition of power and predominance during recent years. There is at times a great danger of the work of Akbar being undone by losing sight of this great lesson which the history of his reign and that of his two successors is so well calculated to teach. The Conference which brings us together is especially intended for the propagation of this 'Din' or 'Dharma,' and it is in connection with that message chiefly that I have ventured to speak to you to-day on this important subject. The ills that we are suffering are, most of them, self-inflicted evils, the cure of which is to a large extent in our own hands. Looking at the series of measures which Akbar adopted in his time to cure these evils, one feels how correct was his vision when he and his adviser put their hand on those very defects in

our natural character, which need to be remedied first before we venture on higher enterprises. Pursuit of high ideals, mutual sympathy and co-operation, perfect tolerance, a correct understanding of the diseases from which the body politic is suffering, and an earnest desire to apply suitable remedies—this is the work cut out for the present generation. The awakening has commenced, as is witnessed by the fact that we are met in this place from such distances for joint consultation and action. All that is needed is that we must put our hands to the plough, and face the strife and the struggle. The success already achieved warrants the expectation that if we persevere on right lines, the goal we have in view may be attained. That goal is not any particular advantage to be gained in power and wealth. It is represented by the efforts to attain it, the expansion and the elevation of the heart and the mind, which will make us stronger and braver, purer and truer men. This is at least the lesson I draw from our more recent history of the past thousand years, and if those centuries have rolled away to no purpose over our heads, our cause is no doubt hopeless beyond cure. That is, however, not the faith in me; and I feel sure it is not the faith that moves you in this great struggle against our own weak selves, than which nothing is more fatal to our individual and collective growth. Both Hindus and Mahomedans have their work cut out in this struggle. In the backwardness of female education, in the disposition to overleap the bounds of their own religion, in matters of temperance, in their internal dissensions between castes and creeds, in the indulgence of impure speech, thought, and action on occasions when they are disposed

to enjoy themselves, in the abuses of many customs in regard to unequal and polygamous marriages, in the desire to be extravagant in their expenditure on such occasions, in the neglect of regulated charity, in the decay of public spirit, in insisting on the proper management of endowments,—in these and other matters both communities are equal sinners, and there is thus much ground for improvement on common lines. Of course, the Hindus, being by far the majority of the population, have other difficulties of their own to combat with; and they are trying in their gatherings of separate castes and communities, to remedy them each in their own way. But without co-operation and conjoint action of all communities, success is not possible, and it is on that account that the General Conference is held in different places each year to rouse local interest, and help people in their separate efforts by a knowledge of what their friends similarly situated are doing in other parts. This is the reason of our meeting here, and I trust that this message I have attempted to deliver to you on this occasion, will satisfy you that we cannot conceive a nobler work than the one for which we have met here to-day.

Note:—This address was delivered at the "Indian National Social Conference," Lucknow, in 1899.

II

MEN OF FAITH AND HOPE

*(Commemoration Address on
The Telang School of Thought)*

You are aware of the nature of the business which has brought us together in this place on the present occasion. It is a function of a friendly and social commemoration, and must be undertaken by every one of us in the spirit which suits the occasion. A meeting like this ought to have been held earlier, and it was arranged accordingly; but owing to unforeseen engagements of the most pressing character, the managers of the Club had to put it off to a more convenient day. Death, as you all know, has been of late so very busy among us that, notwithstanding the absorbing distractions of our everyday life of toil and enforced rest, our minds are in a more serious mood attracted naturally towards those who have been gathered to our forefathers—some of them prematurely, long before their mission in this life had been accomplished. Our minds are, as each fresh loss comes upon us, with its sudden surprise, distracted with grief for a moment; but such is the providential gift of our elastic temperament that we soon recover our usual equanimity, and seem apparently to forget the past. It is not, however, always the case. There are times and there are seasons when even in these absorbing distractions, our thoughts are turned from the present day engagements to converse in spirit and solitude with those with whom we worked in

various fields in the past, and whose company we now miss in the great responsibilities that come upon us as each day rolls on and makes room for its successor. It is not, therefore, without reason that our wise ancestors ordained it as a part of our religious duty that once at least in the course of the year there should be a fortnight set apart for these commemorations, so that each one in his own small sphere, and all of us in our collective sphere, may take stock of the fact that our present existence here is an existence limited by conditions over which we have no control, and that unless we teach ourselves to regard it only as the place for fitting and preparing ourselves for a better existence, we fail to understand the mission of the life with which we are so much absorbed. Last month was the month in which these commemorations were held throughout the country, in domestic circles and more at large in high places, where the claims of the dead commanded a larger circle of mourners. These commemorations remind us of our duties to those who have left this troubled life of ours, and it is to some extent with a similar object in view that the members of this Club have felt it to be their duty, which they had long put off for various reasons, to meet together in this place, and to commemorate in a proper spirit the loss which the Club has sustained in the death of its late President, Mr. Justice K. T. Telang. Five years and more have now elapsed since that eventful departure from our midst took place of one whom we all knew so well, and loved so dearly. It was thought by the members of this Club that this long period of time should be allowed to elapse, for in the excess of our present grief

we might be tempted to put too high a value upon the loss that we had suffered, and that it was far better to wait and see if, like many of our other sorrows, these five years of separation might not reconcile us to the loss that we had suffered and make us forget it, as we do forget many other afflictions that trouble our existence here. Five years have passed, and yet every one of us, I believe every one who is in this hall, and many hundreds who may not be here to-day will admit with me that these five years have not reconciled us to the loss and made us forget the estimation in which we held the late President of this Club during his short but brilliant career. It was on this account that the members of this Club thought that the time had now come when we could discharge this duty without being exposed to the charge that we made too much of our loss.

Of course, on such occasions, when we meet here for such a solemn purpose as this, memories rise before the mind's eyes of many familiar faces, and the shades of the dead flit before our vision with a reality which is almost as vivid as life itself. Not to recall to your memory the great men of the past generation, about whom many of you have no personal knowledge, but whose works we read and admire—not to go so far back as that period, and confining ourselves only to the past five or six years, the memory of which is so fresh with us, our hearts and our recollections are drawn to many familiar faces whom we miss now as the miser misses his wealth, or the mother her lost child. We miss, for instance, the sturdy features of Mr. K. L. Nulkar, than whom a more sustained worker in all the higher activities of our life, a more

earnest sympathiser in all that was good, did not breathe in this part of India. Another loss we feel is that of my friend Mr. S. P. Pandit, whose cast of features indicated an unbending will, coupled with a tenacity of purpose and undaunted courage peculiarly his own. His was a life, though short, of great and continuous struggles and noble achievements on behalf of posterity. We further miss the familiar face of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang who, during three-score years and ten took the lead in our Society, in all good works of benevolence and charity. I prize him more not on account of his ministering to our bodily maladies, but on account of his ministering to our spiritual longings. His loss is still so fresh, and the debt we owe him has been so badly discharged by us that I do not feel myself at present disposed to say more about him. We miss again the face of Mr. W. A. Modak, the great educationist, and a man whose life was an example to us in all things good, a man who applied himself devoutly to every secular duty. We miss him as his shade passes before our vision with a poignancy of grief that I at least cannot describe in words. We miss our Political Rishi, Mr. N. M. Paramanand, confined to his bed for ten years and more of one continuous suffering and yet a friend from whom we never heard a word of complaint or of sorrow. In matters of religious, social or political elevation a purer life and a purer soul never lived with us and never worked with us till the last breath left him. Another gap is that left by my friend Mr. Javerilal U. Yajnik. A soul formed in a higher mould, a soul above vanity, and in its capacities equal to all that we expect in our great men, joined with humility and

resignation that was unequalled by any who lived before him or who might come after him. We miss Mr. V. N. Bhagwat, a silent worker in the higher fields. I know his charity was a silent charity. It was a charity which he loved to hide from all his most intimate friends, a man whose independence of character was never sullied by any blemish of irreverence or fault-finding.

We miss all these and many more. It would be too long a list for me on an occasion like this to recall to your minds all the shadows flitting before our eyes, some more clearly perceptible than others, and we miss above all, our friend, for the commemoration of whose death we have met more especially on this occasion here. Our friend Mr. Telang was not a man whose reputation was confined to this city or this Presidency. He was India's representative, the type, I may say, of New India. Had it not been that the cruel hand of death took him away from us all too soon, there was every promise that year after year the rose that had blossomed with such beauty and with such fragrance in our midst, would have filled the whole country with its sweet scent. His simplicity of life was exemplary, his sympathies were always foremost in the support of everything that was good and true. Noble in mind himself, contact and converse with him made every one, even a stranger who visited him for the first time, discover in the man the nobility of character which only those that have this magnetic power developed in them by the gift of nature can realize. His countenance is before you all; no photograph can ever portray his features, that calm life which I believe we all realize, though it is not possible to describe it. The intellectual

cast of that countenance was of a character which I had the privilege to mark in its very first stages. Some five and thirty years ago it was that I noticed in the young man who then attended the college, a power and force concealed which would carry him up to the very highest stages of our social and political life. There were lines in that countenance which marked him out as an intellectual giant before whom all our modest performances would look as if we were only trying to follow him, but could never get up to him. Those who heard him speak—there must be thousands here—will remember his silver voice, his persuasive and earnest eloquence; it was all one sweet flow of reason. Those who heard him speak still remember him not as an orator who could thunder, but as one who gave light, heat, motion, and hope to the masses about him in a way to make them feel that they had profited by listening to him, even for a short space of time. Such was the man as he was seen and as he was heard, but when we went beyond the spheres of sight and hearing, and when we met the man in converse, when we saw him at work in his own house, or when we saw him as he was engaged in his multifarious duties, our estimation of him which might have been formed by hearing him or seeing him, developed into a love which we liked to cherish as a privilege. Our intimacy with him grew day by day and inch by inch into a privilege of citizenship which under no circumstances we would be induced to forego. Never out of temper himself, he always put other people into their best temper, always thinking that there was something in everybody else which deserved his admiration.

As a scholar, as a speaker, as a politician, as a judge, as a member of our political and official bodies, his services are on record. Though his friends have not done their duty by him in letting his life remain unwritten, and in allowing the reminiscences of his life to be still gathered from the remarks made here and there, that work has been undertaken by an English friend far away separated from India, and by a Parsee gentleman who, however, has not been able to understand him and his life properly. I can imagine one reason why it has been found impossible by some intimate friends of his to do full justice to the man. Their excess of love for him made it impossible for them to put their thoughts in writing in such a way as to do adequate justice to the great excellences of his character.

To those who may think that the claims of future existence have no regard for us, and that all that we need care about is our present existence, and that after death there is an end of all things to us, an end that can never be recalled to them, there is no hope and no joy in store. But most of us cherish the faith in a future existence for the soul where opportunities, denied here, are given to us in abundance; where our powers are still further developed, and where our foibles, if any, are corrected, our temper is strengthened, and our virtues are enlarged. This is the belief of Mr. Telang's friends; and it is this belief of theirs that gives them consolation, and partly reconciles them to the loss they have suffered in the departure of so many of our great and good men. What converse shall we hold with these spirits, who are hovering over our heads in and about this place? What shall we converse with them? Certainly not of our petty disappoint-

ments and sorrows; not of the many toils and trials that we have to suffer. What shall we converse about with souls like these? Everyone has to fix in his own mind what we shall converse about. They all have a family likeness which distinguishes them from many of our other friends who have gone either before them or after them, to the existence from which there is said to be no return.

✓ And while you are contemplating in your own minds what converse you should hold with these spirits, I shall suggest to you the particular features of this likeness. What are these features of family likeness which distinguish those whose memory I have brought to your recollection? Some of you may think that there is no family likeness; that there are no common features in the great and good work done by these men, which would justify my calling them a school; and still I want to show to you, if I am permitted to do so, that they do form a school. In the absence of a better name I may call that school, as representing all its best characteristics—I may call it the Telang School of Thought and Action. Shall we make ourselves worthy to be the followers of this school in our present existence, either as teachers or disciples? For teacher and disciple are alike in the same condition in respect of this high spiritual converse. Teaching is learning in such matters; teaching is discipline; learning is discipline again. What then are these common features which bring all these great and good men together in our estimation? What makes all these great men and good people rise together before our minds as if they were members of one family; as if they were members of one society; as if they were members of an association with

common purposes and objects? Such of you as knew these persons intimately need hardly be reminded of the particular and salient features of this school. I do not deny that there are other schools with distinguishing features; I should be the last person to deny that. Though my love for this school grows higher every day, still I should be the last person to deny that there are other schools, and possibly the members of those schools might have equal right to assert their own superiority. But on this occasion we have been invited as the members of a Club of which Mr. Telang, though not the founder, was a most distinguished leader. We meet here to store up in our minds in this commemoration all the lessons with which his life, his teachings, his actions, and his sufferings are so fraught; we shall carry those lessons by way of discipline and by way of encouragement to us all.

The first common feature is that they were all *hopeful men*. You may perhaps not understand me when I say that this privilege of hopefulness is one which many disentitle themselves from claiming a share in; some of you may not be able to see what grounds for hopefulness can exist in our present abasement when the whole world is pointing the finger of scorn at us. And yet it is a fact that they were all hopeful. If any one wishes to become a member of this Telang school of thought and hold converse with these great teachers of this school, he must first learn the lesson that *hopefulness is the badge of the school*.

We should be unworthy of ourselves if we are not hopeful with our traditions which transcend the tradition of every other nation of the world. You may take the

map of Asia, Europe, Africa, or America, and you will find that there is no other country in the world which presents such a continuity of existence over such a long period of time. Races and creeds have risen, thrived, and decayed in other lands, but India is favoured that notwithstanding its abasement in many other particulars, the people of this country have been preserved from dangers, as they were a people with a special mission entrusted to them. We, of the present, or those of our ancestors of the immediate past, may not be worthy to bear the standard of that mission, but still there is the fact that we represent a continuity of creed, of traditions, of literature, of philosophy, of modes of life and forms of thought which are peculiar to this land, and which have been carried to other countries by our illustrious ancestors in the past from this land. What is there in this circumstance, you may ask, that we should feel hopeful on this account. It cannot surely be for nothing that this particular favour has been shown to us under providential guidance. If the miraculous preservation of a few thousand Jews had a purpose, this more miraculous preservation of one-fifth of the human race is not due to mere chance. We are under the severe discipline of a high Purpose. This is one ground of the hopefulness which has been the characteristic feature of the school. They were hopeful men, they felt proud of the past, and they were hopeful of the future. They were hopeful that if they lived under this discipline, they might in time be fitted to take their proper place in history.

What is the nature of this discipline which unites our dislocated races together and makes us one in aspi-

ration and thought? All the creeds and civilizations are gathered in this land; all the spiritual forms and beliefs are here; all social and political experiments are being tried on a large scale; and this is the only land where you will find all these creeds represented by hundreds and thousands, and millions, living peaceably together and partaking of the charities, learning, and excellence of each in a spirit of toleration for all which you will nowhere find on the broad face of this earth. This is a discipline which has not been vouchsafed to any other country in the world. The Jews were punished in Egypt; they were taken captive to Persia and were brought back and restored to their promised land, and finally again scattered to the four corners of the world. We also have been punished for our wrong doings, and still the providential discipline keeps its hold upon us, but we have not been scattered to the winds. We are slowly being prepared by discipline and trained to be what we were certainly intended to be—fulfillers of the mission which has still not been fully accomplished. Our great ancestors accomplished it in part, their successors failed to accomplish it and suffered the reverses that we are now labouring under, and we feel hopeful that this work has come to our hands, and we are being trained to undertake it in a proper spirit. If we can take away with us this source of strength from this commemoration, then we shall have taken the first steps in the lessons which are taught in this school.

You will recognize that this *sturdy hopefulness* is the golden mean between stolid indifference to change and the sanguineness of temper which desires to accom-

plish the work of centuries in as many decades and the work of decades in as many years and the work of years in as many days. The stolid indifference to change represents the decrepitude of old age and the sanguineness of temper represents the difference between the child and the man. Many of us are still in that state of mind when every little success elates us and every little depression dejects us. Give them a little start in life, and they feel as if they have mastered the whole situation; a little piece of good fortune happens to them and they feel that they are the luckiest men in the world. People who have got this spirit of sanguineness developed in them are, I say, clearly to be distinguished from those who, while they feel hopeful of the final result, are still weighed down with the thought that they have to undergo a long discipline, and have no heart for boisterous displays or dreams of mock revivals of past glory. The results are to be achieved in ourselves and not by change of extraneous circumstances. And these results are to be achieved and change has to be brought about in a way which it would be difficult to anticipate at present but such change must come if we aspire to fulfil that mission which has been left half accomplished. We know that we should not be oversanguine in such matters.

Our difficulties are really not outside us but inside us; the difficulties are in us, in our inertia, in our weakness, in our physical inability to sustain hard work, in our inaptitude to work long for great results by great toil. These are our difficulties; old habits are to be changed; we have by long centuries of debasement learnt to be like little children who are disappointed on being deprived

of a toy or like old men we are irritable and querulous. We should learn to be men, stalwart puritan men, battling for the right, not indifferent nor sanguine, trustful but not elated, serious but not dejected. That is the change in character which has to be accomplished.

One word of caution is necessary here. It is not the immediate past of which we are to feel proud, but of the past of our great ancestors in whose time our philosophies were developed, our literature and sciences grew up and our people went to foreign lands, far off to Java, to the East, and far away beyond Mongolia to the North. About these times we ought to have intense reverence. The more immediate past has brought us to our present position and stranded us into the difficulties in which we find ourselves. We are creatures of that more immediate past, we are suffering the penalty of our weakness, hesitation and self-seeking and mutual jealousies. That immediate past has landed us into our debasement. There have been periods even in that immediate past about which we may be all as legitimately proud as of the days of our great ancestors. There have been lights blazing on the mountain tops which shone with a brilliancy as great as of the Rishis in the olden days. These lights have, however, been extinguished. They were so few and far between, and the work to be accomplished was so great that lights failed and we are to some extent involved in our own darkness; and that veil has to be lifted, and nobody can lift it unless we welcome the light ourselves. Vast agencies are set in motion, by the guiding hand whose kindness it is our privilege to recognise at every step, but it is a work which takes years and years,

and centuries after centuries before it can be fully accomplished.

Now these are some of the distinguishing features of this school. What else is there to be said about the common family features of this group of great and good men that we have called to converse with us? There is this further common feature—that they all agreed in holding that the work to be accomplished is not one-sided work. *The liberation that has to be sought is not in one department of life, or one sort of activity, or in one sphere of thought, but it is an all-round work in which you cannot dissociate one activity from another.* Take the improvement of our physique alone. To do that you may take many decades, you may take centuries, as the result of false ideals of life, evil habits, and bad institutions can only be counteracted by persistent efforts to combat the mischief.

But besides physical development the other duties that have to be performed are of even still more peremptory characters. And what are they? They are the improvement of the social surroundings about us. The very air in which we live, move and breathe has to be purified. These environments have to be in a sense re-ordered in a way that would help not merely our physical growth, but also our intellectual and moral growth. That was the idea in the mind of our friend, the Political Rishi. Those who knew him, lying as he had been in bed in sorrow and suffering for ten or twelve years, knew that if there was anything which preyed on the mind of that man it was not the pain that he suffered—though that pain was excruciating, but it was this thought, that some of

us were attaching too much of importance to one form of evil and paid little attention to the other forms. There was the work of religious regeneration to be attended to. Not that we need go to a foreign country and borrow our faith from foreign masters. Spiritual life was developed into the highest perfection, not merely in the writings, but in the actual existence of great men who flourished in the past. We have to revive that life in us; we have not to set up a particular doctrine which separated one friend from another, and one church from another. Too much importance is attached to that. We have preserved the outward forms and symbols while the spirit has evaporated—the spirit which teaches us to do justice between man and man, and between man and woman too, and high and low alike.

While we developed new forms of thought in philosophy we circumvented ourselves with new temptations, and we are now in a fix, being able neither to move out, nor move with the mass, and yet the social emancipation, or if you want to call it by any other name, religious or social revival if you please—is a task that has to be accomplished.

Next there is the economical and industrial movement. Our industries are in the same condition in which they were when man first entered on the agricultural stage. Millions of people are working and toiling all the year round in a most desultory fashion, managing to eke out their living in some form or other. Labour is unskilful, capital is scarce and without organization, our material resources are either not utilized or undeveloped. It is difficult to accomplish a revolution like that unaided.

But Providence has placed us in a most favourable state to secure the development of this side of human character in its best form. We have been put to school under the best living captains of industry and organisation.

We have, lastly, to learn to take interest in the political well being of our people, and though it is thought to be a very easy lesson to learn, it is one which is most difficult to accomplish, unless ordained with it, we secure the regular development of other useful activity in us.

You may frame a system, you may fashion a machine, you may build a house, but you cannot manufacture men in the way in which you can manufacture dead machines. You must have men to deal with this system, to live in this house, and to work this machine. There are other schools in this country proclaiming a dozen other missions. But the great characteristic feature of what I have called the Telang school is that you cannot develop the chest without developing your other organs; you cannot starve yourselves and yet desire that your muscles shall grow and your nerves have the same elasticity as before. There is an interdependence between the parts, so that it is not possible to do justice to one without doing justice to the other also. This, I believe to be a very difficult lesson to learn and yet every one of those men that I have named, every one of them lived and died in a steadfast faith in this great doctrine. I may bring to your recollection the work done by our friend, whose death we have met here specially to commemorate. He was, as you know, a writer, a social and economical reformer, and he was the most active worker in the political field. He was a man who was a great

scholar; not a scholar in the old sense of the word. He was a scholar whom the Pandits of the West and the Pandits of the East had learnt to revere, and learnt to understand. He combined all these activities in himself and he was trying to give a helping hand to all in other fields when he could not himself work. In such matters as these, people think that they cannot help one another. I should be the last person to entertain an idea like that. The strongest among us has sometimes his moments of weakness. A man who does not get the support of his friends at such times feels that he is left alone and sinks occasionally and sins badly. We are for a moment led to believe that we cannot make use of greater opportunities without running greater risks. This is one of the mistakes which the weakness of human nature always entails upon the strongest of our men. It should be our duty to try and remedy this weakness and to see that such a mistake may not occur. When you find that you have made a mistake you must not try to hide it or defend it, but you should seek help, and try to see that it does not occur again. That is the lesson that we have to learn from true hopefulness; that hopefulness is based on the belief that there is a mission assigned to us; that mission is not assigned by any one among us, but assigned by One who alone has the power to assign the mission. And that belief is based on a sure foundation, not on the foundation of our common sense, or our powers and our capacity. But it is a religious belief that there is this sort of guidance given to us, only on one condition, that we fully realize that we have to work our own liberation and our own betterment, and that betterment not in one field or in

one direction. Our muscles and sinews have to be hardened; our hearts have to be humanized to the sense of justice in all directions; and our intellect to be freed from prejudice and prepossessions; freed from the beliefs of superstitions which have been long dominating over us. This is a work of a very difficult character, and yet each one of us, unless he puts his hand to the wheel, can never help himself to obtain success in his own emancipation. I said that there are other features relating to this particular question which I cannot describe at present. I have thought about them, but I do not at present feel that I can do justice to them. I am quite sure that many of you here had the privilege of longer intimacy with the friend I have now brought to your recollection, whose memory we have now come here to commemorate. The teachings of the Telang School are seen in the life and writings of the men whose family likeness I have brought to your recollection on this occasion. We have a duty to discharge; we all owe a debt of duty, not of course in feeding them with things which they do not want, but to feel for a moment that you are not of this world, that you are in some better existence than in this world, and that your soul converses with their souls in the other existence in order to throw off its bondage. This is an object to the accomplishment of which occasions like this should be utilized. I hope you will be able to do that work. I trust that this Club in which Mr. Telang took so much interest, and a Club in which, I fear, there is something wanting to make it clubbable, will prosper, and that occasions which bring us together will multiply and make us feel the want of Club life, till we raise this Club to the posi-

tion occupied by the Clubs of the other communities in this city. A Club without common feelings may be said to be a rope of sand. Every one of you has got a function to perform in this connection. The common feature of Club life is co-operation and association. I believe I am not far wrong when I say that the few principles which I have tried to place before you now find response in your hearts, and there are many more to which your attention may hereafter be directed. In the meanwhile there is no reason why we may not join in common fellowship which is likely to be productive of such good results. ✓

Note :—This address was delivered at the Hindu Union Club, Bombay, in 1895. 1895?

III

REVIVAL OR REFORM

The Reports of this year's work which have been received from nearly sixty Associations, large and small, and which have been summarized up to date, complain that their work for the year has not been as successful as in the previous two years. And yet to those who can read between the lines, there are manifest signs which show that the work has been as earnestly pursued as ever. To instance a few cases:—Under the head of Female Education, the Bethune College of Calcutta, the Girls' High Schools at Poona and Ahmedabad, the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya at Jallunder, the Sabha's Girls' School at Lahore, the Maharani's Girls' School at Mysore, the Mahakali Pathashala organized by Mataji Tapasvini Bai, a Mahratta lady, in Calcutta, and the Sylhet and Mymensingh Unions, all show a record of progress, each in its own line of development. There is not a single Reform Association of any position in the country which has not lent its best efforts to raise the standard and popularize the system of Female Education. Many Associations, Sabas, and Samajas maintain independent girls' schools of their own, and others have their home classes more or less actively employed in carrying on the work of the schools to educate the more advanced students. Others again have their lectures for ladies, and Ladies' Associations such as at Ahmedabad, Bombay, and Madras, started and maintained by the ladies themselves. Though

the condition of female education is still very backward and though the experiments that are now carried on are on different lines, the signs are clearly visible that throughout India, the national awakening to the necessity of developing the moral and intellectual capacities and aptitudes of our sisters has found universal recognition.

As regards another sign of this liberal movement which seeks to do equal justice to the rights of female as of the male sex, it is satisfactory to note that though the number of widow marriages this year has been smaller than that of the previous years, still all the provinces have taken part in the movement. The reports show that in all, twenty-five widow marriages were celebrated throughout India during the past year:—in the Punjab ten, Bombay six, the Central Provinces four, Madras, North-West Provinces and Bengal, one each. The widow marriages in the Central Provinces have been all brought about directly or indirectly by the persistent efforts of Rao Bahadur Kolhatkar, the President of this gathering. For the remarriages in Punjab the credit is due to Dewan Sant Ram and his friends of the Widow Marriage Association there, and in regard to Bombay the same honour is due to Mr. Bhagwandas, the son of the late Mr. Madhavadas Rangunathdas, in whose house two re-marriages were celebrated. The credit of the widow marriages celebrated in Madras is due to Rai Bahadur Vireshlingam Pantulu. There was thus not a single province in which friends of the cause did not manifest their active interest in it, which remark does not equally hold good for the previous years. The paucity in the total number was partly due to the calamities of the year, and partly to the

prohibition of all marriages due to the year being a *Sinhastha* year. Another good sign of the times which may be noted is the fact that some of the castes, in which no re-marriages had been celebrated before, joined in the movement for the first time this year. It was also reported in the papers that the Maharajah of Nabha, in the Punjab, had exercised his influence in favour of bettering the condition of Hindu widows, and inducing influential Hindu gentlemen to support the widow marriage movement. In the Chandraseniya-Kayastha Prabhu caste of Bombay, a similar pronouncement was made by the leaders of the community in favour of re-marriage, and it was resolved to bring up the subject before the next Kayastha Prabhu Conference to be held at Baroda. Another satisfactory indication of the time is furnished by the fact reported from Guzerat, that the Audicha Brahmin community at Damun has made a similar pronouncement in favour of widow marriage in their caste. The Widows' Homes at Baranagore and at Poona have also been successfully maintained notwithstanding pecuniary difficulties, and the numbers of widows attending the homes has slightly increased, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Shashipad Bannerjee and Professor Karve of Poona.

As regards Foreign Travel, the year has had a good record to show. Several gentlemen of the Saraswata Brahman community have returned from England, and though the *Guru*, High Priest, of the caste has refused admission to them, the reform party at Mangalore and in North Canara have succeeded in openly showing their sympathies with these men. Raja Nowloji Rao Gujar,

a scion of the princely house of Nagpore, returned from England, and was well received, and Messrs. Booti and Alonikar of Nagpur, Mr. Krishna Rao Bholanath of Ahmedabad, Professor Gokhale of Poona, and Mr. Ketkar of Gwalior, have similarly, though not formally, been admitted by some of their caste people, and the opposition has not ventured to place any difficulties in their way. Two Bhatia gentlemen, for the first time in that community, left for England with the full support of their caste. In the Punjab, several young men in the Biradadri castes, who had been to England, were admitted back without any opposition. Two young men from the Aurorbans caste went to England last year. The liberal section of the Cashmere Pandit's Sabha is strongly in favour of foreign travel. These instances show that slowly but surely, in all parts of the country, the prejudice against foreign travel is on the wane, and that before long the orthodox community or communities will learn to tolerate these departures from custom as an inevitable change.

In regard to the question of Inter-Marriage, the Bengal papers announced an inter-marriage in high life between two sub-divisions of the Kayastha community, which hitherto kept aloof. In the Punjab, there was a betrothal between two sub-castes of the Serin community. This was the first instance of an inter-marriage between these two sub-divisions. Many of the widow marriages have also been instances of inter-marriages, and for the first time last year two instances of inter-marriage between Madrasi and Bengali gentlemen and ladies were reported. The North-West Provinces reports show

instances of similar fusion between sub-divisions of the Kayastha caste there, and in Guzerat there is a similar tendency manifest in some of the castes to amalgamate together.

As regards the postponement of Infant marriages, the reports from all provinces show a decided tendency to increase the limits of marriageable ages of girls and boys. In the Punjab, the Aurorbans Sabha has passed a resolution that no girl belonging to the caste should be given in marriage unless she completed her twelfth year. In the Madras Presidency, the opinion is gaining ground that the time has now come for applying to Government for legislation on the subject to fix at least the marriageable age for boys, if not for girls, and to lay down a maximum limit of age for old persons who marry young girls, on the plan adopted by the Mysore Government. The Madras Provincial Social Conference and the Godavery District Conference expressly passed resolutions on this subject. The Hindu Social Reform Association at Madras has also appointed a committee to draw up a memorial with the same object. The Hon. Mr. Jambulingam Mudaliyar is reported to be contemplating the introduction of a Bill in the local Council there on this subject. There have also been individual instances in some parts of the country where grown-up girls have been married without experiencing any very bitter opposition from the caste.

Nearly all the Associations have been pledged to support the Purity movement, including the anti-Nautch and Temperance agitation, and the work done during the year shows considerable progress under both these heads.

To turn next to another question in which the Conference has been interesting itself for the past few years,—the Admission of Converts from other faiths,—some progress has been made during the year. The Shuddhi Sabha admitted nearly 200 Mahomedan converts this year. Hitherto, the movement for the readmission of converts to other faiths back into the Hindu society was chiefly confined to the Punjab. This year, however, there have been also instances of such conversions in Bengal, the North-West Provinces, and far away in Burma, one of them being a convert Christian and the others Mahomedans. The Shuddhi Sabha of Lahore and the Arya Samaja there have deservedly taken the lead in this movement, and it will be a source of great strength to them that the movement has been taken up in the other Provinces also. The Central Provinces report for the year show that Mr. Shanker Shastri of Jubbulpore has published a pamphlet on the subject, and it is a strange coincidence that Professor Rajaram Shastri Bhagwat of Bombay read this year a paper before the branch of the Royal Asiatic Society there, showing how in old times the non-Aryan races were brought within the fold of the Aryan system.

As regards the reduction of extravagant expenses in marriage, a very important movement was started in Calcutta under the auspices of leading Kayastha gentlemen, including such men as Sir Romesh Chundra Mitra and the Hon'ble Mr. Madhava Chandra Ghose, who met at Babu Ramnath Ghose's house, and passed several resolutions which are likely to be attended with good results. Nearly every one of the reports of the

North - West Provinces contains details of the manner in which the Kayasthas, the Bhargavas, the Chaturvedis, the Vaishyas, the Jains, and the other castes have tried to lay down sliding scales of marriage expenditure, curtailing extravagance under many heads, abolishing *Nautch* parties, fireworks, and other useless items. In the Punjab, the Aurorbans have very considerably reduced the extravagance in marriage expenses. On the Bombay side, the Bhatia *Mandal* and the Dasa Oswal Jains have successfully worked in the same direction. Even in far off Baroda, the Dasa Porwad Bania caste people have been moving in the matter. Following the example of the Rajputra Hitakarini Sabha, many non-Rajput castes in Rajputana and Malwa have laid down rules which are enforced by the same sanctions as those of the principal Sabha.

As regards Conference work generally, it may be noted that caste Conferences are the order of the day in all parts of India. I have, on previous occasions, mentioned the gatherings annually held this week in several large towns in the North-West Provinces of the Kayastha and the Vaishya community. This year was distinguished by the holding of the first Provincial Social Conference in Madras, in which Presidency also we had two district Conferences, one on the East Coast in the Godavery District, and the other on the West Coast at Mangalore. New associations are being formed under very favourable auspices in many parts of the country, notably in the districts of Bombay and Madras Presidencies, to support the work of the Conference and to give effect to its resolutions.

Encouraged by the success which has attended the efforts of the Mysore Government, and the Malabar Marriage Law passed in the Madras Council, two Bills of great social importance have been introduced, one, in the Imperial Council, to bring under better control religious Charities and Endowments, and another, in the Madras Council to remove all doubts and to codify the law in regard to what constitutes self-acquired property under the Hindu joint family system. Both these Bills have suggested subjects for discussion at the ensuing Conference this year, and it is not, therefore, necessary for me to enlarge upon their importance. There is a third measure before the Viceroy's Council which, though it relates to a particular section of the Mahomedan community, has a wider bearing which interests us all. The Memon section of this community in Bombay were originally Hindu converts, and though they embraced Mahomedanism, they retained their old Hindu customs in regard to inheritance and succession, and these customs were recognized by our Law Courts. A majority of that community, however, now desire that, in place of the Hindu customs, the Mahomedan Law should govern their succession to the property of deceased persons. The Government of India, accordingly, intend to pass a sort of a permissive measure, by which a member of this community may retain or abandon the old rules by a formal declaration of his choice, which choice, once made, will be final. The subject bristles with difficulties, but the permissive legislation, if it proves a success in actual operation, will furnish a precedent which may prove of considerable help to those who wish to have

more liberal laws of inheritance and succession without a change of religion.

Such is the brief record of the principal social events of the year. Many ardent spirits amongst us will, no doubt, be very much dissatisfied with the poverty of this record. At the same time we must bear in mind that hundreds and thousands, nay, millions, of our countrymen regard this poor record as very revolutionary, and condemn this as one of the unseen causes which have brought about the physical and moral catastrophes upon the land by way of punishment for the sins of the Reformers. These are the two extreme sides of the question, and it is not for me to say to an audience like this, on which side the balance of truth may be found. The Arya Patrika of the Punjab which is a recognized organ of the Arya Samajas there, has, in its words of advice to the Conference, expressed its view that we are radically in the wrong in seeking to reform the usages of our society without a change of religion, and it seriously suggests that we should in the first instance become members of the Arya Samaja, and this conversion will bring with it all the desired reforms. Many enthusiastic friends of the Brahmo Samaja entertain similar views and give us similar advice. All I can say to these welcome advisers is that they do not fully realize the situation and its difficulties. People have changed their religion and yet retained their social usages unchanged. The native Christians, for example, especially the Roman Catholic section among them, and many sections of Mahomedans, are instances in point. Besides, it has been well observed that even for a change of religion, it is too often necessary

that the social surroundings must be liberalised in such a way as to help people to realize their own responsibilities, and to strengthen them in their efforts. Lastly, these well-meaning advisers seem to forget that the work of reform cannot be put off indefinitely till the far more arduous and difficult work of religious conversion is accomplished. It may take centuries before the Arya or the Brahmo Samajas establish their claims to general recognition. In the meanwhile what is to become of the social organization? (Slowly but surely, the progress of liberal ideas must be allowed to work its way in reforming our social customs, and the process cannot be stopped even though we may wish it. In the case of our society, especially, the usages which at present prevail among us were admittedly not those which obtained in the most glorious periods of our history. On most of the points which are included in our programme, our own records of the past show that there has been a decided change for the worse, and it is surely within the range of practical possibilities for us to work for a better state of things, without stirring up the rancorous hostilities which religious differences have a tendency to create and foster. There is no earthly reason whatsoever why we should not co-operate with these religious organizations, or why they should not rather co-operate with us in this work in which our interests are common, because the majority of our countrymen hold different views about religion from those which commend themselves to these Samajas. I am speaking these words with a full sense of my responsibility, for I am, in my own humble way, a member of one, if not both the Samajas, and I am a sincere searcher

after religious truth, in full sympathy with the Arya and Brahma Samaja movements, and I hope, therefore, that these advisers of ours will take my reply in the same spirit, and will not misunderstand me. Schismatic methods of propagation cannot be applied with effect to vast communities which are not within their narrow pale.

On the other side, some of our orthodox friends find fault with us, not because of the particular reforms we have in view, but on account of the methods we follow. While the new religious sects condemn us for being too orthodox, the extreme orthodox section denounce us for being too revolutionary in our methods. According to these last, our efforts should be directed to revive, and not to reform. I have many friends in this camp of extreme orthodoxy, and their watchword is that Revival, and not Reform, should be our motto. They advocate a return to the old ways, and appeal to the old authorities, and the old sanctions. Here also, as in the instance stated above, people speak without realizing the full significance of their own words. When we are asked to revive our old institutions and customs, people seem to me to be very much at sea as to what it is they seek to revive. What particular period of our history is to be taken as the old, whether the period of the Vedas, of the Smritis, of the Puranas, or of the Mahomedans or the modern Hindu times? Our usages have been changed from time to time by a slow process of growth, and in some cases, of decay and corruption, and you cannot stop at any particular period without breaking the continuity of the whole. When my revivalist friend presses his argument upon me he has to seek recourse to some subterfuge which really

furnishes no reply to his own question. What shall we revive? Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our castes indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and intoxicating drink, which exhausted every section of our country's Zoology and Botany? The men and the gods of those old days ate and drank forbidden things to excess, in a way no revivalist will now venture to recommend. Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognized mixed and illegitimate intercourse? Shall we revive the Niyoga system of propagating sons on our brother's wives when widowed? Shall we revive the old liberties taken by the Rishis and by the wives of the Rishis with the marital tie? Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year's end to year's end, in which even human beings were not spared, as propitiatory offerings to God? Shall we revive the Shakti worship of the left hand, with its indecencies and practical debaucheries? Shall we revive the *Sati* and infanticide customs, or the flinging of living men into the rivers or over rocks, or hook-swinging, or the crushing beneath the Jagannath car? Shall we revive the internecine wars of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas or the cruel persecution and degradation of the Aboriginal population? Shall we revive the custom of many husbands to one wife or of many wives to one husband? Shall we require our Brahmins to cease to be landlords and gentlemen, and turn into beggars and dependants upon the King as in olden times? These instances will suffice to show that the plan of reviving the ancient usages and customs will not

work our salvation, and is not practicable. If these usages were good and beneficial, why were they altered by our wise ancestors? If they were bad and injurious, how can any claim be put forward for their restoration after so many ages? Besides, it seems to be forgotten that in a living organism, as society is, no revival is possible. The dead and the buried are burnt once for all, and the dead past cannot, therefore, be revived except by a re-formation of the old materials into new organized beings.

If revival is impossible, this reformation is the only alternative open to sensible people, and now it may be asked what is the principle on which this reformation must be based. People have very hazy ideas on this subject. It seems to many that it is the outward form which has to be changed, and if this change can be made, they think that all the difficulties in our way will vanish. If we change our outward manners and customs, and change our food and dress, sit in a particular way, or walk in a particular fashion, our work, according to them, is accomplished. I cannot but think that much of the prejudice against the reformers is due to this misunderstanding. It is not the outward form but the inward form, the thought and the idea which determines the outward form, that has to be changed, if real reformation is desired. Now what have been the inward forms or ideas which have been hastening our decline during the past three thousand years? These ideas may be briefly set forth as isolation, submission to outward force or power more than to the voice of the inward conscience, perception of factitious difference between men and men, due to heredity and birth, a passive

acquiescence in evil or wrong-doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being, almost bordering upon fatalism. These have been the root ideas of our social system. They have, as their natural result, led to the existing family arrangements, where the woman is entirely subordinated to the man, and the lower castes to the higher castes, to the length of depriving men of their natural respect for humanity. All the evils we seek to combat flow from the prevalence of these ideas. They are mere corollaries to these axiomatic assumptions. They prevent our people from realising that they really are in all conscience neither better nor worse than their fellows, and that the average man, whatever garb he may put on, is the worse for his assuming dignities and powers which do not, in fact, belong to him. As long as these ideas remain operative on our mind we may change our outward forms and institutions, and be none the better for the change. These ideas have produced their results, and we must judge of their good or bad qualities, as St. Paul says, by their fruits. Now, that these results have been disastrous nobody disputes or doubts, and the lesson to be drawn for our guidance in the future from this fact is that the current of these ideas must be changed, and in the place of the old worship, we must accustom ourselves and others to worship and reverence new ideals. In place of isolation we must have fraternity, or rather elastic expansiveness. At present, it is everybody's ambition to pride himself upon being a member of the smallest community that can be conceived, and the smaller the number of those with whom you can dine or marry or associate, the higher your purity and perfection.

The purest person is he who cooks his own food, and does not allow the shadow of his nearest friend to fall upon his cooked food. Every caste and every sect has thus a tendency to split itself into smaller castes and smaller sects in practical life. Even in philosophy, it is a received maxim that knowledge and salvation are only possible for the esoteric few, with whom only is true wisdom and power, and for the rest of mankind, they must be left to grovel in superstition and vice, with only a colouring of so-called religion to make them respectable.

Now all this must be changed. The new mould of thought must be cast, as stated above, in fraternity, or all-attracting expansiveness, and cohesion in society. Increase your circle of friends and associates slowly and cautiously if you will, but the tendency must be to turn our face towards a general recognition of the essential equality between man and man. That will beget sympathy and power. It will strengthen your own minds by the sense that you have numbers with you, and not against you, or, as you foolishly imagine, below you. The next idea which lies at the root of our helplessness is that we were always intended to remain children, to be subject to outside control, and never to rise to the dignity of self-control by making our conscience and our reason the sole guides to our conduct. All our past history has been a terrible witness to the havoc committed by this misconception. We are children, no doubt, but the children of God, and not of man, and the voice of God in us is the only voice to which we are bound to listen. Of course, all of us cannot listen to that voice when we desire it, because from long neglect we have benumbed the faculty

of conscience in us. With too many of us, a thing is true or false, righteous or sinful, simply because somebody else has said that it is so. Duties and obligations are duties and obligations, not because we feel them to be so, but because somebody, reputed to be wise, has laid it down to be so. Of course, in small matters of manners and courtesies, this outward dictation is not without its use. But when we abandon ourselves entirely to this helplessness, and depend on others' wills, it is no wonder that we become as helpless as children. Now, the new idea which should take its place is not the idea of rebellious independence and overthrow of all authority, but that of freedom responsible to God alone. Great and wise men in the past or in the present, have a claim on our regards. But they must not come between us and our God—the Divine principle seated within everyone of us, high or low. It is this sense of self-respect, or rather of respect to the God in us, which has to be cultivated and it is a tender plant which takes years and years to cultivate. But we have the capacity, and we owe it as a duty to ourselves to undertake the task. Reverence all human authority, pay your respects to all prophets and revelations, but subordinate that reverence to the Divine command in us. Similarly, men differ from men in natural capacities and aptitudes, and heredity and birth are factors of some importance in our development, but it is at the same time true that they are not the all-important factors that we have learnt to regard them from sheer idleness, as determining our fates by a sort of moral necessity. Heredity and birth explain many things, but neither they, nor the law of Karma, explain all things,

and what is worse, they do not explain the mystery that makes man and woman what they really are, the reflections of the image of God. Our passions and our feelings, our pride and our ambition, lend strength to these factitious agencies, and with their help, the doctrine of Karma completes our conquest, and enforces our surrender. Heredity and birth can be controlled and set back by a properly trained will, when this will is subservient to a Higher Will. This misconception is very hard to remove, perhaps the hardest of the old ideas, but removed it must be, if not in one life or generation, in many lives and many generations, if we are to rise to our full stature.

The fourth old form or idea, to which I will allude here, is our acquiescence in wrong or evil-doing as an inevitable condition of human life, about which we need not be very particular, as after all human life is a vanity and a dream, and we are not much concerned with it. It is in fact atheism in its worst form. No man or woman really ceases to be animal who does not perceive and realize that wrong and evil-doing, impurity and vice, crime and misery, and sin of all kinds is really our animal existence prolonged. It is the beast in us which blinds us to impurity and vice and makes them even attractive. There must be *Nautches* in our temples, say our priests, because even the gods cannot do without their impure fairies. This is only a typical instance of our acquiescence in impurity. There must be drunkenness in the world, there must be poverty, and wretchedness, and tyranny, there must be fraud and force, there must be thieves and

robbers, and the law to punish them. No doubt these have been facts, and there is no use denying their existence. But in the name of all that is sacred and true, do not acquiesce in them, do not hug these evils to your bosom, and cherish them. Their contact is poison, and the worst poison, because it does not kill, but corrupt men. A healthy sense of the true dignity of our nature and of man's high destiny is the best corrective and antidote to this poison.

I think I have said more than enough to suggest to your reflecting minds what it is that we have to reform. All admit that we have been deformed. We have lost our stature, we are bent in a hundred places, our eyes lust after forbidden things, our ears desire to hear scandals about our neighbours, our tongue wants to taste forbidden fruit, our hands itch for another man's property, our bowels are deranged with indigestible food. We cannot walk on our feet, but require stilts or crutches. This is our present social polity, and now we want this deformity to be removed, and the only way to remove it is to place ourselves under the discipline of better ideas and forms such as those I have briefly touched above. Now this is the work of the reformer. Reforms in the matter of infant marriage and enforced widowhood, in the matter of temperance and purity, intermarriages between castes, the elevation of the low castes, and readmission of converts, and regulations of our endowments and charity, are reforms, only so far and no further, as they check the influence of the old ideas and promote the growth of the new tendencies. The reformer has to infuse in himself the light and

warmth of nature, and he can only do it by purifying and improving himself and his surroundings. He must have his family, village, tribe, and nation, recast in other and new moulds, and that is the reason why social reform becomes an obligatory duty, and not a mere pastime which might be given up at pleasure. Revival is, as I have said, impossible—as impossible as mass conversion into other faiths. But even if these were possible, they would only be useful to us if they reformed us and our surroundings, if they made us stronger, braver, truer men, with all our faculties of endurance and work developed, with all our sympathies fully awakened and refined, and with our heads and hearts acting in unison with a purified and holy will,—if they made us feel the dignity of our being and the high destiny of our existence, made us love all, work with all, and feel for all. This is the reformer's work, and this, in my opinion, is the reason why the Conference meets from year to year, and sounds the harmonies in every ear which can listen to them with advantage.

IV

PHILOSOPHY OF INDIAN THEISM •

Nearly three thousand years ago, in one of the primeval forests of Northern India, Bhrigu, the son of Varuna, approached his father, and entreated him to teach him what Bramha was—that Bramha from which all beings sprung into existence, that which keeps them alive when born, and that to which they tend, and in which they are finally absorbed. His father, Varuna, told him at first that Bramha was Food, as Food generated life and sustained it after birth, and finally, on decay, resolved itself into the food of other generations of life and being. Bhrigu long pondered over the matter, but was not satisfied with the finality or sufficiency of the explanation. He again approached his father with the same question, and he was successively told that Bramha was the Breath of life, that Bramha was the Mind, that Brahma was self-conscious Reason. None of these answers stood the test of Bhrigu's further thought, and finally, he was told that Bramha was the Joy and the Blessedness which pervaded the universe; and this reply satisfied the deepest cravings of the young student. These three stages of thought, the first stage representing 'Sat,' 'absolute existence,' as the cause of all inanimate or animate matter, second 'Chit,' identifying it with 'mind and self-conscious reason,' and the third 'Ananda,' as the

* Delivered at the Free General Assembly, Wilson College, Bombay.

source of all 'joy and blessedness,' these three stages represent the three different phases of thought which have dominated over men's minds throughout history. The spirit of joy and blessedness here described is further spoken of as pervading the universe. *'If there were no spirit of joy in this universe, who could live and breathe in this world of life?'*—(Yajnavalkya Upanishad). He makes us feel joy and gives us peace of mind when it becomes sinless and fearless. This represents the practical side of the subject I propose to-day to take up for your consideration.

There are those among us who are disposed to think that we have had enough of these old-world topics about birth and death, soul and immortality, sin and punishment, and all that can be known about them has been discovered long since, and all beyond the first few steps is mere blind guess. They would dissuade men from the pursuit of this wild goose chase, and characterize the students of this dismal science as preternaturally old men. They will have us turn to more useful pursuits, which will secure for us the comforts of this world, as the world understands comforts. Now, if there has been any feature of our national history which has been its glory and its reward for much suffering, it is the firm belief that 'not what a man hath, but what a man is, or can become,' constitutes his real wealth. This is the protest which Indian thought has raised from all time, and which, it will continue to raise to the end of time. The contrary view derives also no support from the highest Christian or European ideals before us. The whole mission of Christianity and civilization is meaningless for those who read

in it nothing but the progress of physical comforts, and the means of realizing them. On this point, as in others, the highest teaching of the two religions is identically the same. When the great Apostle of the Gentiles reached Athens, he addressed the Athenians by appealing to the Unknown God to whom they had erected an altar, and he described the Bramha in words, which are only a paraphrase of the passage quoted at the beginning from the Upanishad:—*In Him we live and move, and have our being: that is, Outside Him there is neither life nor motion nor being possible.*

The hand of God in History is but dimly seen by those who cannot recognize in the contact of European with Eastern thought a higher possibility for the future of both races. Already the morning dawn is upon us, and we can see glimpses of the bright future reflected in our ability to see and appreciate each other's strength and excellence. Not to refer to the Theosophical movement, have we not seen before our eyes the fact that for the first time after many centuries of stagnation, Indian preachers are reciprocating in other lands the sympathy which sends to our shores the many thousand missionaries, who have laboured among us for generations to spread the truth as they understand it. The labours of English and German Professors are taking a new turn, and the foundations of the Gifford and Hibbert series of lectures, and the holding of the Parliament of Religions, these are not events which we can afford to ignore or which it will profit us to pass by unheeded. The Lectures of Dr. Fraser on the Philosophy of Theism, of which I propose to give you a brief summary to-night, from an

Indian student's point of view, are an important contribution towards this same end, and I am firmly persuaded that I cannot hope to find a more appropriate place for dwelling on this subject than the premises of a College which represents the highest philanthropy of the West actively at work in the East.

What, then, is the problem which the Philosophy of Theism proposes to solve? This is how Dr. Fraser puts it:—What is the deepest and truest interpretation that can be put by man upon the immeasurable actuality with which he is brought in contact and collision ever since he becomes percipient and self-conscious? In what sort of environment, and for what purpose do I exist? What is this Universe, for ever changing the appearances it presents to me? What is the origin and outcome of this endless flux? Is the principle which finally determines all events reasonable and trustworthy or chaotic and misleading, or must man for ever remain ignorant about this and unable to adapt himself to it? What light can enlighten me upon my present duties or my final destiny as part of this mysterious whole?

The eminently human character of these questions will be at once perceived by those who are not blinded to their importance. If there was no human element in them, or as our forefathers said, if there was no 'Rasa,' 'light and sweetness' in them, it is hardly intelligible why the highest thought of man in all ages and countries has been busy over this mystery! It is our highest privilege that we feel the full force of this mystery and are drawn towards it. This is the highest fruition of humanity and its final goal. The awe it inspires is the seed of all

religion. The devotion of the mind to this study of the Infinite is the working force of philosophy. The successive steps of progress towards this knowledge constitutes the hierarchy of science. The existence of evil and sin here below, and the contemplation of Death, and what becomes of us after death, intensify the human character of such studies and make us pause, with Shakespeare, to consider if Death is a sleep, or a dream, or else only a shuffling off of the mortal coil. Both individual and social well-being depend upon the answer we give to this question of questions. It dominates morals, it shapes our legislation and the practical art of government. In the words of the Upanishad, "*If there be no spirit of joy over-ruling the universe, how can we live and breathe in this world of life?*"—(Yajnavalkya).

Having proposed the problem and shown its human character, we have next to see what final interpretations have been attempted of this problem of existence, the articulations, so to speak, of the human mind with reference to it. The two postulates underlying all thought are, the 'I' and the 'Non-I', the subject and the object. This is the quality of finite existence, each a mystery by itself. This is, however, not an ultimate analysis; for the question arises when the Infinite and the Eternal dawns upon us, whether besides the Ego and the non-Ego there is a third postulate of supreme existence which synthesises both, by being in and outside both, the one in which and by which we live and move and have our being. In the philosophy of the Ramanuja sect of Vedantism, we have these three postulates, 'Chit,' human soul, 'Achit', matter, and 'Brahma,' Supreme spirit; the '*Chit*' and

'Ahit' having no separate existence, from Brahma, in the 'Avyakta,' unmanifested form, and appearing separate only when 'Vyakta,' manifested or individualized. This same view is in all other Indian systems of philosophy variously emphasised, some maintaining the existence of three separate principles, others two, and some affirming only the real existence of one principle. In the European systems of philosophy also, the difference between system and system resolves itself into the exaggeration of one or other of these first postulates to the point of negating the absolute separate existence of the other two. One thing, however, is common to all: the human mind is not at rest with the dual solution of the Finite, which alone its senses grasp. It yearns to find the Finite linked together in some bond with the Infinite: it may be by faith or reason, hope or fear, by aspiration or by love. Man finds that his own existence for a moment of time is not intelligible unless there is a background for it to rest upon. He feels that the flux of things is not intelligible unless it also finds its rest in something which knows no flux. Whether the Infinite Being is potential matter, energy, mind or spirit, these are the points on which philosophy has proposed various interpretations and solutions. The mystery surrounding this third postulate of existence is not more enigmatical than what is involved in a right understanding of what constitutes the Ego and the Non-Ego. We cannot comprehend the one more clearly than the other. Each of us can realize the fact that he exists, and that something outside him also exists. His own existence and the existence of the Non-Ego become more intelligible to

him when he also learns to realize the existence of the Infinite.

All the errors of superstition, scepticism and mysticism spring up from our inability to keep our hold on the three distinct postulates of existence. We should not either explain away or exaggerate any of them. When we localize God in place or time and connect Him with uncommon particular events or places, superstition creeps in and overturns the balance of our mind. When we exaggerate our own powers we end in mysticism. When we unduly allow nature and her forms to dazzle us, and belittle our capacities, we become sceptical. It will be useful to see what element of partial truth and falsehood there is, in each of the systems which exaggerate and emphasize the one or the other postulate of existence to the prejudice of the others linked with it inseparably. And first of materialism, which sits at the feet of the material forces and magnifies nature and its powers. In European thought this school has occupied a more prominent position during the last few centuries than it ever occupied in this country. But even in our land two out of the six Darsanas are partially or wholly materialistic, that of the Sankhya system of Kapila and the atomic system of Kanada. As a corrective of extreme idealism, this philosophy has done good service. Its other service to humanity is that it has laid the axe at the root of that conception of the Universe, which made the earth the centre of the universe and man the centre of the world. The sun and the moon, it was thought, shine for us, the planets revolve and the stars twinkle for our benefit. The anthropomorphic conception of God ruling men and

things as a great patriarch of old with the full display of exaggerated human passions and force, and also human weaknesses at times, this conception has been dissipated by the discoveries of modern science which have reduced the earth to its true insignificance and man to his true position on earth, so far as he is a physical being. The discoveries of Astronomy and Geology have especially led to this result, and they have enabled men to understand the full mystery of the Infinite in space and time. Scientific evolution has also enlarged men's conceptions of the methods of operations pursued in the genesis of life and being. The equivalence and conversion of different kinds of force have paved the way to much clearness of thought on these and kindred subjects. The brilliancy of these results led men to the other extreme and to dream of abolishing mind and spirit altogether from the universe. This mechanical and chemical interpretation of Nature, however, solves nothing. It takes us a step or two back and then it leaves the mind more bewildered in the labyrinth of chaos. The manner of working is explained to some extent, by the interpretation of second causes, but the efficient and ultimate cause remains as shrouded as ever, and as impervious to human vision as when Moses saw the glory on the top of Sinai and received the Commandments. Materialism explains co-sequence and not causation, and it explains co-sequence by making it out to be a casual assemblage of atoms chancing to evolve order out of chaos. This solution appears to give no satisfaction to the enquirer. Shankaracharya has in his *Bhashya* very cleverly turned the tables on the atomic theorist.

The first quality of matter is inertia, so our senses tell us. This inertia is overcome by force outside it, and what is this force or energy is still as much a mystery as the mystery of mind and spirit. Why should the molecules be attracted and repelled in a particular way through all time and space? And then, if mind and spirit are left out of view, how comes it that this casual combination of molecules results in the ascending scale—first, of life, next of conscious life, further on of thought, self-consciousness and responsible will, which does not come within the domain of chances, but is guided by purpose which is the negation of chance? This philosophy thus fails to interpret Nature where it most needs rational interpretation. The anthropomorphic conception of a patriarchal God is more intelligible than this materialistic conception of Nature without a Providence overruling it to accomplish purposed ends. Society, law, morals, poetry and art, not more than theology, thus become anachronisms or solecisms, if man and Nature are interpreted as chance combinations of molecules brought out without purpose and both liable to be dis-severed by chance at any time. Man feels instinctively that this surely is not a rational interpretation of the order he sees in the Universe.

He then falls back on himself, and begins to think that there is no truth in this universal flux of things about him and that the only reality is himself. Things exist for him only because he perceives them. Outside his perception of form and colour, primary and secondary qualities, things have no existence in themselves, and from this the inference is drawn that the only real

existence is the individual soul. Homo Mensura becomes the rule of thought. It is a useful guide within certain limits, but when pushed too far it becomes self-destructive. Self-consciousness may be a good reason for man's certain belief that he exists, but it is hardly sufficient to make him equally assured that the external world of matter and force obeys any laws or enjoys permanence outside his changing consciousness about it. Science thus becomes impossible, when scientific truths have no basis except in the fiction of his brain, and even sentient beings like himself have no existence independently of his belief about them. This comes out logically as the result of any philosophy which makes the individual soul the final and only measure of being. There is a similar collapse of our moral nature also, when no relationship subsists between one soul and another. Man feels instinctively that, though he may not be able to say how the world of matter exists, it existed before he came into life, and will exist after he and his race cease to live. It is only demented humanity which can find rest in a merely human interpretation of the Universe, and it is to the glory of mankind that there has been no systematic school which has given it currency either in this country or in Europe, though individual thinkers have used it as a powerful weapon to expose the vagaries of rival systems.

The human mind being thus foiled in its worship of Nature, and the deification of Man as an all-sufficient explanation of being, seeks refuge in an exaggeration of the third alternative, which makes out that the Supreme Spirit alone exists, and both Nature and Man are but its reflected manifestations, not separable from it in essence,

but only 'seen to be separate by reason of our ignorance. This is the system which had its representatives in later Greek and Stoic and modern European, especially German, thought, and which, with shades of differences, has found its chief home in India.

It has several advantages over the other systems. It is an adequate explanation of the infinity of matter we see around us. It is also an adequate interpretation of the infinity of force we see around us. It dispenses with the necessity of explaining the origin of things and the problem of creation or evolution. It has an element of truth about it, in that the Supreme Being is immanent in all beings animate or inanimate. This is a much higher and truer conception of Supreme Existence than any which has found expression in many religious creeds of the world, which seek to separate God from Nature and Man by making Him out to be a being among beings, only more powerful and wise.

There is, however, a notable distinction in this respect between the pantheistic teachings of European thinkers and their prototypes in this country. One of the most current mistakes is to regard the 'Advaita', Monistic system of thought as formulated in the great Bhashya of Shankaracharya on the Vedanta Sutra, as the only characteristically Indian explanation of pantheism in this country. As a matter of fact both before Shankaracharya's time and after his death, the modified Advaita system of Ramanuja has played a great part in Indian philosophy, and to it may be traced the rise and progress of the Vaishnava Sects throughout India, which sects have attained to a higher and truer conception of Theism

than any of the other prevailing systems. In Shankaracharya's own system the existence of objective Nature was not categorically denied. The position taken up was that neither existence nor non-existence could be affirmed in regard to it in the same sense in which the human soul and the Supreme Spirit are known to exist. Besides Shankaracharya freely admitted that Brahma, the Supreme existence, as soon as it conceived the idea of creation, became by reason of that thought 'Ishvara', Creator, and all that was created had phenomenal existence. For all practical purposes this philosophy is strictly theistic in its beliefs. The European thinkers, on the other hand, exaggerated the doctrine so as to negative all other existence.

The European pantheists, while asserting that God was the only substance, the only reality, under the changing appearances of all finite things and persons, fall into the error of consubstantiating this reality with all material things and all individual minds, making it co-extensive with them, so that whatever is predicable of them is equally predicable of the reality. The absolute reality is thus at once Infinite and finite, the substance and the mode, undifferentiated and determined in necessary forms. This error has been avoided in the Indian forms of pantheism as formulated by the great Acharyas. This complete effacement of individual things and persons, and the apprehension of separate appearances as being only an illusion of the imagination ends by reducing the absolute reality itself to a being of two dimensions only, extension and thought, the Sat and Chit of our philosophy. There is no room for the higher spiritual manifestation of

Ananda, without which God is an empty substance, without any spiritual relations towards His creatures, these last being only illusory manifestations of His substance. Pantheism thus ends in becoming, like Materialism, or Egoism, an interpretation of what we see around us, which fails to satisfy our intellectual, moral and spiritual perceptions. We are conscious of our differences, we are conscious of our freedom as well as dependence. We are conscious of our sense of right and wrong, and our responsibility for self-determined action. When the Infinite is thus allowed to swallow up all finite existence in time, space, and causation, the result is that there is no succession in time and space, and that there is nothing like cause and effect. Nothing happens but only exists eternally and necessarily. Nothing is originated or changed. There is no perfection or imperfection, nothing good or evil in men and things. In short, the undifferentiated and impersonal unity which extreme pantheism teaches, is an interpretation of the universe to which the conditions of our self-conscious being can never permanently be reconciled, and this unity must always remain a more or less curious speculation with little permanent hold on the head or heart of men, except in moments of poetic or mystic ecstasy, in which both in Europe and India pantheism finally sublimates.

Having thus examined all the possibilities of reducing the three postulates of existence to a single postulate, man's mind, in despair, has taken shelter in doubt or scepticism, not of the aggressive or militant kind, but in a more resigned form of it, in which it seeks to rest satisfied with the position that nothing certain can be

grasped in connection with these great problems. This is the latest development of modern European speculation, and is known as agnosticism, and we have now to see how far the human mind can resign itself to a conclusion which may be likened to a paralysis of thought as it withdraws itself, tortoise-like, from all contact with such speculations. They all demand logical proof and are not satisfied with practical or moral certitude. It is just possible that practical or moral conviction is all that is needed and therefore attainable by the human mind in its search after the Absolute, and in that case the demand for logical proof may itself be an unreasonable demand. If practical certitude is attainable, it does not follow from our inability to furnish a logical demonstration by way of proof, that nothing can be positively and certainly known about these matters. The failure of the human mind to attain to a living knowledge of the Absolute has partly arisen from this confusion of certitude with demonstration. This disability is not confined to philosophy or religion only. There are large departments of knowledge where demonstrative proof is not possible and we content ourselves with the next best alternative and substitute faith for knowledge and act on that faith and suffer for it. Our Earth, or even the Solar system, is not the Universe, nor is our time Eternity. Finite existence in time and space becomes intelligible only when they discover their background of the Infinite. Second causes linked together necessarily suggest a first cause which holds the links together. In our own personal consciousness, the fleeting perception and even thought of each moment cannot furnish the origin of true

knowledge. That basis is widened by the more permanent results of self-consciousness, which memory holds together over a great length of time in what we recognize as 'I' with its past experiences. Further, connecting our individual thought with those of others, we come to rest our knowledge upon the collective thought of humanity. It would be intellectual suicide or madness if we followed any other principle. We can never demonstrate logically our reasons for the faith that we feel in the continuity of nature and the uniform operation of its laws. All science ultimately resolves itself into a product of our faith in the trustworthiness of the ever-changing universe. This sense of trustworthiness is the slow growth of ages, but it is none the less the basis of scientific truths as we apprehend them. If this basis of faith is not repudiated by science, it has equally legitimate claims upon our acceptance in the philosophy of the Absolute.

This conformity of the material universe with our faith in its trustworthiness establishes the link which joins man with the universe in which he lives and moves and has his being. We do not feel as if we were like fish taken out of water or like the soaring eagle made to walk over earth. This harmony between our thoughts and the operations of Nature is the highest natural revelation. This harmony springs not from man's consciousness only, nor is it born of inert matter. It not only links us with Nature, but it links us and Nature alike with the Infinite existence whose purposes of wisdom and benevolence, beauty and power, are thereby disclosed to our eyes of faith and knowledge. Science thus holds the torch of

faith to the mystery of religion. If this torch were extinguished or set aside not only will Theism suffer, but with it science itself will cease to be scientific, for it also rests ultimately on faith in the harmony of the Universe, and the permanence of its laws and methods of work.

The threefold postulates of existence are thus seen to be distinct and yet harmonized together. All attempts to assimilate and reduce them into one absolute existence fail, because they are bound to fail. At the same time, they are not distinct in the sense of being disjointed parts of a mechanical whole. They are one and yet they are many. Nature and man, each have definite relations of subordination to the great Infinite which rules over them and harmonizes them, and the discovery of these subordinate relations is the special domain of the philosophy of Theism. Even agnostic philosophers have admitted the existence of power and wisdom, beauty and benevolence, as manifested in the operations of Nature. In the infancy of science, this power and purpose was conceived as not the work of any single unseen agency and will, but as the play of good and bad deities—Devatas, angels, spirits, and ghosts, the gods and goddesses of mythology of tribal and local origin, which had larger powers and more subtle influences over Nature than man. This stage of thought naturally led to polytheism and to idolatry. It obtains still in this and other countries among people who cannot understand the universal harmony of Nature's laws as science discloses it. Later on, science taught men to classify these agencies into good and bad angels, Devas and Daityas, Ahriman and Ahuramazad. A hierarchy of gods,

bigger and smaller, under the banners of the principles of good and evil, was thus evolved, and it is best seen in the early faith of the Hindus and Parsis and has left its stamp on the Mahomedan and Christian systems of faith. Finally, with the triumphs of scientific investigation, the idea dawned upon men's minds of the world of Nature and Man being pervaded by one power, wisdom and purpose, which superseded the old gods and goddesses and the division of good and evil principles. This was the work of Theism. This God was not, as in the older forms of Theism, apprehended as a being among other beings, a fashioner or mechanic setting the watch in motion from outside, but a God immanent in everything and over-ruling the Universe, a God who was not exhausted by the limits of His work, but was, in the words of the Purushasukta, 'Bigger than the Infinite Universe, and encircling as He did, the created world of matter and man, exceeded it on all sides.' It was the peculiar glory of the Upanishads to have discoursed of such a God. 'The winds blow from fear of Him, and the Sun rises and sets as He directs. Fire and Indra and even Death run on His errand.' In one of the Upanishads there is a beautiful account of the way in which the mythological gods of Fire, Indra, etc., tried their strength in contest with this Supreme Brahma, and were foiled in the attempt and submitted to do His bidding. He saw, or rather thought, and the world and the inhabitants thereof were created. This is also the teaching of the Old Testament. Order means reason, conscious mind, or personal will. God's immanence in Nature is seen in the order and the purpose which animates Nature.

This account of the origin of things does not make the work of creation an event in time or history. It is as much a development of infinite thought, as though it had no beginning in time. Both Geology and Astronomy, however, show to demonstration that Cosmos, as we now see it ordered and regulated, had a beginning, and a development or evolution from imperfect to perfect, and from simple to complex orders of beings. In this latter view, the important point for us to note is not the question of time but of causation. If causation is seen to be at work in infinite time and space, it is a sufficient explanation for the purposes of practical certitude.

There can be no natural agents in the proper sense of the word. Matter is in its essence inert and the so-called agents are only signs by which the divine reality regulates the purposes of law and order, beauty and benevolence, power and wisdom. This divine activity is what is signified by the phrase, 'God immanent in Nature.' These activities are interpretable by man and become trustworthy, because they are His activities and not mere casual combinations and permutations of lawless and purposess chance. Material agents are like the telegraph wire through which messages are sent across time and space, and deciphered by man, whether they are messages of science or of religion. An interpretable universe brings man face to face with God as the ever acting immanent cause of all natural changes, and the spirit which animates and regulates the world.

Just as Nature is supernatural in this view, Man has also a super-human element in him. The distinguishing features in man are his self-conscious reason and his volition

which is free to act or not to act within certain well-defined limits. Free volition can hardly be said to be present in brute creation. They are solely guided by their instincts and impulses, and are not in the strict sense of the word responsible for their actions. Man alone possesses a sort of delegated freedom to choose between right and wrong, between good and evil. He alone has the power of self-determination and of being a causal agent. These distinguishing features constitute his highest glory and his greatest responsibility. They furnish the bases of all law and government, morals and manners, social and family arrangements, literary and scientific culture, and finally of religion and worship. He is not a mere creature of necessity, not a mere diagonal result of opposite forces acting upon him, as is the rest of the world including even the brute creation. Man thus occupies a higher plane of being and the question arises how this higher existence is subordinated to the over-ruling Providence which regulates the universe including man as a physical being. In man's case his spiritual relations with this universal Soul are made manifest by the sense of conscience in him, which makes him feel that he is responsible for the proper exercise of his delegated freedom. He feels that the spirit immanent in the universe about him manifests His presence in him through this faculty of conscience which accuses him when he goes wrong, and helps and guides him when he is on the right path. The bitter remorse he feels when he demeans himself, and the sense of satisfaction which rewards him when he does his duty, are the connecting links between his soul and the spirit he realises as the Soul of his soul. It is this communion which opens to him

the gates of another and higher world where love and justice reign supreme. Intelligent, self-originated volition under obligation of duty and sense of personal responsibility, this is in the case of man the divine; that is the super-human and super-natural element in him. This ethical and personal conception of man's relation with the universal Soul is a higher revelation than what nature discloses, and this is the realm where faith and knowledge join hand to hand, or rather knowledge becomes faith which elevates man from mortal into immortal existence. Though we cannot know all that we might wish to know about these mysteries, these revelations of Man and Nature teach us that the deepest and truest thought man can have about the outside world is that it is the immediate manifestation of the divine or Infinite person in moral relations to imperfect persons who are undergoing intellectual and spiritual elevation in divine surroundings. At the same time God is not to be conceived of as merely man made infinite, in his qualities and without his imperfections. This was the error of Buddhism which elevated the wise man above the old mythological Gods and even displaced the spirit from the universe. This is the form of idolatry against which all religions have raised their protests, and in none more emphatically than in the Aryan system of Faith. The Upanishads have said that 'He who thinketh that he knoweth God doth not know Him, while he who thinks that he doth not know Him knoweth Him. From Him the speech of man recoileth in despair how to describe Him. The mind of man cannot grasp it. Only through faith, hope and love can He be approached.'

This is the teaching of natural Theism. It has to be supplemented by further revelations of God in history which form the basis of all historical religions and religious movements. Historical revelations of Theism must differ from one another according to the circumstances of the age and country in which they occurred. Their historical surroundings are, however, destined in course of time, to fade in importance as their work of national education is accomplished, and they converge together to supplement each other's work in the final goal which they are all intended to reach. Alone in all the countries of the world, India has had the privilege of witnessing this convergence of historical faiths actively at work without losing its own individual characteristics. With her, revelation has not ceased at any point of time. The stream has flowed and still continues to flow in the lives and teaching of every saint and prophet of this or of other lands. From the worship of the elements personified, Indian Theism, or as I have elsewhere called it, the Bhagavata Dharma, developed into the worship of the power which rules over the elements. This power then became clothed with ethical and moral grandeur, banishing the old gods and elements into a lower order of beings and Devatas, Deities. The capacities of the human soul next attracted attention, and in the Upanishads the divine nature of the soul was first formulated and carried up even to the point of identity. Then came the Buddhists who strengthened the moral side of our nature, and substituted for the old animal sacrifices the sacrifice of the animal in man, as the highest form of worship and the only road to salvation. Next followed the aggressive domination of the Mahomedan

faith which had its own purpose in enforcing the claims of strict Monotheism not only in intellectual apprehension but in practical conduct; and now Christian influences are at work. The power of organisation, active hatred of sin, and indignation against wrong-doing in place of resigned indifference, a correct sense of the dignity of man and woman, active philanthropy and a feeling of fraternity, freedom of thought and action, these are Christian virtues which have to be incorporated into the national character, and this work is actively going on in all parts of the country. The Bhagavata Dharma has many points of contact and kinship with the Christian system of faith. The Supreme Spirit is apprehended in both as being the Ocean of life in which we live and move and have our being. The three persons of the Trinity have their more logical counterpart, in the One without a second, who is absolute existence, 'Sat'; the Logos, or the Word eternal is the 'Chit', and the third person, the Holy Comforter, is 'Ananda', joy and peace, who inspires joy and peace in all. The Hindu ideal of the soul becoming one on emancipation with the universal spirit is materialized in the Christian mystery of transubstantiation. Both systems recognize incarnation, the difference being of one or many. In both sacrifice has played an important part. With these elements of kinship there are essential differences which cannot be overlooked. The characteristics of Indian Theism, which have enabled it to maintain its identity, will cling to it through all times. They are first its non-historical character. It is associated with no particular saint or prophet, though it has room for reverence to all saints and prophets. It is not bound down

to any particular revelation but is open to the best influences of all revelations. With it, revelation is a perpetual stream which never ceases to flow. Above all, Indian Theism is built on the rock of the direct communion of the individual soul with the Soul of the Universe to which it is linked by the tie of faith, hope and love. Indian Theism does not limit its education of man to a single trial in this world. The modified law of 'Karma' which distinguishes it from fatalism, which connects the past with the present and future, is nowhere better realized than in this country, though it is much exaggerated in some of its over-logical conclusions. The national mind has been cast in a spiritual and religious mould, which does not allow it to sink into the worship of this world and its riches and power as the highest object of desire, but always looks upon the hereafter as its chief resting place. The Universe is not merely His handiwork, but He is the Soul, Who fills the universe and moves it. Lastly, Indian Theism teaches toleration to all, self-sacrifice, and the duty of Love, not only of man to man but to all animated beings. It was not, therefore, without reason that the Rev. Dr. Miller, in an eloquent address he gave at Madras, asked the Christians to bear in mind that God was at work in India long before any missionary, Catholic or Protestant, set his foot there, and that the Hindu system, amidst all its corruptions, contains elements of Divine Truth. The *Christian World*, commenting upon this, has observed that India will not give up all its moulds of thought at the bidding of British or Christian organisations, but it will draw

into itself the divine life which these organisations enshrine.

Gentlemen, I hope you will excuse this last digression from the professed purpose of the present address. I have tried to present before you on parallel lines the substance of Professor Dr. Fraser's lectures which represent the latest phase of European thought, and illustrated it by references to our own ancient works. The parallelism is very suggestive, and I hope it will prove an incentive to some of you to follow up these studies. If that result is achieved, I shall consider myself amply rewarded.

HINDU PROTESTANTISM*

Once more we meet on this platform to take stock of our gains and losses of the year that is about to close. Many familiar faces that cheered us in our work and helped us with their sweet encouragement, have left us, and their vacant places have not yet been filled up in our hearts and memories. The sad reflection comes upon our minds as we recollect these losses, whether after all, this Theistic movement is, or is not destined, to out-live those who first founded it in our midst twenty-eight years ago, and if we were left upon our resources, this feeling of dismay might overpower us with its heavy weight. The fact, however, is that the movement has struck its roots deep in the past, and its growth in the future may, therefore, safely be expected to embrace a longer period than is represented by the lives of the present generations of our leaders. During the last few years I have been trying to set forth from this platform, and in other places also, the past history of the origin and progress of what has been well described by our saints and prophets for two thousand years and more, as the Bhagavata Dharma, of which the present Samaja movement is only a faint reflection and a humble off-shoot. One of the essential features of the Bhagavata Dharma is its Protestant character. As among the Jews, prophet after prophet has risen among us, and

* Anniversary Address at the Prarthana Mandira, Bombay, 1895.

in their lives and precepts have protested against and denounced certain habits of thought and principles of action which have an inveterate tendency to encrust the true spirit of our faith and to give a human coating which obscures from view the essentially divine element. Bhagavata Dharma may, therefore, be safely described as Protestant Hinduism, and I would bespeak your favourable attention to-day to the chief feature of this long-continued protest, which has done such great service in the past and which is likely to do still greater service in the future. Our students are tolerably familiar with the fact that the searching of the spirit, and the cleansing of the heart which culminated in the growth of Protestantism in Western Europe were contemporaneously working as powerful agents in this our own country, and with a similar beneficial result. The Christian leaders of modern thought protested against the supremacy of the Latin language as a vehicle of expression and thought in the schools and churches. They protested against the excess of the ascetic ideas of the monks of different orders and the necessity of priestly intervention in all rites and ceremonies. They protested against indulgences, and they protested against pilgrimages, fasts, confessions and casuistry. They protested against the image-worship and relic-worship and pompous ceremonies, which did not tend to elevate the heart and the mind of man. They succeeded in their own time wonderfully, not only by the direct effect of their action in their own communities, but still more by their reflex effect on the Roman Catholic Church, which not only purified itself in the struggle and kept up its authority over a large part of Europe, but

with renewed vigour, has again been able to raise its head as the oldest and noblest representative of constituted authority in its struggle with emancipating reason. The need for protest was not over with the century which produced Luther and Calvin, Knox and Latimer. The established faith has always and everywhere a tendency to grow too rigid and authoritative, too mechanical and formal to retain the celestial fire pure and burning. The Puritans and the Covenanters of the seventeenth and the Wesleyans and Methodists of the last century are all valuable only as protests against the weakness and corruption of the established order of things. I need not pursue this topic further here, as my main concern is to trace the growth of the Protestant movement in our own country. With a view to prevent misapprehensions I may at once state, for the information of my audience, that I have based my own history of this movement on the biographies of saints and prophets, not written by any one of us, but by writers such as Nabhaji, Uddhav-Chidghan, Priyadasa, and rendered familiar to us by Mahipati's great work written more than a century ago. Mahipati's collection makes us acquainted with the history of one hundred saints and prophets, out of which about fifty are from Maharashtra, and the rest from other parts of India. The saints and prophets, it may be noted, include about ten women, and as many Mahomedans, and the rest, about eighty, comprise about an equal number of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, and among these last are representative men of all castes and creeds: butchers, spinners and weavers, goldsmiths, barbers and mahars, kings and farmers, bankers and soldiers. This is the most

noteworthy feature of the leaders of the Protestant movement in India. No country in the world can present such a galaxy of pure and pious men born in humble circumstances, who struggled and strove for the cause, and won it not by their own strength, but by their humility. The genuinely natural character of the movement is attested by the fact that it spread to all classes and touched all hearts, both of men and women, and of Hindus and Mahomedans alike. There is always good reason for despondency and despair, so long as any movement is not so general in its character. This has been the weakness of the Samaja movement, both of our own and of the Arya and Brahma Samaja, that they have failed as yet to stir the heart of the nation, and their influence is only operative over a few souls brought up in a particular atmosphere. It is on this account that the study of this old history becomes to us a matter of paramount importance. These one hundred men immortalized by Nabhaji and Uddhav, Priydas and Mahipati, cover a period of five or six hundred years, and even yet the stream has not been dried up altogether.

We have next to see what were the principal features of the protest that these men raised each in his own place and time, each in his own manner and method. Their struggles led to neither wars nor bloodshed nor persecutions, inquisitions, or banishments. They worked silently as God's spirit works in us, silently but surely. These men protested against the supremacy of the old Sanskrit language as a vehicle of learning, and they enriched, each in his own time, the stock of their vernacular treasures. The battle of the Vernacular against the Classics is not

of our own time only. It is an old, old struggle. Pandits pounced upon Ekanath and Tukaram for daring to popularize the old learning so as to make it accessible to the meanest of the mean. The story of the drowning of Ekanath's and of Tukaram's works at the bidding of the Pandits is well known. The same struggle was maintained by Ramdas against Waman and by Rasal against Namadev. The saints conquered in the end, and so far the growth of the vernacular in each province of India has been the measure of the growth of the protestant element in that province. The protest was raised by these men against the tendency to exaggerate the importance of rites and ceremonies as helps to the growth of the religious spirit. Rites and ceremonies are after all symbols, and if their symbolical character is not vividly presented to the mind, they obscure the religious vision, and usurp the place of the purity of heart and of true devotion for which they were intended to be auxiliaries only, and not masters. Nearly everyone of the saints worked for righteousness in this direction, and it would take too long if I were to enumerate the triumphs they achieved. Jesus' protest against the Pharisees and Sadducees was reproduced in the lives of every one of these men in their struggles with orthodoxy and Brahminism. Their success in this department has not been equal to that which they achieved in breaking down the monopoly of Sanskrit learning, but anybody who can read our Smritis and religious ordinances and compare their strictness with our present customs and practices, can alone measure the greatness of the work already achieved. The third protest raised by these saints was against the

hold of the Yoga system of austerities and the supposed powers it conferred on the Yogi of performing wonders. In this direction the success is almost complete. Our countrymen have learned to discern the vanity of their foolish attempts to strive after occult power, which even, when possessed in full, means no real gain. The contrast exhibited in the lives of Dnyanadev and Changadev, and of Dnyanadev himself and Namadev, typifies this feature of the protestant movement with remarkable accuracy, and leaves nothing to be desired. The fourth feature of the movement was directed against the relaxation of the strictness of caste rules and distinctions. The inclusion of mahars and barbers, cobblers and butchers, the inclusion of women and Mahomedans among the saints, represented an enlargement of view to which you will scarcely find a parallel elsewhere. The lives of Ekanath and Kabir, Ramdas and Tukaram, typified the highest efforts of true religion in this direction. The success here is not so permanent and assured as in other respects, but still much ground has been gained. The next protest was raised against cruelty and impurity, against animal and human sacrifices, against the worship of cruel deities and the performance of Shakta rites. The success here is complete. The next ground of protest was equally strong against Polytheism though not against idolatry, except in the advanced sects of Nanak and Kabir. The saints were practically worshippers of one God, and their efforts not to admit a multiplicity of rival gods was heroic. The protest was equally loud in favour of proclaiming that God was a loving God, and that his spiritual Providence cared for the meanest of His creatures

with more than a mother's and father's love. This sense of a loving God who spoke to and walked with, and comforted the worshippers, that sense is our richest treasure, though the stories told of this inter-communion with men have been often of a very grotesque character. These then are the points in which Indian Protestantism has done us service, and if we are true to our great ancestors, this is the work and these are the lines on which we should carry on the struggle. Coming in contact with Mahomedans, the Hindu Protestant Saints made converts of thoughtful Mahomedans by making concessions which implied an unity of Providence, whether it was called Rama or Rahim. We have come in contact with Christianity and we have our own concessions to make. But, whatever we give in or take from our surroundings, one thing we must never forget—that it is not a movement started by a few English educated natives, and that its founder was this or that man in Bengal or the Punjab. The movement is older than Modern India, and it is not confined to the English educated classes in the towns. Its roots lie deep in our history and we must study it there all along the line if we want to understand how we really stand, and whither we have to go. Authority in matters of faith is as essential as authority in matters of secular happiness. Authority is not a creation of the imagination. We cannot create the same which teaches us to bow to noble and good men of the past, and we cannot dispense with their help. We must seek them as our guides. Our domestic guides are in such matters to be preferred to foreign guides, because these last have not been the flesh of our flesh, and the bone of our bone. If we would bear

that in mind and work the movement on the lines of the Bhagavata Dharma in the times to come, success is sure, because it is His work, and He will carry it through by the hands of poor men, if only we swear fealty to Him and hold by Him through good and bad report.

THE SAINTS AND PROPHETS OF MAHARASHTRA

We propose in this chapter to trace in rough outline the history of this religious upheaval in Western India. Our main sources of information will be the voluminous biographies of the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, written by one of our own poets, Mahipati, towards the close of the last century, long before British influence was felt in these parts as a factor of any importance. Like the political struggle for independence, the religious upheaval was also not the work of a single man, or even of a single century. Its early commencement can be traced even anterior to the Mahomedan conquest of the Deccan. Under the rule of the Yadav Kings of Devagiri, Dnyandev, the first saint and prophet of Maharashtra, wrote his famous commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* in the spoken language of the country. Mukundraj, who lived under the Ballal Kings, also wrote his famous work, the first of the kind in Marathi, in the twelfth century. The Mahomedan invasions for a time seem to have paralysed all activity, but gradually the national spirit regained its healthy elasticity and just about the time of the rise of the Maratha power we had a galaxy of saints and prophets, whose names have become household words with the people of the country. The stream continued to flow in full tide for two centuries, and then it appears to have dried up, and with its ebb, the political domination also became a thing of the past. Roughly speaking

we may state that the history of this religious revival covers a period of nearly five hundred years, and during this period some fifty saints and prophets flourished in this land, who left their mark upon the country and its people so indelibly as to justify Mahipati in including them in his biographical sketches. A few of these saints were women, a few were Mahomedan converts to Hinduism, nearly half of them were Brahmins, while there were representatives in the other half from among all the other castes : Marathas, *Kunbis*, tailors, gardeners, potters, goldsmiths, repentant prostitutes, and slave girls, even the outcaste *Mahars*. Much of the interest of this religious upheaval is centred in the facts we have noticed above, as they indicate plainly that the influence of higher spirituality was not confined to this or that class, but permeated deep through all strata of society, male and female, high and low, literate and illiterate, Hindu and Mahomedan alike. These are features which the religious history of few other countries can match or reproduce, unless where the elevating influence is the result of a widespread popular awakening. In Northern and Eastern India a similar movement manifested itself much about the same time. Nanak stirred up the Punjab to rise and made a supreme effort to reconcile Hinduism with Mahomedanism. Chaitanya in the far East sought to bring men back from the worship of *Shakti* and *Kali* to the faith of the *Bhagavat* ; while Ramanand and Kabir, Tulsidas and Surdas, Jayadev and Rohidas, contributed each in his own way to the work of spiritual enlightenment. Their influence has no doubt been great and abiding, but it cannot be compared with the work done

by the saints and prophets of Maharashtra. The names of Changdev and Dnyandev, Nivriddhi and Sopan, Muktabai and Jani, Akabai and Venubai, Namdev and Ekanath, Ramdas and Tukaram, Shaik Mahomed and Shanti Bahamani, Damaji and Udhav, Bhanudas and Kurmdas, Bodhle Bava and Santoba Powar, Keshav Swami and Jayaram Swami, Narasimha Saraswati and Ranganath Swami, Chokhamela and the two potters, Narahari Sonar and Savatia Mali, Bahiram Bhat and Ganesh Nath, Janardanpat and Malopant, and many others that might be cited, furnish an array which testifies to the superior efficacy of this movement in Maharashtra. The Brahmins in these parts furnished a much larger proportion of saints and prophets than was the case in any of the other parts in India where the *Kshatriya* and *Vaisya* castes furnished a much larger contingent than the Brahmins.

As is the case with all biographies of saints, the popular imagination attributes to these persons wonderful and miraculous powers, notably those of raising the dead to life, healing the sick and feeding the hungry. The stories which are told of the way in which they were helped by supernatural agency in their mission of love may or may not be accepted in these days of vigilant criticism. As Mr. Lecky has remarked, it is the atmosphere of childlike credulity which pre-disposes men to require and accept these wonders and miracles as events of ordinary occurrence. The saints and prophets themselves did not claim miraculous powers. They were meek and suffering men who placed their trust in Providence, and their trust was justified beyond their expect-

tations, often times to their own surprise. The moral interest of these biographies centres however, not in their miraculous feats, but in their struggles, and in the testimony their lives afforded in vindication of the eternal verities of the moral law and man's higher spiritual life. It is with this aspect of their life that we are more immediately concerned in the sequel, and we hope to show that in this respect the work they accomplished was priceless and blessed beyond all comparison.

There is a curious parallel between the history of the Reformation movement in Western Europe and the struggle represented by the lives and teachings and writings of these saints and prophets who flourished about the same time in Maharashtra. The European reformers of the sixteenth century protested strongly against the authority claimed by the priests and the clergy with the Roman Bishop at their head. The clergy and the Pope represented a tradition of authority which had come down from the remote past, and had done signal service in its own time in humanising and civilising the hordes of the barbarian conquerors who devastated the Roman provinces. In course of time, the priests, instead of being the servants, claimed to be masters and rulers, with temporal and spiritual powers, and intermediaries between God and man. The exercise of this intercession was hedged round by numberless rites and ceremonies, and in course of time many abuses crept in and alienated general sympathy. These abuses assumed their worst forms about the time that Luther rebelled against the authority which issued indulgences and levied Peter's Pence, not as charity, but as a tax to subserve the temporal power of intriguing

Popes and their vicious Cardinals. The Reformation in Western India had its counterpart in this respect. Ancient authority and tradition had been petrified here, not in an ambitious Bishop and his clergy, but in the monopoly of the Brahman caste, and it was against the exclusive spirit of this caste domination that the saints and prophets struggled most manfully to protest. They asserted the dignity of the human soul as residing in it quite independently of the accidents of its birth and social rank. The circumstances of their own birth and education naturally predisposed some of these preachers to take up such a position. As observed above, nearly half of them were of castes other than Brahmins, and some of them of very low castes indeed. Many of the Brahmin reformers also had some stain in their inherited purity which led or forced them to rebel against all artificial restraints. Dnyandev and his brothers and sister Muktabai were born to their father after he had retired from the world and became a Sanyasi. His spiritual guide, Ramanand, came to know that this Sanyasi had not obtained his wife's willing consent to a change of Ashram and he ordered him to go back to his native place and live with his wife. The children so born to the *Sanyasi* became marked objects of caste aversion, and the Brahmins refused to perform the Initiation ceremony when the brothers reached the proper age. The children remained in this unrecognised condition all their life, and were revered notwithstanding this defect in their caste respectability. Another saint, Malopant, was married to a low-caste girl, whose caste was not discovered till after the marriage, and the husband did not abandon her, but only held no intercourse with

her, and when on her death, he performed her death-rites as usual, a miracle was displayed which satisfied his worst enemies, that Malopant and his *Mahar* wife were both holy by nature. Jayaram Swami's master, Krishнадas, was similarly married to a barber girl, and the inferiority of her caste was discovered after marriage. The holy life of the man had, however, such an effect that at last, after much persecution, even the high priest Shankaracharya of the day raised no objection. Ekanath, it is well-known, made no secret of the little importance he attached to caste distinctions. He fed a hungry *Mahar* at his house, and, when out-casted, allowed himself to be taken to the river for purposes of purification, when a miracle took place by which the merit of feeding a hungry *Mahar* was proved to be far greater than that of feeding many hundred Brahmins, for the former merit cured a leper of his foul disease, when the latter failed to make any impression on him. A very common miracle is reported to have been performed by many of the saints, notably by Dnyandev, Ekanath, and Naganath, when, on the refusal of the Brahmins to officiate on *Shraddha* ceremonies in their places for breach of caste regulations, the deceased fathers of the obstinate Brahmins were made to descend to earth, and shamed their incredulous sons into the belief that their caste exclusiveness was wholly out of place. In Namdev's biography, his God of Pandharpur, who had allowed Namdev to invite Brahmins to a feast and himself partook of that feast with the saint, was himself excommunicated, and then the story relates how Dnyandev, who was present in spirit, remonstrated with the Brahmin persecutors.

He said :—There was none high or low with God. All were alike to him. Never entertain the thought that I am high born, and my neighbour is low of birth. The Ganges is not polluted, nor is the wind tainted, nor the earth rendered untouchable, because the low born and high born bathe in the one, or breathe the other, or move on the back of the third.

The most touching incident, however, is that which occurred in the persecution of the out-caste *Mahar Chokhamela* for his having dared to enter the temple of *Pandharpur*. When remonstrated with for his temerity, *Chokhamela* replied that his God took him inside by force, and he did not go of his own accord. He remonstrated with the Brahmin worshippers of the temple in this strain—What availeth birth in high caste, what availeth rites or learning, if there is no devotion, or faith? Though a man be of low caste yet if he is faithful in heart, and loves God, and regards all creatures as though they were like himself, and makes no distinction between his own and other peoples' children, and speaks the truth, his caste is pure, and God is pleased with him. Never ask a man's caste when he has in his heart faith in God, and love of men. God wants in his children love and devotion, and he does not care for his caste. The Brahmins, as might be expected, were not converted by this preaching of high wisdom, and they complained to the Musalman officer of the place, and he like another Pilate of the Bible story, ordered *Chokhamela* to be punished by being tied to and driven by a team of bullocks, and tortured to death in this cruel fashion. God, however, miraculously delivered his worshipper, and baffled the oppressors, for

the bullocks would not move from their place. The story of Bahiram Bhat is also interesting in this connection. Being a *Shastri*, he did not find rest in Brahminism, and therefore became a Mahomedan under the impression that its monotheism would satisfy the cravings of his heart, but failing to find the satisfaction he desired, he returned back to Brahminism. Both Brahmins and Mahomedans found fault with him for these changes of faith, but he disclaimed being either Hindu or Mahomedan. Bahiram Bhat challenged the Brahmins to make him a true Brahmin as long as his circumcision mark was not removed, and he challenged the Mahomedans to fill up the holes in his ears, which showed that he was still a Hindu. The Mahomedan converts to Hinduism, represented by Shaik Mahomed's followers even to this day observe the *Ramzan* fasts and the *Ekadasi* fast, and make pilgrimages to Mecca as also to Pandharpur. There are many other saints of great renown who, like Kabir, Nanak and Manik Prabhu, are claimed both by Hindus and Mahomedans as belonging to their respective communities, and worshipped and revered as such by both. These examples will suffice to show how the lives of these men have tended to elevate the national conception of man's spiritual nature, and shake the hold of caste intolerance.

The result of all this elevated teaching is seen in the fact that caste exclusiveness now finds no place in the religious sphere of life, and it is relegated solely to the social concerns of men, and even there its restrictiveness is much relaxed. The relaxation is most accentuated at the time of the annual Pandharpur pilgrim gatherings, and the mixed greetings with which the Lord's Feast is

celebrated on the last day. Just as in Europe, men ceased to believe that the priest was a necessary medium between God and man for purposes of salvation, in this part of India, the domination of the Brahmin caste as the gods of creation, whom the other castes should serve and worship, lost much of its potency, and men and women, high and low, came to feel that they were free to attain salvation by faith and love in spite of their low origin.

There was a counterpart of the European protest in the way in which our saints and prophets raised their voice against self-mortification and fasts, and meaningless penances and endless pilgrimages. The same spirit prompted them to condemn austerities practised by those who followed the *Yoga* system with a view of acquiring the power of working wonders which, it was supposed, the *Yogis* enjoyed in consequence. This contest between *Yoga* and *Bhakti* is well illustrated by the encounter of the proud Changadev with Dnyandev, when the former, in reliance on his *Yoga* powers rode on tigers, and used serpent whips and was put to shame by Dnyandev riding on a wall. There was a similar encounter between Dnyandev and Namdev, when the former, by the exercise of *Yoga* powers, became small in size, and drank the waters of a deep well, while Namdev, by his devotion, brought the waters to overflow the well for all time, so that all who passed by, and felt thirsty, might drink to their hearts' content. These stories most beautifully typify this feature of the teaching of the saints and prophets of Maharashtra.

The story of Kanoba Pathak, who was unbraided by a Brahman of Benares for his inordinate love of children,

and astonished his critic by throwing away his child into a well with seeming indifference, illustrates the vanity of the vows of celibacy, which cannot by themselves produce equableness of mind, and indifference to pains and pleasures. Ekanath all his life lived with his wife and children, and so did Tukaram and Namdev, though they were not blessed with sympathetic female relations. Bodhale Bawa, Chokhamela, Damajipant, Bhanudas, the two potter saints, and many others lived in the midst of their families. Dnyan-dev's father who had become *Sanyasi* without obtaining the free consent of his wife, was directed by Ramanand to return to his home, and live with his wife. All these incidents prove that a very high conception of the sanctity of family-life was realised by these saints and prophets, and they did their best to correct the national weakness which shrinks from trouble and anxiety by retiring from the world's conflict. The lives of the female saints have a special interest in this connection. The biographies relate that, owing to their devotion and implicit faith, God helped them out of their difficulties by assisting them in their daily household work, and, by assuming strange disguises, permitted them the freedom they wanted in order to serve Him without being missed by their jealous relations. There is a danger in all such stories of making providential intervention too cheap, but this fault is more than balanced by the high moral which underlies these accounts. The sanctity of married and family life was nobly vindicated by these saints and prophets, and this was a signal moral triumph over the past traditions of asceticism.

All students of modern European history are aware that the Reformers achieved their most permanent

success in the liberation of the national intellect from the thralldom of scholastic learning, and the oppressive preponderance of the classical Latin in which all the best books were till then written. The Bible was, by the help of these Reformers, for the first time made accessible to all, high and low, and the monopoly of learning, till then enjoyed by the priests, was shaken to its foundations. Here, in India, the process of liberation was carried out on the same lines. The professors of the old Sanskrit learning found for the first time, to their great surprise, that the saints and prophets addressed the people, both in speech and writing, in their own vernacular, and boldly opened the hitherto hidden treasures to all and sundry, men and women, Brahmans and Shudras, alike. The final victory was not achieved without much struggle and considerable suffering. Dnyandev was the first adventurer to stray into these forbidden regions, and his example was followed by Ekanath and Ramdas, Namdev and Tukaram, Vaman Pandit and Mukteshwar, Shridhar and Malopant. These last four gifted men are more celebrated as authors and poets than as religious teachers, but they derived their inspiration from the same sources. It is true the *Vedas* and the *Shastras* were not translated as the Bible was, but there was a sufficient reason for this difference. These early Marathi writers knew that modern India, after the Buddhistic revolution was less influenced by the *Vedas* and *Shastras* than by the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Gita*, and these latter works were translated and made accessible to all. The pioneers in this field, Ekanath and Tukaram, were each made to bear the brunt:

of Brahmin opposition. Their works were not burned as in Europe, but they were ordered to be thrown into water. The river gods, however, so the story runs, would not let them be destroyed, and the works remained dry and would not sink, and thus became more famous than ever. Vaman Pandit, the great Sanskrit scholar, who would not deign to speak or write in the popular language, as being unfit to be used by a Pandit, was, when brought in contact with Ramdas, made to see the error of his ways; and a Brahmin translator of the Ramayana, named Salya Rasal, who was over-proud of his superior learning, was similarly put to shame by a message from his goddess that he should get the work corrected by submitting it to the revision of the tailor Namdev. Dnyandev also was made the instrument of performing a miracle, by which a buffalo was said to have recited the *Vedas* by heart. This story is obviously an allegorical parody of the mental condition of those who prided themselves upon their ability to recite the *Vedas* without understanding their contents.

The struggle between the claims of the Classical Sanskrit and the Vernaculars, of which we hear so much in these days, is thus an old conflict, the issues in which were decided in favour of the Vernacular or living languages long ago, and whatever scholars and antiquarians may urge to the contrary, there can only be one answer to the question,—the answer which was given by the saints and prophets when they laid Sanskrit aside as useless for their work, and spent all their energies in the cultivation and growth of their mother tongue. It may safely be said that the growth of the modern vernaculars.

in India is solely the result of the labours of these saints, and that the provinces which showed most decided tendencies in the way of reform, also showed the most healthy development of their Vernacular literature.

The Protestant reformers in Europe achieved another change of great importance in the way in which they raised their voice against the excesses to which image-worship and saint-worship were carried in the Roman Catholic Church. On our side, also, this protest was raised, but it did not assume the iconoclastic form which the Protestant reformers, especially the stricter sect among them, adopted. Polytheistic worship was condemned both in theory and in practice by the saints and prophets of Maharashtra. Each of them had his own favourite form of the divine incarnation, and this worship of one favourite form left no room for allegiance to other gods. Ramdas, for instance, worshipped God under the name of Rama; Ekanath and Jayaram Swami worshipped Him under the name of Krishna, Tukaram, Chokhamela and Namdev under the name of Vithoba; Narahari Sonar and Naganath under the name of Shiva; Janardhan Swami and Narasimha Saraswati under the name of Dattatraya; Morya Gosavi and Ganeshanath under the name of Ganpati, and so on for the rest. Strange stories are told in these biographies of the way in which the saints, when they visited other shrines, refused to see the image in the form in which they did not worship God, and, as a consequence, the image manifested itself to them in the form familiar to them. The supremacy of one God, One without a second, was the first article of the creed with every one of these saints, which they would

not allow anybody to question or challenge. At the same time, as observed above, the iconoclastic spirit was never characteristic of this country, and all the various forms in which God was worshipped were believed to merge finally into one Supreme Providence of *Brahma*. This tendency of the national mind was a very old tendency. Even in Vedic times, Indra and Varuna, Marut and Rudra, while they were separately invoked at the sacrifices offered for their acceptance, were all regarded as interchangeable forms of the One and supreme Lord of Creation. This same tendency explains the comparative indifference with which the saints and prophets treated the question of image-worship. It is a complete misunderstanding of their thoughts and ideas on this subject when it is represented that these gifted people were idolaters in the objectionable sense of the word. They did not worship stocks and stones. In Vedic times there was admittedly no idol or image worship. It came into vogue with the acceptance of the incarnation theory, and was stimulated by the worship of the Jains and Buddhists of their saints. Finally, it got mixed up with the fetish worship of the aboriginal tribes, who were received into the Aryan fold, and their gods were turned into incarnations of the Aryan deities. The saints and prophets, however, rose high above these grovelling conceptions prevalent amongst the people. Idol worship was denounced when the image did not represent the Supreme God. Both Tukaram and Ramdas have spared no words in denouncing these aboriginal and village gods, and their frightful rites and sacrifices. In the life of Bhanudas it is stated that he told the King of Vijayanagar that the Goddess he

worshipped served his God at Pandharpur in a menial capacity as a sweeper, and the king found it to be the truth when he visited Pandharpur. In the lives of two other saints it is stated that the Goddess Kali, to whom human and animal sacrifices were offered, was so frightened by the protest of the saints in the name of Hari against such cruelty, that the sacrifices were given up by the command of the Goddess not only for the time, but for all time. These illustrations will serve to show in what light image-worship, as an aid to devotion, was utilised by these saints, and unless this distinction is borne in mind, it will be impossible to understand the true position occupied by these teachers in this important matter.

There is one point, however, in which the reforming saints and prophets in this country differed essentially from those who were working in the same cause elsewhere, the contemporary protestant reformers in Europe. From the Vedic times downwards, the *Aryan* gods have been gods of Love and Brightness, of sweetness and of light. There were, of course, terrible gods also, such as Varuna and Rudra, who inspired awe and filled the mind with terror. But the national tendency was to dwell with affection on and contemplate chiefly the bright side of divine Providence, and was unlike the Semitic idea which dwelt upon the terrific manifestation of a distant God, whose glory could not be seen save through a cloud, a severe Chastiser of Human frailties, and a Judge who punished more frequently than He rewarded, and even when He rewarded, kept the worshipper always in awe and trembling. This conception lies at the root of all

Semitic religions, and it is to the credit of Christianity that it attempted and partly succeeded in bridging the gulf by securing the intervention of God incarnate in the flesh, as Jesus Christ, who suffered for mankind and atoned for their sins. This intervention was never found necessary in the *Aryan* religions of Greece or Rome, or of India. God, with us, has always been regarded more as a father and a mother, a brother and a friend, than a judge and a chastiser and a ruler. Not that He does not judge, or rule; but He judges, rules, and chastises with the love of a father or a mother, ever ready to receive the repentant prodigal son back into his arms. The orthodox Brahminical conception does not bring out this feature of kindly Providence so prominently as it is found to be realised in the teachings and life experiences of our saints and prophets. They are emphatic in their assertions that they were able to see their God, and hear His words, and walked and talked with Him, and held intercourse with Him. In their higher moments they, no doubt, describe Him as One who did not speak, but their most normal condition of mind was one of satisfaction when they realised His presence as we realise the presence of sensible things. The *Yogis* and the *Vedantis* only talk in their waking dreams of being one with God, but Namdev and Tukaram, Ekanath and Dnyandev, were not content with this distant and difficult union, which did not last during all the moments of their conscious life, and compared their own happiness in such daily intercourse with God as being above all the attainments of *Yoga* and *Vedanta*. We may believe the miracles ascribed to these saints or disbelieve them, but we cannot

disbelieve their emphatic statements on this point. All the love that in Christian lands circles round the life and death of Christ Jesus has been, in India, freely poured upon the intense realization of the every-day presence of the Supreme God in the heart in a way more convincing than eyes, ears or the sense of touch can realise. This constitutes the glory of the saints, and it is a possession which is treasured up by our people, high and low, men and women, as a solace in life beyond all value.

As a consequence of this conception of God's relations with man, the supreme efficacy of devotional Love, *Bhakti*, over all other methods of attaining to His knowledge became the cardinal creed of these *Vaishnava* sects. There is not a life in all these sketches drawn by Mahipati in which *Bhakti* and Faith, *Bhawa*, are not emphasised as being far superior in virtue to all other forms of worship, such as the performance of rites and ceremonies of external worship, pilgrimages and ablutions, self-mortifications and fasts, learning and contemplation. These have relation only to the body or the mind, while the Spirit is what God desires to see engaged in His service. The rites and ceremonies may be performed as indifferent matters, just as food may be taken and thirst quenched, and the rest of sleep enjoyed, as they come naturally without effort or unnecessary anxiety about them. The best ablution is when the senses are drowned in the ocean of God's presence about us, and the same presence is made to fill us inside and out. The best sacrifice and the highest *Dana* or gift is when we surrender ourselves to His sweet will and for His service, and claim

nothing as our own. The best mortification is that which makes the spirit humble before Him, the best contemplation is when His glory is sung with all our powers. Neither knowledge nor *Yoga* powers, health nor wealth, nor children nor possessions, not even *Mukti*, freedom from birth and death, is desirable in itself. What is desirable is to be always full of love for Him and His works including all creation, men and animals. Namdev cried while removing the bark of a tree, because he thought he saw blood coming out from the stroke of his axe, and he struck himself with the axe to see how he felt, and realised what the tree might feel. Shaik Mahomed, being sent by his father to practise the butcher's trade, first cut his own finger with his knife to see how the animal would feel, and the pain he felt drove him to forswear his trade, and retire from the world in which such pain had to be inflicted for earning one's livelihood. Tukaram felt that there must be something wrong about him, when, on seeing him, the sparrows left the field he was sent to watch, though he did not intend to disturb them. This intense spirituality and absolute surrender of Self may sound somewhat unreal to men not brought up in the atmosphere these saints breathed. But, there can be no doubt about the fact, and there can also be no doubt that the national ideal of spiritual excellence has been shaped by these models. It may be that a stronger backbone and more resisting power are needed in the times in which we live, but in an account of the saints and prophets as they flourished more than two hundred years ago, we cannot afford to interpolate our own wants and wishes.

It may be interesting to note how these saints thought and spoke, and how, when they came in contact with a militant religion like Mahomedanism, they faced their troubles and conquered them. The lives of Namdev, Ramdas, Ekanath, and others are full of such incidents. The most noteworthy fact in this connection is that several Mahomedans became converts to the Hindu faith, and obtained such a public recognition that their help was invoked by the Hindu authors who wrote in those times, along with the Hindu saints. Shaik Mahomed and Kabir may be cited as examples of this catholic spirit of recognition. On the other hand, Tukaram and Ekanath were so influenced by their contact with Mahomedanism that they composed verses in Urdu of so catholic a character as to be unobjectionable to the strictest Mahomedan. Ramdas did the same when one of his disciples, Udhav, got into trouble at Bedar. The story of Damajipant, a servant of the Bedar Kings, is well known to all. In a time of famine he distributed the Government stores of grain among the poor, and on being taken to task he was relieved by an unexpected remittance of the full value of the grain to the King's treasury. The saints came out well in their struggles with their foreign rulers and they prevailed not by fighting nor by resistance, but by quiet resignation to the Will of God. There was a tendency perceptible towards a reconciliation of the two races in mutual recognition of the essential unity of Allah with Rama, and by the time Shivaji appeared on the scene, this reconciliation seems to have been almost complete, though occasional outbursts of Mahomedan fanaticism were not altogether unknown even then.

We have thus noticed all the principal features of the religious movement, which, commencing with Dnyandev who lived in the fifteenth century, can be traced to the end of the last century as a steady growth in spiritual virtues. It gave us a literature of considerable value in the Vernacular language of the country. It modified the strictness of the old spirit of caste exclusiveness. It raised the *Shudra* classes to a position of spiritual power and social importance almost equal to that of the Brahmins. It gave sanctity to the family relations and raised the status of woman. It made the nation more humane and at the same time, more prone to hold together by mutual toleration. It suggested and partly carried out a plan of reconciliation with the Mahomedans. It subordinated the importance of rites and ceremonies, and of pilgrimage and fasts, and of learning and contemplation, to the higher excellence of worship by means of Love and Faith. It checked the excesses of polytheism. It tended in all these ways to raise the nation generally to a higher level of capacity both of thought and action, and prepared it in a way in which no other nation in India was prepared to take the lead in re-establishing a united native power in the place of foreign domination. These appear to us to be the principal features of the religion of Maharashtra, which Saint Ramdas had in view when he advised Shivaji's son to follow in his father's footsteps, and propagate this Faith, at once tolerant and catholic, deeply spiritual and yet not iconoclastic.

Note: This Essay has been extracted from Ranade's 'History of the Rise of Mahratta Power.'

VII

STATE LEGISLATION IN SOCIAL MATTERS

The discussions raised by the publication of Mr. Malabari's Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood have been notably distinguished for the warmth and freshness of light thrown upon many of our most cherished social institutions. As is usual in the case of all discussions on social evils, much declamation and invective have been employed on both sides, to supply the place of calm and critical investigation, and the merits of the questions really at issue have been obscured by clouds of words and figures, and empty boasts of self-satisfied complacency. These questions really reduce themselves to two points of inquiry, first, whether or not the institutions assailed produce on the whole more of evil than good, and secondly, whether the evil that is in them admits of a speedier and more effective remedy than is implied in the advice of those who would let things alone, and would drift along with the stream of events, but neither exert themselves, nor permit others to make an effort, to regulate the current and make it run steadier and stronger in the desired direction. On the first point, taking the general sense of those who have spoken out on both sides, there appears to be a general agreement. The dispute here is confined to the alleged extent of the evils, which are freely admitted to be real. On the second point, the difference of views is radical, and there does not appear to be any great likelihood of an agreement ever being

arrived at which will satisfy both parties. When one sees how men, who had grown grey in the denunciation of these evils, turned round immediately a suggestion was made for practical action, and joined the orthodox majority in their praise of the existing arrangements, the 'Political Rishi's' warning about the defects of Hindu character seems to be more than justified. There appears to be no ground for hope, under such circumstances, of seeing any genuine reform movement springing up from within the heart of the nation, unless that heart is regenerated, not by cold calculations of utility, but by the cleansing fire of a religious revival. However, there is really nothing strange in all this outcry. There will always be, and there always have been, as Lord Ripon in another connection observed, a clean and an unclean party in small municipal, as well as in large social, arrangements. If the population of our cities were entirely left to themselves, and each man's or woman's vote was as good as another's, the good sense of the men of light and leading would no doubt prevail in the end, but, in the earlier stage of discussion and argument, we should doubtless hear many an appeal to the glory of our ancestors, their long life and vigour, maintained, it might be proudly observed, in spite of, or in the absence of, municipal conservancy. Even in European countries, there are anti-vaccination doctors; Shakers, who take no medicine, but leave the body to cure itself; physical science pedants who still question the truth of the motion of the earth round its sun centre, and its motion round its own axis. A love of paradox is a weakness which clings to many great minds, grows with their other

excellences like a parasitic excrescence. Leaving these unnatural developments aside, it is clear that there is a chance of producing a reasonable conviction among, not the vast majority of those who do not think, but among the considerable minority, who in every country lead public opinion by informing it and setting it in proper form before the community in general.

Viewed in this light, there is abundant reason for hope that an historical study of these institutions will dispel many a false conception of the antiquity and sanctity of the existing arrangements.

The early celebration of child marriages, the forcible disfigurement of widows and absolute prohibition of remarriage in the higher castes, the occasional and local practices of polyandry and polygamy, are all admittedly corruptions of recent growth unknown to the best days of our country's history. The late lamented Hon. Rao Saheb V. N. Mandlik, C. S. I., who speaks with an authority which few will dispute, has freely admitted that the Hindu girls' marriageable age is twelve, and that the corresponding age for boys has been reduced from time to time as the period of Brahmacharya studies, was more and more curtailed. Taking the most narrow acceptance of the Grihya Sutra rules, this period could not well be legally curtailed below twelve years, thus making the marriageable age for boys twenty years. In regard to the question of widow marriage, it is admitted by the orthodox leaders of the opposition that the prohibition forms part of the Kali-Nishedha, or prohibitions intended for the Kali Yuga only. The writings of Manu and Yajñawalkya show, what the Puranas and

Itihasas confirm that monogamy is the natural condition of Aryan life and that both polygamy and polyandry are disreputable excrescences. Nobody can, under these circumstances, contend that, on the strictest interpretation of the texts, the local usages which obtain at present agree with our best traditions of the past. Those who advocate a return to the old order of things are thus in good company, and are not foreign imitators.

We have to consider, next, how it came to pass that the Aryan population, in course of time, departed from the vigorous and healthy usages of their ancestors. Such an enquiry alone will enable us, who now aspire after a higher life, to trace our way back without risk of failure or disappointment. The Hindu community has always been self-contained, if not original, in its grasp of social matters, and no analogies drawn from Christian or Mahomedan nations can have any convincing force, unless they are supported by reasons and associations of our own venerable past.

The rise and fall of female rights and status in Hindu Aryan Society has a history of its own, at once interesting and suggestive in its analogies with the corresponding developments in the institutions of another kindred stock, the Roman Aryans, who have so largely influenced European ideas. Both began by a complete subordination of the women in the family to the men, and of the men themselves to the head of the family. In early Vedic times, the woman was, like the deformed or the sickly member of a family, devoid of rights, and being incapable of self-protection, was disentitled to share the inheritance. The succession in a united family after the death of its

chief went to the surviving male members, his sons and brothers, and, in their default, the more distant agnate males.

The earlier Sutrakars, Baudhayana and Apastamba, clearly reaffirmed this exclusion from inheritance and asserted the perpetual subjection of every woman to her father, her husband, and her son. Gradually, however, as the Aryans settled in the land, and the necessities of war gave place to the gentler virtues and victories of peace, the earlier Smritis found admission by express texts for the wife, the mother, the grandmother, daughter, and the sister, and finally to the female relations of the male Gotraja Sapinda. It is hardly necessary to follow this growth step by step. Corresponding with this recognition of the claims of family affection, a chivalrous regard for women, and for their personal comfort and liberty, was asserted in other ways. The women took equal part with the husbands in solemn religious rites, and as queens took their places in great religious sacrifices and the deliberations of State, on occasions of display and power. They were permitted at their choice to remain single and unmarried, and neither the father nor the mother would interfere by exercising their power of choosing husbands for them. They were poets, philosophers, and Rishis, and composed hymns, wrote works and studied and argued with men on equal terms. This went on for many centuries, and the proofs of it are too numerous in all our early writings to admit of any hesitation on the part of even the most hostile critic. Marriage was optional with man as well as with woman. The texts of the marriage ritual, the rule for selecting brides or rather bridegrooms, the

practice of Swayamvara in mature age, the liberty to be married again on the death, or absence, or incurable impotency, of the first husband, both before and after consummation, the strictness of the monogamous tie, all these privileges were conceded to women in the natural growth of things.

Thus far, there was no break of continuity, and all was smooth sailing. The analogies between the Roman and Hindu developments were complete so far. In course of time, the Aryans, like the Romans, having overcome their enemies, fell to fighting among themselves, and long and murderous wars between Brahmins and Kshatriyas devastated the land. Under the pressure of these complicated difficulties, the strong love of the active virtues of fighting and hunting, chivalrous regard for women, and the enjoyment of the innocent pleasures of life generally, gave way to a philosophy which regarded life and being itself as a pain and a calamity, the bustle of the arts of peace and war as a vanity of vanities. And naturally weak woman, from being the soul of chastity and virtue, came to be described as a snare and a burden. The gods, who had cheered the conquering and militant Aryans with their countenance, retired with the Rishis to the Himalayas and beyond. They could no longer be seen, and gave way to a fatalistic belief that man was the slave of his own miserable *Karma*, and must bear it patiently till he learned how best to throw off this mortal coil. The great excess of bad passions which had deluged the land with fratricidal blood demoralized society, and lowered the status of women in the family, the State, and in the social arrangements

generally. The Aryan ideals lost their charm, and a lower type of character and morality asserted its predominance as the down-trodden races, which had been driven to the hills, issued from their haunts, and fell upon the demoralized and disunited Aryan kingdoms on all sides. At the same time, a new race of invaders from Central Asia, partly Scythian and partly Mongolian in stock, entered India by the North-West, and the North-East, drove before them the old Aryans, and established their power and colonies in the Punjab, Sind, Rajputana, Central India, Bengal, Guzerat, and even in parts of Maharashtra. This process of the upheaval of non-Aryan races, and the invasion and settlement of barbarian Scythian and Mongolian conquerors, was in active development for many centuries, and these ethnic and political forces have profoundly modified the institutions and usages of modern India. They brought to the surface races of men with a lower civilization, more patriarchal, and, therefore, less chivalrous ideals of life. Polyandry, has always been a normal institution of the non-Aryan or Scythian and Mongolian races. It derived new dignity from the rise to power of these backward races. The woman's lot has always been one of dependence and misery in barbarous countries. It could not be otherwise here. Woman in these ruder races was bartered in marriage as a moveable chattel or slave. She was burned with the deceased lord, with his bows and arrows, his horse and weapons, to provide for his comfort in another world. When these races rose to power, the better minds were driven to seek shelter in asceticism and abandonment of the world which had for them no charms and

only misery, life-long and unrelieved; and instead of being the deity of peace and goodwill in the family, woman became the symbol of corruption and vice. Optional celibacy and Swayamvara were under these circumstances out of the question. The old state of pupilage and dependence was re-affirmed. Late marriages, and the liberty of second marriage to widows, were denounced, though here and there they were allowed to associate with the husband's surviving brother for the purpose of procreating children for him. The well-marked four-fold divisions of life lost their meaning and their sanctity, and baby and child-espousals could not but come into fashion, and bring in their train polygamy and concubinage. Things thus settled themselves on this lower level of barbarous usages. Gradually, the better and the Aryan portion of the community recovered from the surprise and discomfiture, and the dark clouds of the Middle Ages of Indian History, the dreaded Kali Yuga of the Puranas, began to clear up.

Political and ethnic agencies of great power have wrought the evil, and we cannot afford to lose sight of this fact in our attempts to elevate the status of the female sex. Fortunately, the causes which brought on this degradation have been counteracted by Providential guidance, and we have now, with a living example before us of how pure Aryan customs, unaffected by barbarous laws and patriarchal notions, resemble our own ancient usages, to take up the thread where we dropped it under foreign and barbarous pressure, and restore the old healthy practices, rendered so dear by their association with our

best days, and justified by that higher reason which is the sanction of God in man's bosom.

The next question is, as stated above, a more difficult one to deal with. How this gentle revolution is to be effected without breaking with the past, is a problem which admits of difference of views. There are two schools of thinkers among those who have discussed this subject. One set would utilize all the active and passive agencies which tend to encourage and vitalize reform; the other set would leave things to take their own course, firm in the confidence that the passive agencies at work would secure all our ends just as we desire, slowly but surely. Those who feel the full force of the ethnical and political causes mentioned above, and also feel how necessary it is at certain stages of man's progress to secure the assertion of right ideas by the highest sanctions, advocate to some extent the help of State regulation, as representing the highest and most disinterested wisdom of the times, working to give effect to the other tendencies, concentrating and popularizing them. Those who are not sufficiently alive to these considerations would trust to education and the gradual development of better ideas by their own internal force, to achieve all that we desire. It is needless to state that the publication to which these remarks are prefaced is intended to strengthen the hands of the first set of thinkers, and to show, by the example of what occurred in the past, that timely State regulation is not attended with the mischiefs which people attribute to it, and that it co-ordinates and vivifies the healthy action of the other agencies. It becomes, in this connection, necessary to consider briefly the several objections

urged by the advocates of the let-alone school in their order of relative importance.

The first objection urged on this head is that these are social questions, which it is not the duty of the State to regulate. We answer that this argument is not open to those who welcome, as the vast majority of this class of opponents freely do, State regulation for the abolition of *Sati*, of infanticide, the suicide of *jogees* on the banks of the Ganges, and self-torture by hook-swinging before idol shrines, or to those who propose compulsory education, and compulsory vaccination, and sanitary precautions generally. Individual liberty of action is no doubt a great force, but this liberty has its limitations imposed by the fact that no man's liberty should encroach upon the liberty of those who surround him. Whenever there is a large amount of unredressed evil suffered by people who cannot adopt their own remedy, the State has a function to regulate and minimize the evil, if by so regulating it, the evil can be minimized better than by individual effort and without leading to other worse abuses. The State in its collective capacity represents the power, the wisdom, the mercy and charity, of its best citizens. What a single man, or a combination of men, can best do on their own account, that the State may not do, but it cannot shirk its duty if it sees its way to remedy evils, which no private combination of men can check adequately or which it can deal with more speedily and effectively than any private combination of men can do. In these latter cases, the State's regulating action has its sphere of duty marked out clearly. On this, and on this principle alone, can State action be justified in many important departments of its activity,

such as the enforcement of education, sanitation, factory legislation, of state undertakings like the postal service, or subsidies given to private effort in the way of railway extension and commercial development. The regulation of marriageable age has in all countries, like the regulation of the age of minority, or the fit age for making contracts, been a part of its national jurisprudence, and it cannot be said with justice that this question lies out of its sphere. The same observation holds true of the condition of the widow rendered miserable in early life, and thrown helpless on the world. More legitimately than minors, the widows are the wards of the nation's humanity, and to the extent that the evil they suffer is remediable by man, it cannot be said that this remedy may not be considered by the State as fully within its proper function.

The next argument urged on the other side is that the evil is not so great as some people think, and that it really needs no state action. There can be no doubt that, to some extent, Mr. Malabari has laid himself open to this side attack. The evils of child-marriage, and enforced widowhood, and unrestricted polygamy, are not quantitatively, and calculating them by statistical returns, so great as Mr. Malabari described them to be. But this does not go to show that, after making due allowance for all exaggerations, the residue of unredressed wrong which calls for remedy is not sufficiently great to justify action. Much the same thing was said when it was proposed to prohibit Sati or Infanticide. Wherever there is undeserved misery endured in a large number of cases there is ground for state interference, always supposing that the

interference will lead to the redress of the wrong, better than any individual effort can accomplish.

A third way of stating the same objection is that the parties who suffer do not complain of it, and strangers have, therefore, no business to intervene. This is a very old line of defence. It was urged as an argument against the abolition of slavery, as well as against the laws which rendered Sati and Infanticide crimes, and validated widow marriages. Perhaps, the worst effect of injustice is that it depresses the down-trodden victims to such an extent that they lick the hand of the oppressor. The slaves fought on the side of the Southern planters against their Northern liberators. No wonder then, if the helpless women and widows side with the orthodox majority. If the State contemplated forcible action in spite of the wishes of the victims, the argument might be urged with some effect. But nobody in his senses can, or does, contemplate any such method of procedure. Widows and children are not the proper persons who can seek their own relief under the wrong that is done to them, and to society, and this argument therefore, falls to the ground.

Fourthly, it is urged that, admitting the fact that such regulation falls within the province of State action, and that these evils, after making all allowances for exaggeration and the apathy of the victims, are still sufficient to justify State action, if such action can remedy the wrong without leading to other and greater abuses, and that it is not proper to wait till the victims rebel—it is urged that a foreign Government cannot be trusted with this power. This jealousy of foreign inter-

ference in social matters is not altogether a bad sign, and if the interference was of foreign initiation, the force of this argument would be irresistible. In this case, however, the foreign rulers have no interest to move of their own accord. If they consulted their selfish interests only, they would rather let us remain as we are, disorganized and demoralized, stunted and deformed, with the curse of folly and wickedness paralysing all the healthy activities and vital energies of our social body. The initiation is to be our own, and based chiefly upon the example of our venerated past, and dictated by the sense of the most representative and enlightened men in the community, and all that is sought at the hands of the foreigners is to give to this responsible sense, as embodied in the practices and usages of the respectable classes, the force and the sanction of law. These considerations weighed with our leaders in the past, when they welcomed this co-operation in the abolition of Sati and Infanticide, and also in the recognition of the validity of widow marriages.

If we are to abjure such help under all circumstances, we must perforce fall back behind the Parsis, Mahomedans, and Christians, who have freely availed themselves of the help in recasting their social arrangements. The Parsis through their Panchayat secured to their community the benefit of the Parsi Marriage Act, and their Matrimonial Courts with Parsi delegates to assist the Judge. The Khojas have been striving to secure similar concessions for their own community. The Nayars, in Malabar, have very recently had the benefit of an improved Marriage Law extended to them by legislature. The movement of proper regulation of religious

endowments, in respect of which public opinion is almost unanimous, may be cited as an illustration of the readiness of all classes of people not to object to State Legislation at the hands of foreign rulers. Further, as it is likely that foreign rule will last over us for an indefinite length of time, we reduce ourselves, by accepting this policy, to the extreme absurdity of shutting out a very useful help for many centuries to come. In such matters, the distinction of foreign and domestic rulers is a distinction without difference. It has a meaning and significance when foreign interests override native interests, but when the foreigners have no interest to serve, and the initiative is to be all our own, the recognition of State help is not open to the stock objection urged by those who think that we forfeit our independence by seeking such regulation on lines approved by us.

Fifthly—It is further urged, in deprecation of State action, that in this matter we must not lose sight of the fact that institutions, like constitutions, must grow and cannot be made to conform with foreign ideals to order. There is, no doubt, some force in this observation, and it would be a fatal objection if the argument for change were based on the ground that we must copy the foreign exemplar. The remarks which have been made above are, however, a sufficient answer to this allegation. The change is sought not as an innovation, but as a return and restoration to the days of our past history. Those who advocate it justify it on the authority of texts revered, and admitted to be binding to this day. The intermediate corruption and degradation was not of the nation's seeking. It was forced upon it by the predominance of

barbarous influences, and by the intolerance of ruthless conquerors. That force having ceased to be operative, we must now return to the old order of things, if we are to grow to our old proportions. The history of the suppression of Infanticide and of Sati shows that these institutions, which had grown as excrescences upon the healthy system of ancient Hindu Society, were checked, and could be checked, only by the strong arm of Law, and once they were denounced as crimes, they disappeared from the face of the country. Before Government made up its mind to deal finally with these evils, the usual arguments that institutions grow, and cannot be made to order, were urged, and the duty of religious neutrality was held up *in terrorem* to frighten the timid and arouse the passions of the ignorant and the prejudiced. The diseased mal-formations of the body cannot, and should not, be dealt with in the same way as its normal and healthy developments. The sharp surgical operation, and not the homoeopathic infinitesimally small pill, is the proper remedy for the first class of disorders, and the analogy holds good in the diseases of the body politic, as also in dealing with the parasitical growths of social degeneration.

Sixthly—The apprehensions against State legislation expressed in some quarters might have been most reasonable if, as a fact, Hindu Society was really not governed by any law, and it was proposed for the first time to regulate these matters by subjecting them to the controlling action of the State. The fact, however, is that law, a written law, and a very stringent one too, does regulate these matters, and it is enforced much in the same way as

other laws by our Courts of Justice. The courts are bound to give effect to that law, and decree personal rights and disabilities in strict accordance with it. What is now proposed is to substitute the more ancient and righteous law for a later degenerate off-shoot of that law, cancel the travesty of law which is condemned by all, at least more amenable to reason, and utilize the force of State sanction as a final support. No private understanding can prevail against the coercive power of unjust law as it is now enforced. The new law proposed is itself not a foreign importation, but is only a revival of the ancient law of the country as laid down in the texts, and all that the Government is called on to do is to revert from the times of corruption to the times when Hindu Society was more healthy and vigorous.

There is another incidental and an important advantage likely to accrue in consequence of the change proposed. All progress in social liberation tends to be a change from the law of status to the law of contract, from the restraints of family and caste customs to the self-imposed restraints of the free will of the individual. Nay, more, the confusion caused by inconsistent Smriti texts and judicial authorities on ancient Hindu Law and custom furnishes the strongest argument for a definite improvement based on ancient lines by way of codification on the subject by the legislature. There is not a custom, however absurd, which cannot be defended by some strong text of ancient law. The usual practice of reconciling texts, intended for different ages and countries, and the loss of the spirit of true criticism, have benumbed the power of judgment. The liberation from superstitious

thraldom, which will result from the changes proposed, is not likely to be the least of its benefit. It will be necessary to be very circumspect in graduating the change desired to meet exactly the extent of the evil crying for redress. The past century or half a century has effected a change in national sentiment, which, if not recognized to the extent it has gone, will only lead to a catastrophe and revulsion of feeling that will be simply irresistible, and may involve the ruin of many interests dear to the nation's heart.

There is only one more objection which we think deserves a passing notice. It is said that all previous legislation was directed against positive crimes, or was only of a permissive nature, while the evils now sought to be remedied are not crimes, and the remedies proposed are not of a permissive character. On the first point, we must urge that the practices now complained of are in some respects far more criminal than those which State action has checked. Sati was committed under temporary insanity caused by grief, while infanticide was in too many cases dictated by a similar mad impulse. They were both offences not committed in cold blood, and their effects spent themselves in a single act of violence, which inflicted the greatest shock on the perpetrator himself or herself. In most cases enforced widowhood and disfigurement, the destruction of home sanctity by polygamous connections, the stupidity of baby marriages, are not impulsive acts, they are done in cold blood, and they inflict lifelong and undeserved misery on helpless victims, while the offenders suffer but little. So far as their moral heinousness is concerned, they are inflictions of injustice

without any redeeming features, and the criminal responsibility of the nation is beyond all reprieve.

As regards the question of permissive *versus* compulsory legislation, we have no patience with those who can find consolation in empty words. The remedies proposed are in their nature permissive, and need give offence to nobody. If the law lays down strictly that no polygamous connection shall be entered into except for reasons specially permitted by the ancient law of Manu, we fail to see how such legislation is more compulsory than permissive. When the law lays down that no widow may disfigure herself except of deliberate choice, and at a fit time of life, say after she is twenty-five years old, where indeed is the compulsion? When the law lays down that marriages shall not be celebrated below a certain age, at least twelve for girls and eighteen for boys, under penalty that earlier celebrations will not meet with the recognition of the Civil Courts in cases of disputes, where again is the compulsion?

We have thus noticed and answered all the usual objections urged by those who honestly support the continuance of the existing order of things. The question of principle is one which must first be argued out in all its bearings. Once the principle is recognized, the details of legislation may safely be left to the common sense of the community. It is with this view that the compiler of this publication has addressed himself to the task of placing before the public, in an accessible form, the literature of the subject in the shape of the debates that took place when the Widow Marriage Bill was just introduced in the Legislative Council thirty years ago. The argu-

ments then urged and refuted have a curious family likeness to those we have at present, and just as the apprehensions then entertained were disappointed, so surely we trust to see that all our ignorant prophecies will be falsified. The directions in which the marriage law needs reform have been already briefly indicated. Diwan Bahadur Raghunath Rao has already sketched out a draft Bill in which some of the reforms urgently required are set forth in full detail. The late Maharaja of Burdwan submitted thirty years ago a scheme for abolishing polygamy. The views of those who have given thought to the subject on this side of India may be briefly thus summarized.

We would, to start with, fix twelve and eighteen as the minimum ages of marriage for girls and boys. These periods are in full keeping with the most approved practice, and the more respectable orthodox sentiment of the present day. Even Rao Saheb V. N. Mandlik has stated twelve years for females as a permissible limit, and for boys we do not think he will regard eighteen years as an unreasonable limit. Marriages contracted before this age should be discouraged, not by pains and penalties of the criminal law, but by the attendant risk of making them liable to be ignored, as in the case of contracts entered into by minors, liable to be ignored or set aside in case of disputes in the Civil Courts for sufficient reasons. Marriage, unless consummated should not be recognized as a perfect union before the limits laid down above are reached. Before such consummation, the girl should not be recognized as having become one with the husband in Gotra, Pinda, and Sutaka. This is the

ancient law, and our revival of it will do away with the superstition which paralyses the action of parents in dealing with the misery of child widows. We would on no account permit disfigurement except after twenty-five years, when the widow may be presumed to be able to realize the circumstances of her position, and can choose deliberately the celibate course of life. Under no circumstances should one wife be superseded by a second connection, except under the safeguards recognized by Manu and other writers. The widow's forfeiture of her husband's estate as a consequence of her second marriage should be done away with, and her life interest in her husband's inheritance should remain intact, whatever her choice of life might be. The marriage of a widower above fifty with girls below fourteen should be strictly prohibited as being opposed to the most approved Smriti texts.

These are the several changes which the advocates of Reform seek to accomplish, not all at once but in due progression. They are fully aware that the details of legislation will not be easily settled, without suggesting many difficulties and doubts which will have to be provided against. The time, however, for suggesting these details has yet to come. We think the discussion has now reached a stage when all sides may well agree in asking for a Commission of Inquiry. Such a Commission, composed of representative Natives, and Europeans, on the model of the Education Commission, will pave the way for practical suggestions. Its inquiries will give point to the discussion, and tend to preserve the interest that has been aroused in all quarters.

VIII

RAJA RAMA MOHANA ROY

It has been arranged that after service this day, I should speak to you a few words about the life and teachings of Raja Rama Mohana Roy. All of you are aware that this day, the 27th of September, is the anniversary of his death. He died while he was on a visit to England; and his remains were buried there by loving friends. He died in 1833; we are in 1896. We are, therefore, celebrating in this place on this occasion the sixty-third anniversary of the death of this great man. Among the orthodox community, this particular fortnight—the dark half of the month of *Bhadrapada*—is dedicated by a very ancient and a very useful custom to commemorate the death of our departed ancestors. Each man and woman tries during these fifteen days to remember the debt of gratitude he or she owes to those who gave them birth; and though in this Samaja this practice has no place and we may not follow the outward observances, the sense of filial love and duty, which moves thousands of people in all parts of the country to show their gratitude for the debt due to our ancestors—has a significance and a truth which we cannot afford to ignore. This is then the sixty-third anniversary of the death of a person who might well be called one of the fathers of the Brahma Church. I say one of the fathers, and advisedly. Because I hold, as I have said on many other occasions, that we, the members

of the Brahma Samaja can claim a long ancestry, as old as any of the sects prevailing in the country. The Brahma movement was not first brought into existence in 1828; we are representatives of an old race; as old as the Bhagavat Gita and the Bhagavata Purana; much older still; as old as Narada, Prahlada, and Vasudeva and the nine sages who visited *Janaka*. From that time there is a continuity of *Sadhus* and saints down to the present day. Raja Rama Mohana Roy, as I said, was thus one of the fathers of the Brahma Church but he was neither the first nor the last. For even in these modern times we have had the founder of the Swami Narayana sect, Keshava Chandra Sen, and Pandit Dayananda Saraswati; which fact shows that the old fire, that animated those who have made this land the sacred birthplace of many religions and religious movements, has not been burnt out. Before, however, I come to speak about Raja Rama Mohana Roy's life and teachings some of you will be interested, I believe, if I draw your attention to the fact that while the anniversaries celebrated in the case of Gods and birthdays in the case of men are allowed to be buried and for the most part forgotten, we find that it is the anniversaries of the deaths of great men that are honoured all over the world. There must be some meaning in this custom so universally prevalent among Christians, Mahomedans, Parsis, Buddhists, and Hindus; it could not well have been a mere accident that, while the *Jayanties* of gods and incarnations are the days of their births, in the case of men we celebrate the time when they leave us. There is a very good and sufficient reason for this difference. No man, till death

takes him away from the temptations of this world, can say to himself, nor can it be said of him by his friends, that the man's life's purpose has been accomplished. A Greek Philosopher was asked a similar question. He said, 'wait till that particular man dies before you sing any song about him.' The life that we lead here has a serious purpose; it is to be guided by discipline, and discipline is, as you know, always a hard master. Out of the hundreds of thousands who start in the race of life, those who reach the goal are but few. Temptations lie in the way, and the difficulties that we experience disable many of us, and it cannot safely be said till a man's death that his life's purpose has been accomplished or that his is a life worthy of the purpose for which he was sent into this world. That is the reason why in the case of men it is the anniversary of death that is commemorated by those who remain after him. No man can be called great who has not, to the last hour of his life, fulfilled the responsibility which greatness implies; and this brings us to the consideration of the question, what constitutes the greatness of the men we love to honour after their death. When we celebrate the anniversaries of our own ancestors, of our fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers, the question is not whether they are great or whether they are not great. To every one of us our fathers and mothers are always objects of reverence as the ancestors who gave us birth, and whatever may be their failings, the mere fact that they are persons to whom we owe all that we have, constitutes a debt of gratitude which we are bound to discharge by celebrating their memories at least once a

year in a more solemn manner than we may be disposed to do on other occasions; but when we make a public commemoration of our great men, the question naturally arises: 'What is it that constitutes greatness in the sense in which you and I and everybody else understand the word? What is it that constitutes this greatness of character?' There are various views held on this subject. To such of you as are interested in this study I would recommend a very careful perusal of some of the English authors, especially Carlyle on 'Heroes and Hero-Worship' or Emerson on 'Great or Representative Men.' These two books will place before you all that might be said on this question: 'What is it that makes a man great, so that we should be anxious to keep green his memory from year to year?' One view, that is Carlyle's view, is that sincerity of purpose and earnestness of conviction make a man great. Every one of us can feel that there is a good deal of truth in that observation. All of us are more or less acting parts in the theatre of this world. Every one of us, be he small or great, be he learned or unlearned, each of us has a small stage; on that he struts and strides, moves about and goes on, persuading others as he also persuades himself that he is not playing a part but that he is playing the reality. However, when he is shut up in his own chamber, when nobody sees him, then you find that every one of us is disposed to wonder and to laugh at the way in which he moved in this theatre. For the most of us there is no reality about it. Sincerity of purpose and earnestness of conviction certainly go a long way to make a great man's character. If we are

wanting in one thing more than another it is in this sincerity and earnestness. In the case of great men, that is, men who are worthy of being so reckoned, you will find that this element of greatness is more or less found in a much larger measure than in the ordinary run of men and women who constitute human society. We may be sincere and earnest on occasions ; but habitual sincerity of purpose and habitual earnestness of action are a gift, a possession, and a treasure that are denied to most of us. You may take up the life of any man whom the world classes as great ; and you will find in a large number of such men this trait of character. Take the case of Luther. In his time there were more learned and even better men than himself, such as Erasmus and Melancthon, who were equally gifted and equally endowed. But what was wanting in them was the earnestness of conviction and sincerity of purpose which were found in Luther. We are all of us more or less speaking under constraint, moving under constraint ; we know that there is no outside control over us, yet we make our own constraint ; and we find that full freedom of movement is not left to us. That is not exactly what constitutes a great man. I will give you another instance of this trait of character in great men. There was a son of a Mahomedan butcher, aged ten or eleven. His father told him to follow his own trade. When, however, the knife was given him and he was told to use it in the way in which his father was using it, he said : 'I am not going to use this knife on this poor dumb animal, till I know how it feels when applied to the sentient parts of my own body ; till I am satisfied on this head, I will not use the

knife.' And so saying he used the knife on his own person first; and feeling that the pain was insufferable, he gave up that trade, he gave up the associations in which he was born, and left the world and retired and thus became the great Mahomedan-Hindu saint of Maharashtra, Shaik Mahomed of Shrigonda. That is one of the traits of character which makes a man great. However, it is not mere sincerity and mere earnestness that go to make a man great. He must be original. He must have imagination which brings him into contact with the Infinite and the real. Such men are called geniuses. Things strike them in a way in which they do not strike us. We are so familiar with things that we can scarcely realise the inner spirit in them; somehow or other there is an obtuseness about us which prevents us from seeing things as they are. For instance, there is a story told of Dayananda Saraswati as regards the circumstances which led him to leave his home and become a *Sanyasi*. He was, as you know, a great man; there is no denying it, whatever may be our differences with him. Among the men of the present generation few men can be named alongside him. When a boy he was sent by his father to perform worship in a Shaiva temple during the night of a fasting day. The father's command was that the boy should sit up all through the night, and see that the water-pot which was hanging over the god was always filled and that water was continuously dripping over it. So the boy of ten or twelve went to the place and sat the night out. At about midnight he found that he was more or less getting sleepy; he could not keep his hand steady and prevent his eyes from closing involun-

tarly; he tried all manner of means, but still he was dozing; and he found that some of those dirty creatures which are always found in dark and close temples sat unconcernedly over the Linga, and disturbed the flowers. As soon as he heard the noise, he got up and found that the water was falling on the rats instead of over the idol. Well, that is a very common experience of us all, but it suggested to him a new line of thought which made him leave his home. It suggested to him that the dumb mechanical worship had no power in it and that the spirit must approach the Soul of the world in some other way than this. This is only one instance. But it shows how great men are original. Originality or imagination, like sincerity of purpose, is thus an essential trait in human greatness. There is a third element again. Not only must a great man occupy a higher plane of thought and action but he must have an attraction about him. It cannot be called magnetic, or any other physical form of attraction, but there is such an attraction about him, that it inspires in those about him the same spirit which he feels of self-sacrifice and public devotion. Any man who stands by himself single and whose example and teachings have not succeeded in penetrating into the hearts and intelligences of other people in such a way that these hearts and intelligences are bound to become part of him, cannot be called a great man.

Truthfulness, great impulses, moral aims, resourcefulness to attain those aims by the bond of love and fellowship—these are the traits of character which go to make a great man, and those in whom they are best developed are

the greatest of men. You have all read accounts of the life of *Buddha*. He had such a hold upon men's minds that wherever he went hundreds and thousands followed him as the Great Teacher, so that they ensured the permanent success of the movements which he inaugurated—a most unparalleled success in the world's history. Take again the story of the prophet Mahomed. A poor, illiterate man, he did not dream of religion in his youth, and yet at forty he goes into retirement, incessantly moves about in such a country as Arabia to find that he is persecuted and has to fly for life; but there was such an attraction among men and women towards him that in the course of ten or twenty years he was able to dictate terms to the largest and the most powerful potentates of the day. Here, then, you have a general idea of what constitutes greatness. Earnestness of purpose, sincerity in action, originality, imagination and, above all, the power of magnetism—we might call it vital or spiritual magnetism—these are the qualities which go to make a man great. I have thus given you my own conception of what a great man is. He is not the richest man, nor the most intelligent man, nor the most cultivated man, nor the most successful man, but a great man is he who, whether he be poor or rich, learned or unlearned, in the profession or out of the profession, successful in life, or unsuccessful in life, the great man is he who combines some of those virtues that I have just attempted to draw your attention to.

Having said this much we shall turn to see whether in Raja Rama Mohana Roy some of these virtues can be found in a way to justify our regard for him as one of the

greatest men that India has produced during the last two centuries and as one of the fathers of the Brahma Church movement. His was a very simple life. He was born in 1774 and he died in 1833; he thus lived for about sixty years; a time which many of us here are now nearing, and some of us have exceeded. He was born a Brahmin. On his mother's side he belonged to the *Shakta* sect, which is the orthodox sect on the Bengal side. On his father's side he came from a family which was well-known for its *Vaishnavism*. So the *Shakta* and *Vaishnava* blood joined together in a sort of mutual reconciliation in producing this great man who was destined to accomplish work which this union of a *Vaishnava* father with a *Shakta* mother typified. In those old days when schools and colleges did not exist, this boy at the age of twelve left his village and went to Patna to study Arabic and Persian, which were then the Court languages. At sixteen he went to Benares and there studied Sanskrit for four years, not to be a Pandit, but to understand the real significance of the old learning. He thus became an Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit scholar, without knowing a word of English till that age.

His familiarity with the Arabic and the Sanskrit philosophy enabled him at the age of sixteen to conceive a dislike to the idolatrous practices which in those parts of Bengal have reached an exaggerated form, with which most of us here are not familiar. There are idolatries and idolatries. But the Bengal system of Kali worship is something of which even we have no idea. This was the sort of idolatry which he denounced at

sixteen. We might well compare notes as to what we did at sixteen with such a record. Were any of us lighted up with the fire that burnt in his heart? His father got vexed with him; and he had to leave his home. He went outside of India as far as Thibet and there he became practically familiar with the Buddhistic system. He knew Musalman philosophy, he knew the Sanskrit philosophy, and in the four years' time that he spent in travelling he became familiar with the Buddhistic philosophy.

After four years' travelling his father got reconciled with him and allowed him to return home. There at twenty he commenced to learn English, completing that study at about twenty-five. Till forty he spent his time in the service of the English Government. He did not rise to any very good position; but was, I believe, the Head Clerk or *Shirastedar* to the District Judge or Collector in several places. At forty he retired from the service and for the first time came to Calcutta. Till then he had not taken any part in any of the public movements. He lived twenty years more. From 1814 to 1833, his life was of incessant work which far exceeded in measure the labour of many hundreds of people like ourselves. He was at once a social reformer, the founder of a great religious movement, and a great politician. These three activities were combined in him in such a way that they put to shame the performance of the best among us at the present time. Raja Rama Mohan Roy's services to the country were not confined to any particular department of human activity. He waged war against polygamy. He first denounced the practice of *Sati* in

1818 when our Presidency of Bombay came under British rule. From that time to 1828 this crusade was carried on continuously for ten years. But not having obtained success he went on this same mission to England in 1830 when he was called to give evidence before a Parliamentary Committee that was sitting there. He was also entrusted by the Emperor of Delhi with some political mission. This crusade against *Sati* represents the most prominent side of his social activity.

As regards his attempts to revive the pure Monotheism of the Upanishad period, it may be noted that after coming to Calcutta in 1814, he established a rudimentary form of the Brahma Church in a spot where people might meet to discuss and also pray, and join in prayer. From 1814 to 1828, this work was carried on with unflagging enthusiasm, and brisk controversy was kept up not only with the orthodox defenders of Hinduism, but with the Christian missionaries. He called upon both Christians and Hindus to return back to the wisdom of their ancient sages. In the two volumes which are published of his life you will find that nearly one whole volume is devoted to the Raja's publications and pamphlets addressed to the Christian missionaries. The rest of the volume is devoted to his expositions of the *Vedantic* and *Upanishad* philosophy. He was reading and writing, preaching and protesting, refuting and discussing all these twenty years. But while he was doing all that, he did not abstain from studying the political wants and needs of his time. In those early days, when the Charter of the East India Company was about to be renewed in 1833, he was called from India and he went

to England to give most useful evidence before that Committee. Unfortunately, the climate did not agree with him and he fell a sacrifice in his country's cause, among strangers in a foreign land, far away from his dear home.

Here ends a brief exposition of the life of this great man. He started the Brahma Samaja movement and that Samaja is his living memorial. He made efforts for the abolition of the practice of *Sati*, and though he did not live to see the result, the Government felt itself compelled by the labours of this great man to take measures to stop *Sati* by legislation five years after his death. People here are not quite familiar with the enormity of this practice of *Sati* in those days. I know there are some men who still say that it was a wrong step to stop *Sati* or to abolish it. You will have some idea of the enormity of this evil from one of the pamphlets Raja Rama Mohana wrote and the petitions he submitted to Parliament. In one of those pamphlets figures are given for fourteen years, and in the Lower Provinces of Bengal alone there were eight thousand cases of *Sati*-burning during the fourteen years, or an average of six hundred per year. There was not a single family which had no case of *Sati*-burning in the last century. These *Sati* sacrifices were not voluntary; but women were pressed to immolate themselves. Once a woman said 'yes' in her agony of grief, her relations made it impossible for her to change her mind. If Government had not stopped it we should have had these horrors repeated before our eyes to this day. If the credit of putting an end to these horrors belongs to any man, that credit must

While Raja Rama Mohana was struck with this universal prevalence of the monotheistic principle, he was deeply pained at the thought that this exalted faith was turned to no practical account, because it was associated with external observances and rites which were in entire discord with it. These external rites and observances made the nation worship all manner of gods and goddesses, elemental, mythological, tribal and local divinities, with the most grotesque features and the worst inhuman associations. This polytheism had also grown side by side with the higher teaching of the Upanishads, that God was One without a second, and of the Bhagavat Gita, that He alone was to be worshipped. This contrast between the monotheistic spirit and the polytheistic observances strikes every student of our religious life as a puzzle which baffles the understanding. You can well imagine how it must have struck a great soul like that of the Raja who from his very boyhood had been brought up an iconoclast and waged war with idolatry of all kinds. He brooded and thought over it, and he worked, and suffered for it in a way of which we have no conception. The question that he put to himself was, how does it come to pass that Monolatry does not go hand in hand with Monotheism in India, when in other countries where the monotheistic principle is less exclusively professed, monolatry has been for two thousand years and more the prevailing practice? This is the question I request you to consider each for himself. I offer no solution of it myself to-day; because though I have been thinking about it for a long time I have not yet been able to find a rational and consistent solution of the difficulty. The question, you will

recollect, is not of idolatry or non-idolatry. That difference relates to the method of devotion and not to the object of worship. The difference to which I have drawn your attention has a deeper source and requires our most anxious consideration. In most cases idolatry is only a consequence of this practical polytheism which prevails in the land and which leads men against the teachings of their own higher reason to think that one Supreme will does not govern all the operations of nature, but that many gods and goddesses, good and bad deities, or *Devatas*, are permitted to influence the operations of nature and the well-being of man in a hundred different ways, and it is these subordinate powers which must be propitiated each in its own way and on its own day. It is this ceaseless distraction of the mind between the devotion to the One Supreme Lord of all and the claims of the multiple small agents of good and bad influences which is the real evil. There is image worship among the Roman Catholics and there is saint worship and *Pir*-worship among Christians and Mahomedans, but on the whole they do not detract from the monolatrous character of the devotions of these people. With us this limit has been overstepped with the consequent debasement that we see all about us. Rama Mohana Roy naturally felt pained at this modern debasement, and with a view to bring into accord our practical devotions with our monotheistic faith, he gathered together kindred souls who felt with him on this point and established the Brahma Samaja. He did not regard the Brahma Samaja faith as a new Dispensation, or a new declaration of God's purposes. He aspired only to establish harmony between men's accepted faith and their practical

observances by a strict monolatrous worship of the One Supreme Soul, a worship of the heart and not of the hands, a sacrifice of self and not of the possessions of the self. There was nothing foreign in its conception, origin, or method. He wanted men and women to cherish their own ancient treasures of faith and to secure their freedom from the bondage of superstition and ignorance. This was the work which the Brahma Samaja was intended to carry out. It is not for me to say how far that promise has been fulfilled. If it has not been fulfilled, the blame is not his but ours. To us the same problem presents itself to-day, as it did to him early in the century. And it is a problem on the right solution of which our destiny here and hereafter greatly depends. In connection with this anniversary I beseech you to take the great lesson to heart and try to work out its solution in such a way that the integrity of your soul may be restored. When this correspondence between the head and the heart, this concord between the flesh and the spirit is established, Indian monotheism will be a great power in the land, uniting 250 millions of men and women in a bond which shall be indissoluble. The historical differences of national creeds will continue to exist like the different styles of architecture. The Christian Church will not look in outward appearance like a Mahomedan mosque or an Aryan temple, but the differences of style and form will not interfere with the spiritual unity of purpose. When this is accomplished, another great idea, the union of all religions, which Raja Rama Mohana Roy cherished deeply in his heart, will be realised, and with it people in all lands will say with one voice

'Thy Kingdom has come and Heaven has descended on Earth.'

Since this address was first delivered there are evident signs of the awakening of thoughtful minds in all countries to the necessity of securing the co-operation of all nations towards this great end. And the best evidence of it was furnished by the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in connection with the great Columbian exposition, the smaller Unions among Christians themselves, held at New York, (U.S.A.) and Paris, (France) this year. The great World's Temperance Union is a similar sign of the times. We may note also the fact that the missionaries from this country have been actively working both in America and in Europe to familiarise the people in those parts with the higher spiritualism of our ancient land. Also the Theosophical movement, which represents men who profess all the known religions and yet feel that they can co-operate together in this common elevation. All these indications may be regarded as the early dawn, which will before long usher in, in full blaze, the Sun of Righteousness and Glory which will unite all nations in a common brotherhood.

IX

LIBERATE THE WHOLE MAN

The idea of holding periodical gatherings in each Presidency for the discussion of Provincial matters of public interest is a legitimate off-shoot of the great National Gatherings which have now become an institution of the land. This year these gatherings have been held in all the three Presidencies and it is obvious that this success indicates a healthy growth of public sentiment. In the Madras Presidency the political gatherings in that Province have always been accompanied by the friends of Social Reform utilizing the occasion on the analogy of the great national gatherings of the Congress and the Conference to meet together for the discussion of social subjects, and though hitherto in the political Conferences held in this Presidency, it has not been found possible to follow this example, it is a matter of great satisfaction to find that our Satara friends have realized the necessity of supplementing the work of the political Conference by inviting the friends of social reform to come together and take stock of our gains and losses in the social sphere of our activities. Owing to the circumstances under which this work had to be undertaken at Satara we have had to content ourselves with a very brief programme, but it is to be hoped that the seed sown to-day will bear a rich fruit hereafter.

I know there are those among us who see no advantage in holding local or national gatherings of this

sort for the consideration of social topics. There are others who think that, though such gatherings may have their uses, they should not be joined together in place and time with the political meeting, as they only serve to distract the attention of the workers and lead to no practical results. It may be of use to attempt a brief reply to both these objections.

As regards the first difficulty it seems to me to arise from a confusion of ideas, which is very prejudicial to the right appreciation of our duties both in the political and social sphere. The underlying assumption is that in politics our duties consist chiefly in stating our wants and grievances to strangers who have been placed by Providence in command over us and who are ill-informed about our real condition. Politics in this sense means simply formulating claims for gifts or favours which require no other action on our part. While in the social sphere our duties lie more exclusively with the regulation of our own actions in which outside help is not needed for guidance or control. As I understand it, this distinction between the two spheres of our activities is based on a radical mistake. The integrity of any human being cannot be broken up into separate spheres of activities of the sort contemplated by those who raise this objection. For the sake of convenience you may say that the rose has its beauty and its fragrance, but you can no more separate the fragrance from the beauty, and any attempt to do it can only end in the destruction of both. What is true of the individual is true of the collections of individuals whom we may call by any name, tribe, class, or community. These communities are organizations and you can no

more separate their activities except provisionally and for the time. Every little village in our land, however poor it may be, has its temple and its chowki, its resting place and watering place, and every town or city must have its township civic life made up of interests which are not wholly political or religious or commercial. The shops and the bazars, the temples and the theatres, the schools and the hospitals, the courts and the barracks, the young and the old, the men and the women, the poor and the rich—it is this variety and concourse which constitute the interest of village, town, and city life. Some may rule, others obey; some may advise, others follow; but the distinction is only provisional and not in the nature of things. You cannot even build a house of your own where you do not keep a place for strangers or the wayfarer. You have to provide for the God's place of worship, a place where the thirsty, hungry, and sick may be cared for, and there is no man so poor and so selfish that he does not share in all these varied interests and recognize their claims. Each concern has to be attended to in its own time and in its own way, but it is the whole collection which makes it a human interest. What is true in our private concerns is equally true of our public life. Politics is not merely petitioning and memorialising for gifts and favours. Gifts and favours are of no value unless we have deserved the concessions by our own elevation and our own struggles. 'You shall live by the sweat of your brow' is not a curse pronounced on man, but the very condition of his existence and growth. (Whether in the political, social, religious, commercial, manufacturing, or aesthetical spheres, in literature, science or art, in war or in peace, it is the

individual and collective man who has to develop his powers by his own exertions in conquering the difficulties in his way. If he is down for the time, he has to get up with the whole of his strength, physical, moral and intellectual, and you may as well suppose that he can develop one of these elements of strength and neglect the others, as try to separate the light from the heat of the sun or the beauty and fragrance from the rose. You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you be fit to exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economical system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideals are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economical, or political spheres. This inter-dependence is not an accident but is the law of our nature. Like the members of our body you cannot have strength in the hands and the feet if your internal organs are in disorder. What applies to the human body holds good of the collective humanity we call the society or state. It is a mistaken view which divorces considerations political from social and economical, and no man can be said to realize his duty in one aspect who neglects his duties in the other directions.)

As an example, the present crisis of the famine may well be considered. If our social arrangements were as perfect as they might be made, half the terrors of famine would vanish and the political problem would be much simplified. There is no question which is purely political any more than social or economical, or even religious; and they may make a fatal mistake who suppose that

these are separate departments in our composite nature. The same forethought, the same resolution, the same historical spirit, the same comparative scrutiny and the same strenuous endeavours are needed in all the spheres of our activity, and therefore, it will not do for us to say that in politics our duties are clear but not so in other spheres. (The whole man has to be developed and perfected for his own advantage and the glory of God, and it is only a conception like this which can strengthen our efforts and crown them with real success. It is on this account that when we take stock of our wants our mind must be open on all sides; the eyes must see, and the ears hear, the hands move and the feet support. This can only be done by our devoting attention to all claims. Owing to our difficulties of everyday life of toil and sorrow we cannot always find time for all things. When we therefore meet for the purpose of taking thought of our political condition, that is just the time when we have the spirit of unselfish devotion stirred up in us to approach our internal man in its most tender moments, and there is an obvious convenience in seeking to utilize the advantages of time, place, company and the enthusiasm which springs from association with equals, and you will thus see why the Congress and Conference gatherings have been joined together. If I had the choice we should long since have added other spheres of work so as to make the national gathering really national in name and aims. The claims of some kind of work might be more absorbing than those of others, but each must have its time and place, and proportional attention devoted to it, and I am glad to see that these consider-

rations have weighed with our friends in inviting us to this gathering at Satara on the present occasion.

But it may be said that our social fabric is not the work of human hands like the political institutions under which we live, and that in regard to these social customs the law has been laid down from time immemorial and we have only to follow it and it is not for us to attempt changes to suit our exigencies. This is another of those misconceptions for which there seems to be no excuse, except a false pride, which makes us cherish dangerous delusions. As a matter of fact the social arrangements at present are admittedly not those for which we can plead the sanction of the great Law-givers whose names we revere in lip worship but whose behests we disobey at every step. Most of the customs which we now profess to follow run counter to the practices observed in the old times, when the Institutes were written. The dependent status of women, the customary limits of the age of marriage, the prohibition of marriage to widows in the higher castes, the exclusive confinement of marriage to one's own division of the sub-castes into which the country has been split up, the ignorance and seclusion of women, the appropriation of particular castes to particular professions, the prohibition of foreign travel, the inequalities made by the license enjoyed by men and the abstentions enforced on women, the jealous isolation in matters of the social intercourse as regards food and even touch, indiscriminate charity to certain castes—for all these and many more alienations from the old standards you cannot hold the Law-givers responsible. They are the work of human hands, concessions made to

weakness, abuses substituted for the old healthier regulations. They were advisedly made by men whose names are not known to our ancient history. They are innovations for which no sanction can be pleaded. It may be, they were made with the best intentions. Admittedly they have failed to carry out these good intentions, if any, then entertained; and in seeking to upset them and restore the more healthy ideals they superseded, the reformers of the present day are certainly not open to the charge that they are handling roughly our time-honoured institutions. It is rather for the Reformers to take their stand as defenders of these ancient ordinances and denounce those who have set God's law at defiance to suit their own purposes.

But, even if this were otherwise and even if it could be shown by a long special pleading that the changes made are to some extent proper deductions from the old texts, it is quite plain that no lapse of time can bar the way of reform, where such is needed by the exigencies of our present difficulties. Above all mere ordinances of Institutes stands the Eternal Law of justice and equality, of pity and compassion, the suggestions of the conscience within and of nature without us. We can no more resist the stream of these influences as working for righteousness than we can roll back the tide. All real prudence would dictate that we should take full measure of these influences and decide how far we must accommodate ourselves to the inevitable. All classes of Society, reformers and anti-reformers alike, unconsciously admit the force of these considerations. The only difference between the two consists in the fact that while the latter yield un-

consciously and under pressure, the former seek to use conscious effort to accomplish the same purpose, and between the two victory must be for those who do not wish to drift, but wish to be guided by the admonitions of their inward monitor and the lessons of past history. People will visit England whether their elders like it or not, and the force of circumstances will prevail. The education of women will similarly be encouraged as each year rolls on. The limits of age for marriage will be raised. Inter-marriage restrictions will be dissolved. Caste exclusiveness must relax and the greatest freedom predominate in all transactions between man and man. As prudent men the question for us will be, shall we float with this current or resist it? As these influences are Providential, our duty is clear and this duty becomes more pleasant, when we find that in so acting we are not only obeying God's law, but also returning to the ways of our forefathers, overstepping the obstacles put in by our fathers in the way. <

There is one objection still which hampers the way of Reform. Granted that reform is desirable, it is still claimed that only the ecclesiastical heads of the different communities and the caste elders have legitimate authority to act in such matters and that it is not for a miscellaneous crowd of people like ourselves to claim this privilege. To a certain extent the caste elders and even the Acharyas are moving in the right direction. In the great caste conferences held in all parts of India the Kayastha, Vaisya and other organisations that might be named without number, there are visible signs of the dead bones heaving with the life of a new spirit. Even the

Acharyas in the South, when moved by Native rulers, and, in some cases when not so moved, spontaneously, have put forth efforts to promote what is right and proper. There is, therefore, no occasion to quarrel with these agencies. They, however, have their vested interest at stake and it will be more than human if they look at these things in the same light as we, who feel the pinch, are disposed to regard them. Their co-operation should be welcomed, but the question does not close here. The duty is cast upon us to see that the commonwealth to which we belong is not endangered by any vested prejudices. We can never forego the right of every human being to act in concert with others of his own way of thinking and make the effort to better our condition with the light that is given to us and with the help that religion and history afford us. Of course, our powers are limited, but the work of education consists in increasing the strength of the powers by propagating both by precept and example what we feel to be right and proper. We may fail or our effort miscarry but the effort will do us incalculable good, and the very failure will serve as a warning. This is the law of all progress and we can claim no exemption from it.

Lastly, it has been said that we are to split up into sects and divisions, castes and sub-castes, that no common concert is possible for the best of us, and that if we mean real work we must begin with castes and sub-castes and not indulge in the dream of joint action at least for many centuries to come. This argument is double-edged and has been used by those who do not feel with us, to damp our energies in the political as also the social sphere of

action. When we examine it more carefully we find that it is more fallacious than true. Castes and sub-castes have no doubt their particular preferences and dislikes, their own evils and iniquities to account for, and we see that everywhere from the reports of the Social Conference their best men are manfully struggling to cure these evils. It should, however, not be forgotten that this caste difficulty is the main blot on our social system. The great fight has to be maintained here and not on the outskirts. Quite independently of this circumstance, the differences between the caste merge into minor matters by the side of their great similarities. In the social sphere of our activities all castes and even creeds are alike defective in not recognizing the claims of justice and equality, and according to the respect and freedom due to the female sex, and cherishing the abuse claimed by men as men and by the members of one class of men to the disparagement of other castes. This furnishes the common platform on which all can act, and it is only the education received on this common platform, that can command the elevation and freedom, which alone will help us to be taller, wiser and better, individually and collectively.

I have thus attempted to forestall by anticipation many of the objections which might be and are urged by those who are not disposed to be friendly to the work of our social emancipation. With the work that has been done in the different Provinces by more than a hundred Associations that are in full sympathy with the cause of social progress, it is not my purpose here to deal. The reports of the Conference for the last thirteen years

furnish a living record to which all can refer with advantage. It is a record which does not show large achievements in accomplished facts, but to those who can read between the lines the spirit that animates this work, there is a land of promise opening its vistas before them so as to encourage the most despondent. To go no further back than the past five months, I find from the notes of events kept with me that even in this year of distress some seven re-marriages took place: three in the Punjab, one in Bombay, one in the North-West Provinces, one in Madras, and one in the Central Provinces. In Bengal, where the widow marriage movement commenced in Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidya-Sagar's time, as many as forty-six marriages were celebrated, thirty were celebrated since, and forty-one more celebrated among the Brahmos, making a total of one hundred and seventeen. Including the Central Provinces and the Berars, the Bombay Presidency has, during the last thirty years since the movement began, shown more than a hundred such marriages distributed equally between the Gujarathis and the Deccanis. The Punjab and the North-West Provinces show a total of more than thirty, and Madras presents nearly the same figure. The total of marriages would, therefore, be about three hundred through out India in the several Provinces, in the higher castes.

Miss Manning's "Indian Magazine," in one of its recent numbers, gave the total number of Indians, mostly students studying in England, to be three hundred and fifteen, of whom nearly half, or one hundred and forty-one, were Hindus, seventy-nine Mahomedans, sixty-one

Parsees and twenty-two Native Christians. These figures show how the wind is blowing and how the stream of events is steadily on the right side. The Native papers in the Punjab show that during the last five months some seven admissions of converts from Christian and Mahomedan faiths were made by the Arya Samajais, and there is an active controversy going on for the wholesale admission of some hitherto despised castes. The success of Bethune College in Calcutta, and Female Schools and Colleges at Jullunder, Poona, Ahmedabad, and Mysore has been full of promise in this as in previous years. Among legislative events, next after the passing of the Mysore Marriage laws, the most noteworthy event during the past five months has been the enactment of the Hindu Gains of Learning Bill by the Madras Council. The local Sabhas, such as the Deshamukha and Kunbi Sabhas in the Berars, the Rajput in the North-West Provinces, the Saurashtra in the Madras Presidency and the Khattris in the Punjab, have held their meetings and under good auspices passed resolutions in favour of marriage reform. Many instances of late marriages have taken place throughout the country, also of inter-marriages in different parts of India. This is, no doubt, a brief record, but as observed before it is full of promise.

The present crisis through which our part of the country is passing under the stress of plague and famine has intensified the necessity of taking adequate steps for alleviating the distress suffered by all classes. There are particular directions in which all social reform organizations might work with advantage in such a crisis. Many thousands of poor orphans have been rendered

homeless and although they are supported through famine by private and Government charity, the time is coming when, with the rains on us, this charity will cease to flow and the unclaimed orphans will have to be provided for when the distress is over. Missionary Societies have pledged themselves not to effect conversion while the distress is at its height, and they are prepared to give over the children to those who will claim them. The rest, who will be unclaimed, will have to be cared for by these societies, and people everywhere must consider the question how to deal with these poor children. Freedom to return to their community is a charity which we all can display, if we have the largeness of heart to understand the issues involved. The economical question here becomes one of religion and social amelioration. Equally affecting is the claim which has been urged on behalf of hundreds of child-widows who have been rendered miserable in consequence of the famine and the plague visitation. In normal times their condition was bad enough, but their misery has been aggravated by the misfortune of these hard times and those who have any heart to feel for their wrongs might well be asked to take thought as to how their misery might well be alleviated. The question of postponing the marriages to the latest limit of marriageable age—to the age of puberty, while the visitations are upon us, will not fail to attract the attention both of the Reformers and of those who profess to be indifferent to this subject. These and other matters will, I doubt not, engage the attention of friends who are assembled to-day. We shall not be able to take any immediate action here, but if these matters allowed

claims on our thoughtful consideration, when we go to our places, the work of reform cannot fail to lead to some useful results. For this and work like this, concerted action is needed, and concerted action is only possible under existing circumstances when we think and work together. A committee consisting of all those who sympathise with the progress of Reform is, therefore, sorely needed in this part of the country to co-operate with similar workers elsewhere, and it is with this view that our work to-day will chiefly consist in forming such a committee and laying down the lines on which it is to work. This is a duty in which I trust you will all join, join with a heart that will suffer no disappointment, but will strain every nerve, each within his own sphere, to bring about the practical well-being of our people, in which the well-being of every individual is involved. This is the message that I was commissioned by friends elsewhere to communicate to you here and I now commend this subject to your anxious care, in the full conviction that the work is one in which we can all co-operate with advantage, and in which no progress is possible without such co-operation.

X

VASHISTHA AND VISHVAMITRA *

About this time last year I had occasion, at the inauguration of the Conference held at Lucknow, to dilate on a text of Nanaka, in which he proclaimed himself to be 'Neither a Hindu nor a Mahomedan.' To-day, I find you have come together in the extreme North-West corner of India, in the land of the Five Rivers, the original home of the Aryan settlers who composed the Vedic hymns and performed the great sacrifices. You have met to-day in the land of the Rishis, where Vashistha and Vishvamitra lived and flourished at a time when the caste institution had not taken its root in our Indian soil, when men and women enjoyed freedom and equality, asceticism had not overshadowed the land, and life and its sweets were enjoyed in a spirit of joyous satisfaction. The Punjab, during its eventful history, has well deserved the compliment that it is the land of the Rishis. The question, then, naturally arises, who were these Rishis? What was the condition of society when they lived? What thoughts stirred them, and what actions ennobled their lives and their struggles? For most of us, long habit has rendered it impossible to imagine a state of society where men were not split up into petty divisions of caste, with its artificial barriers, limiting men's activities and narrowing their sympathies. It is a revelation to

* Inaugural Address, Lahore Conference, 1900.

many of us to be taken back to two or three thousand years ago; to a state of society when class divisions, such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, were unknown, or not well established, and the only distinction recognized in practice was between the Aryans and non-Aryans. To illustrate the gulf which separates our own times from the days when the Rishis flourished, we need only mention the fact that Lopamudra, the daughter of the king of Vidarbha was given in marriage to Agastya. Another Raja, by name Lomapada gave his daughter Shanta in marriage to one Rishya-Shringa. The King Trinabindu also thus gave his daughter Gou to Pulasti, and Bhagiratha gave his daughter Hamsi to Koutsa Rishi. The King Sharyati's daughter Sukanya was given in marriage to Chyavana Rishi. Instances where the Brahmins gave their daughters in marriage to kings were also not uncommon. Thus Shukracharya's daughter Devayani, was given in marriage to Yayati and Shukracharya's daughter Kritwi to Anuha. Independently of marriage alliances, stories are told where Rishis, who were born in royal houses, or where Rajarishis, became by their sanctity and devotion, entitled to be called Brahma-rishis. One Priyamedha was elevated, and Shini, Gargya, and Trayaruni were also so promoted to the status of Brahma-rishis, and their progeny to that of Brahmins. Also Mudgala and Gritsamada, who were before kings, became thus Brahmins. The Brahmins, on their side, felt no scruple in learning the Dhanurveda or archery; Agastya Muni, as is well known, was skilled in Dhanurveda, and conquered the non-Aryan King Ilvala, and the Kalakeyas, who were pirates on the sea-coast.

Agniveshya was also noted for his skill in archery, and he was the teacher of Dronacharya, himself a great Brahmin commander in the wars of the Mahabharata. His son Ashwathama, and his brother-in-law Kripa were similarly renowned. Instances where Brahmins caused the ruin of the day by their curses are, no doubt, more frequent than those where kings cursed the Brahmins and brought about their ruin. As illustrations of the first class, we may mention stories about King Nahusha and Vena Raja. Nahusha, as is well known, had by reason of his superior merits become the occupant of Indra's throne, but he made the Brahmins carry him in a palanquin, and Agastya Muni resented the ill-treatment and cursed him, which led to his downfall. King Vena was similarly dethroned. Similarly, Vashistha's curse against Sahsrarjuna enabled Parashurama to lop off his numerous hands. Vashistha is also mentioned as having cursed Raja Kalmashapada, and Raja Trisanku became Chandala in consequence of the curse. On the other hand, Vashistha himself did not escape unharmed. There is, besides, the story of Ambarisha, who was persecuted by Durvasa, and in the result Durvasa had to entreat Ambarisha to grant him pardon and withdraw the Sudharshana which perpetually followed him and gave him no rest. As regards the women, numerous stories are told of their remaining unmarried throughout their lives, and of their engaging themselves in the pursuit of devotional exercises or in the study of philosophy. The story of Amba, who remained unmarried all her life, is well known. She wanted to marry with Shalva, but he would not take her and she would not accept the choice made by Bhishma for her. The daughter

of Kunigarga also remained unmarried during life. Gargivachaknavi, Vadavapratitheyi and Sulabhamaitreyi—all these are historical names of women who passed their lives in celibacy and engaged in discussions on philosophic subjects in the court of Janaka.

Perhaps, the most instructive of these ancient stories is that which is connected with the rivalry of Vashistha and Vishvamitra. Both these names occur in the Vedic hymns, and though their rivalry is noticeable even in these early hymns, they furnish no authority for the legend which gathered round their names in the period which succeeded the composition of the hymns. Vashistha is a great exponent of Brahmin orthodoxy. The legends seek to make out that Vishvamitra was not by right a Brahmarishi. He was only a Rajarishi, and aspired to be a Brahmarishi. Vashistha would not support him in this ambition, and that accounted for their strife. Throughout the story Vishvamitra represents the view of those who try to admit the non-Aryans into the Aryan community and seek to elevate them. The story of Trisanku, for instance, notwithstanding its exaggeration, has a moral of its own. Vashistha had without justice condemned Trisanku to be a Chandala simply because he aspired to go to heaven by the force of his merits. Vishvamitra took up his cause and performed the Yagnya, because Trisanku had saved his wife and children during a great famine. The result was that Trisanku was accepted in heaven notwithstanding the curse of Vashistha. The story of Suna-sepa, who was the son of a Brahmin, and was purchased as a sacrificial victim to be offered to Varuna in the place of the king's son, who was first

promised, is also full of the same liberality on the part of Vishvamitra, who saved the Brahmin's life by his mediation. The result of the conflict between Vashistha and Vishvamitra was complete victory on the part of the latter, for Vashistha admitted Vishvamitra's claim to be a Brahmarishi. Vashistha's line was continued by his grandson, Parashara. Krishnadvaipayana, Vishampayana, Yagnyavalkya, Shukra Muni and Jaimini, all belonged to the orthodox side. Vishvamitra's family was connected by alliances with that of Bhrigu, Jamadagni and Parashara. The great Rishis who colonised Southern India were undoubtedly Agastya and Atri, who with their wives Lopamudra and Anasuya occupy a prominent place in the story of the Ramayana. King Rama stopped in their Ashram, and Valmiki's description of these Ashrams presents a picture of these holy settlements which does not lose its charm even at the present day. These settlements were the pioneers of civilization in Southern India. There were similar establishments in other parts of India, on the borders of the civilized kingdoms. The Rishi, with his wife and his numerous pupils, kept herds of cows, cultivated the land, and founded colonies or cities, and helped the Rajas from the north to establish their power in the south. Jamadagni's story of the conflict with Kartavirya, and the subsequent wars between Parashurama and the sons of Kartavirya, no doubt, refer to such expansion of power. King Rama himself was helped by Agastya in the final struggle with King Ravana. Parashurama is said to have similarly carried on a war with the Rakshasas, which was put an end to by the mediation of Vashistha. The early Rishis were great both in peace

and in war. In this respect the Rajarishis were as great as the Brahmarishis. Risabhadeva, for instance, had one hundred sons, of whom nine devoted themselves to meditation and philosophy and eighty-one followed the Karma-marga, and the remaining ten ruled over kingdoms. King Janaka was great as a sovereign ruler, and greater still as a saint. Vamadeva was noted for his piety, devotion and knowledge, which came to him in his mother's womb. The Brahmin Rishi Balaki was taught higher philosophy by Ajatasatru, the Raja of Kasi. It may be seen that there was no monopoly of learning in those early times and Rajas and Brahmins sat at the feet of each other to learn wisdom. There was, in fact, no permanent division of functions between the two orders and, therefore, they were somewhat like the temporal and spiritual lords we know of in England. They could interchange place, and did, in fact, so interchange them in numerous instances.

This brief account of the time when the Rishis flourished in this country naturally leads to the inquiry as to how it was that in course of time Brahmin Rishis came practically to monopolize the title and deny it to the Rajas. The story of Vashistha and Vishvamitra furnishes some clue to a solution of this difficulty. The great names of Agastya and Atri, Vashistha and Jamadagni, Bhrigu and Bharadwaja, Parashara and Vamadeva, Vaishampayana and Yagnyavalkya, Valmiki and Vyasa, Kapila Muni and Shuka Muni, naturally carried influence with all classes of people. The Rajarishis were not much known for their authorship, and when these old families succumbed to foreign conquerors in the early

period of the Christian era, the new Rajput, or Jat, conquerors had no hold on the popular mind, and the Brahmins retained or increased their hold on the affections of the people. The Puranic literature which had its birth about this time confirmed this superiority of the Brahmins, and the result was that the term Rishi came to be applied only to Brahmins, as being the only literary or cultured class of the time. Their predominance continued unchecked, except so far as the Vaishnava movement came to the relief of the non-Brahmin classes. The Vaishnava movement has struck its deepest root in the Punjab, where the ten Gurus, from Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, have effected a change the like of which no other part of India can exhibit. The Granth Sahib has taken the place of the old Vedas and Puranas, and the Gurus and their descendants occupy the place of the Brahmins. Since the establishment of the British rule new forces have been in operation, and the road is now again open by which the best men of all classes might aspire, as in the past, to be the true Rishis of the land. A movement which has been recently started in the Punjab may be accepted as a sign that you have begun to realise the full significance of the need of creating a class of teachers who may well be trusted to take the place of the Gurus of old. The chief point, however, that is to be considered in this connection is, who should be these Gurus of the future. It is with this view that I have endeavoured to place before you a brief account of the true Gurus of the past, namely, the Rishis who were both Brahmarishis and Rajarishis, only distinguished from one another by their individual inclinations and abilities. We must keep that

ideal before us if we mean to prove ourselves the worthy descendants of our earliest ancestors. Of course, the teachings and the methods and the subjects taught in these days must be made to suit our new exigencies and environments, but the spirit animating the teachings must be the same as that which led the first settlers to cross the Vindhya Range, and establish their colonies in the South. By reviving our ancient traditions in this matter we may hope in the near future to instil into the minds of our young generations lessons of devotion to learning, diversity of studies, and personal loyalty to the teacher without which no system of school or college education can ever bear any fruit. This, however, is not all. In addition to these lessons, our new teachers must know how to introduce their pupils to a correct appreciation of the forces which are at work in the wider world outside, and which, in spite of temporary checks or seeming reverses, represent all that is best in human efforts for the elevation and happiness of man. (Our teachers must enable their pupils to realise the dignity of man as man, and to apply the necessary correctives to tendencies towards exclusiveness, which have grown in us with the growth of ages. They must see that our thoughts, our speech, our actions are inspired by a deep love of humanity, and that our conduct and our worship are freed, where necessary, from the bondage of custom and made to conform as far as possible, to the surer standard of our conscience.) We must at the same time, be careful that this class of teachers does not form a new order of monks. Much good, I am free to admit, has been done in the past and is being done in these days, in this as

well as other countries by those who take the vow of lifelong celibacy and who consecrate their lives to the service of man and the greater glory of our Maker. But it may be doubted how far such men are able to realize life in all its fulness and its varied relations, and I think our best examples in this respect are furnished by Agastya with his wife Lopamudra, Atri with his wife Anasuya, and Vashistha with his wife Arundathi, among the ancient Rishis, and, in our own times, by men like Dr. Bhandarkar on our side, Diwan Bahadur Raghunatha Row in Madras, Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, the late Keshab Chander Sen, Babu Pratap Chandra Mazumdar and Pandit Shivanath Shastri in Bengal, and Lala Hansa Raj and Lala Munshi Ram in your own province. A race that can ensure a continuance of such teachers can, in my opinion, never fail, and with the teachings of such men to guide and instruct and inspire us, I for one, am confident that the time will be hastened when we may be vouchsafed a sight of the Promised Land.

THE MESSAGE OF RANADE

Liberate the Whole Man

Ranade viewed every aspect of life *sub specie aeternitatis*. The last of an untroubled age, he 'combined vision and industry'. Without the ecstasies of the mystic or the contempt of life of the stoic, but possessed of a temperament human and serene, and an imagination that was almost prophetic, he loved life and was conscious of its potentiality and purpose. He disapproved alike of the narrow monkish ideal of single-minded celibacy and the thoughtless surrender to a butter-fly existence of pleasure and comfort. He would have us "realise life in all its fulness and in all its varied relations." Hard of muscle and sinew, humanised in heart and responsive to truth and justice, free of prejudice and superstition, liberated in mind, tranquil in spirit, the men of to-day and to-morrow must be like the rishis of old—'still climbing after knowledge infinite' with infinite courage. "We should learn to be men, stalwart, puritan men, battling for the right, not indifferent nor sanguine, trustful but not elated, serious but not dejected." It is a radiant vision of 'liberated manhood' that Ranade continually holds before our wondering gaze. Duty, for him as for Wordsworth, the stern daughter of the voice of God, and her sisters, no less divine, Faith, Hope, and Charity, are the cardinal virtues that should be called into full exercise in the endeavour to regenerate man. For it is a comprehensive task. "The whole existence must be reno-

vated." "The liberation that has to be sought is not in one department of life, or one sort of activity, or in one sphere of thought, but it is an all-round work in which you cannot dissociate one activity from another." The process demands discipline and suffering, "the baptism of fire, and not water." The gallant impatience that cries "Elevate the race at once" for a last and new crusade against life's ills would find little support in Ranade. Step by step, day by day, year by year, in the face of discouragement and defeat, we must build brick by brick. The "helplessness and dependence" caused by a weak fatalism should be replaced by knowledge and effort originating in reverence for the higher self in man. The Law of Karma, widely misconceived but hardest to remove, should be replaced by the Law of Duty. The new idea must come in, that "the Law of Karma can be controlled and set back by a properly trained will, when it is made subservient to a higher will than ours." To hearken to the voice of conscience—"the Divine principle enthroned in the heart of every one of us, high or low"—to respect the God in us, to let nothing come between us and our God, is our duty to both God and Man. "Revere all human authority, pay your respects to all prophets and revelations, but never let this reverence and respect come in the way of the dictates of conscience, the Divine command in us." The way is strewn with difficulties, and "one has to tread upon sharp-edged instruments, carefully balancing the weak limbs and spirits." But "we must bear our cross, not because it is sweet to suffer, but because that pain and the suffering are nothing compared with the greatness of the issues involved." We

may fail, but our cause will succeed. "We may all have to die and become manure for the seeds of life in future generations." The first task is to break the bonds of ignorance and lethargy, to quicken to life a people plunged in intellectual and spiritual decay. The fetters of the mind must be realised as fetters, for then they drop off themselves.

Faith in the Mission of the Indian People

In Ranade sanctity and scholarship, piety and patriotism went together. Deeply read in history, wise with the wisdom of philosophy and experience, he was disposed to see the hand of God in every sublunary transaction. His political and patriotic creed is derived from this implicit faith in God's benevolence. "I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed. This country of ours is the true land of promise. This race of ours is the chosen race." Ranade's faith in the mission of the Indian people was no mere expedient of popular appeal. It was a real faith, a faith based on reason and fact. "It was not for nothing that God has showered His choicest blessings on this ancient land of Aryavarta. We can see His hand in history. Above all other countries we inherit a civilization and a religious and social policy which have been allowed to work their own free development on the big theatre of time. There has been no revolution, and yet the old condition of things has been tending to reform itself by the slow process of assimilation. The great religions of the world took their birth here, and now they meet again as brothers prepared to welcome a higher dispensation, which will unite all and vivify all. India alone, among

all the countries of the world, has been so favoured, and we may derive much strength of inward hope from such a contemplation."

The Religious Experiment In India

The Religious history of India which transcends the record of every other race, justifies the faith in the mission of the Indian people. To us, the most devoutly religious of peoples, has been assigned the great experiment of evolving an integrated civilization. "All the creeds and civilization are gathered in this land; all the spiritual forms and beliefs are here; all social and political experiments are being tried on a large scale; and this is the only land where you will find all these creeds represented by hundreds and thousands and millions, living peaceably together and partaking of the charities, learning and excellence of each in a spirit of toleration for all, which you will nowhere find on the broad face of the earth." By inheritance, tradition, and discipline the Indian peoples are best fitted to work for "the early dawn, which will before long usher in full blaze, the Sun of Righteousness and Glory which will unite all nations in a common brotherhood." There has been in India a continuity of saints and sadhus who have worked to this end. The nation, spiritual in all its aspirations, gradually ascended to the conception of the purest form of Monotheism the world has yet seen. "One age after another constructed the edifice, laying brick upon brick and layer upon layer and storey after storey rose." This highest conception was not only confined to pandits, philosophers and shastris, but it was the common property

of every class, including the lowest of the low. But our mission, sad to say, has not been fully accomplished. "Our great ancestors accomplished it in part, their successors failed to accomplish it and suffered the reverses that we are now labouring under." It is the double call of patriotism and religion that we should return to the ways of our forefathers and become "what we were certainly intended to be—fulfillers of the mission which has still not been fully accomplished." But Ranade is opposed to any mock-revival of past glory. Revival is impossible. Reform, based on the old ways and by absorption of the good elements in the new, is the only way of regeneration.

Follow the Lead of Akbar

Ranade's penetrating eye saw the hand of God at every stage in our history. There is a soul of good in things evil, if we would discern it, and Ranade had this ability to read the deep underlying meaning of things. The Mahomedan ascendancy which some would regard as a story of humiliation and sorrow is, for him, a divine dispensation intended to correct and strengthen the character of the Indian peoples. "It cannot be easily assumed that in God's providence such vast multitudes as those who inhabit India were placed centuries together under influences and restraints of alien domination, unless such influences and restraints were calculated to do lasting service in the building up of the strength and character of the people in directions in which the Indian races were most deficient." If the Indian races had not benefited by the contact with the men of stronger muscles and greater powers, they should never have

been able to re-assert themselves in the way in which History bears testimony they did. Ranade pays glowing tribute to Akbar and his two immediate successors for realising for the first time in our history the conception of a united, regenerate India. With his broad-minded scholarship, he acknowledges in detail the many items of benefit resulting from the contact with Muslim culture. With eloquence and earnestness Ranade insists that the centuries have not rolled in vain, that the lessons of the past have a value not to be put by, and that in this vast country no progress is possible unless Hindus and Mahomedans join together, determined to follow the lead of Akbar and the men of his time. In the struggle for national emancipation, both Hindus and Mahomedans have their work cut out. Our ills are alike, social and political, and together, "we must put our hands to the plough and face the struggle."

A Vision of the Promised Land

Ranade's vision of a united, regenerate India is of the utmost value to our distracted generation, for it is a vision founded on fact and faith, and invested with poetic intensity. It is not invented for a certain kind of propaganda only, but is derived from the facts of history and based on the deepest traditions of the land. It has the memory of antiquity and it dreams of things to come. In a 'timeless' passage, sublime with a sublimity that never sleeps, Ranade dreams the dream and takes us into the deep power of hope and joy.

Here is the miracle of bud and blossom co-existing with the mellowness of autumnal fruit:—

“The end is to renovate, to purify, and also to perfect the whole man by liberating his intellect, elevating his standard of duty, and perfecting all his powers. Till so renovated, purified and perfected, we can never hope to be what our ancestors once were—the chosen people, to whom great tasks were allotted and by whom great deeds were performed. Where this feeling animates the worker, it is a matter of comparative indifference in what particular direction it asserts itself, and in what particular method it proceeds to work. With a liberated manhood, with a buoyant hope, with a faith that never shirks duty, with a sense of justice that deals fairly to all, with unclouded intellect and powers fully cultivated, and lastly, with a love that overleaps all bounds, renovated India will take her proper rank among the nations of the the world, and be the master of the situation and of her own destiny. This is the goal to be reached; this is the promised land. Happy are they who see it in distant vision, happier those who are permitted to work and clear the way on to it, happiest they who live to see it with their eyes and tread upon that holy soil once more. Famine and pestilence, oppression and sorrow, will then be myths of the past, and the gods will then again descend to the earth and associate with men as they did in times which we now call mythical.”

—*The Editor.*

SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY'S LIBRARY
PCONA 4.

1. Books drawn from the library may not be retained for longer than a fortnight.
2. Borrowers will be held strictly responsible for any damage done to books while they are in their possession.