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SUBRAHMANYAM

The Story of a Pilgrimage

C. H. MONAHAN

SUBRAHMANYAM



With all good wishes.

Ever

Yours truly,
Rev. Babu Chyanyan

THEOPHILUS SUBRAHMANYAM

The Story of a Pilgrimage

BY THE REV.
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PREFACE

THE Rev. Theophilus Subrahmanyam, of South India, visited England in 1921 as a delegate to the Methodist Ecumenical Conference. After the conclusion of the Conference he spent many months in advocating the Missionary Cause in the British Isles. At the request of the people in many places he told the story of his life, which made a deep impression on his hearers. The officers of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society have requested me to write the story for publication, as they feel that some who heard it from his own lips will be glad to have it in a permanent form, and others will find in it interest and inspiration.

In drawing up this narrative I have made the fullest use of a careful statement typed by the Rev. W. Herbert Spencer from shorthand notes of conversations we had with Mr.

Subrahmanyam. In few places have I departed even from the language of that statement. But I have largely added to it from a verbatim report of one of Mr. Subrahmanyam's addresses and from my own knowledge of his life gained in a friendship of twenty-nine years. For the narrative of facts relating to himself Mr. Subrahmanyam is responsible. But for all opinions I alone am responsible.

It is inevitable that comparisons will be drawn between this story and that of Sādhu Sundar Singh. Therefore I take this opportunity of stating that Mr. Subrahmanyam told me his story many years before either he or I had heard the name of the Sādhu. Consequently it stands as an independent witness to a type of Indian psychological experience.

Madras,

C. H. MONAHAN.

October, 1922.

NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION.

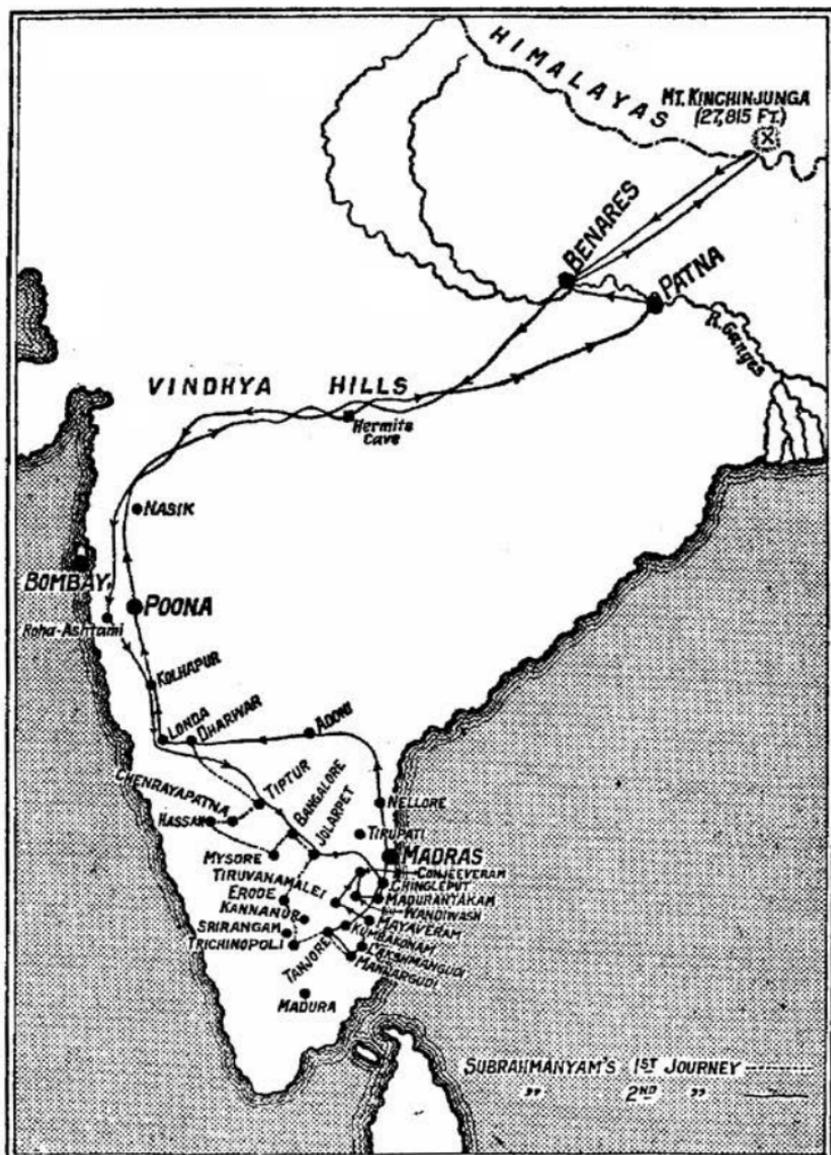
Ā has the sound of a in "father."

ī " " " " i " "police."

Subrahmanyam should be "Su'brah-muniām."

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MAP OF INDIA TO ILLUSTRATE SUBRAHMANYAM'S PILGRIMAGES.

CHAPTER I

THE BRĀHMAN'S HERITAGE

IF the reader is to grasp the real meaning of this story of pilgrimage he must have some knowledge of the Brāhman life and tradition into which Subrahmanyam was born. Without this background he cannot see the picture in true perspective. But he must clearly understand that it is not possible to give a description of Brāhman manners and customs which will apply equally to all parts of India as there are many local variations. He must also remember that the Brāhmanism of forty or fifty years ago differed in many respects from the Brāhmanism now found in the cities, and especially in the colleges, where progressive ideas have modified both belief and practice. It is the more conservative tradition, still powerful in the villages, that I have chiefly in view in this chapter.

From ancient times Hindus have been divided into four main castes: Brāhmins or priests, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaisyas or merchants, and Sudras or agriculturists, artizans

and servants. Beyond these are the Pan-chamas, or fifth class, who are looked upon as outcastes. In South India the number of Kshatriyas and Vaisyas is small but Brāhmans and Sudras are found in large numbers, the latter, however, far exceeding the former.

Formerly Brāhmans were said to have sprung from the head of Brahma the Supreme Being. By virtue of their origin they were believed to have the wisdom which is the key to the mysteries of life. Western science and education have rudely disturbed many ancient ideas in India, but they have not deprived the Brāhman of his intellectual primacy. In the learned professions he takes the first place as a rule. His position as religious leader is no doubt being challenged in many quarters, but he still holds the priestly power in Hinduism. His philosophy is often, alas, misleading and unsatisfying, but he does at least think about unseen realities, and therein is far better than the worldling whose soul's horizon is bounded by the work and pleasure of the passing day. There is surely no people on earth whose daily life is more marked by religious observance than that of the Brāhman in the villages. Whether he eats or drinks or whatever he does, all his acts are prescribed by religion. He accepts, generally without question, the discipline imposed by his caste.

Individual tastes count for little in com-

parison with the will of the community. The Brāhman of the South is a strict vegetarian. Even the eating of eggs is to him taboo. He never eats with a man of another caste, nor ordinarily with one belonging to a different section of his own caste. Nor can he marry outside a limited circle within his caste. All this the ordinary Brāhman accepts without question. He performs the annual ceremonies for the benefit of his ancestors without fail. In his youth he undergoes the discipline of study. Now discipline tends to make life great, especially when it is not merely individual but communal. No one can deny this element of greatness to the Brāhman caste. But, alas, it is too often purchased at the cost of denying liberty of conscience to the individual. Because it so often denies personal liberty and hinders brotherhood, caste is admitted by the best Hindus to be the curse of India to-day. It certainly organizes life on principles contrary to the Mind of Christ. Yet I recognize in it an element of discipline and fellowship, albeit exclusive, which gives it strength. Like all anti-christs, it is the counterfeit of something good. Men cling to it for fear of losing that good, nor can we expect them to forego it, unless there is a purer discipline and a better fellowship in Christ.

Every Brāhman parent longs for a son. The ancient idea was that unless a son performed the annual ceremonies in honour of

his ancestors, his parents and their forbears of the six preceding generations would fall into hell. Therefore a son was a *religious* necessity. The longing for a son had been satisfied in the case of Subrahmanyam's parents long before he was born. He was the youngest son of a large family.

As amongst the ancient Jews, so amongst the Brāhmans, child-birth causes ceremonial defilement to the mother. The first step in her purification according to their scriptures usually takes place on the eleventh day. On this day a quaint custom is observed in some homes. If the child be a boy, he is laid for a moment on a writing slate, to suggest the hope that he will become a scholar; if a girl, on a winnowing fan, to indicate her calling to domestic tasks. In Subrahmanyam's case a silver plate was brought in, on which rested Sanskrit texts, written on palm-leaves. This was to suggest that his life was to be devoted to sacred studies. From the eleventh day, on which the mother gets her first bath, the child is considered pure. Till then it shares the mother's defilement, so that even the father cannot touch it without contamination.

The Nāmakarana, or name-giving, is a very important event, especially in the case of a boy. Sometimes there is a preliminary gathering on the ninth day. But usually it is held on the eleventh, when, for the first time, the father touches his son. Near relatives in the

village are invited, and the women, except widows, take a chief part in the rejoicings. The father's sister in particular is the leader on this occasion. Sugar-candy is distributed, if the child is a boy; sugar if a girl. The paternal grandfather's name is given to the oldest son, and his wishes are respected in regard to the others. But in practice it is the aunt who often chooses the child's name. This should include that of some god, and the first letter should belong to the constellation under which the child was born. The actual ceremony of giving the name is performed by the Brāhman Upādhyāya (teacher) of the village. As the days of the mother's purification are not yet fulfilled, she cannot take part in this ceremony, but watches from her room what goes on in the court-yard. Her final ceremony of purification is on the forty-first day, unless the circumstances of the family make it necessary for her to take her part in the ordinary life of the household at an earlier date, in which case the purification is completed sooner.

More important even than the Nāmakarana is the Upanayana or investiture with the sacred thread, which in Subrahmanyam's case took place when he was between the ages of six and seven. By this initiation a Brāhman boy enters the ranks of the "twice-born." Till now he has been technically only a Sudra. Now he gains all the privileges of his com-

munity. It is a new birth, and only less significant than marriage. Indeed, no Brāhman can be married till he has been invested with the sacred thread. During this time a whole night of absolute silence is enjoined. In the morning the boy goes forth with his parents to a booth prepared for the occasion, where sacrificial fire is burning on the altar. He is then shaved and bathed, after which sweet food, consisting of rice, clarified butter, sugar, milk and fruit, is brought, and for the last time in his life he eats with his mother. Hereafter, as one of the twice-born, he will eat only with the men of the family. The teacher, after calling on the Nine Planets to witness, questions the boy as to his desire to become an initiate and when satisfied, accepts him as his disciple, entrusting him "to Prajāpati and Sāvitrī, to the gods of water, herbs, sky and earth, to all the gods and all the demons to protect him from every kind of evil." He lays his commands on the boy to walk as a true Brāhman.

The climax of the rite is when the famous prayer, or spell, called the Gāyatrī, is whispered, first by the priest to the father, and then by him into the right ear of his son. It is so sacred that the right ear into which it is breathed becomes sacred. To repeat it brings cleansing from sin. No woman ordinarily, and no low caste person ever, must hear it. Not only must the initiate learn the separate words,

but he must also acquire the correct intonation. This mantra (spell) is repeated every day of his life by a Brāhman. It is given in somewhat various forms, and the pundits do not care to divulge all the ideas it is supposed to contain. Here is one form of it :—

“ Om, bhur, bhuvan, svar,
Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhīmahī
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayāt.”

The sacred exclamation “ Om ” is followed by an invocation of Earth, Ether and Heaven. The rest of the invocation may be translated :

“ We meditate on that excellent light of the divine Sun. May he illuminate our minds.”

One of the last acts of the initiation is when the boy stretches his hand towards the sacred fire, draws it back and, laying it on his heart, says :—

“ May Agni (the god of fire) protect me and give me help, may Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) give me intellect, and may Sūrya (the sun) give me light.”

Now that he is initiated the young Brāhman can perform the daily devotions called Sandhyā Vandana, of which the Gāyatri forms an essential part. The Brāhman ought to say this mantra three times a day, once when, standing knee-deep in the river or tank, he salutes the sun as it rises ; again at noon-day, lifting his face up to the sky just when the sun is overhead, and lastly in the evening, as he faces the setting sun. Each time he should bathe before repeating his prayer. It will be seen from the foregoing account that in the

ritual of his daily life the Brāhman emphasizes the two ideas of purification and illumination.

The Brāhmans are the Levites of India, from amongst whom the ministering priests are chosen and anointed for their sacred work. They are also the Scribes who hold the key to the treasure-house of the sacred literature and philosophy of the country. In the past they too often tried to keep that treasure-house closed to all but select members of their own community. If they submitted to discipline to enter the kingdom of letters themselves, they regarded with jealousy members of other castes who wished to enter with them. In the learned professions, and in Government service, they hold very many of the most influential positions. Of late there has been an uprising of the Non-Brāhman communities to restrict what they consider the exclusive influence of the Brāhmans in the administration of the country. At the General Election of December, 1920 (the first India ever knew), the Non-Brāhmans obtained a majority in the Legislative Council and control of the Government of Madras. Complicity with idolatry makes the Brāhmans untrustworthy guides in religion. Orthodox Brāhmans sincerely believe in image worship. Others are conscious of the futility of idolatry, but, nevertheless, pander to the debased popular cult, of which they have taken control and reap the profits, whilst in their hearts de-

spising those to whom such things seem necessary.

To my mind the most serious count against caste is this:—it denies to its members the right of obeying Jesus Christ. It ostracises those men and women who in simple obedience to the Son of God identify themselves with His Church by baptism. It allows liberty of thought but not of action. That is what makes baptism so crucial a test for the high caste convert. Men and women, who are in other respects kindly and charming, do not scruple to trample on conscience when it leads a man to reject the prescriptions and taboos of his caste. Liberty in thought and bondage in action produces a slough of sentimental dualism, in which some of the best minds of India are wallowing to-day.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE

THEOPHILUS SUBRAHMANYAM hails from the Tanjore District, which is the richest in South India, being well watered by the Kaveri and its tributaries. This is the India of green rice fields and graceful palms. He was born and spent his boyhood in Lakshmangudi, about seven miles from Man-nārgudi in that District. According to the charming story of the chaste and heroic goddess Sita, the ancient Aryan hero, Lakshmana, at her bidding, passed through this village on his way to help his brother, the great god Rāma. Hence its name.

Subrahmanyam belonged to a family of Smārtha Brāhmans, an influential sub-division of the caste. The Smārthas are eclectics who combine the worship of Vishnu and Siva, the two gods who divide the allegiance of the great majority of Hindus. Though originally Saivites they frequently visit Vaishnavite temples. The name they give to the deity is Harihara, a combination of Hari (Vishnu)

and Hara (Siva). This eclectic tendency makes them suspect in the eyes of strict sectarians like the Iyengar Brāhmans, who, as strict Vaishnavites, would never enter a temple of Siva. The chief priest of the Smārthas lives at Sringeri in the State of Mysore. Some sects emphasize either the masculine or feminine elements in deity. The Smārthas hold that man is ignorant of these mysteries of the divine nature. They, therefore, wear on the forehead a screen of sandalwood paste, to show, as some declare, such things are hidden from our prying eyes. When going to the temples of Siva they smear themselves with sacred ash like other Saivites. The true Smārtha spirit of compromise was shown by Subrahmanyam's family in the name given to him. They called him Lakshmī (the wife of Vishnu) Krishna (an incarnation of Vishnu) Subrahmanyam (the son of Siva), thus honouring both deities in his name.

Subrahmanyam's ancestors held positions of trust in the land. His great-great-grandfather was employed in the palace of the Pāndyan Rāja in Madura, and came to Lakshmangudi on his retirement, bringing with him a handsome gratuity from the Rāja in recognition of his services. In accordance with the custom of those disturbed times, this treasure was buried deep in the earth, and for many years after the death of its first owner its hiding place was unknown. Subrahmanyam's grand-

father became a man of considerable wealth, and added much land to the family possessions. In his time, when Subrahmanyam was a little boy, the hidden treasure was recovered through the digging of a well in the garden. About thirty feet below the surface the workmen came upon cement paving which was found to be circular, with soft clay in the centre. Working on under the guidance of the excited grandfather they went down another ten feet and found a brass pot. As soon as it was certain that the buried treasure had been found, the workmen were called up from the well and steps were taken to release the precious pot with its contents from the power of the demon who was believed to control the lower parts of the earth. Ancient Hindu custom required a human sacrifice. Great, therefore, was the old man's perplexity, as he wondered who should be chosen as the victim. But whilst he hesitated, it was pointed out to him that India was now under British rule, and that the Government had absolutely forbidden all human sacrifice. With great relief and fervent thanksgiving to the gods for the blessing of such a Government, he sacrificed a bullock instead and poured its blood into a bowl. Then, as the workmen were afraid to go down alone, he sent his eldest son down into the well to claim the treasure. After he had repeated a mantra (spell or prayer), a Sudra poured the bull's blood from the bowl on the

treasure. After this sacrifice the workmen helped the son to bring the pot to the surface. Now that the little boy, who witnessed the scene, has become a Christian minister he is able to make effective use of it as a parable of the recovery through sacrifice of the treasure of the divine image in man, lost through sin and held in bondage and darkness until redeemed by the Son of God Himself.

Subrahmanyam was the youngest of a family of fourteen, seven of whom died in childhood. His father held the important judicial post of District Munsiff. He had given all the elder boys an English education, but some calamity which had overtaken the family led him to doubt whether he had not incurred the displeasure of the gods by so doing. He determined therefore to put matters right by bringing up his youngest son, whose full name was Lakshmi-Krishna Subrahmanya Aiyar, in the strictest Brāhman orthodoxy. As soon as the boy had assumed the sacred thread, he was destined to become a sāstri or guru, a life-long student and teacher of Indian religious lore. In accordance with this decision he took his place among the disciples of the Brāhmas teacher of the village who worked under the direction of the Mahopādhyāya (great teacher), an authority on the Sanskrit texts. Here his sole education consisted in being taught to repeat from memory passages from the Indian sacred books, especially from the Rig-Veda.

It was not permitted to reveal to him the meaning of the texts. Comparatively few Brāhmans ever understand them, and those who do are not allowed to interpret them to others without special license. He was, therefore, simply learning to repeat sacred sounds which to him were largely meaningless. In this way, within the space of seven or eight years, he learned by heart many hundreds of stanzas, as did six or seven other Brāhman boys of his village, who were brought up at the feet of the same teacher. Periodically he went with his teacher to see the Mahopādhyāya, and counted it a great privilege to listen to conversations between him and his older disciples. He also ministered to his own teacher by performing such services as washing his clothes and tending his cattle. Other education at this time he had none, so that until he was fourteen he was unable to read or write his own mother tongue, which was Tamil.

His home life was in harmony with this orthodox training. He was carefully nurtured in the religious ways of his fathers. Amongst his early recollections are those of frequent visits to the great temples of the South. The family constantly visited the temple of Subrahmanyam, the son of Siva, which the grandfather had built in Lakshmangudi itself. They also visited the shrine of Minākshiamman, the wife of Siva, in Mannārgudi. In the same town is a large temple of Vishnu, who is there wor-

shipped as Rājagopal or the Royal Herdsman, a name recalling the youth of Krishna spent amongst the herdsmen. The Rāja of Tanjore used to visit this temple periodically and gave extensive lands to provide revenue for its support. Here also the family worshipped.

These visits to temples became more frequent after his eighth year, when he had an attack of small-pox, which left his eyes very weak and swollen. He was taken to a native quack, who blistered the eyes and made him almost blind. In this trouble his mother took him to the temple of the small-pox goddess at Kannanur, to seek there the boon of restored eyesight. Another time his aunt took him, and once he went alone. With the same object he visited other shrines also. But in none of them did he recover his sight. At length his mother, on the advice of friends, took him to Dr. Drake-Brockman at the Eye Hospital in Madras. There he was treated for six or seven months. Once she said to the doctor that she was praying to the Amman (goddess of small-pox) at Kannanur, and if her boy recovered, she would make an offering at her shrine. He answered: "It is not in the name of Amman or of Ayyan, but of God Most High, that I treat my patients. Before operating I ask His help. By His grace alone can the cure be effected." "Well, then," she said, "if not to another, I'll make an offering to that God at least for the healing of my boy." His eyes were cured, but he had

to wear spectacles from that time. After his recovery she took him to the Amman temple and there offered a few rupees and two silver eyes, which a silversmith in Madras had made for her. Then they went to Srīrangam and offered thanks in the temple to Ranganāthan and Ranganāyaki (Vishnu and his wife). Thus he was brought up in the way of devotion to the old deities. On at least one occasion his parents took him on special pilgrimage to the great temple of Siva and his wife Mīnākshi at Madura, where with them he prostrated himself before the idol in the inner shrine. On another occasion he went with his mother, his eldest brother, and one of his sisters to Tirupati, where his head was shaven and dedicated to the god. At this shrine there is a quaint custom, which has given rise to a Tamil proverb. The barbers ply their trade at Tirupati in the open air. Sometimes the crowd of worshippers who need shaving is very great. A customer sits by the wayside to have his head shaved, but before the work is finished another customer arrives. The barber bids him sit down, leaves the first person half shaved, and starts to shave the second, whom he similarly leaves partly shaved to secure a third customer, and so on, until he may have a row of a dozen or more folk with partly shaved heads, who clearly cannot go away in that condition, and must wait with what patience they can till the barber's last

hope of securing another victim is exhausted. Then he finishes off his work, beginning with the first comer. "Tirupati savaram" (shaving) is a proverbial expression, like the English: "many irons in the fire." There were so many to be shaved on the occasion of his visit that Subrahmanyam had to wait three hours for his turn.

One of these visits to temples had an important influence on Subrahmanyam's religious life. In the temple of Nātarājan, or the dancing Siva, at Chidambaram, with its great hall of 1,000 pillars, there is a room called the Hall of the Supreme Secret. In fact, it is nothing more than an empty hall without any image. Some Vedāntists are opposed to idol worship. The Brāhman priests, with their usual skill in turning things to account, keep this hall locked and charge a fee for entrance. Subrahmanyam was at first disappointed to find it absolutely empty. Presently, however, he was reminded of what he heard a missionary tell of the altar to the unknown God at Athens and how "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man." Could it be that his own old religion recognized as its "supreme secret" that God is Spirit not to be worshipped in any image of man's making?

As a little boy he enjoyed the great feasts of popular Hinduism, especially the car and floating festivals. The enormous crowds of people, the music, the feasting, the busy bazaars with

their rich variety of articles for sale, and the processions, when the Brāhmans chanted Sanskrit hymns and the people in a frenzy of religious fervour tugged at the cables to drag along the idol car—all these things affected his mind. He thought not merely of the tamash (festivity), but also of the religious import of the feasts. As a boy he took little or no notice of the filthy carvings on the cars, which have a degrading influence in the minds of young men. As his parents frequently spoke of gods and goddesses, he thought it quite the ordinary thing for a god to have a wife. As he grew older this feature of the old religion became an offence to him. Even as a young boy his contempt was moved by the inability of an idol by the roadside to guard itself from gross defilement.

His mother was a devout and loving soul, of whom he always speaks with reverent affection. His father, Krishna Aiyar, also was a devout man and a careful student of the Hindu scriptures. He had a separate room into which he used to retire daily after his morning ablutions, and there he would spend many hours in meditation and prayer. He would read the great classics of India, her great epic poems, the Song Celestial, and the Upanishads, those records of esoteric doctrine, in which the ancient philosophers by brooding thought tried to pierce beneath the surface of things in their search for eternal realities.

In such a peaceful atmosphere of religious observance and thought Subrahmanyam's early youth was spent until his fourteenth year, when his father's death revolutionized the whole course of his life.

The direction of the family now passed over to his paternal uncle and his eldest brother, and they, with his mother's approval, decided to give him the advantage of English education like his brothers. It is the only possible avenue to Government service, a means of living ardently desired by many young Brāhmanas. His affectionate mother all along felt it a pity that the Benjamin of the family should be deprived of this advantage. Accordingly they made up their minds to send him to the nearest High School. But, as he felt ashamed to sit with little boys in the lowest class, they engaged a Brāhman teacher, who knew English, as a private tutor for him. The teacher was intelligent and the boy was keen. He made rapid progress, and before long he passed the public Middle School examination. This success encouraged him to seek admission into the Wesleyan Mission High School, now Findlay College, at Mannārgudi, the Principal at that time being the Rev. T. Frederick Nicholson.

When Subrahmanyam had reached the fifth form, the school passed into the charge of the Rev. E. Percy Blackburn, whose personality and teaching made a deep impression on the

boys. They saw in him a man of simple faith and sympathetic heart, honest and upright, unostentatious and kindly in all his dealings with them. He took an interest not only in their studies, but in their games and every part of their lives. He showed his concern for their parents, their families and all that touched their welfare. He visited them when they were ill, or, when that was not possible, he wrote them letters. One letter which he wrote to Subrahmanyam, when he was laid aside with cholera, made a deep impression on him and his brothers. In this way, almost without their knowing it, he made a place for himself in the hearts of the boys, and that made it easy for them to sit at his feet listening to the Gospel.

The new teaching Subrahmanyam now received started enquiries in his mind as to the truth and value of much that he had previously learned and taken for granted. He found himself, for instance, hesitating to repeat the names of Hindu gods in the customary ceremonies connected with the taking of food. But not easily or soon did he acknowledge that the old religion could not satisfy the deep longings of his heart. Like most Brāhman boys he loved dialectic and sought to involve his teacher in discussion. "We very often," he says, "worried him with all kinds of questions. But the gentle way he handled our questions, the very affectionate and helpful

way he tried to answer them, sometimes with tears trickling down his cheeks, sometimes hanging his head down and then lifting it with a beautiful smile on his face, won our hearts and at the end of twelve months there were six of us who were minded to run the Christian race. It was a great disappointment to us when he was transferred to another station. Still we often wrote to him and his letters cheered us as we met together under the shade of a tree to read them and the Word of God." It was not, however, the divine will at this early stage lightly to heal the wound of his soul. Had Mr. Blackburn been able to remain he might have reached the goal more quickly. But Subrahmanyam was to penetrate more into the spirit of his old religion, to explore deeply its resources and to realize that its finest fruit could not quench his thirst for the living God. Still it was the teaching of Mr. Blackburn that had awakened his soul.

Meanwhile he passed the Matriculation examination of the Madras University. He and five of his friends had now to leave their native place and continue their education in different parts of the country. It was decided that he should study medicine. He sought admission first to the Medical School in Tanjore and then to the Medical College in Madras, but there was no immediate opening for him in either of these institutions. So for eight months he studied in the Junior F.A. Class

of the Madras Christian College, under Dr. Cooper and Dr. Miller, the famous educational missionary. Then an opening occurred in the Medical College, and for about a year-and-a-half he pursued his studies there. All this time his mental and spiritual disquiet was increasing, and he found no prospect of relief in the course of study he was then pursuing. This course, especially the practical part of it in the dissecting room, brought him into a contact with the material and corruptible body, which became increasingly distasteful to him. His old Brāhman instincts asserted themselves and filled him with unutterable loathing for the flesh, especially when he was called upon to handle and dissect its decaying tissues. For a Brāhman to touch a corpse is utter defilement. But apart from that his mind had been nurtured in a faith which at its highest seeks release by the destruction of the body, "the home of sin," which Hindu ascetics "despise and hate." He had not yet learned to reverence the body because God has made it the vehicle and organ of His self-manifestation to the world. His course in practical anatomy did not begin till he had been nearly eighteen months in the College. But within three weeks of starting dissection, unable any longer to bear an employment which kept the corruptible body so constantly and closely in his thoughts, he resigned and returned home to Lakshmangudi.

Here he remained for about six months uncertain what his next step would be. One day he heard a colporteur crying his books for sale at the entrance to the Agrahāram (Brāhman quarter). Subrahmanyam agreed to buy a Tamil Testament, but was too proud to take it from his hand. The colporteur had to lay it on the ground and retire a distance of forty feet before Subrahmanyam would touch it. The good man then withdrew and was seen under a shady tree praying, doubtless, for the haughty youth who had just bought the Testament. The reading of the Gospels brought back to Subrahmanyam what he had learned in the mission school and increased his desire for further enlightenment. He was urged to go to the Roman Catholic priest by his family doctor, who was a Roman Catholic himself. But he did not do so. He went, however, for help to his former Hindu instructor, the Mahopādhyāya, but he refused to answer his questions. Grieved at this rebuff and gravely disquieted in soul, he formed the plan of cutting himself off from all human attachments, so that as a sannyāsi (hermit) in a cave on some lonely hill or in a forest he might find the peace denied him in the society of men. He would turn his back on the world for ever.

CHAPTER III

THE PILGRIM'S QUEST FOR GOD

IT is well to remind ourselves that at this time Subrahmanyam's quest for God arose in the first instance out of an intense longing to be released from the coil of the mortal body, rather than from any passion like St. Paul's to be delivered from the mind of the flesh, the disobedient will which is enmity against God. In leaving home secretly he used an artifice which he now condemns.

The young pilgrim set out on his quest,* having discarded the sacred thread which he had worn since his initiation, and the caste marks which hitherto he had worn on his forehead, at least, when taking food. His only possessions, apart from a few rupees for his railway fare, were his light pink cloth with silk border, which was tied round his waist, and the sannyāsi's metal bowl, in which to receive the food offered by pious givers. He travelled by rail to Mysore, and then proceeded

*The narrative of the pilgrimage is wholly based on Subrahmanyam's evidence, and must be understood as his own account of experiences, which the writer, of course, had no means of sharing or observing.

to Chenrāyapatna, near Hassan, to visit a brother who was an engineer in the Mysore Government service. This brother was very angry with him for leaving the Medical College and adopting the rôle of sannyāsi. Alarmed at Subrahmanyam's restlessness, he used every argument he could think of to dissuade him from his present course. Finding persuasion vain, he seems to have come to the conclusion that his unrest was due to some malign influence, which it was his duty to counteract. At all events, after two days, Subrahmanyam's recollection of the visit ceases, and the next thing he remembers clearly is that a week or so later he found himself lying on the platform at Tiptur station. Coming back to consciousness, he found that his body had been branded and smeared with saffron. He had apparently been drugged and beaten some days before. The stationmaster said he had received instructions to send him to Bangalore and thence back home. He refused, however, to go in that direction, and, finding that a few rupees had been tied in his cloth, he took a ticket for Dhārwar, in the opposite direction. On arriving there he stayed for a time in a chattram or hostel provided by pious Hindus for religious pilgrims, who receive there food and lodging free and are treated with much veneration. The true sannyāsi does not need to beg. It is considered an act of merit to feed him. One of Subrahmanyam's brothers, Kalyāna

Sundram, had gone in search of him to Chenrāyapatna and Tiptur and, not finding him, had given up the quest. After some time, however, a cousin found him in a chattram and took him back to Lakshmangudi.

At the first opportunity he was off again, this time on foot, still going as a sannyāsi. He travelled north by the great trunk road, sometimes alone, sometimes with other pilgrims. His nights were spent under some friendly tree by the roadside or in one of the many rest-houses for pilgrims. Sometimes he would go bowl in hand to a Brāhman house to receive a meal; at other times, without his asking it, a pious housewife, seeing a "holy man" in meditation under a tree, would set food before him. He felt no inclination to halt for any length of time in Madras. The life of a student, whether in an arts or a medical college, had now no charms for him. He wanted "release" (mukti) from life and absorption in the ocean of dreamless rest.

On this quest he journeyed forward, proceeding north along the Nellore road, meeting, but not heeding, the long caravans of bullock-carts, laden with rice, that churn up the red laterite metalling of the road on their way to and from the city. Ten miles north of Madras he reached Redhills, and rested one night under the shelter of a spreading banyan-tree, where many years after he stood with the writer to preach the Gospel. On the present

occasion a kindly bazaar-man pressed him to accept some bananas, saying in sympathetic tones: "You are very young to have turned your back on the world."

Continuing his journey northwards, he reached, after several days, the outskirts of Naydupet, where he found himself in a Christian hamlet. He recognized his mistake when he heard the people singing Christian lyrics. So, to avoid contamination, he hurried out of the place, for the old Brāhman feeling of caste exclusiveness was still strong in him. Even as a sannyāsi it clung to him. At Naydupet he rested for a short time. Then, turning westward, he continued his pilgrimage across country, walking on the ridges of the rice fields and along the banks of rivers, till he reached Dhārwar once more, having tramped on foot almost across the peninsula. At Dhārwar he fell in with some pilgrims returning from Conjeeveram, a popular place of pilgrimage in the south to Kāsi (Benares) in the north, the most famous of all Hindu "holy places." He travelled in their company as far as Poona. Leaving them there, he wandered off alone, scarcely knowing where he was going, but seeking some lofty hill where he could practise the ascetic life.

After a few days he found himself back in the vicinity of Londa, where he again fell in with a band of pilgrims. After about ten days' march he parted from them on the

southern bank of the Narbada, which he crossed in a round basket boat, and so came at length to the Vindhya Hills and reached the foot of a peak about 3,000 feet high. The Vindhya range forms the northern slope of the basin of the Narbada, which in places washes the base of its pink sandstone rocks. These hills and the Satpura range on the south of the river together form the watershed of Central India, dividing the great plains of the Ganges basin from the Deccan tableland. The flat-topped hills and bold scarps of the Vindhyas are studded with the ruined castles of marauding chiefs, who once infested this area. The hill-sides are clothed with stunted forest growth. Although the Vindhyas cannot compare with the superb majesty of the Himālayas, Subrahmanyam found in them just the retreat he longed for. The journey had taken five months to accomplish.

In one of his most charming poems, John Drinkwater sings :

“ To the high hills you took me, where desire,
Daughter of difficult life, forgets her lures,
And hope's eternal tasks no longer tire,
And only peace endures.”

It was the longing for that peace and the hope of quenching the desire of life that drew our pilgrim to the hills. Among their fastnesses he hoped to find an answer to the doubts that tormented his spirit. In some natural temple “ among the scars and proud, unbuilt spires ”

of the mountains, knowing nothing of man's querulous hopes, he thought to attain to a rest of God, if, indeed, there were a God, Who could be said either to work or rest. What if Para-Brahma (the Supreme) were impersonal? Could anything positive be known about Him? Jesus argued that if men, being evil, show fatherly love to their children, *much more* does the Father in heaven show such love. The Indian philosopher inverts the argument: "If men, being evil, have the characteristics of personality, *much less* can the Supreme, which is not evil, be a person." Which argument is true? "Much more" or "much less"?

With thoughts such as these he entered the silence of the hills to "read anew the eternal argument." For some days he wandered about at one time following a hermit whom he found there, but this man spoke only Hindi, and they were unable to converse. So Subrahmanyam left him and pursued his solitary way. He had a colloquial knowledge of Telugu and Kanarese as well as of his mother tongue, Tamil. But he had got far beyond those language areas. In any case he had little use for languages, as there were no friendly people near to talk to or to give him food. He had to live on the roots and herbs he could pick up in the jungle. He was suffering terribly from cold and dysentery, but that he did not mind, for he now thought that deliverance could only come to him through the destruction

of the body, from which he longed to be set free.

While in this condition he came to a cave some distance from the summit of one of the highest peaks in that range. The cave was partly hidden by trees and shrubs. On either side of the entrance, and above it, were huge boulders under which he had to stoop to enter. It opened downwards beneath a great overhanging rock. Thinking that it was probably the abode of wild beasts, he watched it for three days, and then, having seen no animals, he ventured just inside the entrance, where he rested, spending his time in meditation on things that brought a measure of relief to his soul. For three days he remained near the mouth of the cave. He had a strong conviction that there was some other living presence within the cave, and desired to go further down to explore, but was for a time afraid to do so. At length he ventured, and after going down about a dozen feet into the cave he saw very faintly in the dim light the figure of an old man sitting motionless with closed eyes and hands folded in the attitude of devotion. His uncut finger-nails were long and curly, and his matted grey hair hung down to the ground. Subrahmanyam at once believed himself to be in the presence of one of those ascetics whom India regards with such reverence, and prostrated himself on the ground at his feet in token of a desire to become his disciple. The old man did not open his eyes or take

notice of his presence in any other way. He made no reply when the young pilgrim sought permission to stay near him and serve him as a disciple.

This was not very encouraging, but at least Subrahmanyam was not ordered to go away. So he stayed. Most of his time he spent near the mouth of the cave, but every day went down to visit the Rishi (venerable ascetic) and wait upon him. For eight days the old man ignored his presence, although the would-be disciple visited him every day and made obeisance to him. But on the ninth day he opened his eyes and smiled upon our friend. His eyes were most expressive, showing keen intelligence, and his face was lit up with joy as he silently motioned to Subrahmanyam to sit down. Subrahmanyam hesitated to sit in the presence of so venerable an ascetic, but the old man was insistent, and to please him the youth sat down. Thus began a strange companionship which lasted more than fourteen months.

During all this time the Rishi spoke not a single word. He had imposed upon himself the discipline of silence. This is one of the vows hermits take. They also bind themselves not to look upon the face of another human being unless he, too, is a hermit; and never to eat ordinary food such as grain or meat. They must eat only the roots, leaves and fruit of trees or herbs, such as they can find in the forest.

To a Brāhman the absence of a meat diet was no hardship, but the lack of rice and clarified butter must have been a great trial. Subrahmanyam did not take the vow of silence, but in the old man's company the habit of silence grew upon him. He used to gather herbs in the forest for food, which he shared with the Rishi.

The old man's delay in recognising the youth was intended to test his sincerity. When he did open his eyes and smile on him, it was clear that he believed in the genuineness of his motives. All the months they were together he communicated with Subrahmanyam either by signs or by writing a few words in the sand on the floor at the mouth of the cave. Not the least singular feature of this intercourse was that neither of them knew the other's vernacular, and their only easy means of communication was English. Another piquant fact emerges. The elder of these Hindu hermits had learnt English in the Wesleyan High School, Colombo, and the younger in the Wesleyan High School, Mannārgudi. From the missionaries they had learned something more than English—the good news that God had entered human life in Jesus for us men and for our salvation. What impression the Message had made on the older man we shall see presently. In the case of the younger it had quickened, without as yet satisfying, his soul. Here, then, in one of the lonely caves

of the Vindhya Hills, two sons of the old faith, who had been challenged and stimulated by the new, sought in characteristic Hindu fashion to solve the problems of life and destiny. Subrahmanyam told the old sannyāsi about the trouble of his soul, and very tenderly did the teacher seek to remove his doubts and to give him peace in place of a distraction bordering on despair. Each day they would come out of the cave and sit facing one another in the sunlight as they pondered their high themes.

The old man was fond of a symbolism in which some Christian ideas found quaint expression. He had an elaborate interpretation of the five fingers of the hand as a symbol of truth. The thumb represents the Paramātma (supreme soul); the first finger Jīvātma (the finite soul); the other three fingers, in order, are the world, the flesh, and the devil. There can be no union between Paramātma and Jīvātma, unless the latter bend down and humble itself as the prodigal did. When it so humbles itself Paramātma moves to meet it. When the two join in communion, the other three fingers have no power over them. Moreover, as the thumb is lower than the fingers, God is below the level of human pride and beyond human vision. The loftiness of pride must be brought low, and one must search for God in the depths of life. He humbles Himself to teach us humility. Again Paramātma (the thumb) is nearest to us of all. And all

Jivātma's strength is rooted in Him. When He chooses to erect Himself, none of the four can reach Him. But when He moves a little nearer, though erect, Jivātma can touch him by bending, but none of the other three fingers can reach Him unless He chooses to move still nearer towards them. However much they erect themselves, He can reach their roots. They can never reach His depths unless He wills it. Jivātma is farther from the other three than they from one another. The devil (the little finger) uses the world and the flesh to draw Jivātma towards himself. If Jivātma joins the other three, the four can easily bend down to do their evil will. But if it remains upright, the world, the flesh and the devil have little power. In such curious ways did the Rishi set forth the relation between God, the Soul and the World. The two hermits meditated upon those great themes which perplexed the ancient sages of India and of Greece. They adventured them into seas of thought which no mariner can safely pass unless haply he have found the barque of that Divine Word in which no trusting voyager has ever suffered shipwreck. They pondered on such themes as the following: Is God a Person? Is man a person distinct from Him? Or is belief in man's separate personality an illusion? Is the soul eternal as well as immortal? Is sin a fact or an illusion? If it is a fact, how is one to be saved from it? Why

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are there such inequalities in human life ? Is the doctrine of many re-births true ? If so, is there any hope of escape from the sea of such re-births ?

These, and other such old, old questions that have fascinated and puzzled the great minds of India in the past, were the subject of their constant meditation. But above all, Subrahmanyam relentlessly questioned the old man about God : " Is He a person or not ? Can anything be certainly known of Him, and, if so, how can the discovery be made ? " For a long time he received no answer. This made him all the more insistent. Was his venerable instructor withholding from him the most precious secret of his esoteric doctrine ? If there was an answer to be found on earth he wanted it and he fervently believed that it would, if anywhere, be found with just such a revered ascetic as his friend.

One day the answer came, and it proved a bitter disappointment to the seeker. It came from the Rishi in an impressive series of signs, not easy to reproduce in print. He raised his hand with one finger pointing straight upwards, then slowly lowered it toward the ground ; next he bent his head sideways, rested it upon his hand, and closed his eyes ; then drew a circle with his finger ; next raised his two hands before his face as one reading an open book, motioned with his hand toward the low country, pointed to Subrahmanyam, and made

a final gesture for him to go. As he could not understand all these signs, he begged the old man to explain his meaning by writing on the ground. He felt that he was now approaching the goal of his quest. The pearl of great price was almost within his grasp. With tense eagerness he read the words that the Rishi traced on the ground. Surely the climax of his initiation would be expressed in their ancient sacred language, Sanskrit. But no. The explanation was *in English*, and this is the substance of it: The hand, with one finger pointing straight upwards, signifies "There is only one God." The hand slowly lowered to the ground: "He came down to earth." The head bent sideways, resting on the hand with the eyes closed: "He laid down His life." The circle meant: "For all men." The rest of the gestures signified that the record of this truth was with the people who read a book (the Bible) down on the plains. Subrahmanyam must go to them and sit with them, reading the book, to find the answer to his questions about God. Let him enquire of the Christians and, if they could not satisfy him, let him try the Muhammadans.

It is hard to describe the effect of this communication on the seeker. It almost stunned him. It meant that the Hindu cupboard was bare of the bread of life he sought, and he was referred by his revered teacher to those whom he had left behind in the firm

belief that, however high the claims of Christ, as shown by Mr. Blackburn, there was something higher, nobler, more abiding in that form of Hinduism the hermits practised. But there it was. The Hindu cupboard was bare. So deep was Subrahmanyam's disappointment and displeasure that for several days he did not go to see the old man in the lower part of the cave. When he did go his disappointment was increased, for the Rishi told him he was about to leave him, and he would see him no more. The old man had nothing more to give him.

Next morning, when Subrahmanyam awoke, he had gone and the cave was empty. Our friend's heart, too, was empty. The beloved companion of so many months of common meditation and discipline was gone, having dashed his young companion's hopes. Now a kind of madness seized him. His old religion bankrupt! No, he would not believe it. His old friend must be found and questioned afresh. Together they would seek and find soul peace in the old way of their fathers. He would not surrender his national ideals by taking his religion from foreigners. He would still pursue his quest. But first he must find his venerable friend. The loneliness was unbearable now.

He started off at once to search for him, making enquiries as he went. He wandered far and wide over hill and dale, scarce knowing

where he was going. On the north side of the Vindhya he fell in with some pilgrims, with whom he travelled in a north-easterly direction as far as Patna. There he turned west, and made his way to Benāres, which is to a devout Hindu what Mecca is to a Muhammadan. To bathe in the Ganges at Kāsi (Benāres) is the way to acquire the highest merit. Thus he believes he can wash away sin with its entail. But that type of teaching made little appeal to our young pilgrim, and from Benāres he proceeded northward till he reached the southern slopes of the Himālayas. As he climbed the range that for more than two thousand miles has stood for ages as India's northern sentinel, his heart thrilled with patriotic fervour. Here, in the fabled home of the gods of his childhood's legends, near Mount Kailās, he would surely achieve his purpose and find the God of his quest. From the region of rice and millet to that of wheat and barley, from plantains, oleanders and oranges to oaks, rhododendrons and pines, he steadily mounted up, and saw, still higher, beyond the pines, the snow on the peaks. At length he came to rest for a time in a high pass, 12,000 feet or more above sea-level, near a lofty mountain, whose snow-capped summit, dazzling in its majestic purity, inspired him with awe. He was told that this was Kinchinjunga, nearly 28,000 feet high.

After some time of rest in the pass he moved

still northwards, descending into a valley on the borders of Nepal and Tibet, where he was thrilled by the sight of ascetics doing penance, each sitting between five fires. He felt that now at last he had reached the bourne of release within the old faith. He, therefore, kindled five fires for himself and sat in the midst of them. Then, gathering together all the faculties of his soul, he tried to fix them on the Invisible. But although he strove hard to concentrate all his attention on Para-Brahma, his mind was active all the time. The spirit of obstinate questioning was still alive in him, and this gave him no rest. While in the cave on the Vindhya he sometimes was able to induce the state of trance which he eagerly desired, but it never came readily to him. Now that he once more sought it amidst fire and ice on the Himālayas, it never once came to him. His heart still craved for release from "the body of decay and worms." For the image of the body in its corruption still stood before his mind. As the penance of the fires brought no sense of release from the coil of the flesh, no liberty of spirit, after three weeks he impatiently arose and scattered the fires.

Then he climbed once more the steep mountain-side and looked out on a wondrous panorama of scenery, range rising above range, separated by deep, mysterious valleys and the piercing whiteness of the snow above it all.

O for the purity of the snow ! O to be done with the foul corruption of the body for ever ! The pure majesty of the mountains seemed to mock the frailty and foulness of the body. The contrast increased his agony of spirit as he cried : “ Who shall deliver me out of the body of death and worms ? ” All through the three weeks past that had been his cry, but there had been neither voice nor any to answer. But now the beginning of his deliverance was at hand.

CHAPTER IV

THE VOICE AND THE VISION

AT this point I had better warn the reader that we are on the eve of occurrences in this story which Subrahmanyam firmly believes to have been miraculous, in the ordinary acceptance of that word. The last generation of English Christians did not believe that miracles happen nowadays. Many of them were so obsessed with the closed theory of mechanical causation that they scarcely dared believe God could, as they said, "interfere" with the operation of nature. This generation of believers has advanced beyond that position. We are sure miracles have occurred, and if they cannot occur in our time we want to know why. We are open to conviction of their occurrence if the evidence is adequate. We believe that God can in the interests of His Kingdom use forces far beyond our experiences, but we are not prepared to explain things as miracles which are capable of interpretation on natural grounds. I am not so foolishly sceptical as to say Almighty God cannot cause a voice from heaven to be heard by a man's outward ear, or a vision of heavenly realities

to be given to his bodily eyes. I need evidence, however, to believe that He *has* chosen that method in any particular case. And if it were clear that the Voice and the Vision were the results of an impression wrought by the Spirit of God in Subrahmanyam's subconscious self, I should not for that reason doubt the reality of the call or the revelation.

As in the case of Sādhu Sundar Singh so in that of Subrahmanyam, I do not for a moment believe that the visions granted to them were the result of subjective illusion. The results have been far too precious to be ascribed to illusion. "By their fruits ye shall know them." It is no valid objection to say that by long fasting and meditation they had induced a frame of mind susceptible to supra-physical suggestion. No Christian can deny that bodily discipline and prayer are roads to the apprehension of reality and that certain forms of reality are only reached by such roads. "This kind goeth out by nothing save by prayer." The old Hindu asceticism had a profound contempt for scientific research in nature and history as an avenue to the apprehension of reality. It looked upon meditation and austerity as the only way to reach reality. That was one extreme. The West has gone to the other. The European scientist tended some time ago to think that his critical method was the only approach to truth. He has now learnt to be sceptical of his scepticism and

humbly to take God's self-disclosure in the way He chooses to give it. So must we.

We left our pilgrim gazing from the mountain-side on the glorious works of God in nature, and inwardly longing to be delivered from the body of corruption. Presently he heard behind him a gentle voice whisper: "Back to the Vindhya Hills." He turned to see the speaker, expecting to find that his old master had for once broken the vow of silence and was calling him. But there was no one to be seen. Believing that he had heard a divine voice, he immediately obeyed, and spent seventeen weeks in returning to the cave. On the way, he passed through Benāres again, and there met some distant relations, who tried to persuade him to return south with them. When persuasion failed, they tried to use force and to stir up public sympathy with their attempt; for they, too, thought he had been drugged by the missionaries. He escaped out of their hands and went on his way, sometimes alone, sometimes in the company of pilgrims.

On this return journey he wandered off the direct route very often, and when at length he reached the Vindhya he could not at first find the cave. He came near it, but just missed the entrance, screened as it was with jungle growth. After several days he discovered it and entered eagerly, hoping to find his old friend in his accustomed place. But the cave was quite empty. That night he

was very restless and sad. He lay on the cold rock and watered it with his tears.

About midnight, as he lay in the cave, he heard a voice calling to him: "Follow thou Me!" He again thought his guru was calling him. He arose and went out to see, but was disappointed to find no one there. He went back into the cave more depressed than ever and could not rest. All night in an agony he cried unto God: "O hear me and comfort me, Thou Supreme Brahma." And then in the morning, just about dawn, there came again the beautiful voice saying the same words: "Follow thou Me," which Mr. Blackburn had often quoted in his talks about discipleship. He came out of the cave and ran along the hills in the direction of the voice, until, in the east, he saw the rising sun light up the glorious panorama of the hills before him. He was particularly struck with the beauty of the dewdrops on the blades of grass, now sparkling like diamonds in the sunlight, and there came over him a passionate longing to exchange the body of corruption for a life of crystal purity like theirs. For a moment he stood still and drank in the rapture of the gorgeous scenery, so that for the time he forgot the voice.

As he stood gazing, he noticed at some distance from him, partly concealed by a little hill, a grove of trees on a huge ridge of mountains. From the grove, there came a voice, saying: "Follow thou Me!" He started to

run towards the grove and soon found himself buried in its glorious shade and silence. No living soul was to be seen there. Then the pent-up feelings of a heart aching for holy fellowship found expression in tears. Clapping his hands to his head, he called aloud for the author of the voice. Then his soul was thrilled as once more he heard in the same accents the words: "Follow thou Me!" Again he ran in the direction of the voice until he was too tired to run farther. He rested a while, and started to run again. And so for seventeen days he went forward in a south-westerly direction, alternately resting and marching, until on the eighteenth day he reached a ridge of the Western Ghats about forty miles south-west of Bombay.

On the hills, above the village of Roha-Ashtami, in the Colaba District, he tried to rest that night. His strength was much wasted with dysentery, due to exposure and lack of proper food. His cloth was worn threadbare, but he still had a tiger-skin his old ascetic friend had given him in the cave. With this he covered himself as he lay down on a rock to sleep that night, after breathing his oft-repeated prayer: "Para-Brahma, O reveal Thyself to me." It was now near the end of July, and the weather was warm enough to make it pleasant to sleep in the open, provided it did not rain. The rain held off and he slept. He awoke in the early morning and saw by the light of the waning moon a huge tigress

with two cubs about six yards away from where he lay. At first he thought it was a nightmare. But soon he knew that it was dread reality. He saw her beautiful stripes in the moonlight, and terror filled his soul. Almost paralysed with fear, he had strength to repeat the Brāhman prayer for deliverance from reptiles and noxious beasts :—

“ In the name of the King of the World, O great Siva, drive far, far away cobras and all other reptiles.”

After uttering this prayer there came to his mind the story of Daniel which Mr. Blackburn had taught him. So he added : “ O God of Daniel, or Thou Who hast given me the call to follow Thee, deliver me now, for I am in danger ! ” He lay quite still in a kind of stupor, and presently coming to himself, he saw the tigress and her cubs walk quietly away. Soon after they had gone he got up and began walking about rather aimlessly till the sun rose.

In the early morning Subrahmanyam saw a young man walking up the hill towards him. In obedience to the ascetic practice he was then following, he lay down and closed his eyes, so as not to look on him. Sannyāsis avoided the direct look in the belief that there is a subtle power of attraction in the eye, by which one may be drawn within the orbit of another's will. Even ordinary Hindus soon cast their eyes down before a direct stare for the same reason. After a moment he heard

himself called by name: "Lakshmī-Krishna Subrahmanya! What are you doing here?" The voice sounded very familiar, and, overcome with curiosity, he broke his rule and opened his eyes to see bending over him an old schoolfellow of the Mannārgudi days, Ragunātha Rao by name, who was one of the six who were moved by Mr. Blackburn's life and words. He had accepted the Christian faith and at the request of the Rev. Ebenezer Webster, of the Wesleyan Mission, had been baptized by Dr. Hume, of the American Marathi Mission, and was now headmaster of the Mission school in Rohā-Ashtami. He embraced his old friend, and having got from him an account of his remarkable wanderings, persuaded him to come to his home in the adjacent village. Subrahmanyam agreed, and they went down the northern slope of the hill together, hand in hand.

In this congenial fellowship he remained for a month. At first he was far from well. His privations had worn down his strength, and the return to ordinary diet upset him, but the rest in his friend's home was very grateful, and his health was much improved before he left. He had now a dear companion to fill the place of the friend he had lost. Even in the days of his most ardent pursuit of the Yoga-Mārga (Way of Austerity) his soul never found satisfaction in mere loneliness. He clung all unknowing to the essentially Christian

truth that the highest life in God and man is not aloneness but fellowship. This explains his attachment to the old Rishi and his desolation of spirit after his disappearance. It explains also the comfort he found in the companionship of one so like-minded as Ragunātha Rao. This joy in fellowship followed on a new approach to God in Nature which reached its climax that morning on the Vindhya when he saw the rosy-fingered dawn and realized the freshness and purity of the light that sparkled in the dew-drops. From that time his hatred of the body abated, and the longing to escape from the "home of worms" soon passed away entirely. And now growing fellowship with God in Nature finds its complement in fellowship with Man in God.

Those were happy days as together they read and re-read the Gospel of St. John, the book of the Bible that had all along made the strongest appeal to them. As they read, they prayed together, and so the month slipped by. It was a grief to Ragunātha Rao that his friend insisted on going. He had done his best to persuade him to be baptized, but Subrahmanyam was not ready for this yet. A great longing had come over him to return home and tell his mother and brethren all about his experiences and find out what they thought about them. Ragunātha Rao tried to dissuade him from this course. "Brother," said he, "they will poison you ; they will drug

or kill you." And he told of his own experiences at the hands of his people. But the longing for home was too strong, and he definitely determined to go back to Lakshmangudi. He wanted to tell his people of the Voice and of the remarkable Vision now to be narrated.

The evening before Subrahmanyam's departure the two friends had prayer together and then retired to rest. A little room used by Ragunātha Rao as a study in the day-time was given up to his use at night. Here he used to sleep on a plank raised about one foot from the ground. He seldom slept for more than two or three hours at a stretch. This night he was wakeful and two hours after retirement was kneeling by the side of his plank bed. He addressed his prayer to the Author of the Voice, whom he still thought of as Para-Brahma. The burden of his petition was: "Who art Thou Who hast called me to follow Thee? O reveal Thyself to me!" Then the room was filled with a supernal light. When he opened his eyes he felt dazzled with the brightness, almost as if he were looking at the noonday sun. Indeed he says: "The sun in the east with all his brightness could not compare with the wonderful light which filled the room." On the left was seen a great company of Brāhmans, fair-skinned, lean, and proud, amongst whom he found himself, whilst on the right was a group of poor, ill-clad Pariahs with coal-black complexions, who made

a sorry sight. "Then," says he, "a glorious fiery hand descended upon me and, plucking me from amongst those proud Brāhmans, placed me amongst the pisāchas, those untouchable, dirty outcastes, whom the Brāhmans despise. The hand rose up high and again descended on my head with a marvellous pressure which I feel to this day. It was as though a fiery current was passing through me from head to foot. With the pressure of the hand, a voice said: "Follow thou Me." Immediately there was thick darkness in the room, and a fairy sleep overtook me and I slept."

He woke early and told the Vision to his friend. Ragunātha Rao was more than satisfied that it was God in Christ Who had given the Vision and called him with that gracious Voice. It was clearly his duty to come out from Brāhmanism in baptism, and to take the good news of salvation to the outcastes. He implored Subrahmanyam to receive baptism at once and to remain with him preaching the Gospel in that neighbourhood. That would have been a less painful course than the one he followed. His study of St. John's Gospel led him to the sure conviction that Jesus Christ had been revealed to him. He dwelt much on such passages as these :

"In Him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shineth in the darkness and the darkness apprehended it not."

“There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world.”

“I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

In his Vision the same ideas had emerged: Light, Darkness, “Follow Me.” It meant that Jesus was the Light of life and would lead him through the darkness, if only he would follow Him. There was something more in the Vision than that. It meant he was called to leave the society of the privileged aristocracy of his land and to mix amongst those from whom the world shrinks as untouchable. Ragnātha Rao believed that the thrilling pressure of the divine hand symbolized the gift of the Holy Spirit for service among the outcastes. It was in vain that he urged instant baptism. Subrahmanyam felt he had the higher gift. Why should he seek the lower? Does a man who has been born of the Spirit need to go back to be born of water too? On this point he had not yet reached the standpoint of the New Testament. But he was determined at all costs to be obedient to the heavenly Vision. His next step was to go home and tell his own people how the Lord had called and commissioned him. It was the Lord’s will to show him how many things he must suffer for His name’s sake.

Ragnātha Rao gave Subrahmanyam money to travel by rail, and in four days he reached the home of his boyhood.

CHAPTER V

THE BAPTISM OF WATER AND OF SUFFERING

SUBRAHMANYAM was welcomed home very warmly and there were great rejoicings at his return. But soon his behaviour began to give rise to fresh anxiety. He was not observing that strict aloofness from other castes which is customary among Brāhmans. He was found to be mixing somewhat freely and conversing with Sūdras. When his uncle discovered that he was actually visiting parcherries (Pariah hamlets), the rejoicing gave place to bitterness. Sometimes he took his seat beside proud Brāhman teachers and pressed them with questions, the very asking of which seemed to them an impertinence. They were greatly disturbed when he reported his Call and Vision and interpreted them in the light of the Gospel. God the Supreme has spoken in the Word. The Word has appeared in the world as the Light more brilliant than that of ten million suns.

All this offended them. But the first serious cause of offence was that he absolutely refused

to put on again the sacred thread which he had discarded on becoming a sannyāsi. As a kind of punishment for this refusal he was made to sleep on the outer verandah and food was served him, not with the other members of the family, but alone in the passage between the front door and that leading into the courtyard. His mother would gladly have seen him married at this time, but no attempt was made to force a marriage, especially as the relatives whose daughters were suitable would have hesitated to give them to one who treated caste restraints so lightly.

It was about this time that a peculiarly insidious temptation assailed him. A caste-keeping Roman Catholic who lived in the village urged him to see a French priest at Tanjore. He saw him two or three times in one week, and was greatly impressed by the fact that his people prostrated themselves before him as though he were a god. This priest warned him against the folly of becoming a Protestant, as he would lose all the prestige of his caste, which he might still retain in the Roman Communion. "We keep all caste observances. Join us and you will still be respected as a Brāhman, and the people will continue to prostrate themselves before you." This made a very subtle appeal to Subrahmanyam. But the thought of the Vision helped him to overcome it, and he continued to converse with Pariahs about salvation.

His present behaviour convinced his uncle that he was under the influence of Christian missionaries, and he even suspected that they had given him some drug to disorder his mind. He therefore actually gave him another drug to counteract it. The Saturday oil bath was the occasion for its administration. Delicate children, after the afternoon oil bath, are often given a decoction in the evening to ward off a chill. There were about sixteen children in the united family. After some of these had taken their medicine, a decoction of a very different sort was given to Subrahmanyam. He was also denied the usual food that day, lest it should neutralise the effect of the drug. For about six days he was unconscious, and during that period, as his mother told him afterwards, he raved like a madman.

When he recovered he went forth again to speak to the Pariahs about salvation. This exasperated his uncle beyond measure. One day his mother said : " My son, I entreat you to stay indoors. Do not go out at all. Your uncle is growing more and more angry. He may do you some serious bodily harm." He replied : " Come what may, mother, I must preach salvation." " Then," said she, " run away to my brother's house." He obeyed her voice and took his flight to Sathanur. But soon the same kind of thing happened there. At all events, remarks began to be made which showed him that his conduct was looked on

with as much disapproval there as at home. He therefore decided to leave his maternal uncle's house and made his way to Kumbakonam and thence to Mayaveram by train. From there he went on foot to Cuddalore ("the town by the sea"), and marched north along the beach to Covelong, Chunampet, Sadras, and so reached Madras at San Thomé. On this journey he passed the famous Seven Pagodas, or Mahābalipuram, and slept in the rock-hewn temple there one night. It took him ten days to reach Madras.

Soon after his arrival in the city he met an old friend and fellow-student of the Medical College, who gave him hospitality for a few days, until he found room in a hostel in Linga Chetty Street, founded by Dr. Miller, of the Christian College, for Brāhman students attending that and other institutions. Here he resided in safety for a few months.

Subrahmanyam now began to attend Christian worship in the Wesleyan Church, Popham's Broadway, Georgetown, a sanctuary built in 1822. On the fourth Sunday an English gentleman named Greenfield put his hand on his shoulder and said with a smile: "My brother, you are a Brāhman. I wonder why you come to this place of worship. Have you found anything here to satisfy your heart?" Subrahmanyam then gave him a brief outline of his story, which pleased him greatly. He asked him what work he was doing, and, when

he learnt that he had no employment, he offered him a post in the census office at Fort St. George. Subrahmanyam gladly accepted this work, and remained in the office about three months. Then Mr. Greenfield was transferred to Poona, and a cousin of Subrahmanyam's was appointed to fill a temporary vacancy in the same office. He soon made the place too hot for our friend, who was forced to leave. Mr. Greenfield, a true man of God, kept up a correspondence with the young enquirer and when he learnt the straits he was in, he wrote a very sympathetic letter, enclosing Rs. 75, and promised to find an opening for him at Poona as soon as possible. Meanwhile he urged him to continue his attendance at Christian worship.

On the 14th of August, 1892, Subrahmanyam went to the church in the Broadway, where he heard the Rev. T. H. Whitmore preach a powerful sermon on "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." This dispelled all his doubts about baptism and decided him as to the course he must take. After the service was over he accosted the preacher as he descended the pulpit steps and asked for baptism then and there. The long spiritual pilgrimage was about to reach its nearer goal. One phase of his soul struggle was ended and he was wholly ready to surrender his life to God in Christ, to live as a Christian in name as well

as in reality. It was indeed a great thing for him to have reached this point. What a struggle it had cost him! Great, therefore, was his disappointment when Mr. Whitamore did not at once fall in with his wishes. He knew nothing about Subrahmanyam, and felt he must not act in the dark. So he asked him to come the following evening. "After the meeting in the vestry is over, I shall be glad to hear your story and see what can be done." The youth's glowing enthusiasm was a little damped by what he thought the unkind delay, and he returned to the hostel somewhat depressed.

The minister, wearied with the labours of the day in an exhausting climate, returned home for the night, but not to rest. He was troubled by thoughts of the eager Brāhman enquirer. Early next morning before Subrahmanyam had left his room, he heard a knock at the door. On opening it he was surprised to see the preacher of the previous evening standing there. In reply to his enquiry, "What is the matter?" Mr. Whitamore entered, and after closing the door said: "I have been much troubled during the night when thinking of you, and it has been vividly impressed on me that I must see you without delay. I am, indeed, thankful to hear that you have been brought to know and trust in God." It seems that before going to an early prayer-meeting in his church he had made his

way to Linga Chetty Street, and there had been directed to the hostel by a young Indian Christian friend. There followed an earnest conversation between the enquirer and his visitor in which it was mutually agreed that Subrahmanyam should be publicly baptized the following Sunday.

While they were talking together word was passed round the hostel that a missionary had made his way in, and some of the Brāhman students made a very unfriendly demonstration. The bitterness of caste prejudice will be appreciated when it is remembered that the very facilities these students enjoyed in the hostel had been provided by the large-hearted generosity of a missionary. Just as Mr. Whitamore was about to leave the room, they made an attack on him, in which they tore his coat, knocked off his sun helmet, and threw it in the gutter, wounded him on the head, and would have rolled him down the steps, but for the help of three secret disciples among the students, by whom he was protected from serious injury and enabled to depart in safety.

On Sunday morning, August 21st, 1892, Subrahmanyam was baptized in the old Church in the Broadway, where many distinguished men had expounded the oracles of God. In its hundred years' history I do not know that a more significant event occurred than this baptism thirty years ago. In baptism the

convert took the Christian name of Theophilus. The Commissioner of Police and Mr. N. Subrahmanyam, Judge of the Small Cause Court, and a well-known leader of the Indian Christian community, were present as witnesses. Contrary to expectation, the service passed off without any attempt at interruption.

The tidings of the baptism very quickly reached Lakshmandi, and three days later his relatives, in a body, arrived in Madras to seek for him. They captured him as he was taking a long walk on the beach, and put him in a vehicle to take him to the railway station *en route* for his native town. He asked permission to go and bid Mr. Whitamore good-bye, giving a solemn promise that he would make no attempt to escape. At first this was refused, but, as he persisted, it was granted, and he was taken to Mr. Whitamore's house in Rundall's Road. In his deep concern for the young convert's safety, and having himself experienced the unscrupulous violence of caste resentment, Mr. Whitamore tried to detain him, and with mistaken kindness declined to give him up to his relatives. This error of judgment, due to ignorance of all the circumstances, gave them just cause for indignation. They surrounded the house, and both Mr. and Mrs. Whitamore had a rough time, until Subrahmanyam, determined to keep his word, broke out of the house, and went back with his people to the station. They reached the old home

in Lakshmgudi very early on Friday morning. And then came his final testing. A desperate effort was made to cure him of the madness which they believed was possessing him.

Before relating the painful events that are to follow, it is only right to remember that, according to Subrahmanyam's confident assertion, what was done was done out of real affection for him, and deep sorrow that he should be turning away from the customs and beliefs of his fathers to what they could only look upon as a foreign and hateful religion. "It was in love for my soul that they did it," he always says in narrating the story.

St. Paul's words inevitably come to one's mind at this stage of our narrative: "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus."

There is a stern element in our Lord's teaching which the sentimentalists find unpalatable. They think it intolerable that He should love righteousness above peace. They gloze over His statements that He came, not to send peace but a sword, that He came to set a man against his own father, and the daughter against her mother . . . and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. And when He dares to say: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me," they openly scoff, thinking it mere impudence to set any loyalty above a man's love of his mother. Yet the Master's word stands and the truth of it

is not submerged by any sea of sentiment. The fact is, no man really loves his father and mother well enough who does not love Jesus more. No one ever did, or can, love Him too much.

But to return to our narrative of Subrahmanyam's fiery ordeal. His father's brother and a host of relations gathered together and demanded from him a faithful promise to return to the Brāhman fold. That promise he declined to give. They urged and besought him by every argument they could think of, but, finding him firm, they resolved to try the effect of torture. They made him stand with bare feet in the courtyard through the hottest part of the day on a granite grinding-stone, heated fiercely by the sun and by charcoal fires. As the sun rose higher and higher the stone grew hotter till the pain became almost unbearable. He begged them, with tears, to have mercy, but in vain. There could be no release unless he returned to Brāhmanism. He stood on the burning stone till afternoon, when they took him down because, as the sun declined, the shadow of the roof fell on the stone and lessened his torture.

The brave young confessor was then fastened to a pillar of the inner verandah. After a while his uncle appeared on the scene, fiercely indignant. He asked one question: "Will you turn back?" "No," said the nephew, "I will never turn my back on Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour." The uncle had a whip

in his hand and brought it down with all his might on the youth's bare back. Then he went indoors, came out with a red-hot poker, and applied it to Subrahmanyam's back and legs. He was branded. To this day can be seen the little holes made on his head with the poker. His father's sister now arrived and added her angry reproaches to those of her brother. As this treatment failed to break his resolution, his uncle gave him a potion, forcing his mouth open with pincers, and breaking a tooth out in the process.

All this time his mother, being a widow, was not allowed to appear in the presence of the men. Her affectionate heart was stricken with anguish as from the inner room she witnessed what was happening in the courtyard. At 5 p.m. all the men had to go to the tank outside the village for their evening devotion. The uncle shut up Subrahmanyam in a room, locked the door, and took away the key, lest his fond mother should, out of love, allow him to escape. He was shut up all night. The effect of the drugs passed off after a few hours.

Saturday morning dawned, and Subrahmanyam was brought out and again tied to the pillar. All his relations were called, and spat in his face one by one as they passed him. He was again placed on the heated stone in the sun, and another attempt was made to extract a promise from him to return to Brāhmanism. When they failed to move him,

his uncle once more lashed him with the whip and branded him with the hot iron. He begged hard for mercy. The answer came: "Promise and you shall receive mercy." He remained silent. So the village scavengers were called in to fling filth at him. Disgusting filth was poured upon his head. In all these sufferings and humiliations his spirit was sustained by a vivid sense of the presence of his Master, who for his sake had been spat upon and buffeted and now counted him worthy to enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. He was in the Apostolic Succession of those who for Christ's sake are counted as the offscouring of all things.

As five o'clock struck, when the men had to go out, his mother stole out of her room to see her suffering son. But his uncle, who had not yet gone out, heard her move, and angrily struck her. All the cruelty inflicted on himself Subrahmanyam can freely forgive, but to this day that outrage to his mother awakens feelings of deep resentment in his heart. Personal injury we forgive of our generosity, but forgiveness of injury done to another calls for something other than our generosity. There is need of atonement by Him against whom every outrage is done, and of penitence in the doer, if there is to be a reconciliation worthy of the name.

By six o'clock the house was free of the men. The uncle, before going out, had not locked

Subrahmanyam into the room, but instead had left his sister to guard over him. Then at length his dear mother, who for these two days had not been allowed to approach her son, came out of her room and began to plead with him to yield for her sake. She used every fond term of endearment as she begged him to renounce his new faith, until his heart was nigh to breaking. It was the story of Perpetua and her father over again. "My boy, my own dear boy! What have I done to you that you should leave me? I gave you birth and reared you. I still care for you, denying you nothing, lavishing all I can upon you. Is this the return you make to your mother? How hard-hearted you have grown! Is this the requital of my love? Can you not at least remain a Brāhman till the breath leaves this poor body of mine? Stay, do stay, my boy, till the torch is set to my funeral pyre!"

He would indeed have stayed at home most gladly if she and the others would permit him to remain as a Christian. But the implied condition in all her appeals was that he should renounce Jesus Christ. In how poignant a fashion does the issue present itself to these men and women who have to choose between caste and Christ. If they choose caste, they stifle conscience and live self-condemned. If they choose Christ, caste rules force them to leave home. Often the appeal is made to would-be converts from Hinduism not to accept

baptism till they have performed a son's part in lighting the funeral torch for their parents. One has seen many a modern counterpart to the story in the Gospel: "And He said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But He said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God." Stern words these, but spoken by the Lover of men's souls.

Subrahmanyam's sister now added her earnest pleadings to those of their mother, and there raged in his heart a tense struggle between the claims of Christ and of home. On the one hand he felt the drawing power of Him who said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," and on the other hand he was drawn by the love of mother, sister, and home. In this stern ordeal, between the two appeals, he lifted up his eyes and his heart to God in prayer. The Vision came back fresh to his mind, and the call "Follow me" rang in his ears. At length, turning to his mother, he said: "My mother, Jesus loves me and gave Himself for me on the Cross. Your love, though unspeakably precious to me, can have only the second place in my heart." These words cut her to the quick. Taking hold of his chin and embracing him she said with a cry: "My son, a stranger to our country and a person unknown has been given first place in your heart, and not

CHAPTER VI

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

THE next few months were by no means free from difficulty for the new convert. His kind friend, Mr. Whitamore, was about to return to England, and therefore was most anxious to get him well placed before he left. Unexpected difficulties occurred. True, an opportunity offered of getting him trained for Christian work in connection with another Missionary Society, but he preferred to remain with those through whom he had found the light.

Before adequate arrangements for his future employment could be completed, Subrahmanyam contracted enteric fever and was taken to the Madras General Hospital, and there Mr. Whitamore had to leave him, commending him to the care of the Rev. W. B. Simpson, who was then stationed at Ikkādu, about thirty miles from Madras. The latter called at the hospital and enquired, but was misinformed by an attendant, perhaps deliberately, and failed to discover him amongst

I, your mother!" Then she flung herself upon the ground and never rose again. Her heart was broken.

The end was mercifully hidden from him at the time. He thought she had swooned with grief. But years after he learned from his sister that she never awakened from that swoon. The sword had pierced through her soul. Her son's faith cost his mother her life. Even now the memory of that scene fills him with anguish. To think that he should have been the occasion of his mother's death! Yet he knows that his Master never makes a mistake, as his mother, too, will realize when reunited in the perfect life and love of their Saviour they both confess: "He hath done all things well!"

Little thinking that their mother was dead, his sister came to him and said: "To-night they will kill you, if you do not yield. I heard them say so as they went away. Uncle will throw you into the well. If you are not going to recant, I had better release you. Run for your life, and I may see you again: if they drop you into the well, I shall never see you more." And with that she cut his bonds and set him free. For this act of sisterly kindness she was excommunicated for five years by her family.

Subrahmanyam, unexpectedly freed, ran for the nearest railway station, nine miles away,

avoiding the open road as much as possible and taking all the cover he could find. When he reached the station platform, he found that the night train had just steamed out of the station, and there was not another for many hours. In desperation he ran along the line after the train, crossing a bridge by the steel girders where there was no other footway. After going some distance he saw a red light in front of him, and when he reached it found that it was the train, providentially derailed. He ran for the guard's van, only to make another providential discovery. The guard was an Indian Christian belonging to Negapatam. He had been guard of the train by which Subrahmanyam had been brought home on the morning of the previous day, and knew the whole story. Recognizing him at once he said: "Get in here, and say nothing," and he pointed to the van, in the darkest corner of which Subrahmanyam hid himself. The kindly guard next brought him some bread and coffee, saying: "Eat and drink. Then lie down and sleep, and all will be well."

While he refreshed himself with the bread and coffee, the guard went to the engine and returned with two handfuls of coal dust, which he rubbed all over Subrahmanyam's face and hands. He then rigged him up in an old suit of European clothes belonging to the driver, and the fugitive was fairly well disguised. Then, worn out with the fatigues and sufferings

of the past two days, he fell into a sound sleep. After some delay the wheels were set on the rails again and in the early morning the train started.

It was an adventurous journey. So far he had travelled only on a branch line, and in due course the junction with the main line at Tanjore was reached. Here the guard kept him concealed until the main line train was on the point of starting, when he hurried him across the platform and into the train bound for Madras. In the ordinary way he would have had to leave him here, but this Christian man had the spirit of the good Samaritan, and was so much concerned about his charge that he had in the meantime succeeded in obtaining special leave of absence from duty and permission to travel up to Madras. He did not leave Subrahmanyam until he had handed him over in safety to Mr. Whitamore. At every important station *en route* there were people searching for him. At one place relatives who knew him well examined the train but failed to discover him. At Kumbakonam, his cousin, the police inspector of the town, was waiting with a number of constables to search the train for him. Seeing him lying down, his cousin looked into his face and said, "Hallo! assistant driver, have you seen anything of a runaway Brāhman? Did he board the train last night at Nidamangalam?" Subrahmanyam was afraid to utter a word, and the police officer

turned away from him muttering that he must be some "great gun" and too proud to speak. It was a very narrow escape.

They reached Madras on Sunday evening, a week after the baptism. As soon as the coast was moderately clear, the guard, Wesley Samuel, took him to Mr. Whitamore's bungalow. They mounted the steps of the verandah just as Mr. and Mrs. Whitamore, Mr. Greenfield, and two other friends were lifting up their hearts to God in prayer for his protection and deliverance. Their prayers were turned into joyful thanksgiving when, as they rose from their knees, they saw before them the one for whom they had been interceding.

There was then a period of peace. Subrahmanyam's people waited for six months to see if he would return. Then they made up their minds to accept the inevitable and to regard him as dead to them. They made a "corpse" of reeds to represent him, and for ten days observed all the rites for the dead. Thus they banished him from their life and troubled him no more. He lost his share of the family property, and has never to this day been allowed to enter his old home.

the many hundreds of patients in that great institution. Indeed, Subrahmanyam had the mortification of seeing Mr. Simpson pass through his ward in search of him, and yet he was too weak to attract his attention. Distant relatives from Mylapore called and tried to win him back to the Hindu fold. By this train of circumstances it came about that, when Subrahmanyam was discharged from the hospital, after two months, he had nowhere to go. Not far from the hospital is the People's Park. He went in there and lay down to rest under a banyan-tree, feeling not a little dispirited.

During that morning two things happened which showed that God was near, keeping watch over His own. First, a postman, named Varathan, who had known him as a student, came up and looked at him as he lay, and recognized him. "Where have you been, you dirty Christian?" he said. "I have been searching for you ever so long. So you have fallen into the religion and have gone to the bad! Whatever is the sense of your being in this plight? A registered letter has come for you. Here, take it." And he used a word and gesture both signifying his contempt. The letter was from Mr. James Mercer, of Lurgan, Ireland, who had met Mr. Whitamore very soon after his arrival in England and had heard from him Subrahmanyam's story. He was much moved by it and, wishing to

help him, wrote him a kind letter, enclosing a postal order for one pound, which fetched fifteen rupees. Those fifteen rupees seemed to the dispirited youth like fifteen lakhs, so great was his joy at this proof of Christian friendship.

This encouragement was speedily followed by another and greater one. Through the park came a busy country missionary, who was hurrying towards the Central Station to catch his train home, after preaching in Madras. But for all his haste he had time to offer a leaflet to the young Indian whom he noticed under the banyan-tree. The missionary thus providentially sent to his help was no other than Mr. Simpson. The delight of both was unbounded when they discovered one another's identity. Mr. Simpson now took him to the home of Mrs. Cotelingam, a very saintly woman, with whom he remained a fortnight. When he was able to travel he went to Ikkādu, where Simpson was stationed. The latter became his most intimate friend and wise instructor in the Christian life, and so continued as long as he lived.

Earlier in the morning, when he felt the isolation of his position, Subrahmanyam had seriously entertained the idea of going back to the cave in the Vindhya as a Christian sannyāsi. But in Simpson's genial companionship he found healthier occupation for mind and body.

Like John Wesley, Subrahmanyam had the

sense of a divine vocation before he found peace with God himself. Wesley was an evangelist long before he felt his heart "strangely warmed" at Aldersgate Street, and Subrahmanyam had the vision of service amongst the outcastes even before his conversion and baptism. Now, therefore, his course was clear. He must be trained for Christian service, especially amongst the outcastes. This he received whilst with Simpson, both as to theory and practice. In 1893, when I first visited Ikkādu, I met him there, and learned how Simpson was guiding his studies in the odd moments he could spare in a very strenuous life. I also learned how the young convert was humbling himself to visit the homes of the untouchables in Pinnabakkam, and how the once haughty Brāhman was sometimes treated with scant courtesy by the ignorant Pariahs, especially the women, who feared the presence of the "Twice-born" in their hamlet would bring a curse upon them.

When Simpson moved to Madurantakam, in 1894, he took Subrahmanyam with him, and placed him under the immediate care of the Rev. R. T. Sundaravelu, himself a convert from caste Hinduism. It was part of Subrahmanyam's duty to sit among Pariah boys and teach them their letters. He found it a great trial to the flesh to eat and sleep in a Pariah hamlet, but he doggedly disciplined himself into doing it. To the wisdom and firmness

of Mr. Sundaravelu at this time he owes a debt of gratitude. Years later it was his good fortune to marry Mr. Sundaravelu's only daughter, whose faith and courage have made her an ideal helpmeet to him.

In the early years of his Christian life, next to Simpson, William Goudie was the man from whom Subrahmanyam got most help and inspiration. In him he saw a quenchless thirst for souls, and prodigal expenditure of life in self-forgetting service. From him, too, he learnt unforgettable lessons in faith, patience, and humility. How much higher and more unselfish was William Goudie's passion for the redemption of the Pariah than the self-inflicted penance of the ascetic, sitting between his five fires on the Himālayas! He was father and mother to the untouchables. He would tramp miles in the broiling sun to cheer and help them, would share, when invited, a peasant's humble meal, would carry a Pariah child on his shoulders to the Orphanage, would watch by the bedside of the cholera-stricken folk, would lift the highly infectious corpse and commit it to a grave dug by his own hands, work in which Subrahmanyam on occasion assisted him. Long before even the sites for hospital and church at Ikkādu were secured, Goudie knelt down with his young companion and claimed in faith both land and buildings. "Subram, the Lord is going to build a house of healing here," he would say. And again:

“The Lord will build His sanctuary here.” And so it came to pass after years of patient toil. What a lesson in faith and prayer for the young disciple! And then his humility—how brotherly and self-forgetting his spirit! One little incident made an indelible impression on Subrahmanyam’s mind. One day, as they toured in the Nagari circuit, they had to cross a broad, dry river-bed in the hottest time of the year and of the day. The sand was so scorchingly hot that Subrahmanyam could not walk across it without blistering his bare feet. Goudie, hard campaigner that he was, cheerfully carried him over on his back. It meant nothing to him. To his young friend it seemed an unforgettable act of Christlike humility. In such inspiring companionship, Subrahmanyam spent one month each year from 1894 to 1896 on tour in the Tiruvallur circuit.

In 1897 Subrahmanyam entered the ministry. The vote in the Synod was divided, some of his Indian brethren voting against him. This greatly depressed him, for he had the idea that a divine call would inevitably be endorsed by a unanimous vote in the Synod. He wondered whether he ought not to withdraw his candidature at once. But as they walked up and down in front of the Mission House at Royapettah, Goudie laid his hand affectionately on his shoulder and said: “Subrahmanyam, often men do not choose whom God has chosen, and God does not choose whom men have chosen.

I know you are chosen of God. If a man is not called of God no man can make him a true minister. If God has called a man no adverse vote of men can take from his call." Thus encouraged, he held on his course and so began a ministry that has been used by God for the conversion of many. After a probation successfully completed he was ordained at Secunderabad in 1902. It goes without saying that he holds Mr. Goudie in the most reverent and affectionate remembrance. To one who interviewed him after Mr. Goudie's death he said: "Do you wonder at me if I say in this hour of bereavement that if I had not become a Christian and were only a Hindu, I should worship him?"

As this is not a biography, which cannot be adequately written while the subject of it still lives, I make no attempt at an analysis of Subrahmanyam's character, nor is it necessary to give a detailed record of events in his career as a minister. The whole aim of this record is to show how the guiding hand of God has shaped his career. Of God's providential care there has been abundant proof all these years.

In 1903 Subrahmanyam went back to Mannargudi for the first time after his conversion. All these years he had yearned for reconciliation with his own people, but he knew it was useless to force himself upon

them. Now, however, he hoped that time might have assuaged the bitterness of their feeling against him. He stayed in the town with a Hindu doctor friend, who tried hard to pave the way for a reconciliation, but in vain. One day Subrahmanyam went to the verandah of an aunt's house, who received him very kindly, but an attack was made on her by infuriated neighbours, and she had to retire indoors while a kindly-disposed man conducted him to a place of safety. He went to see another and older aunt, who was blind. As soon as she heard his name, she banged the door in his face and went away cursing him. Then she sprinkled the verandah with the usual liquid used to remove defilement. The same day he visited another relative. This gentleman had a sympathetic nature, but could not openly welcome him. In private he assured Subrahmanyam, with tears, that the severance between them grieved him to the heart.

One day Subrahmanyam borrowed a bicycle and went to Lakshmgudi. He found his native village as pretty as ever. The two fine arasa-trees near the agrahāram (Brāhman quarter) and the river had all their old charm for him. He arrived in the heat of the day, and was resting on the verandah of a chattram, when an uncle, thinking him a Government officer, politely enquired about his health and his work, and then suggested that he should

accept hospitality at his house. But when our friend addressed him as "Uncle" in the old familiar tone, he realized his mistake, and with an expression of disdain walked off in high dudgeon. The word was passed round: "That scapegrace has come; don't let him into the street." One of the women, moved partly by pity and partly perhaps by fear lest his spirit might afterwards torment them, brought him a ball of rice, similar in shape to, but larger than, the rice balls offered to the dead, which are called *pindam*. Placing it on the ground at a distance from him she said: "O what a miserable shame that this should be your fate! Here, eat this *pindam*." Thus, even while doing him a kindness, she reminded him that he was dead to her. She then went to the *agraharam* and said: "There! I have given *pindam* to that scapegrace. Don't call him into the street." Two young men of the family, however, insisted on bringing him to the outer verandah of the old home, and in spite of the curses of the older people, gave him food there. In all this we see family affection and innate politeness struggling against the venom of outraged caste feeling. It ought also to be said that one of his brothers sent him Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 each year until his death. This was a welcome addition to Subrahmanyam's slender ministerial stipend.

From 1905 to 1907 Subrahmanyam was set apart by the South India Provincial Synod as

a special missionary. Two of these years he worked along with the Rev. W. B. Simpson, who, having returned to England some years before on account of the ill-health of his wife, now came back to India alone for this special mission. They visited many stations in South India, and the work was so successful that after Simpson's final return to England, Subrahmanyam was asked to continue it for another year.

Amongst other places they visited the famous Hindu shrine at Srīrangam, which Subrahmanyam had visited as a worshipper more than once in his boyhood. The temple, with its seven courts one inside the other, is so large that it practically encloses the town. Into the outer courts people of all races and religions are freely admitted. But near the entrance to the inner courts there is an inscription forbidding Pariahs, Muhammadans, and Christians to proceed any farther. It reminds one of the inscription in the temple at Jerusalem, which warned all Gentiles not to enter the inner courts on pain of death. But just as in Jerusalem this rigidity of caste sentiment consisted with a godless temper that turned the house of God into a den of thieves, so in Srīrangam gross impurities are exhibited in the name of religion. All the more significant, therefore was a discovery Simpson and Subrahmanyam made there. They found an inscription in Sanskrit and English cut into the stone of one of the towers. It read as follows :—

“ I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight ; that Thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest. Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

The Sanskrit was not defaced, for it was unintelligible to all but a few pundits. But the English words had been filled in, and the nāmam, or Vaishnavite caste mark, had been plastered over them. Some wandering sannyāsi, who had an acquaintance with the Bible, must have stealthily engraved those words on the temple wall under cover of darkness.

Soon after this special mission was concluded, Subrahmanyam was sent to Natal as superintendent of the Indian Mission there. This position he held for three years, from July 1908, to July, 1911. On the voyage from India to Natal he met a European doctor who was leading a careless and ungodly life. He spoke to him about God and his soul, but the doctor treated the whole matter with levity. When they landed, their ways parted, and for a long time they saw nothing of one another, till one day, as our friend was walking along the beach, he saw what appeared to be the lifeless body of a man cast up on the shore. He went to him and recognized the doctor whom he had met on shipboard. He used artificial respiration and with the help of friends had him carried to his own home, where he and his wife nursed their patient back to life.

When he recovered consciousness he was unable to account for his accident. The last he remembered was that he had been walking on the pier. However the incident occurred, it was the means of his conversion from a godless life to one of sincere faith in Christ and devotion to His cause. Although some were at first suspicious of him, in view of his previous record, he soon convinced them of his sincerity, and was the means of the conversion of not a few. His previous recklessness had undermined his health, but the years of life that remained to him were beautifully spent to the glory of God. He followed the Subrahmanyams back to India and spent the last months of his life in their home, lovingly cared for by them and their children, with whom he was a prime favourite. He died in their home in the full faith of a Christian, while Subrahmanyam was on active service with the troops in Mesopotamia. I mention this incident to show that it was not merely Indians who were helped by his ministry. He had the joy of bringing into Christian service two young men, Reuben and Arthur Choonoo, both of whom are now in the ministry in South Africa. Arthur married his only daughter a few years ago, and had one happy year of married life with her, till her untimely death plunged him and her family into deep sorrow.

It was during his residence in Natal that Subrahmanyam made the acquaintance of that

remarkable man, Mr. M. K. Gāndhi, for whose character he has a sincere admiration. It would be idle to deny that so sensitive a man as Subrahmanyam felt very keenly the attitude of the ordinary Boer and Colonial towards the Indian community of which he was a member. He was classed with the coolies, who were looked upon as a necessary evil in the colony. One day a white man very grossly insulted Gāndhi and himself when they were travelling on the railway. He will never forget how, on that occasion, Gāndhi showed a spirit of forbearance under provocation worthy of a true Christian. In shining contrast to such ill-mannered treatment was the unfailing kindness shown by the Indian Mission Committee, and especially by such men as Mr. Harold Payne and Mr. Polkinhorne, the Protector of Indian immigrants. One day, when Subrahmanyam was tripped up on the pavement by a rude colonial, Mr. A. Smith, a leading layman of the Wesleyan Church and a member of the Indian Mission Committee, arrested the offender and handed him over to a policeman, who released him at Subrahmanyam's request, not, however, before he had suitably apologized. In his efforts to reach the coolies on the farms and plantations, Subrahmanyam was often hindered by the undisguised hostility of the farmers. At this time Gāndhi's example of patience and courage was a real inspiration to him. When Gāndhi returned to India,

Subrahmanyam, then superintendent of the Royapettah circuit in Madras, organized a meeting of welcome for him which was largely attended by Indian Christians and missionaries. In this meeting Gāndhi made ample acknowledgment of his debt to Christian missionaries and the Bible. Since then Gāndhi's religious and political development has followed lines widely different from those that Subrahmanyam believes either right or prudent. But whilst deploring the misguided and perilous activities of Gāndhi's later years, he still retains his love for that extraordinary man, who was the last person he visited before sailing for England in 1921, and who received him with his old wealth of affection.

When Subrahmanyam returned from South Africa in 1911, Mr. Polak wished him to devote his time to political propaganda to further the interests of the Indians in Natal. But whilst sympathizing with their legitimate political aspirations, he felt that his call was to a higher service in preaching the Gospel. While in Natal, another offer had been made to him which carried with it a very handsome financial inducement. Certain Hindus settled in South Africa, who had acquired wealth and wished to enhance their prestige by having a Brāhman as their priest, offered him thousands of pounds if he would become their purohit (priest) and teach them the Gāyatri and other sacred texts. The money would have been welcome

enough, but the condition was an impossible one for him who had obeyed the voice and the Vision.

In 1912 Subrahmanyam became superintendent of the leading Tamil Church in the Madras District. During his ministry of more than five years at Roypettah, apart from his own circuit duties, he was in great request for special evangelistic work in many parts of South India.

In 1918 the Government of India appealed to our senior chaplain to recommend an Indian minister for service with the troops in Mesopotamia as the first Indian chaplain of the Free Churches. It fell to my lot to call for volunteers. Subrahmanyam offered to go for a year. It was an arduous but interesting experience for him. The principal chaplain reported to me that he had displayed tact, energy, and discretion in this service and in the pioneer work of introducing Indian chaplains into the Army. He (Mr. Jarvis) had valued his help, guidance, and sound judgment. It was a very good year's work.

General Maude appreciated the work of the Indian chaplains and appointed a day on which they were to have an interview with him. But, alas ! on that day he died of cholera.

On Subrahmanyam's return from Mesopotamia to India his brethren in the ministry conferred on him the highest honour in their gift by electing him Chairman of the South

India Provincial Synod, a position he filled with dignity. This was in 1919. In 1920, also, he acted as Chairman for several months during the absence from India of his successor.

Meanwhile, the sister who had cut his bonds and set him free twenty-eight years before, saw the news of his return from Mesopotamia in a daily paper, and came to Madras to see him. She had a strangely interesting story to tell. Her only son fell ill. She sought the doctors' help, but, in spite of all they could do, he got worse and worse from day to day, till all hope of his recovery was abandoned. The thought of being left as a childless widow almost unhinged her mind, and she rushed from the dying boy's side to fling herself into the well and end her sorrow. For her to survive him was intolerable. As she neared the well she heard a voice saying: "Stop." She turned round to face the speaker, but there was no one to be seen. She went on. Again the voice said: "Stop." "Who are you?" she answered. "Are you one of the gods of this place?" and she named them one by one. But the voice only said: "It is *I* who am speaking." "But who is *I*?" "He whom you released will tell you. Go and ask him." She did not in the least think of Subrahmanyam. Her mind was too obsessed with grief about her son. Then again the voice said: "Go back home and I will restore your son." She went back, and the boy recovered. During the next

six months she was much exercised in mind about this occurrence. Who was the "I" who had spoken to her? And whom had she released? She had long ago ceased to think of Subrahmanyam. But when she learnt the news of his return from Mesopotamia, it all came back to her—his obstinate endurance of persecution, his release, and her excommunication.

So it was her own brother whom the voice bade her consult! She lost no time in going to Madras and seeking him out. After she had told her story he read to her the 3rd chapter of Exodus, with the story of the burning bush, where the great I AM revealed Himself to Moses. She drank in every word, convinced that the same I AM had spoken to her. At length she exclaimed: "The knowledge of I AM is worth all your sufferings and sorrows." He got her a Sanskrit New Testament, with the Psalms, which her son reads to her. She has given up idolatry and worships only I AM, but has not received baptism. The persistence of the old caste feeling came out in the beginning of their interview. When he was told that a Brahman widow stood outside his house, desiring to see him, he hurried out and rushed to embrace her. But she drew back, saying: "Don't touch me. You have ceased to be a brother to me. Still, I thought I should like to see you." Even when led by a divine call to seek his help, she could not forget the

gulf caste had made between herself and the brother who had been baptized.

When it was decided that an Indian minister should visit England in 1921 to represent India at the Methodist Ecumenical Conference, the choice fell on Theophilus Subrahmanyam, and very worthily he fulfilled the trust committed to him. His messages to the people of Great Britain and Ireland were so charged with spiritual power and awakened such missionary interest that the Missionary Committee gladly arranged for his visit to be prolonged for some twelve months. His testimony to the grace of God in his own life and to the triumphs of the Gospel in his native land proved a great inspiration to thousands, not a few of whom, as they heard his story, grew ashamed of their own comfortable and easy-going conceptions of Christian discipleship, and resolved to follow Christ with firmer footsteps and more fervent zeal. At the same time, the gracious hospitality and affection which were freely showered on him during this visit by the friends of Missions, were to him a clear fulfilment of the Lord's promise : "There is no man that hath left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this time and in the world to come eternal life. "