

CHRISTIAN POETS AND TAMIL CULTURE



BY

T. DAYANANDAN FRANCIS

A GOLDEN JUBILEE PUBLICATION
The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for
Advanced Study in Philosophy
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS



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GENERAL EDITOR !
Dr V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

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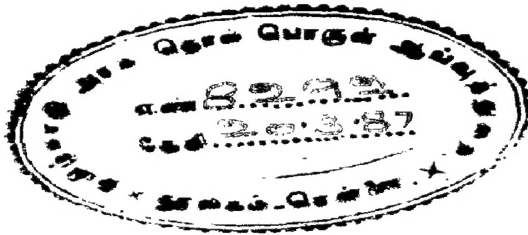
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FOREWORD

The Department of Philosophy was started in the University of Madras in September 1927. In August 1964 it was raised to the status of a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy by the University Grants Commission. From 1976 it has come to be known as the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy.

Since its inception in 1927, this Department has kept in view two major objectives: (1) the study of Indian systems of thought and (2) the study of other systems of thought. Last year the Department arranged for a course of special lectures in furtherance of these objectives.

It was very kind of Dr Samuel Amirtham, Principal, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai to suggest the name of Dr Dayanandan Francis for a course of lectures on Christianity and Tamil Culture. Dr Dayanandan Francis is a Professor on the staff of the Theological Seminary. Besides his specialisation in Theology, Dr Dayanandan Francis is also a fine scholar in Tamil. The Institute is thankful to him, not only for delivering the lectures but also for giving us a gist of these lectures in English for the benefit of those who do not know Tamil. The Institute has great pleasure in publishing these lectures in its Golden Jubilee Series. The present volume gives the gist of the lectures delivered originally in Tamil.

The Institute wishes to thank the Government of Tamil Nadu, Dr Malcolm S. Adiseshiah, the Vice-Chancellor, and the other authorities of the University of Madras for the financial aid given for these publications. The Institute is appreciative of the interest evinced by the University Grants Commission in upgrading the parent Department into a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, financing it for ten years and for its subsequent and sustained interest in the progress of the Institute.

The Institute is grateful to Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri for laying the foundations of the Department on sound lines and to Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, former Director of the Institute for building the Department over a period of three and a half decades by his devoted services.

The General Editor wishes to thank his colleague Mr P. Balasubramanian for seeing these lectures through the Press and the Rathnam Press, for the prompt and neat execution of the work.

Madras }
March, 20, 1978 }

V. A. DEVASENAPATHI

P R E F A C E

I am deeply grateful to Dr V. A. Devasenapathi, Director, the Dr S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras for giving me the opportunity of delivering three lectures on 'The Impact of Tamil Culture on Christian Poets, Vedanayaga Sasthriyar and Krishna Pillai.' In the following pages I have tried to show how the Tamil Literary traditions and the religious conventions have influenced these two poets who have made their own contributions towards indigenisation and inter-religious understanding and fellowship.

I am thankful to Prof. P. Jotimuthu who helped me with the translation of the Tamil Text. My thanks are also due to Dr R. Balasubramanian, Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras who with Dr Devasenapathi has edited the text of my lectures and to Mr P. Balasubramanian who saw the matter through the Press. I am grateful to Dr Samuel Amirtham, Principal, Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai for the constant encouragement given to me in my undertakings.

I am fully aware of the limitations of this small book and I alone am responsible for the shortcomings.

T. DAYANANDAN FRANCIS

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TANJAI VEDANAYAGAM SASTRIYAR IN TAMIL LITERARY TRADITIONS

There are many religious works in the rich and prolific Tamil Literature. The compositions of some Christian poets are among them. *Tembāvāṇi* composed by Vīramāmunivar (Beschi) of the 18th century is regarded as fine epic poem. Of the poets who succeeded him in the last century Vedanayagam Sastriyar, H. A. Krishna Pillai and Mayuram Vedanayagam are outstanding. They are popular among the Tamils. There are many others who are well-known among the Tamil Christians. The following deserve mention :

Kanagasabai, author of '*Tiruvākuppurāṇam*', Suhathiyar (Scott) author of '*Suvisēdapurāṇam*', John Palmar, author of '*Kristāyaṇam*', Vedamanikkam, author of '*Vēdapporuḷ Ammānai*', Peter Adolphus, author of '*Tiruvavatāra Mālai*', Pastor Winfred, author of '*Tāvitharasan Ammānai*', Saminatha Pillai, author of '*Nasaraikalambagam*', Anthonikkutti Annariyar, author of '*Pachāthāpam*' and many other minor works. The Rev. G. S. Vedanayagam author of '*Ammalaguru Sadagam*', D. A. Gnanabaranam, author of '*Esunāthar*' S. Arokiasamy, author of '*Sudaramaṇi*', V. P. K. Sundaram, author of '*Arutkuraḷ and Arutpugazh*.' The last four belong to this century.

Many of these poets are converts to Christianity. Their love and devotion to the new found faith is discernible in their writings. Some of them have gone to the extent of ridiculing other religions. Nevertheless, even they did not try to abandon anywhere the literary merits, theological ideas, phrases, thought forms and usages found in Hinduism which they had embraced before. On the other hand, they had endeavoured to make use of them to adorn their works. We can boldly assert that these poets would not have embraced Christianity if there had been a rule that one could become a Christian only if one gave up Tamil, Tamil literary conventions and the trends of religious

literature. These poets had a great desire to produce works equal to the Hindu religious literature and to adore Christ with the garlands of words and ideas found therein. One is able to find this in many of their poems. Here are a few examples:

G. S. Vedanayagam reveals often in his work *Amalaguru Sadagam* his yearning to get united with Jesus. In one stanza he gives expression to the idea that his head should rest at the feet of Jesus and that he should vanish. Desiring to carry into Christianity, the reputed Śaivite idea of feet-head relation (தாள்-தலை) he sings as follows:

‘In order that this wicked one might vanish in Thy image like a piece of iron burnt in fire, and that I settle under Thy feet upon the cross so that the nail on Thy feet might pierce through my head.

கனல்முண்ட இரும்புபோல் உன்சாய விலங்கவிக்
கசடன் காணு தொழியவும்
காலாணி யென்சிரசி லூடுருவிக் குருசிலுன்
காலடியில் நான் பதியவும்...¹

The poet visualizes his Immaculate teacher nailed to the cross. He wishes that his head should settle under His feet. His longing is that this settlement should be very firm and enlivening. So he beseeches that the nails piercing through the feet of Jesus should pierce through his head. He believes that when this kind of oneness is attained his image will vanish like the iron in the furnace and the image of God will enshrine it.

This poet offers to the Christian literature of the entire world through the devotion of the Tamil country the idea of the head of the devotee settling under the feet of God. At the same time he makes it clear to the Tamils, including the Christians, the fact that the devotion of Tamil Christians is not an import from the West but belongs to the Tamil soil.

Here is another poem. This is found in ‘*Tiruvaruḷ Mālai*’ of Māyurām Vedanayagam. He visualizes the scene of the Jewish soliders scourging Jesus and disfiguring him. Even the fact that

Jesus kept quiet in the midst of such cruelty done to him did not seem a wonder to him. Instead something else astonished him. He relates it as follows :

“O King of celestials, it is a wonder that when the Jews beat You and disfigured You the blows did not fall on the worlds under Your feet”.

விண்தங்கும் அமரரசே நரகுழாய் மேதினியில்
பண்டங்கமாய் வந்தபோதுனை யூதர்கள் பற்றித்தசை
கண்டங்களாய் அவிழத் தாக்கிய போதுன் கழலிலொட்டும்
அண்டங்களில் அடி வீழா திருந்த ததிசயமே²

The scene of the story of the Lord Śiva carrying earth for broken pieces of cake as His hire presents itself to the vision of the poet. The picture of ‘*Tiruvīḷaiyādal Purāṇam*’ which depicts the blows on Lord Śiva falling also on the king and his subjects forms the background for the poet. So he wonders that what ought to happen did not happen.

Here is yet another poem V. P. K. Sundaram pictures as follows the beautiful form of the shepherd in rhythmic poetry bringing out the theme of the 23rd Psalm.

“The Divine Shepherd wears grace as his garment,
Plays on the flute and creates beauty ;
He enfolds us like mother, offers himself,
Stills our thoughts and tends us.”

அருளே உடுக்கும் குழலே இசைக்கும்
அழகே படைக்கும்—இறை மேய்ப்பன்
அனைபால் அனைத்துத் தனையே கொடுத்து
நினைவே நிறுத்தி—எமை மேய்ப்பன் !²

This poet while picturing God as a shepherd, did not fail to visualize him playing on the flute. David, the author of the 23rd Psalm, was a shepherd in his youth. He was well-versed in playing on a lute—a stringed instrument. There is no mention of his playing on the flute in the Bible. But this poet visualizes his shepherd in the form of the cowherds of our land, especially hat of Krishna.

Some of these poets have endeavoured to introduce to Christianity not only words, phrases and ideas but religious conventions of Tamil Culture particularly in the mode of worship. The following is the composition of poet Satyanathan which the Tamil Christians use very much in their worship in the Church.

“I, your slave stand before your presence ;
With lifted hands on my head I pray to you
You are loving as a mother and so
Do not be angry with me, your servant”.

சன்னிதி முன் தொண்டன் நின்றே—என்றும்
தாயான கருணை உனக்கு உண்டென்றே
சென்னி மேல் கரம் கூப்பி நின்றே—உன்னை
சேவிக்கும் எளிதையனைக் கோபிக்காய் என்றே...

சரணம் நம்பினேன் ஏசுநாதா—இது

தருணம் தருணம் உந்தன் கருணைகூர் வேதா⁴

It is the wish of this poet that when devotees sing this song in the church, they should have both their hands lifted up over their head in worship-ful attitude. But Christians while worshipping in the church, sing this song sitting, holding the song book in their hands. Dr. Savarirayan Jesudasan emphasised that this song should be sung as a rule, standing and with hands over the head. He introduced this method at his Christukula Ashram.

Now we shall consider two of the Tamil Christian poets. These were men well-versed in Tamil culture. They have made their literary contributions along the religious conventions of the Tamils. We shall deal with the background of their lives, the literary excellence of their religious works, their religious ideas and their theological thinking based on Tamil culture.

Two Great Poets :

These two poets belong to the last century. One is Vedanayagam Sastriyar (1774–1864) and the other one is H. A. Krishna Pillai (1872–1900). They both belong to the Protestant church. Both of them were born in the district of Tirunelveli. Krishna Pillai was 37 years old when Sastriyar died. He might have heard about him

and read some of his works. But there is no evidence of their meeting each other.

Vedanayagam was born of Christian parents. When he was twelve years of age, the Rev. C. F. Schwartz (1726-1798) took him to Tanjavur with him and brought him as his own son. One day the boy Vedanayagam asked the clergyman Schwartz for some book to read. He gave him '*The Psalms of David*'—a collection of divine hymns of the Old Testament times. Vedanayagam read the book with great interest. His son N. Gnanadicka Sastriyar observes that his father became a divine poet since those poems appealed to him in his youth.⁶

One could see the stamp of the Psalms in the songs of Sastriyar. He was attracted by the poet David, the author of many of the songs in the book of Psalms. Vedanayagam mentions David's name in many of his songs. He addresses Jesus in his songs 'O Son of King David' and 'O Inspirer of King David'⁶ In one of his songs, he calls Jesus 'One whose words are true, King David of the Jewish race'.⁷

Vedanayagam had his theological studies from one Dr. John at Tarangampadi for two years from 1780. Since he studied in a Lutheran school one could see in his works many ideas of that denomination. The Fabricius translation of the Bible, which was in vogue at that time attracted him very much. (The first edition came out in 1717). The word *Theos* for God in original Greek New Testament was translated as '*Parāparan*' in the edition. Vedanayagam has made a profound use of this phrase. One of his songs begins with the line 'Has the earth become heaven? Has God *Parāparan* become man?'⁸

He has entitled one of his early works as '*Parāparan Mālai*'. He calls God as '*Parapara Vastu*'⁹ which is equivalent to '*Parāparam*' used by Tāyumānavar. When Vedanayagam was a school teacher for sometime, he should have studied Tamil grammar and literature and works on Tamil Prosody. It is apparent that he paid special attention to musical composition. From that time all his works became people's literary composition. He composed

works like *Jnānakkummi*, *Jnānattāeāṭṭu*, *Pralāba Oppāri*, and *Pērinbakhāḍal* (ஞானக் கும்மி, ஞானத் தாலாட்டு, பிரலாப ஒப்பாரி, பேரின்பக் காதல்) based on the popular works of that time. He composed them in such a way that any one could easily learn and sing them.

A few lines from *Jnānattāḷaṭṭu* serve as a good example :

“Sleep, O Son, who came to do away with the sinful deed, resulting from the forbidden fruit in the garden ”

காவில் விலகுங்
கனியி னாலே விளைந்த
பாவினை தீர்க்க வந்த
பாலகனே கண்வளராய்¹⁰

Where are the celestials? Where are the heavenly residents? Where are the ones who guard you? Are you an orphaned Son?”

வானவரெங்கே மோட்ச
வாசிகளெங்கே யுனைகொண்
டானவரெங்கே நீதான்
ஆருமிலாப் பாலகனே¹¹

“Were you so moved with love as to forsake all the riches of Paradise and come down as a beggar?”

பரதேசிலுள்ள பல
பாக்கியத்தை விட்டுப்
பரதேசிபோல் வரப்
பட்சமுமக் குண்டாச்சோ¹²

Similarly, the songs in *Parlaba Oppari* also appear in easy style :

“O, sinners, will not any of you come to see Him dead on the cross and hanging?”

“O, my dear and beloved Christians, won't you follow me, weeping and crying?”

சீவன் மடிந்து சிலுவையில் தொங்குறதைப்
பாவிகளா ரேனு முண்டோ பாக்கவர மாட்டீரோ ! ¹³
அன்பிற்குறிய அருமைக் கிறிஸ்தோரே
என்பிறகே கூடி இரங்கியழ மாட்டீரோ ! ¹⁴

The songs of the Siddhas also had attracted Vedanayagam. He has composed songs also along the lines of *Sivavākkīyar*, *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar* and others. In one of the songs he raises the question, "Is there any justice, or equity in the saying that there are four castes among men, while there is no caste or likeness among the tall trees, animals and birds?"

ஓங்கு விருட்சம் விலங்கு பறவைகள்
ஒருரு வோர்குலம் இல்லாத வாறுபோல்
நான்கு விதக்குலம் மாந்தர் குலமென்க
னாய் மிருக்குதோ? நேய மிருக்குதோ? 16

Here is a song modelled on *Pāmbāṭṭi Siddhar*.

"Dance, O snake, rise up and dance, O snake, Praise the Lord Christ, and dance O snake! Don't hide and run away, or deviate from the lasting, true and firm path. Stand erect and sing, O snake, Look at the beautiful feet of God and dance rejoicing. O, snake, dance 'the Almighty one, the Holy one, cast His glance and took compassion'".

ஆடுபாம்யே எழுந்தாடு பாம்பே—கிறிஸ்
தண்ணலைக் கொண்டாடிக் கொண்டாடு பாம்பே
ஒளிந்து ஒளிந்து மறைந்தோடாமல்—சத்திய
உண்மை உறுதிநெறி சாயர்மல்
தெளிந்து தெளிந்து நின்றாடு பாம்பே—பரன்
சீர்பாதங் கண்டு மகிழ்ந்தாடு பாம்பே¹⁶

The one work which made Vedanayagam very famous is his *Bethalēm Kuravanji*. He must have studied such 'Kuravanji' plays like *Tirukkutrāla Kuravanji* which was very much appreciated by the people at that time, *Sarabēndra Bhūpāla Kuravanji*, *Kumbēsa Kuravanji* and others. He must have seen these plays enacted as well. As a result of these, he composed *Bethalēm Kuravanji* in 1800.

He has introduced in his work the whole pattern of the *Kuravanji* drama and characterization of the personal. The processionist is Jesus. The one who falls in love with him is 'the Daughter of Zion' This phrase indicates the people of Israel in

the Bible. In Christian tradition it is used for the Christian church. The poet gives her the name of *Dēva Mōhini* or 'Lover of God'. His creation corresponding to '*Singi*' is faith. According to the definition of *Kuravanji* drama, she approaches the daughter of Zion with a basket and a wand in her hand and describes to her the beauty of the hills in the Bible and the fertility of the land of Canaan. She understands the feelings of the daughter of Zion and tells her the good news that she is going to be wedded to the Processionist.

The husband of Visvasa Singi is Jñāna Singan. He catches birds with net and noose with the help of '*noovan*'. The poet has made use of him metaphorically. He is pictured here as bringing the birds of men to Jesus.

Since Singi, who set out on divination did not return for a long time, Singan is very much distressed and laments, and even offers to reward those who would tell him of her whereabouts. At this juncture Singi returns home. While welcoming her he piles on her question after question to which she gives him pointed answers. He rejoices when he comes to know whom she had been to and what rewards she had come back with. The play ends with a benediction.

It is to be noted that Vedanayagam has composed his work largely modelled on the *Tirukutrālakkuravanji* of Tirikūdarāsappak kavirayar. He has mentioned in the Introduction that he composed it with a view to propogate it in the district of Tirunelveli where the *Kuravanji* of the Kavirayar was frequently enacted. Further, he presented his *Kuravanji* in places like Tanjavur and Madras where he did evangelistic preaching with his group of singers. Not only the form of *Kutrālakkuravanji* but also its musical melody, phrases of the chorus, arrangement of words, and forms of thought have been used by Vedanayagam suitably to Christianity. I would like to give here, only a few of those instances. While Vasanthavalli was after Kutrālanāthar with whom she fell in love, even the moon light burns her. She blames the moon. Here is a line from her song :

“Is it not by your mockery, O bright moon, that you waned like a snake?”

ஆகடியஞ் செய்தல்லவோ வெண்ணிலாவே—நீதான்
ஆட்கடியன் போற்குறைந்தாய் வெண்ணிலாவே...¹⁷

Vedanayagam makes his Deva Mohini sing in the same pattern:

“Because of your haughtiness,
Bright moon, you waned and got diminished”

சிந்தை கருவங் கொண்டதால் வெண்ணிலாவே—நீ
தேய்ந்து குறைந்து போனாய் வெண்ணிலாவே¹⁸

When one goes through these lines, it seems that Sastiriyar accepts the *purāṇic* version of the cause for the waning of the moon. But in a subsequent section the poet makes it clear that since she has fallen in love with Christ, the New Adam of the new age, she ridicules the old age and all that goes with it and the sinful nature of the Old Adam:

“Did you not get very haughty, O old Adam?
Hence you lost your greatness and got your fall!”

மெத்தக் கருவங் கொண்டா யல்லவோ பழையாதாமே—உனின்
மேன்மை யழிந்து விழுந்தனையே பழையாதாமே¹⁹

Kutrālakuravanji while announcing the coming of Singi, describes beautifully her ornamentation.

“With a scented *tilaham*, on her bow-like forehead, having adorned her scented hair with *kadamba* flowers, and painted her piercing eyes, with a wand in hand and carrying a basket, comes the lovely woman”

சிலைநுதலிற் கத்தூரித் திலகமிட்டு
நறுங்குழலிற் செச்சை சூடிக்
கொலைமதர்க்கண் மையெழுதி மாத்திரைக் கோல்
வாங்கி மணிக் கூடை தாங்கி...வஞ்சியப
ரஞ்சி கொஞ்சி வருகின்றாளே²⁰

Modelled on this, Sastriyar gives the following description of the *Bethalēm Kuravanji*.

“Putting on the dress of righteousness, wearing the garland of prayer and scripture, the spiritual ornaments and worshipping the Ancient and Holy one with true wisdom”

நீதியினுடைய தணிந்து, ஞானபரண
வேதசெய் மாலைபுனைந்து, மெய்ஞ்ஞானமுடன்
ஆதியம லனைப்பணிந்து...²¹

Kutrālakkuravanji refers to resident *Siddhas* and sages while describing the richness of her mountains. *Bethalēm Kuravanji* also speaks of *Siddhas* residing in her mountains.

“The mountaineers cast their glance and call the celestials; the *Siddhas* traversing through space pay visits and bestow supernatural powers”.

கானவர்கள் விழிஎறிந்து வானவரை அழைப்பார்
கமனசித்தர் வந்துவந்து காயசித்தி விளைப்பார்²²

Bethalēm Singi describes as follows:

“The celestials come together and sing praises, all the mighty *Siddhas* do great penance”.

வானவர்கள் கூடிவந்து தோத்திரங்கள் படிப்பார்
வண்மையுள்ள சித்தரெல்லாம் அருந்தவங்கள் பிடிப்பார்²³

Tirikūdarasappar describes beautifully the feelings and doubts in the mind of *Singan* who pines for his *Singi*. *Vedanayagam* follows him and tries to portray the conflict in the mind of *Singan* with Christian background.

Kutrāla Singan laments as follows:

“Has she followed those who drink all the arrack in the bottle and the toddy in the pot”

குத்தியி லரக்குங் கள்ளும் குடுவையில் தென்னங்களும்
அத்தனையும் குடித்துப்போட் டார்பிறகே தொடர்ந்தாளோ?²⁴

Bethalēm Singan also sobs whether she is unconscious after the drink.

“She got bread from one vessel, and getting the wine from another, did she drink it, in haste and stand in rapture?”

பாத்திரத்தில் அப்பம் பின்னோர் பாத்திரத்தில் ரசம் வாங்கி,
ஆத்திரமாய் நின்றுகுடித் தானந்தமாய் நிற்கிறுளோ! 26

(The food and drink mentioned here are the elements of the Eucharist) When the Kutrāla Singan sees his wife he filled with joy and enquires about her new ornaments. He asks her whence she got them. This dialogue is presented in many couplets. Here is one of them :

“O Singi, why is a big viper lying [over your feet biting!

O Singa, this is an anklet which I got for divination at Salem!”

காலுக்கு மேலே பெரிய விரியன்
கடித்துக் கிடப்பானேன் சிங்கி!
சேலத்து நாட்டில் குறிசொல்லிப் பெற்ற
சிலம்பு கிடக்குதடா சிங்கா! 26

The Singan of the Bethalēm hills also enquires similarly his wife who has returned. One of his questions and the answer she gives are given in two couplets by Vedanayagam.

“O Singi, what is wrong with your knees? Why are they all black and swollen?”

“O Singa, this is because of praying to Christ without ceasing!”

முற்றுங் கறுத்து முழங்கால் தடித்தது
மோசம் தென்னடி சிங்கி!—நான்
சற்றும் விடாமல் செபித்துக் கிறிஸ்துவைச்
சாற்றின தாலடா சிங்கா! 27

Since this work was introduced to the Christian Churches through evangelistic preaching, Vedanayagam was honoured with the titles ‘The Evangelistic King of Poets’ ‘A Biblical Scholar’ ‘The great wise Emperor of poets’ (சுவிசேட கவிராயர்; வேதாகம சிரோமணி; மகாஞானக் கவிச்சக்கரவர்த்தி)

Sastriyar brings out in many ways the relation between Christ (the Lover) and the Daughter of Zion—the Church (the Loved) in the two works *Āraṇāḍindam* and *Jnānavulā*.

In *Āraṇḍindam* Jesus leaves the heavens and comes to the earth in search of his bride. He goes seeking her in the guise of a human being. He reveals to her the longings of his heart. But the daughter of Zion refuses to accept him. Since he is persistently following her, when at last he knocks at the door and calls her, she is pleased to receive him and opens the door for him. But she gets agitated when she does not find him. She roams all over the place searching for him and waits for his coming. She finds him at the end.

Sastriyar has composed this work along *purāṇic* lines. The opening scene of this work depicts beautifully the dialogue between God, the father and Christ, the Son in heaven. The poet has endeavoured to give in the form of a picture such Biblical ideas as Christ is the Son of God, one who was offered by God to the world and the one who is seated at the right hand of God.

When the poet portrayed the scenes of Christ meeting the daughter of Zion, the scenes of Murugan meeting Vaḷḷi as a huntsman and an old man while she was keeping watch over the millet field should have presented themselves to his mind. For at the beginning of the section 'The Bridegroom meets the Bride' he introduces the subject as follows :

“ While the beautiful Daughter of Zion was keeping watch over the garden of the Kingdom of David, the Lord of creation, putting on the guise of a man went there, met the girl and conversed with her in affection !”

“ தாவீ தாட்சித் தோட்டத்தில்
சித்திரச் சீயோன் செல்வி
காவல் காத்திருக்கும் போது
காரணத் தம்பிரானார்
மேவியோர் மனூடனாக
வேடமே கொண்டு சென்று
பாவையைச் சந்தித் தாங்கே
பரிந்துசம் பாஷித்தானே ” 20

The poet describes the dialogue between Christ and the Daughter of Zion after the pattern of folk songs in ornamental

style. When Christ approaches her while she was watching over the Vineyard, she asks him as follows :

“Which is your town, master? Where are you from? and what brought you here? What right have you to seize my hand? Will my people allow me to go alone? Will not the unjust Jews put you to death?” (19,12,14)

எந்தவூர்நீர் தம்பிரானே எங்கணிநுக் தெங்கு வந்தீர்
என்றனைநீர் கைப்பிடிக்க ஏதுமக்குச் சொந்தமுண்டோ?
தனிவழி நான்வரத்தான் சம்மதிக்குமோ இனங்கள்
அநியாய யூதரும்மை யருங்கொலை செய்திடாரோ? 20

Christ answers her as follows :

“I left the heavens, forsook the throne
Came over to the earth, found no place to lay my head
Even if my life is in peril, will I forget you O Zion?
Even if I cease to be, I'll give my life for you.” (19,20,17)

பரமண்டலத்தை விட்டேன் பத்திராசனத்தை விட்டேன்
தரை மண்டலத்தில் வந்தேன் தலைசாய்க்க இடமற்றேன்
மாயும்படி வந்தாலும் மறப்பேனோ சீயோனுன்னை
ஓயும்படி வந்தாலும் உனக்காய் உயிர்கொடுப்பேன். 20

Jnāna Andādi is a composition of hundred stanzas. The poet mentions in the Invocatory stanza that he composed this work as a commentary on the ‘Song of Solomon’ in the Old Testament. H. A. Krishna Pillai also has composed a similar work. It is called *Anmapralābam*. Prof. Sathiasatchi examines a few sections of these works. Speaking about *Jnāna Andādi*, he observes : “Tanjai Vedanayagam has thus portrayed in letters the loving relation between man and God, that inward relation which is felt by thought and mind but invisible to the eyes”.²¹

Vedanayagar who has produced works along the line of minor literary compositions, has also composed many songs based on *Tevāra* melodies and *Tirupukazh* rhymes. He was attracted by Tāyumānavar and has composed some of his songs in his style. These are found in his work *Jepamālai*. Sastriyar has mentioned in the introduction that he has produced this work like the order of worship which westerners have introduced into Tamil Christian

congregations. There are 42 sections in this work containing orders of worship and devotional songs based on the Tamil tradition. Sastriyar says that he had been working at it for 45 years from 1810 to 1855. It was his desire that the orders of worship in this work be popularized among Tamil Christians. But only a few of the songs in this order of worship are in use today among the Tamil congregations.

Here is a song in *Jepamalai* which Vedanayagar offers in *Nindāsthuthi* (Praising in the apparent form of abuse).

“You don’t have a way of escaping if one seizes you sincerely in prayer and crucifies you in mind by piercing nails on your hand and feet! Granting, O benevolent One that you will escape by Your power; If I shut you up again in my heart, where can You go rejecting me?.....”

கள்ளமற்றுணையே செபத்தினூற் பிடித்துக்
கருத்தினூல் சிலுவையில் அறைந்து
கால்கரத்தாணி கடாவி வைத்திருந்தால்
கடந்துபோம் வழியுனக்கில்லை!
வள்ளலே இதையுன் வல்லபத்தாலே
மாற்றுவாய் என்றுதான் வைப்போம்;
மறுபடியுனை யென் மனத்தகத்தடைத்து
வைத்திருந் தாலெனைவிட்டுத்
தள்ளிநீ போகும் இனமுனக்கேது?...⁸²

This verse is comparable with Māṇickavāṣagar’s beautiful way of conveying the idea by expressions like ‘சிக்கெனப் பிடித்தேன் எங்கெழுந்தருளுவதினியே’ and ‘பண்டே பயில்தொறும் இன்றே பயில்தொறும் ஒளிக்குஞ் சோரனைக் கண்டணம்; ஆர்மின், ஆர்மின் நாண்மலர்ப் பிணையலிற்றூடனை இருமின்! சுற்றுமின்! துழ்மின்! தொடர்மின்! விடேன்மின்!’

In a section *Japamālai* called *ahappatru* (அகப்பற்று) a series of songs, Vedanayagar has given expression to the longings of his heart. The first song runs as follows:

“O knowledge, lustre of true wisdom, King of the Celestials, O God the beginningless, embodiment of the ten attributes and

qualities of divinity. You became a man in order to get hold of me, a bondsman to the devil. Lord, Jesus, the Teacher Who rode on an ass, do come into my heart”.

அறிவே மெய்ஞ்ஞான ஒளியே வினாடர்
அரசே அனாதி முதலே
குறியாறு நாலும் நெறியாறு நாலும்
குணதேவ தேவ சொருபி
வெறியாடு பேயின் முறிகாரண
வினையேனை யாள மனுவாய்
மறியேறி மேவும் குருவேசுநாதர்
வரவேணும் என்றம் அகமே⁸³

He has given many such rhythmic melodies in *Japamālai*. It will be appropriate to quote her a song which reminds us of Aruṇagirināthar's impressive rhythmic style.

“You who shine as the bright Sun upon the mountain, grant Your grace so that I may not be deluded either by the thought of sweet, young women or by taking their love to be true. O Lord, give me the refuge of Your fragrant feet”.

பகரந்திகழ் மடமங்கையர்
பருவந்தனை நினைவுண்டவர்
மகரந்தனை நிசமென் றியான்
மருளாமலுன் அருள்கூரையா
சிகரந்தனில் எழநின்ற செங்
கதிரின்திரு உருகொண்டவா
தகரஞ்செறி சரணங்கொடு
சருவேசுரா! சருவேசுரா!⁸⁴

Similarly, following the unique Tamil prosody of Tāyumanavar, Sastriyar has composed his ‘*Karuṇaiyānanda Vaḍivam*’: after the pattern of ‘*Cinmayānandaguru* and *Saccidānanda Śivam*’. In this section called Divine Act (திருச்செயல்) there are eleven songs. In one of them he sings as follows:

“You will raise a crop without the seed and cause the rain to fall without the clouds, You will give light without the Sun and walk in the firmament; You will resurrect the dead, dry

and perishing bones to prophesy ; You will crown again Israel and make him prosperous in Canaan.....Grant Your grace that I, a senseless ass, may have Your Vision, U Triune God, the embodiment of grace and bliss ”.

வித்திலா மையினுன்று விளைவு செய்குவாய் மேக
மின்றிமழை பெய விதிப்பாய்
வெய்யனிலாம லொளி வீசுவாய் ஆகாய
விரிவின்மே லேகடப்பாய்
செத்துலர்ந் தழிவான என்புகளையுந் தீர்க்க
தெரிசனஞ் சொல உயிர்ப்பாய்
திரும்ப இஸரேலேமுடி சூட்டியே காணு
தேசத்தில் வர்ழ வைப்பாய்
.....
கத்தபம் போலான புத்தியிலேன் உனது
காட்சியைக் காண அருள்கூர்
கருத்தாபத்தாள் திரித்துவ ஏகத்துவமே
கருணை யானந்த வடிவே !³⁰

The idea of “ raising a Crop without the seed ” expressed in the first line of the song is found in *Tiruvāsagam*. Vedanayagar like Māṇickavāsagar marvels at the divine act of =creation and sustenance of the universe by God. Resurrecting the bones and rehabilitating Israel are illustrations of the marvellous power of God in the Old Testament. Māṇickavāsagar in his characteristic humility compared himself to a poisonous mango tree. Following him, Vedanayagar also compares himself to an ass. In the last two lines, he reminds us of Tāyumānavar’s command of words.

The confessional songs of Vedanayagar are based on the Confessional model of the saints of Tamil Nadu. He laments that he is a great sinner. Though he might not have committed all the sins that he mentions, he accepts the sins of others as his and makes his confession on behalf of all sinners. It is worth noting here what Professor Devasenapathi says while talking about great saints. He observes : “ The saints in their large heartedness blame themselves for the faults of others and thus indirectly show the need for self-examination ”.³¹

Here is a song from *Jepamālai* in the section of 'Confession of Sins' as a typical example :

“I am a grave sinner from head to foot, puffed up with haughtiness and lust. I roamed about with a longing for Union with women, indulged in boasting. I did not respect the elders and obey them. Everywhere I did evil deeds, speaking lies to earn a livelihood. O, Lord Jesus, plead with God that He be merciful unto me, a miserable sinner”.

அங்கம் முங்கிமங்கியே அலைக்கழிந்த பாவியான்
ஆசை இச்சை லச்சையின் அகந்தைமிஞ்சு கன்மியான்
பெண்கள் சங்க வாஞ்சையில் திரிந்தெனின் பெருமையால்
பெத்தரிக்கம் பேசியே பெரியவர் தமக்குமுன்
சங்கைசெய்து கீழ்ப்படிந் தடக்கமா யிராதகான்
சாண்குழி பிழைக்கவெகு தப்பறைகள் சொல்லியே
எங்கணும் வினைபுரிந்த கேடனுக் கிரங்க வென்று
ஏகனுக் குரைக்க வேணும் இயேசுநாத சுவாமியே⁹⁷

In this song Vedanayagar makes his supplication to God through Jesus.

Vadanayagar is now very much known among Tamil Christians only through his musical compositions. He has composed nearly five hundred lyrics on spiritual subjects in different kinds of melody.⁹⁸ One can find in these the forceful style in which the choice ideas are presented. The following lines are typical examples of Sastriyar's songs.

ஆதம் வினை தீர்ப்புது
ஆதம் என வந்துதித்த
ஆதவா திவ்ய மாதவா⁹⁹

(O Holy God, O sun who appeared as new Adam to do away with the sin of Adam) He who put on the holy guise in the lineage of Adam, the sinful.

கோதேபுரி ஆதாமுடைய கோத்ர திருவேஷன்⁴⁰
தந்தையர் தர வந்தவா—பசு
மந்தை யூடு பிறந்தவா—கதி

தந்தவா சொல் உவந்தவா—மெய்

சிறந்தவா விண்ணெழுந்தவா

தேவ தேவனே யெகோவா வாவென் ஜீவனே⁴¹

(O the One who came as the gift of the Father, the One, born among the cows, Who offered salvation, the One pleased to teach, in whom Truth excelled and the One Who rose to the heavens!)

Sastriyar was a contemporary of Thyagaraja the singer and melodist *par excellence*. (1767—1847). They lived within a distance of a few miles. Both of them were very much honoured by King Saraboji of Tanjavur. Sastriyar would, undoubtedly have had opportunities of listening to the songs of Thyagarajar. D. W. Devanesan has published a lyric of Vedanayagar along with a lyric of Thyagaraja and shown how Sastriyar heavily draws on terms and expressions from Thyagaraja⁴².

I give below the *pallavi* or refrains of both lyrics.

Sujana Jivanā—Suguṇa bhūṣana Rāma Sujanā (Thyagaraja)

Parama Jivanā—para vimōsanā dēva parama (Vedanayagar)

Following Thyagarajar, Sastriyar too has mentioned his name at the last line of each of his song. The Western missionaries who had come to work at Tanjavur at that time did not like it. So they ordered that the last lines bearing the name of Vedanayagar should not be sung during Church worship. Sastriyar followed the practice of the saintly poets of our country like Tukaram in adding his name in the last line of his lyrics. The Western missionaries argued that when devotees sing in the presence of God, there is no need for any man's name to be mentioned. Sastriyar has used in the last lines of some songs expressions like ‘வேதநாயகன் பாட்டா’⁴³. Some might have felt that such expressions could be easily interpreted in a double sense. The fact that Sastriyar has addressed Jesus in many songs as ‘வேதநாயகா!’ did not seem proper to them. Devanesan observes: “It is hard to justify that he addressed only Christ as Vedanayaga”⁴⁴. It is worth mentioning here that Sastriyar has mentioned his name in the last line of certain songs with a sense of humiliation.

This is how the poet has composed the last line of a song :

தூதர்களின் பாட்டுனக்குச் சோபனப் பாட்டு!
வேதநாயகன் பாட்ட தென்ன பாட்டு?

(The song of the angels is a benediction to You ; but the song of Vedanayagam, what kind of song is it?)

Sastrayar was very familiar with the Tamil literary tradition and has tried to enhance Christian literary forms and contents to some extent.

I wish to finish this section with the tributes paid to him by Dr. G. U. Pope (1820-1903) and the Rt. Rev. Robert Caldwell (1814-1891) two eminent Tamil Scholars.

While speaking about Christian Tamil Literature Pope refers to the names of De Nobile, Fabrucius and others and goes on to say, "There has been at least one real native Christian poet, Vedanayaga Sāstriyar of Tanjore whose writings should be collected and edited."⁴⁵

Bishop Caldwell observes in his reminiscences, "In the year 1841, I met in Tanjore the celebrated *Tanjore Poet* a native of much ability and great practical power, the author of prodigious number of lyrics, many of which will probably always hold their place in the public and private use of the Christians of the Tamil Country".⁴⁶

TANJAI VEDANAYAGAM SASTRIYAR IN TAMIL RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Just as Vedanayagam Sastriyar had a liking for *Tevāram*, *Tiruvācagam*, *Tiruppuhazh* and other hymns besides minor literary works in Tamil, he had a liking also for the excellent religious ideas contained in them.

He did not hesitate to adopt the religious ideas of our country to explain Biblical ideas. When we look at this in the context of his times his attempt seems to be a bold one. No where has he made use of Hindu religious ideas to the detriment of Christian fundamental doctrines. He has used them only to clarify the basic ideas of Christianity. He has welcomed such Hindu religious ideas and phrases as are akin to Christian ideas and has introduced them to Tamil Christians through his songs. Only those who are broad minded and have a keen sense of understanding could understand his intention.

In *Tamil Christian Lyrics* Sastriyar's songs are found in great number. The reason for not including many more of his songs in it is the fact that the editors thought that the Hindu religious ideas and phrases in them might confuse the Christians. Nevertheless, it is to be appreciated that they have included in the hymnal songs those containing such phrases as following :

பரப்பிரம்ம ஏகோவா¹ சச்சிதானந்தா²
சமயம் ஈராருேர் ஆறு சாத்திரங்கள் வேத நான்கும்
அமையும் தத்துவம் தொண்ணூற்றூறும் ஆறும் கடந்தோன்*

Sastriyar has made use of the word *Om* very much in his songs. The third section of his *Jepamalai* has the caption *Om Pranavam*... The last line of the ten songs in this section ends with *Om namā* (ஓம் நமா) The first song begins with “பொன்னுல குச்சிதப் புகழ்ச்சி நமா! பூரண காரண ஓம் நமா”⁴ In the middle are found the lines “இஸரவேல் அதிபதி இயேசு ஓம்நமா”⁵ “மேசியா கிறிஸ்து விண் வேந்தன் ஓம் நமா”⁶ The word *Om* has been removed in

the revised edition of *Tamil Christian Lyrics*. The phrase 'மொ
 ஓம்' has been revised as 'நமாவே' which does not mean the
 same. When Sastryar used the Ōm he had in his mind what
 John had when he described Christ by the Greek word Logos
 which means 'word'. He enlightens this subtle thought by such
 phrases as "ஓசையா உயிரையா ஒளியார் வந்தார்".⁸

Sastryar who subscribes to the monotheistic understanding of
 God considers that the names 'Father of Jesus Christ' 'Jehovah'
 Siva' and 'Allah' indicate the one God, the Supreme Being, when
 he points out "ஊருமிலான் பேருமிலான் ஒன்றுமிலான் பந்து ஜனம்
 ஆருமிலான்."⁹ Sastryar sings the praise of God with that larger
 vision of Manickavāsagar who sings, "ஒரு நாமம் ஒருருவம் ஒன்று
 மிலாற்கு ஆயிரம் திருநாமம் பாடி நாம் தெள்ளேணம் கொட்டாமோ"¹⁰
 The statement of Martin Buber, the Jewish philosopher "All God's
 names are hallowed" deserves consideration in this connection.
 Sastryar has made use of the above-mentioned names of God in
 a manner in which no other Christian poet has ever dared to
 do. Here are some examples:

- "ஓம் அல்லா அல்பா ஒமேகா
 மா வல்லா! மகத்துவா தெய்வீகா"¹¹
 "அல்லா அல்லாவே யே கோவாவே
 அரிய அரிய வாழ்வே"¹²
 "ஏவாள் சுவாவே குதாவே"¹³
 "சிவதவ சிவதவ தெய்வஅதி
 சுய சொருபியே..."¹⁴
 "ஆண்ட சதாசிவ கருணா"¹⁵
 "மூவா பரப்பிரம்ம எகோவா திரித்துவத்தின்
 மூன்றாள் ஒன்றாக வந்த தாவீதின் மைந்தனான ஏசுதேவா"¹⁶

He held that 'Allah' 'Budha', 'Sivam' 'Sadasivam' 'Para-
 brahmam' 'Jehovah' 'Trinity' in these lines refer to God, the
 Supreme Being. Further, he thinks that these names are applicable
 to Jesus Christ Who is extolled as the Son of David and as the
 Second Person of the Trinity.

In Sastryar's songs words and phrases illustrative of God's
 Character, His nature, His qualities and His function are found

in hundreds. When we examine those which he very often uses we could see that they are adaptations of usage and traditions of our land. He has been influenced very much by the phrase 'Sachidānandā which indicates God's existence, intelligence and bliss succinctly. Particularly he wonders at the omniscience of God which indicates his transcendence and the limitation of man's knowledge. He describes God as *colarum meijñānar* (சொல்லரும் மெய்ஞ்ஞானர்)¹⁷ *avivin uruvāgiya mūlar* (அறிவின் உருவாகிய மூலர்)¹⁸ *ānanda jñāna sorūbar* (ஆனந்த ஞான சொருபர்)¹⁹ He shows that God is pure intelligence and subtle being by using the phrase 'ambara dēva cidambaranādar' (அம்பர தேவ சிதம்பரநாதர்).²⁰ Sastriyar has tried to explain the Biblical idea that God is spirit,²¹ by such phrases as *kāṇappadāda arūpan* (காணப்படாத அருபன்)²² 'caḍamilān' (சடமிலான்)²³ 'parisuttarūbi' (பரிசுத்தருபி).²⁴

When he describes the Omnipresence of God he uses the theological phrases 'toṇappadaviyāban' (தோணப்படா வியாபன்)²⁵ 'Oridattillādān' (ஓரிடத்தில்லாதான்).²⁶ The same he tries to do in the words of bhaktas. A typical example is as follows :

எண் ணுமாகினை இறையுமாகினை
ஏகமாகினை ஆகமாகினை
கண் ணுமாகினை வழியுமாகினை
கதியுமாகினை பதியுமாகினை
பண் ணுமாகினை பாவுமாகினை
பரமுமாகினை வரமுமாகினை
விண் ணுமாகினை வெளியுமாகினை
வேதநாயகா ! வேதநாயகா !²⁷

The poet who sees God as Omnipresent and as One Who bestows all goodness, has not failed to extol heaven as His abode :

'Māgamaṇḍala vilāsan' (மாகமண்டல விலாசன்)²⁸ 'Viṇḍalattuk-kappāl Veḷiccattulāvu paramaṇḍalattuk kērūbin vāraṇattan' (விண்டலத்துக்கப்பால் வெளிச்சத்துலாவு பரமண்டலத்துக்கேருபின் வரணத்தான்).²⁹ With phrases like these he reveals the thought that God is in heaven. He describes His heavenly forms in many ways. "எட்டாத சோதியின் வாசன்."³⁰ He says that God is sitting there majestically in the form of Trinity :

“மைந்தன் ஆவியும் ஒன்றாக அனாதியான் பரம பத்திராசனத்தில்
வீற்றிருந்தார் அன்றே”⁸¹

All the celestials worship and praise God, the heavenly father
Who is seated so majestically. He also says that Christ the Son
also worships Him :

“ மரிய மதலை தொழு பாதா !”⁸²

Thus, of the three persons of the Trinity, God the father, the
first person is praised exclusively at times.

Sastriyar mentions that the twelve disciples recite the scriptures
in the holy realm where God dwells in majesty :

பன்னிருவர் வேத பாராயணங்கள் பண்ண முன்னூட்
பன்னிரு பிதாக்கள் பணிந்து தொழும் வாசலினுள்.⁸³

He says that the Standard of God has been hoisted in the same
place. Sastriyar calls it the ‘Standard of Cross’. He describes
God as ‘*Siluvaikkoḍiān* (சிலுவைக் கொடியான்)⁸⁴ and ‘*Siluvatt-
tuvasa virudā*’ (சிலுவைத்துவச விருதா !)⁸⁵

When the poet mentions that those who sing praises to God
and those who serve Him in heaven are countless :

“ நூறு லட்சங்கோடி சங்கத் தலைவர் ”⁸⁶

and ascribes it to Jesus.

In describing the nature of God, he has followed three
approches, namely the theological, the devotional and the visual
or *purāṇic* approaches. He finds that these three approaches are
interdependent and intertwined in Tamil religious literature adopts
them in his writings.

While speaking about the greatness of God, the idea that
God is most ancient and most modern seems to him an excellent
idea. He sings :

‘ முந்திய பிந்திய எந்தாய் ’⁸⁷

‘ நூதன புராதன நூலாசான் ’⁸⁸

following the utterance of Manickavasagar who sings :

‘ முன்னைப் பழம்பொருட்கும் முன்னைப் பழம்பொருளே
பின்னைப் புதுமைக்கும் பேர்த்துமப் பெற்றியனே ’⁸⁹

It is noteworthy that a similar concept is found in the Bible. The very first book in the Bible begins with the words 'In the beginning God...' ⁴⁰ and the concluding chapter of the last book contains the words "Behold I make all things new" ⁴¹

The following are the phrases which Sastriyar uses extensively when he speaks about the greatness of God.

- 'நிறை பூரணன்' ⁴²
- 'எல்லார்க்கும் பெரியான்' ⁴³
- 'ஏகப்பதி' ⁴⁴
- 'சருவேசன்' ⁴⁵
- 'பராபரன்' ⁴⁶
- 'மெய்த்தேவு' 'மெய்த்தேவன்' ⁴⁷
- 'ராஜாதி ராஜன்' ⁴⁸
- 'ஆதி அந்தம் இல்லான்' ⁴⁹
- 'அந்தம் அடி நடு இல்லாதவர்' ⁵⁰
- 'தேவத்துவ பரிசுத்தனார்' ⁵¹
- 'விமலன்' ⁵²

Of these '*Sarvēsvaran*' was very much in use in the Roman Catholic Church and '*Parāparan*' in other Churches in those days. While Sastriyar describes God in many places as '*andam ādi illān*' he also makes references about God as '*alba omēga*' ⁵³ (Alpha and Omega).

The ideas of Manickavasagar such as 'அந்தமும் ஆதியும் அகன்றோன் காண்க' ⁵⁴ 'ஆதியும் அந்தம் ஆயினாய்' ⁵⁵ 'அடியொடு நடு ஈருளாய்' ⁵⁶ are worthy of comparison. When Vedanayagar refers to the collective attributes of God, he uses the religious phrases of our Land:

- 'எண்குணமுடைய பேரான்' ⁵⁷
- 'ஆறிலக்கணச் சொரூபன்' ⁵⁸
- 'பத்திலட்சணத்தான்' ⁵⁹
- 'குறியாறு நாலும் நெறியாறு நாலும்' ⁶⁰

Vadanayagar indicates the divine qualities by sacred marks also. The following are worthy of mention:

- 'கண்ணறிவு ஒன்றும்' 'கழலது இரண்டும்' 'கதிப்பதம் நான்கும்' ⁶¹

‘*Kaṅṅarivu*’ indicates the eye of wisdom (ஞானக்கண்). ‘*Kazhaladu iraṇḍum*’ indicates the sacred feet and ‘*kadippadam nāṅgu*’ indicates *Sālōham*, *Sāmipam*, *Sārūpam* and *Sāyucchiam*. To this list, he adds the five wounds of Jesus on the Cross காயமதைந்தும் as marks of God.⁶²

He sings in *Jñāna Ulā* under the heading ‘Divine Play’ (திருவினையாட்டு) in forty nine lines of God’s call and guidance of such saints as Abraham, of the covenant relationship, he had with the people of Israel and of the sacred activities of Jesus in the Bible.⁶³ He addresses Jesus as (ஆனந்தத் திருவினையாட்டுக்கோன்). Evidently he was attracted by the phrase ‘*Tiruviḷaiyādal*’ which Śaivism uses to describe God’s relation with His devotees and His greatness in guiding them. He regards the theophanies in the Old Testament and the incarnation of Christ as types of ‘Divine play’ (திருவினையாடல்).⁶⁴

Scriptures serve as aids to have knowledge of God. Sastryar points out the truth that God is the origin and source of the scriptures through such phrases as ‘மறையாரணன்’ ‘ஆரண காரணப் பெருமான்’⁶⁵ ‘மாவேத ஞான மந்திர சூத்திரன்’⁶⁶ Thus he teaches that Theology is precisely scripturology. He enlightens us through this that the acceptance of the Bible as word of God, is to take it as ‘*Śabda pramāṇa*’.

When Sastryar praises God as the creator he brings to our notice an idea of our land which is not found in the Bible. In Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament there are references to creation. In the third chapter of the book it is stated that man was formed out of earth.⁶⁷ According to the religious notion of our land man possesses a body which is composed of the five elements. The body is the microcosm of the entire universe. Here is how Sastryar sings about God, the divine architect :

“ வீடு கட்டினானே ஞானத்தச்சன்
வீடு கட்டினானே...
அண்டத்திற் கண்டது பிண்டத்திற் காணவே ”...⁶⁸

“ ...பூதியம் நான்கையும்
சேர்த்தொரு மிப்பதுவாய்க் கொண்டு

நீடும் பிருதிவியைப் பிரதானமாய்
நேரிட்டோர் அங்கமாய்ச் சீரிட்டமைத்துமே”⁶⁹

In order to show that man is the Crown of God's creation, is a temple, a 'moving temple' where God lives⁷⁰ he also sings as follows:

உன்னத வீட்டுக்குச் சன்னதி வாசலோ
டொன்பது வாசலும் பின்புற வீதியும்
வன்ன மதிள்களுள் துண்ணி நெருங்கத்தான்
மட்டுக்குள்ளே சாண் எட்டுக்குள்ளே தான்...⁷¹

Sastriyar divides sin, the evil deed into three kinds:

“.....தெரியா நாட்
பாவத்தையும் தெரிந்த பாவத்தையும் செனன
பாவத்தையுங் கொல்பவ நாசன்”⁷²

In the above lines we find how the three types of sins are clearly distinguished by Sastriyar. 'தெரியா நாட்பாவம்' may denote the evil deeds of childhood or it may refer to the Old Testament idea "I punish the children for the sins of the father"⁷³ 'தெரிந்த பாவம்' denotes sins man commits in the present life 'Āgāmiyam' (ஆகாமியம்) 'செனன பாவம்' is the sin committed by the first man and transmitted to mankind, the sin which goes by the name 'original sin':⁷⁴ There is found in the Bible a classification of sin analogous to *Sañchita*, *prārabdha* and *āgāmiyam*. Sastriyar carefully points out the ideological differences between the doctrines of Hinduism and Christianity.

Nextly we shall consider the beautiful way in which Sastriyar finds Jesus Christ in the background of Tamil religion.

The contemporaries of Jesus called him 'Galileam' (of the province of Galilee) or Nazarene (Of the Town of Nazareth). Some Western Christian poets have called him 'The man of Calvary' and 'The Lord of Calvary'. But only in Sastriyar we find the manner of speaking of him in association with the name of the place of his birth. He praises Jesus as 'பெத்தலைப் பதியான்' and 'பெத்தலைப் பதிக்கதிகாரன்'. Though Jesus was born in that place he was not much associated with it. The greater part of his

earthly life of 33 years was spent in places like Capernaum and Nazareth in Galilee and in places like Jerusalem and Jericho in Judea. There is not any specific reference in the four gospels that he went to Bethlehem. Nevertheless the poet calls him 'Of Bethlehem' according to the Tamil custom of calling a person after his native place like 'Ārūrar' and 'Vādavūrar'.

In describing the incarnation of Jesus, Sastriyar finds pleasure in overdoing it and in narrating it along the *purāṇic* ways of presentation. He wonders at the incarnation of Jesus, the necessity of his leaving heaven and coming into the world in humble guise and extols the event raising two questions: "Is heaven the earth? Did God become man?"⁷⁵ He does not stop with raising these questions, but dares to ponder over, in a legendary fashion, how Christ would have descended from heaven and all that he passed through coming down here. In one song he sings as follows:

“உன்னதத்தின் கிருபாசனத்தை விடுத்து
உயர்ந்த வெளியைத் தாண்டி—அந்த
உம்பர்கள் சேனைக் குழாங்கள் உலவிய
ஓளிவின் விரிவுள் தாண்டிச் சுடர்
மின்னிய சேரக்கூடாத வெளிச்சத்தின்
வீதிவிலாசமும் தாண்டி—அப்பால்
விந்தை நட்சத்திரம் மண்டலங்களுட
விம்பத்தையும் விட்டுத் தாண்டிச் சென்று
பின்னையுஞ் சூரிய மண்டலத்தினுட
பெருஞ் சக்கரமுங் கடந்து—அங்கே
பெருத்த கிரக மண்டலத்தை யெல்லாம்
பின்னிடந் தள்ளியே நடந்து—சுடர்
மின்னும் ஆகாய விரிவின் பெருவெளி
மட்டற்ற பாதையிற் றொடர்ந்து—இங்கே
மண்டிய தேவரும் அண்டரும் போற்றப்பூ
மண்டலத்தைக் கிட்டி...
வந்தானே பரன்மகன் வந்தானே !”⁷⁶

Vedanayagar mixes the pure, supreme and subtle Biblical idea of the incarnation of Jesus with imagination and offers it in such a way that even ignorant persons can visualize it.

Now, one of the stanzas in ‘*Kadaltāvu Padalam*’ (கடல்தாவு படலம்) of ‘*Sundara Kāṇḍam*’ (சுந்தர காண்டம்) of *Kamba Ramayanam* deserves consideration in this context. While describing the speed of Hanuman, the son of *Vayu* in reaching Lanka after crossing the sea, Kamban says that he crossed over it in such a way that the gap between the planets and the stars ceased to exist :

செவ்வான் கதிருங்குளிர் திங்களுந் தேவர் வைகும்
வெவ்வேறு விமானமும் மீனொடு மேகம் மற்றும்
எவ்வா யுலகத்தவும் ஈண்டி யிருந்த தம்மின்
ஒவ்வாதன ஒத்திட ஆழிவெங் காலும் ஒத்தான்”

Kambar wonders at the speed of Hanuman through space. Sastryar conjectures the distance through which Jesus crossed. Both of them plunge us in astonishment. Both set before our mental eyes the great tremendous scenes of the Universe. Sastryar reveals that the fountain of imagination of the Tamil religious poets is welling up in his mind as well.

Vedanayagar describes very well the teaching vocation among the manifold ministry of Jesus. He sings ecstatically in a worshipful mood: ‘குருவென வந்தவனைக் கும்பிடுகிறேன்...’⁷⁸ He praises Jesus in many ways like ‘சற்குரு’ ‘அருமைக்குரு’ ‘சத்திய வேதாந்த சாஸ்திரியார்’ and ‘வேத போதகர்’⁷⁹ Jesus has initiated him and bestowed on him sacrament of baptism which is spiritual wealth (ஞானத்திரவியம்). Sastryar makes it clear when he sings: தீட்சை தந்து சேர்த்தவனைக் கும்பிடுகிறேன்; ஞானத் திரவியம் ஈந்தவனைக் கும்பிடுகிறேன்”⁸⁰ From whomsoever one received his baptism, in fact, the one who gives it is his dear guru Jesus, is the conviction of Sastryar. The Rev. Schwartz who brought him up and baptized him is always mentioned by him as ‘*Aiyar*’ (ஐயர்). In his works the word ‘Guru’ is exclusively used for Jesus. The Śaivite doctrine of God which teaches that Śiva assumes the form of a human Guru and bestows grace on souls (8th *Sūtra* of *Śivajñāna Bōdham* and the 5th chapter of *Tiruvārūṇipayan*) invite our attention in this context.

There are numerous evidences in the writings of Sastryar to support the fact that he never rejected in full the Tamil religious

traditions. On the contrary, as a Tamil he has gladly and proudly accepted them and used them as the most natural means of expressing his Christian faith.

On the basis of his literary and musical compositions we can regard him as a faithful follower of the devotional poets of Tamil Nadu. We could see in his songs the image of devotional literature of Tamil Nadu. Further, the contribution he has made towards the enrichment of Tamil devotional literature is discernible in his writings. He did not write his songs for the learned in particular. His songs were popularized among the common people in the original context. They are easy to learn and memorize.

Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai, the great Tamil Scholar has written a short essay about Sastriyar in his book *Christian Tamil Scholars*.⁹¹ In it he mentions that one of Sastriyar's songs captivated him. It is found in "*Parāparan Mālai*". It is as follows :

நீயிருக்க வேதநெறி யிருக்க நெஞ்சமுற
வாயிருக்க நிற்பதத்தில் வந்திருக்க என்மனமும்
போயிருக்க, நிற்புதல்வன் புண்ணியனார் அன்பிருக்கத்
தாயிருக்கச் செய்க்குத் தவிப்பேன் பராபரனே

Sethu Pillai observes that mercy and tenderness fill this song.⁹²

Similarly he quotes another song from Sastriyar's *Jñana Etrappāṭṭu* and concludes his essay with these words: "That day will be great day for the Tamil country when she honours born poets like Vedanayagam and appreciates their poetry".⁹³ Here is the song he quotes at the end of his essay :

ஒருபொருளே தெய்வம்—நீ
உகந்து தொழு நெஞ்சே!
உடைந்து மனம் கெஞ்சே—அந்த
ஒருபரனுக் கஞ்சே!

The wounds of Jesus on the cross caused by the piercing nails and spear have been the subject of devotion and theme of many Christian devotees. Vedanayagar was also attracted by that theme. He gives expression to his feelings in the form of songs. Here are two lines from a song :

எந்தை விலாவில் இருகால் கரத்திலுள்ள
ஐந்து வடுவென்றன் அகத்தில் தழும்பாமே⁸⁴

These words are from his scared heart. There is a reference to St. Francis that when he contemplated the wounds of Jesus that he got these wounds on his hands. Vedanayagar mentions that the scars of the wounds of Jesus have been formed in his heart. One cannot but recall the inspiring lines of Subramanya Bharati,

உன் கண்ணில் நீர் வழிந்தால்
என் நெஞ்சில் உதிரம் கொட்டுதடி

in this context.

Not satisfied with getting the scars of the five wounds of Jesus in his heart, he invites his Master to come to him as follows :

நாயமே தரு நடுவா—ஐங்
காயமே உரு கொடுவா⁸⁵

Just as the devout poets of our land beseech Murugan to give them his beautiful vision, holding the spear and riding on the peacock, so also Sastriyar beseeches Jesus to appear before him with the scars of the five wounds, His identifying marks.

Christian theologians who examine the ideas of Sastriyar and his understanding of the Bible will judge him as a conservative or Fundamentalist. But there is no doubt that every one will appreciate and welcome the manner in which he gives out his ideas with a broad mind steeped in Tamil culture. Someone who wrote an essay on Dr. Stanley Jones has remarked, "He has a conservative heart and a liberal mind". This is applicable cent percent to Vedanayagam Sastriyar also.

The message Sastriyar to his successors through his writing is the challenge to create popular literature for the populace. We find the creative genius in the writings of Bharathi, Bharathidasan and Pattukkottai Kalyanasundaram in the present century similar to the works of the popular poets of the nineteenth century like Sastriyar. Of the Christian poets of this century, the reverends G. S. Vedanayagam, S. Paramanandam and N. Samuel may be regarded as the successors of Sastriyar.

KRISHNA PILLAI—"THE SALVATION POET"

(*General Introduction*)

We saw that Vedanayagam Sastriyar produced many small works following greatly the various minor literary works in Tamil. Krishna Pillai who came after him was greatly interested in epics and set himself to the task of producing a Christian epic. Vedanayagar went to many places in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka with his group of singers and entertained Christians as well as non-Christians with his musical talents. But Krishna Pillai spent the greater part of his life as a Professor of Tamil in the district of Tirunelveli. He was not popularly known as a singer like Vedanayagar. He took delight in teaching *Kambaramayanam* and other literary works to college students for many years. He maintained friendship with some distinguished Tamil Scholars of his days. Hence his works appeared as fullbodied literary compositions.

He has drunk deep from Tamil epics to such an extent as to be appreciated as "Christian Kambar" and as one coming in the line of Veeramamunivar. Some complained that he did not write in a style easily understandable to all. Krishna Pillai did not fail to answer such critics. His epic "*Rakshanya Yathirgam*" was first published in 1894. In the introduction the poet says as follows :

"It would be fair if the critics had spent at least a tenth part of their time and effort in getting proficiency in English to the study of Tamil. It is not fair on their part to complain that they cannot understand a stanza without studying a Tamil book thoroughly at least for a year. *Rakshanya Yathirgam* is easily understandable to those who are interested in literature to some extent; it is not a work to be abandoned on the pretext of non-intelligibility".¹

Apart from the Tamil epics, the hymns of the saints also had greatly attracted Krishna Pillai. He has composed many hymns after the pattern of *Tēvāram*, *Tiruvāsagam* and *Tiruvāimozhi*. Many of them have been inserted in suitable places in *Rakshanya*

Yāihirigam. Like Sastriyar, Krishna Pillai was also attracted by the songs of Tāyumānavar. He has written many verses following Tāyumānavar. Since Krishna Pillai has composed his songs with a feeling of devotion, he is regarded as a 'divine poet'.

Tamil Christians honour him as the 'Poet of Salvation' and as the 'Poet of Redemption' since he has emphasized in his works the Christian doctrine of redemption. He has added the word "*Rakshanya*" as an epithet to the titles of his religious works calling them "*Rakshanya Yāthirigam*" '*Rakshanya Mānō-haram*' '*Rakshanya Samaya Nirṇayam*' and '*Rakshanya Kuraḷ*'. Of these the first three have been published. '*Rakshanya Mānō-haram*' is a collection of devotional songs. '*Rakshanya Samaya Nirṇayam*' is Christian apologetics. In this work Krishna Pillai examines the religious and philosophical systems of our country. We could understand from this work how extensive is his religious knowledge and how strong is his profound faith in Christianity.

R. P. Sethu Pillai, having well understood the intension that Krishna Pillai had in the Salvation of the world which he denotes as '*Rakshanyam*' remarks as follows regarding his epic.

"Rama destroyed the evil that filled the earth with the might of his bow. Kaṇṇagi burnt off evil that filled the city of Madurai with the strength of her chastity. The Lord Christ, the Hero of *Rakshanya Yathirigam* wiped off the evil that covered this great world with the power of his great sacrifice. Hence *Rakshanya Yathrigam* is a rare epic which proclaimed the greatness of the sacrifice of Christ".²

The word '*Rakshanyam*' or '*Rakshippu*' which Krishna Pillai uses, denotes the change that takes place in life by the grace of God. When the 150th birth anniversary of the poet was celebrated at Madras for three days from the 22nd April, 1977, The Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraiswamy referred to this in his inaugural address as follows:

"The great poet Krishna Pillai realized that Salvation is not leaving one religion and embracing another. Salvation is a new

state—viz. coming to life from death, entering into great light from darkness. This is how he understood it”.⁹

Krishna Pillai realized this truth in his own life and has expressed it in the following lines :

“I was dead in sin ; thou hast made me alive by thy Spirit.

I Was blind and wandering in darkness and thou hast showed me the light which never fades.

.....
Let me never, never forget thee.

Do thou live in my soul, sweet like the juice of sugar cane.

Thou art the tree of Life, laden with the ripe fruit of Thy divine grace.....”⁴

For Krishna Pillai salvation is not something that could be got in a second ; but to be realized step by step all through one’s life. He had known very well that ups and downs, temptations and disappointments and the like come one after the other as ecstatic moments and other kinds of spiritual experiences. He was firmly convinced that “while we are best by sin, we are upheld by divine grace”. He got this conviction not only through the Bible but also through the work “பரதேசியின் கோடீச பிரயாணம்” a translation of *Pilgrim’s Progress* of John Bunyan (1620–1688) which he read in his youth.

He read the book for the first time when he was twenty nine years old. He must have studied it deeply many times subsequently. He began to write an epic out of it when he was about fifty three years old. He worked at it for fourteen years, changing a few scenes according to Tamil usage and adding literary excellence to it. Parts of this work were published every month in *Narppōthagam* (நற்போதகம்) the official organ of the Diocese of Tirunelveli. The entire work was published in 1894, six years before the death

of the poet by C. L. S. Madras through the untiring efforts of Rev. Walker.

Although the work 'Pilgrim's Progress', one of the Spiritual classics of undying fame has been translated into more than 120 languages, only a few English poets and our poet have made attempts at versification of the work. From 1687 up to 1924 some 23 English poets have attempted to render this work in minor poems or in the form of songs.⁵

The Rev. H. A. Poppley, in his introduction to the second edition of *Rakshanya Yathirigam* has remarked, "Even though this work has been based on the work of John Bunyan, we can say that in this work, the entire history of the Christian life of the author has been depicted". Krishna Pillai has written his autobiography in compliance with the request of Walker in 1893, seven years before he breathed his last.⁶ One could understand to what extent Krishna Pillai has carried on his spiritual journey through great conflicts like *Christian*, the hero of Pilgrim's Progress.

John Bunyan says in the Preface to his work, "This book will make a traveller of thee".⁷ The autobiography of Krishna Pillai shows that it is 100% true. The poet identifies himself with the character, Christian—the Pilgrim. He says that he reveals through *Christian* his own mental struggles.⁸ John Bunyan has also written a small book about his life history.⁹ This was the first book he wrote in prison. In this book he narrates candidly his temptations, sinful feelings and the illumination he got from the Bible. One could see in this book the active impulsions pertaining to the work "Pilgrim's Progress"—a work born out of a dream. He writes this book with a sense of humility. He is amazed while he contemplates upon the abundance of divine grace bestowed upon him, the Chief of all sinners.

Krishna Pillai has composed the prefatory stanzas of his epic in an attitude of great humility:

"There is not any where in this world a sinner like me; and yet, the Lord Jesus Christ regarded me a cur worthy and redeemed

me; and so I have undertaken to weave with flowers the garland of *Rakshanya Yāthirigam* in chaste Tamil to adore His beautiful and sacred feet".¹⁰

In certain places in the epic the poet adds reverential confessions of sin not found in the original. Here is an example.

Christian, engaged in a long spiritual journey deviates from the path at a certain juncture and is baffled. At that time the *Evangelist* appears and guides him. He advises him to go up to the outer gate and knock at the door. Accordingly *Christian* goes to the gate and knocks at the door. John Bunyan describes this briefly in a few words as follows :

“So in process of time, *Christian* got up to the gate. Now, over the gate there was written ‘Knock and it shall be opened’. He knocked therefore, more than once or twice saying,

“May I now enter here? Will he within
Open to sorry me, though I have been
An undeserving rebel? Then shall I
Not fail to sing his lasting praise on high”.

Krishna Pillai creates a separate section “Opening the Gate” in order to describe this scene. He describes beautifully the scene where *Christian* stands knocking at the door of the gate and then pictures in ten stanzas in a heart—melting manner his supplication for opening the door. The songs which express the confession of *Christian* are composed by Krishna Pillai following the pattern of Jeyamkondar, author of *Kalingattupparai*¹¹ in which the author pictures the soldier’s returning late from the battle field knocking at the door of their wives to open the door to them. I quote here only two stanzas from *Rakshanya Yāthirigam*.

கல்லேன் சுருதி நலம்புரியக்
கருதேன் பாவங் கசந்திடேன்
பொல்லேன் எனினும் வந்தடைந்தேன்
போகேன் கபாடம் திறமினோ!
கொடியரிற் கொடிய புலையரிற் புலையன்
ஆயினும் குமர நாயகன்

அடியருக் கடியனாக வந்திவண்
அடைந்தனன் கதவு திறமினோ!

I have chosen these two stanzas because the poet quotes them from *Rakshanya Yāthirigam* at the conclusion of his autobiography where he states "I am a sinner by birth as well as by deeds."¹²

An opinion expressed in the daily *Madras Mail* in 1892 about *Yathirigam* deserves to be quoted here: "The *Pilgrim's Progress* is to *Rakshanya Yathirigam* what the *Lives of Plutarch* is to the plays of Shakespeare".¹³

Krishna Pillai introduces the author of the original work John Bunyan in the beginning of his epic. The way in which he speaks about the circumstances in which the original work was produced and the manner in which he introduces John Bunyan resemble the way in which Sekkiḷar introduces the *nāyanmārs*. I quote here two stanzas from the '*Varalārtup paḍalam*'.

“ஆய வித்தகு சிந்தையாத் திரை பெரிதாற்றி
நாயகன் கிறிஸ்தியேசுவக் கன்புசெய் நண்பன்
தூய ஜீவிய நடை கடைப் பிடித்தவோர் சுகிர்தன்
மாயிரும் புவி மயக்கறு மாண்புடை ஞானி”

“எம்பிரான் திருச்சித்தமே எனது பாக்கியமென்
நும்பர் நாயகன் பணிபுரிந் தொழுகும் அவ்வூரவோன்
இம்பரோர் சிறையிருந்துழி யோக நித்திரையில்
தம்பிரான் அருள் சமைத்தது தரிசன மொன்றை”

Byron, the English poet speaking about the power of dreams remarks "I had a dream, which was not at all a dream". J. W. Mackail speaking about the dream of John Bunyan comments on the similitude of dream to the clear vision of one who had probed life to the depths. Krishna Pillai as if summarizing the above ideas, clarifies the dream of Bunyan by means of a religious idea of our land viz. conscious sleep (*Yoga mitra* or *Arituyil*).

There are five sections in the epic containing forty seven chapters. The number of stanzas is 3622; 144 hymns have been added here and there. So this work contains about 3800 stanzas.

In the preface to this epic, the poet refers to this work as a Major Epic. (*Perumkāppiam*). Although this work is lacking in some minor component parts, the poet observes that it deserves to be regarded as a major epic, according to the following rules :

“ தன்னேரில்லாத் தலைவனை யுடைத்தாய்
நாற்பொருள் பயக்கும் நடைநெறித்தாகி” and

“ கூறிய உறுப்பில் சில குறைந்தியலினும்
வேறுபா டின்றென விளம்பினர் புலவர் ”

He also says that his work mostly follows the *Kambāramāyaṇam* and its diction.¹⁶

In the next lecture we shall see how Krishna Pillai has composed *Rakṣaṇya Yāthirigam* as an epic steeped in Tamil Culture, following Tamil literary usage and religious model.

KRISHNA PILLAI IN TAMIL LITERARY TRADITION

Krishna Pillai has composed his epic with literary embellishments following the epic poets Kambar and Sēkiḷār to a great extent. One could see in many of his stanzas that his treatment of nature is similar to theirs.

While Kambar portrays the river Sarayu and Sēkiḷār the Ponnī, they make a divine aroma pervade their poems. Kambar describing the Sarayu sings as follows:

“கல்லிடைப் பிறந்து போந்து கடலிடைக் கலந்த நீத்தம்
எல்லையில் மறைகளாலும் இயம்பரும் பொருளீ தென்னத்
தொல்லையி லொன்றே யாகித் துறைதொறும் படர்ந்த சூழ்ச்சிப்
பல்பெருஞ் சமயஞ் சொல்லும் பொருளும் போற் பரந்த தன்றே”¹

“The water coming from the mountains mingles in the sea. But it spreads like the words and their meanings of many great religions, in which the Supreme being whom the countless scriptures cannot define, the ancient one diversifies itself into every fields”.

While Sēkiḷār describes *Kāviri* he compares it with *Umā*.

“வண்ணநீள் வரைதர வந்த மேன்மையால்
எண்ணில்பே ரறங்களும் வளர்க்கும் ஈகையால்
அண்ணல்பா கத்தையா ருடைய நாயகி
உண்ணெகிழ் கருணையி னொழுக்கம் போன்றது”²

“By the grandeur of its descent from the beautiful mountain and by its gift with which countless good works are supported, it resembled the flow of compassionate grace of the Lady Who holds part of the Lord’s Body”.

Krishna Pillai following these poets who compare the clear flowing river with God and His grace, describes in one of his stanzas, the divine river in heaven as follows:

“ ஒருநெறித் தாகித் தூய்தாய் உள்நூறத் தெளிந்து பாவத்
தருவனம் முறித்துச் சாடித் தருமச் செஞ்சாலி நீடப்
பெருவளம் படுத்து நிய்ய பேரின்ப சலதி கூடும்
திருவுடைத் தாத லாலித் தீர்த்திகை சுருதி போலும்”³³

“This river is like scripture, because it flows straight, it is pure and clear, destroys the forest of sin, helps the fertile growth of the paddy of Virtue and has the excellence of joining the ocean of eternal bliss”.

It is remarkable that Krishna Pillai has added scripture to God and grace in the list of similies chosen to describe the river. Kambar mentions in one of his stanzas the various places the river *Sarayu* flows through :

“ தாதுகு சோலை தோறும் சண்பகக் காடு தோறும்
போதவிழ் பொய்கை தோறும் புதுமணத் தடங்கள் தோறும்
மாதவி வேலிப் பூக வணந்தோறும் வயல்கள் தோறும்
ஓதிய உடம்பு தோறும் உயிரென உலாய தன்றே”³⁴

“It flowed through gardens, groves of *Shanbaga* trees, through flowing ponds, fragrant gardens, through *Madavi* hedges and fields like the soul in body”.

Following the trend of Kambar, Krishna Pillai portrays in a stanza the place where the river of bliss flows through, adding a spiritual nuance.

“ நிறைவளம் படுக்குந் தூய நித்திய ஜீவ கங்கை
துறைதொறும் பிரிந்து போந்து தொடுகுள மடுத்தடாகம்
குறைவற நிரப்பி யுண்மை குலவுநீண் மருதவைப்பின்
கறைதுடைத் திதய மென்னும் கழனிபுக் களைந்த தன்றே”³⁵

“The fertilizing, holy, eternal river of life branches out, fills all tanks, pools and ponds, wipes off the dirt from the land and enters the field of heart and mingles therein”.

Not only as Krishna Pillai follow the ideas and imagination of Kambar, but he also borrows his words and phrases with pleasure and uses them in some of his stanzas; for example, he narrates the free life of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden as follows :

“பூதலப் பொருள்க ளெல்லாம்
பொதுவன்றிச் சொந்த மில்லை
ஆதலிற் கொள்வா ரில்லர்
கொடுப்பவ ராரு மில்லர்”

No one will fail to notice that the last line reflects exactly the following two lines of Kambar.

“கள்வா ரிலாமைப் பொருட் காவலு மில்லை யாதும்
கொள்வா ரிலாமைக் கொடுப்பார்களு மில்லை மாதோ”

“There is no guard over things, since there are no thieves ; there are no givers since there are no receivers”.

Natural scenes remind Krishna Pillai of the environment of devotion and methods of worship.

Christian crosses over many obstacles on his long journey and reaches a grove which has in its midst a pool with clear water. The trees are tall, spreading their branches around. The poet is interested in the grandeur of the branches waving with wind. There he sees an environment of worship, of devotion and humility. He makes his readers see it through his poem :

“மண்ட லத்துற முடங்குதா னூன்றிவாய் மலர்ந்து
விண்டு தாமலர்க் கண் துளி வடித்துமெய் யரும்பித்
தண்ட ளிர்க்கரம் விரித்துயர் சினைத்தலை தாழ்த்திக்
கொண்ட செவ்வியிற் பரவுதொண் டரைப் பொருவுங் கொழுங்கா”

“The exuberant grove resembles worshipping devotees in its grandeur of the trees standing firm in the ground, bending their branches low, shedding, tears of honey, opening the hands of their leaves.....”

In describing a situation of pitch darkness, the poet brings in religious ideas one after another as similies. “The mass of tar-like darkness—Is it a mark of sin?...or intensity of God’s curse?...or a cave of danger and destruction...”

“பாவத்தின் திரளோ அந்த காரத்தின் பரப்போ தேவ
சாபத்தின் செறிவோ மாய சாலத்தின் சமைவோ நித்ய
கோபத்தின் மலிவோ ஞான நாசத்தின் குவிவோ மோச
ஆபத்தின் குகையோ வந்தத் தாரிருட் படல மம்மா”

The poet, following Kambar in composing this epic, adopts his method of describing the scene of Rama's leaving Ayodhya on learning that he was not to be enthroned. He narrates in a heart-rending manner the scene where Jesus leaves Jerusalem and makes his way to Calvary. The womenfolk of Jerusalem witnessing the cruel scene of Jesus carrying the cross shout and scream, shed bitter tears and spit out angry words. Krishna Pillai portrays it as follows :

“Alas what is this? Sheer injustice” they say, “Is undying virtue to drop and die?” they ask, “How is it the eternal One does not show his anger?” “Is there no end to the unceasing suffering souls?” they ask.

“ஆவாவி தென்னவ றவுமரி யாயமென்பார்
தாவாவ றமோத லைசாய்த்தி றுவதென்பார்
முவாமு தல்வனமு னியாத தென்னென்பார்
ஓவாது முலெம்மு யிர்க்கொழிவின் றேரு வென்பார்”

(குமாரபருவம், இரட்சணிய சரிதப்படலம், 320)¹⁰

The stanzas describing the lamentations of these women are comparable to stanzas of Kambar in his Nagarninguppadaalam (105—114).

The poet describes in his own characteristic style the incarnation and advent of Jesus with figurative embellishments.

He gives a new meaning for *Pūmugam* (பூமுகம்) a word meaning the earth.

“The name ‘Pūmugam’ came to be in vogue since it (the earth) has put on the beautiful lotus—like feet of the Royal prince” (Jesus).

“கோமகன் சேவடி பதுமங் கோத்தலிற்
பூமுக மெனப்பெயர் பொலிந்த தாமரோ”

(ஆதிபருவம், சுவிசேஷமார்க்கப்படலம், 23)¹¹

Similarly, when he contemplates ‘the wonder of Jesus’ leaving heaven and being born in this earth, he gives expression to it in a stanza through two beautiful similies :

“How wonderful it is that the deluge of the deep river of life came down and flowed into the pit of the earth below, and the mature eternal tree of life's branch broke through space and bent over the earth”.

“ஆழ்ந்த ஜீவநீர் நதிப்பெருக் கதோமுக மாகித்
தாழ்ந்த பூதலப் படுகரிற் பாய்ந்ததுந் தழைத்துக்
காழ்ந்த நீத்திய ஜீவகற் பகச்சினை ககனம்
போழ்ந்து பாருறப் பணிந்ததும் எத்கனை புதுமை”

(சுவிசேஷ மார்க்கப்படலம், 15)¹²

Speaking about the weight of the cross which pressed down the body of Jesus, he says it was so cruelly heavy that it passes beyond thought.

“Looking at it every atom of the cross was made up of a mass of sin whose might was that of millions of great elephants”.

“நோக்கிலணு ஒவ்வொன்றும்
நூரூயிரங் கோடி
மாக்கயத்தின் சும்மை மலிந்த
பாவந் திரட்டி
ஆக்கு சிலுவை.....”

(இரட்சணிய சரிதப்படலம், 308)¹³

Like Kambar, Krishna Pillai is gifted with the skill to instill many kinds of feelings in small stanzas. In a poem of four lines he brings out three kinds of feeling.

Those who tried Jesus before he was crucified treated him disgracefully and cruelly. They scourge him, spit on him and insulted him. But he keeps silent as calmness personified. The poet brings this scene before us.

“Though he suffers untold pain, he does not utter a word painful to them. But his enemies do not sympathize with his patience. Heinous crime, O heinous crime”.

“ஓதரும் வேதனை யுழந்து மொன்னயார்
நோதக ஒருமொழி நுவலு வாரலர்

ஏதில ரோபொறைக் கிரங்கு வாருமில்
பாதகம் பாதகம் பரம பாதகம்

(இரட்சணிய சரிதப்படலம், 271)¹⁴

The poet brings out a feeling of sympathy in the first two lines, a sense of disgust in the third line, and a feeling of wrath in the last line.

Bunyan speaks in his work about two demons, Pagan and Pope, living in a cave and destroying many spiritual pilgrims :

“I espied a little before me a cave where two giants, Pope and Pagan dwelt in old time, by whose power and tyranny the men whose bones, blood, ashes etc. lay there, were cruelly put to death”.¹⁵ But when Krishna Pillai describes this scene he does not like to attack boldly other religionists and the Pope as Bunyan does. He gives Tamil names to the Characters and introduces them without indicating whom they represent in the original. This reveals his cultured Tamil mind. He describes one of them as “an evil one, day-blind” (பகற்குருடாய தீயன்) and the other as “another Wicked one who destroyed the good” (கோவியல் ஒழித்த மற்றொர் கொடியவன்)¹⁶ (நிதான பருவம் ; மரணச் சூழலிறுத்த படலம் ; 75).

Since our poet was very much interested in the devotional literature in Tamil, one could see in his works the likeness of *Tevāram*, *Tiruvāimoli* and the songs of Tāyumānavar. Today Tamil Christians are making use of his lyrics in worship. There may be Christians who have not heard about *Rakshanya Yāthrigam* or read it. But we can boldly say that there are no Tamil Christians who have not sung or heard Krishna Pillai's songs.

Our poet's first compositions were for the worship at home to be sung as prayers by his children. In them humility and confession are beautifully brought out. Here are a few lines from one of them.

“O Jesus, I am quite ignorant of praying devoutly, grant me the good will to praise you intelligently”.

“ பத்தியாய்ச் செபம் பண்ணவே
சுத்தமாய்த் தெரியாதய்யா
புத்தியோடுமைப் போற்றநற்
சித்தமீந்திடும் இயேசுவே”

“ O Manuel, Son of God, I am a poor sinner. Your feet are my refuge. Be gracious into me and say: “ Dont fear”.

“ பஞ்சை நானொரு பா வியேன்
தஞ்சம் உன்னிரு தாளய்யா
அஞ்ச லென்றநள் வாய்பரன்
மஞ்சனே மனுவேலனே ”

“ May the scripture prosper; may the teaching of the true *Guru* prosper; may the songs of the imperfect composers prosper, may the feet of Christ prosper for ages”.

“ வேதம் வாழ்க மெய்வேதியர்
போதம் வாழ்க விப் புன்சொலார்
கீதம் வாழ்க கிறிஸ்துவின்
பாதம் வாழ்க பல்லாழியே”¹⁷

Krishna Pillai has composed the forty five stanzas of this hymn in order that not only children but all could sing it. The stanza beginning with ‘May the scriptures prosper (வேதம் வாழ்க) is the last stanza. It is composed along the lines of Sambandhar’s “May the priests prosper.....” (வாழ்க அந்தனர் வானவர் ஆனினம்).

Among the hundreds of hymns that Appar and Toṇḍaradi-
poṭiāḷvar have composed, the hymns wherein they both have made use of the same phrase at the end in the same melody has greatly attracted Krishna Pillai. Just as these saints in great humility have sung “why was I born?” (என் செய்வான் தோன்றினேனே). Krishna Pillai has made use of that phrase in twelve instances.

Appar sings as follows :

“ I have not overcome the five senses, nor have I joined the company of those who have overcome. Hence I am far from the right path. So I am agitated in mind, O God how vile I am. To say ‘I live’, tomorrow I will not be. Why was I born?”

“ வென்றிலேன் புலன்களைந்தும் வென்றவர் வளாகந் தன்னுள்
சென்றிலே னுதலாலே சென்றெறி யதற்குஞ் சேயேன்
நின்றுளே துளும்பு கின்றேன் நீசனேன் ஈசனேயோ
இன்றுளேன் நாளை இல்லேன் என்செய்வான் தோன்றினேனே!”¹⁹

The following is the hymn of Topḍaradippoḍiālvār :

“ I cannot adore thy beautiful feet with flowers at all times.
I cannot speak of Thy holy attributes with unblemished words.
My heart is not filled with love for Thee. I am hence helpless.
I am not fit for *Arangar*. Why was I born?”

“ போதெல்லாம் போதுகொண்டுன்
பொன்னடி புனைய மாட்டேன்
தீதிலா மொழிகள் கொண்டுன்
திருக்குணம் செப்ப மாட்டேன்
காதலால் நெஞ்சமன்பு
கலந்திலேன் அதுதன்னாலே
ஏதிலேன் அரங்கர்க்கல்லேன்
என்செய்வான் தோன்றினேனே”¹⁹

Krishna Pillai following these two saints sings as follows :

“ O Lord, I am a vile creature who has no love for Your
feet. Though I enter the congregation of the virtuous who love
Your feet, I have not learnt the proper way, nor have I given
up my wicked ways. Why was I born?”

“ நின்னடிக் கன்பு செய்யா நீசனேன் ஈசனே உன்
பொன்னடிக் கன்பு செய்யும் புண்ணியர் குழாத்துட் புக்கு
நன்னடை கற்றுமில்லேன் நன்றெலா மொருவி கின்ற
என்னடை இகழ்நது மில்லேன் என்செய்வான் தோன்றினேனே”²⁰

We can understand to what extent Krishna Pillai was impressed
by them when he uses ‘நீசனேன்’ and ‘ஈசனே’ from Appar and
‘பொன்னடி’ of the Ālvār.

Krishna Pillai has composed his *Tiruvakaval* on the pattern
of the four *Tiruvakavals* of Māṇickavāṣagar and the *Aruṣṣerumjōdhi
Akaval* of Ramalinga Aḍigaḷ. This has 106 lines, every two lines
with one rhyme. This work was in the form of a manuscript

for a long time. Recently Dr. V. Gnanasigamani has published it with a commentary. He is of opinion that the poet might have composed this extensively or he might have planned to do so.²¹

The poet begins this small work with the words ‘உலகெலாம்’ following Sēkkilār.

“ உலகெலாம் பரவு மொருதனி முதாலாய்
அலகிடற் கரிதாய் அகிலா ரணமாய்”²²

The poet gives the first stanza of the first section of *Rakshanya Yāthirigam* as an invocatory song. It is to be noted here that the poet begins that song with “உலகம் யாவும் புரந்தரு ஞன்னதர்” following the invocatory song of Kambar which begins with “ உலகம் யாவும் தாமுள வாக்கலும் ”.

In the first thirty lines of his *Akaval* the poet describes the majestic grandeur of God in heaven. In the following lines, he narrates the mighty acts of God and finishes with the word ‘போற்றி’ like Tamil religious poets. Here are a few lines in illustration :

ஒன்றுமுன் றுய ஒருவா போற்றி !
என்றென்றும் மாரு இறைவனே போற்றி !²³
அன்புரு வாய அப்பனே போற்றி !
மன்பதைக் கிரங்கிய வரதனே போற்றி !²⁴
இடர்க்கட லமிழ்ந்த ஏழையே முய்ய
அடைக்கல மாய அப்பனே போற்றி !²⁵

Krishna Pillai has written his prose work *Rakshanya Samaya Nirṇayam* following Tamil religious traditions. He has written this work adopting the method of presenting the religious tenets of other religions and refuting them as shown by Aruṇandi Śivācariar in *Śivajñāna Siddhīār*. This work bears the sub-title ‘வஸ்து நிர்ணயப் பிரகரணம், வசன கிரந்தம்’. In the list of works the poet gives as helpful in preparing this work, the following names of books : *Upaniṣads*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Mahā Bhāratam*, *Śivadharmottaram*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇam*, *Kanda Purāṇam*, *Tattvanijānubhogasāram*, *Kaivalyanavanitam*, *Oḻiviloḍukkam*, *Siddhīār*, *Arangathandādi*, and others. In this work the author explains the dogmas of twelve

religions in 126 pages. In the final chapters ('சந்தேக நிவர்த்தி' 'முடிவுரை'), he tries to establish Christianity as the religion of salvation. Bishop Appasamy observes that it was Krishna Pillai who was engaged in explaining Christian Theology by Tamil background after Robert De Nobili.²⁶ It is true that in this work Krishna Pillai attacks other religions. Especially he has attacked image worship. In support he has sought the help of the writings of Paṭṭinattār and Śivāvākiyār. Appasamy explains his stand as follows: "Instead of expounding the Christian doctrine of worship from the Biblical authorities alone, he has also used the insights of the Hindu thinkers. His conviction is that God had revealed himself also to them".²⁷

This work is written in an obscure style followed by the Tamil scholars of the past century. Krishna Pillai has used very many Sanskrit words. The first edition of the work came out in 1898 and the second in 1956.²⁸ It may be mentioned here that this work is not as popular among Tamil Christians as Krishna Pillai's *Yāthrigam* and *Manoharam*.

KRISHNA PILLAI IN TAMIL RELIGIOUS TRADITION

Krishna Pillai tries to present the scenes of *Christian's* long spiritual journey in the religious background of Tamil country. We may say that he has made *Christian* a Tamilian. He makes him sing songs in *Tēvāram* metre when he gets a conviction of his sins and when he gets an experience of devotion as a foretaste of bliss. He makes him invite people addressing them as "our kith and kin" (நமரங்காள்!) and "People of the world" (ஐக்கத் தீரே!) in order to share with them his joy. Further, he makes his Tamil *Christian* get some experiences which are not available to Bunyan's *Christian*.

In the circumstances when Bunyan wrote his work, there was no necessity to make any mention about creation in the Bible or the return of Israel from Exile in Babylon or the life of Jesus or about descriptions of heaven in the Bible. He knew that most of his readers were Christians. So, there was no need to explain to them these things. But Krishna Pillai has inserted them all in

his epic at proper places. He had a longing to present to Tamil people Biblical material in poetic form. Since he has composed his epic following Kambar, he had longed to mention Biblical stories and incidents as Kambar has inserted minor episodes here and there in his *Rāmayaṇam*.

The evangelist whom *Christian* meets at first instructs him briefly, gives him a scroll and asks him to study it. This is found in the original of Bunyan. But Krishna Pillai makes the evangelist to speak at length to *Christian* about Biblical stories and history.

When *Christian* enquires the evangelist which is the way to the joyful city of salvation, the latter begins to describe the grandeur of heaven. This section bears the title *Paramarājyapaḍalam* (பரம ராஜ்யப் படலம்).

When Krishna Pillai describes heaven, the scenes of the celestial residences found in the *purāṇas* of our country present themselves to his view. There the cloud of grace raises up, draws the water from the sea of love, covers the mount of salvation and then pours down the rain of mercy, it is said. Hence the consequent surging flood of virtue is said to be flowing in that country as *Jivagaṅgai*:

“ அருண்முகில் கிளம்பி யன்பி னூர்கனி யமுத மொண்டு
திருமனி தருள ஈரணிய திவ்விய சிகரி போர்த்துப்
பெருவருங் கருணை மாரி பொழிந்த புண் ணியமர நீத்தம்
ஒருமுக மாகி ஜீவகங்கையா யுலாய தன்னை ”¹

Speaking about heaven, he could not but think of the *Karpaga* tree. So he speaks about that as well. The heavenly host of angels and the redeemed who live there are said to be enjoying their stay under the shade of *Karpaga* tree. They are said to be spending their time in the service of God:

“ கற்பக நிழலிற் றங்கிக் களிப்பவர்வான் கணங்களாவார்
தற்பரன் தொழும்பு செய்வர் தகைபெறு முத்தராவார் ”²

Speaking about the construction of the Holy city, he presents it in the likeness of the sacred temples of the Tamil Country.

There is the shrine of the Holy one. Contiguous to it, he says, are the temple of the Son and the Hall of the Holy spirit. This holy city is praised by him as *uccitapaṭṭiṇam* (உச்சிதப் பட்டணம்) and *ponnagaram* (பொன்னகரம்). He calls it also as the ancient mount of Zion where the three peaks of Trinity shine forth. He gives a stanza wherein are mentioned the temple on the mount, the hall which is there, the inner shrine and the sound of three drums. He also calls this city *Saccidānandapuri* (சச்சிதானந்தபுரி).

“ உச்சிதப் பட்டணம்பதவி யூர்த்தகதி, பொன்னகரம் உம்பர்நாடு
சச்சிதா னந்தபுரி தருமபுரி அடைக்கலப்பட்டணஞ் சாம்ராச்சியம்
முச்சிகரி திகழ்சீயோன் முதுகுன்றம் மும்முரசம் மூழங்குமுன்றில்
அச்சதவேந் தரசிருக்கை திருக்குமராலயம் பரிசுத்தாவி மன்றம்”*

When one goes through these stanzas, one cannot but think of the description of the *Saccidānanda* states of God by Umarupulavar in his *Sirāppurāṇam* in the following words:

“ திருவுருவாய் உணர்வுருவாய் அறிவினொரு
தெளிவிடத்துஞ் சிந்தியாத அருவுருவாய்...”

Similarly, when one reads about *Karpagattaru* (கற்பகத்தரு) and *Kumaran Kōvil* (குமராலயம்) one cannot but rejoice considering here also what Umarupulavar says when he speaks about Abithalibu, the paternal uncle of the prophet Muhammad as follows: “இலகு செல்வியும் இவர்மனை முன்றில் வீற்றிருந்தான்”⁴ M. M. Ismail has quoted these lines.⁵ He comments that in *Sivāppurāṇam* the Arab land becomes the Tamil land.⁶ So far as Krishna pillai is concerned, heaven itself becomes the Tamil country!

The poet ascribes to Biblical characters some conventional behaviour peculiar to Tamil culture. For example, in describing how Adam and Eve led their domestic life very well in the garden of Eden, he says they worked hard, ate roots and fruits and bathed in the river. He further adds that they entertained the guests from the celestial regions:

“ வருந்திமெய் சலியார் வேலை வரன்முறை செய்து செய்து
திருந்துவர் சுணைகான் யாறு சிந்துநீர் வாவி யாடி
அருந்துவர் கந்த மூல பலங்களை அமரர் நாட்டின்
விருந்தெதிர் கொண்டு போற்றிப் பூசனை விருப்பிற் செய்வார்”⁷
T-7

He sees Adam as a *Rishi* and Eve as a *Rishipatni* and remarks that they both were doing penance daily in the garden of Eden.

ஒழுக்கமே கலங்க ளாக உடைபரி சுத்தமாக
இழுக்கறு கரும மேனிக் கிடுநறு சாந்தமாகப்
பழுக்குமன் பத்தி யன்ன பாணமாப் பகல்க ளெல்லாம்
வழுக்கறு மரபிற் போக்கி மாதவம் புரிவர் நானும்⁹

Devotion, Faith and Love show *Christian* the three places the library, the arena and the mount of bliss. The scene of their showing the mount Bliss resembles the scene of Rama showing many scenes in *Vanam Pugu paḍalam* (வனம்புகு படலம்) and *Cittirakūḍappaḍalam* (சித்திரகூடப் படலம்). The last foot of these stanzas ‘*pārāy*’ (பாராய்) ‘*kārāy*’ (காணாய்) of Kambar are adopted by Krishna Pillai also.⁹ As a sign of the establishment of the kingdom of God on mount Bliss, there are found scenes of grace. He lists one after another the scenes of the age of Truth, mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible, at the advent of the Messiah.

In one of the stanzas, the Virgins of the Castle Beautiful show to *Christian* the sky—scraping temples, *āśrams*, the hermitages and huts.

“மன்னு நித்திய ஜீவனை விழைந்தான் மதிதீயாய்
சென்னை வான்தொடு மாதவப் பள்ளியுஞ் செறிந்த
அந்ந லார் துற வாச்சிர மங்கனும் அறவோர்
பன்ன சாஸ்ய முறைமுறை திகழுவ பாராய்!”¹⁰

In describing the blessings of the Messianic age,¹¹ the poet follows the two divisions of Hindu religious life namely the domestic state and the ascetic stage. He longs to see the Hindu religious pattern in the Messianic concept.

In the same manner, the poet refers to ideas about Godhead. We saw in the previous lecture the *Saccidānanda* concept of God that attracted greatly Vedanayagam Sastriyar. We noted that he used the term along with Christian God-names. Krishna Pillai associates the Godhead of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānandam* with the

Trinitarian understanding of God in Christianity. While associating it, he does not mean to say that *sat* indicates God, the father, *cit*, the Son Christ and *ānandam* the Holy spirit. He pictures beautifully in one of his stanzas the complete merging in a profound way. The first two lines of the stanza composed in the style of *Tirumurai* run as follows:

“ சத்தாய் நிஷ்களமாய் ஒருசாமிய முமிலதாய்
சீத்தாய் ஆனந்தமாய்த் திகழ்கின்ற திரித்துவமே”¹²

The same idea is conveyed in another stanza thus:

“ சத்தாகிச் சித்துமாகித் தணப்பிலா னந்தமாகி
நித்தியந் திகழ்த்தி நிற்கும் நிருமல திரியேகத்தின்”¹³

In another context he refers to the Trinity as follows:

“ மூன்றாய கவடுடைய முதுமூலத் தனிப்பொருள்”¹⁴

He describes God as *Saccidānanda Vēndan* (சச்சிதானந்த வேந்தன்)¹⁵ and the abode he dwells *Saccidānanda Puri* (சச்சிதானந்த புரி).¹⁶

Now, by calling God the Father as *Saccidānanda Vēndan* he does not limit Him as *sat* but makes it clear that *cit* and *ānanda* also are His attributes. So it is evident that his idea is that ‘God the Son’ and the Holy Spirit also should be understood as *Saccidānanda maindan* (சச்சிதானந்த மைந்தன்) and *Saccidānanda āvi* (சச்சிதானந்த ஆவி).

The saints and sages of our land have often proclaimed the truth that God is unknowable. Some of their statements are worth noting here.

“ உரைக்கும் கடந்திங் குணர்வரியான் ”

(He transcends speech and knowledge)—Appar.

“ தெரிவரிதாகிய தெளிவே ” (ununderstandable wisdom).

“ நினைப்பரிய தனிப் பெரியோன் ” (the unthinable Supreme Being).

“ பாரார் விசம்புளார் பாதாளத்தார்
புறத்தார் ஆராலுங் காண்டற் கரியான்”

(He is the One whom the inhabitants of earth, heaven and the nether world and any outsiders cannot know)—Manikavasagar,

Similarly Sundarar Sings :

“ அரிய நான்மறை அந்தணர் ஓவாது
அடிபணிந் தறிதற் கரியாணை...”

(He is the One rarely to be understood (even) by the unceasingly worshipping Vedic Scholars).

Bearing these thoughts in mind Krishna Pillai says, “However much the angels of heaven sing praises to God, they cannot understand fully the subject of their songs” and he raises this question. “How can the dwellers on earth know Him?”

“ நாட ருந்திரு நாட்டு வைபவம்
ஊட றிந்தறிந் தும்ப ரின்னிசை
பாடு வார்முழு துணரற் பாலரோ
வாடு மானிடம் வகுப்ப தெங்ஙனம்?”¹⁷

Our poet has endeavoured greatly to explain, by means of words and phrases associated with Tamil religious ideas his faith that God approaches men and offers them His riches of grace through Jesus. For instance, let us look at one stanza :

திருநோக்கால் திருவாக்கால் திருக்கரத்தால் திருவருளால்
தீண்டிக் கிட்டி
ஒருவரிய பிணிபிறவிக் குருடுசெவி டுமைமுடம்
உதிரப் பாடு
வெருவருபேய்க் கோரணிசித் தப்பிரமை திமிர்வாத
வியாதி யாதி
பருவரலுற் றோர்க்கருளி யிகபரமன் மையை யளித்தார்
பரமன் மைந்தர்¹⁸

The phrases ‘Divine look’ (திருநோக்கு) ‘Divine utterance’ (திருவாக்கு) ‘Divine touch’ (திருக்கரத்தால் தீண்டல்) and ‘imparting divine grace’ (திருவருள் பாலித்தல்) which occur in the first line of this stanza are the vocabulary of the *Siddhānta* indicating the actions of the Lord Śiva when he manifests Himself as the *guru*. Krishna Pillai ascribes them to Jesus with great enthusiasm.

Māṇickavāṣagar describes the greatness and accessibility of the grace of Śiva thus: 'the Celestial One coming down to the earth assuming the form of a divine *guru*' (அருபரத்தொருவன் அவனியில் வந்து குருபராகி), whenever the poet thinks of the incarnation of Jesus, he reveals his exultation mingled with wonder. He has endeavoured to express those feelings in a stanza based on the style of Māṇickavāṣagar. (அச்சோ பதிகம்) It is as follows:

வானாடு தொழுதிறைஞ்சு மகிமையெலாம் புறநிறுவிக்
கானாடு மலர்க்கழலோர் கன்னிகருப் பாசயத்துற்
றானாடு முடலெடுத்திங் குயிப்பலிநேர்ந் துதவினைநீ
ஆநாடற் கெளிதோனின் னன்புநிலை யச்சோவே¹⁹

In another stanza he says:

ஆனாடுநெறி யமைத்தாக்கிய வகிலாண்டவச் சுதனோர்
ஊனாடிய திருமேனிகொண் டுதித்தாருல குவப்ப²⁰

It is clear that the poet tries to point out the human nature of Jesus by the phrases body of flesh (ஊன் நாடும் உடல்) and 'Divine form of flesh' (ஊன் நாடிய திருமேனி) having in mind the idea of incarnation and the holy appearance. In ten stanzas he addresses Jesus as 'The great King Who assumed a human body, the holy *guru* of divine wisdom'

'நரசரீரம் கொண்ட வரராசனே பரம
ஞானசம்பந்த குருவே'

To point out the Biblical idea that man is the crown of creation and that the rest of creation is all for him, he sings as follows:

மலைகடல் ககன நாடு மதிகதிர் புனல்யா றோடை
நிலைமடு வாவி சோலை நிலவொளி மழைபல் பண்டம்
தொலைவிலாப் பயிர்வ ருக்கந் தொக்கபல் வளங்க ளெல்லாங்
கலைமதி மாந்தர்க் கென்றே கையளித் தனார்நங் கர்த்தன்²¹

Accepting the Biblical idea that although man was created fit to live in fellowship with God, he is now in a state where he himself has broken that relationship, the poet describes the stain of sin of the fallen man with various expressions.

In some places the poet tries to apply the *Siddhāntic* terminology 'three fold *malas*' (மும்மலம்) to the background of Christian Theology.

While describing the false appearance of 'The worldly wise' (இலௌகீகன்) a character in *Yāthirigam*, who is entangled in the desires of the world, the poet remarks as follows :

மீயுற வேதியர் வேடந் தோன்றிடும்
வாயுற மறைத்திரு வசனம் வந்திடும்
வீயுற வறுவகை விகாரம் மும்மலந்
தீயுறு மனத்திடைச் செநீந்து நிற்குமால்²²

The phrase 'Sixfold perversions' (அறுவகை விகாரம்) in this stanza denotes the conventional six vices. (காமம், குரோதம், உலோபம், மோகம், மதம், மாற்சரியம்). The expression 'three fold *malas*' (மும்மலம்) is frankly interpreted as *āṇavam*, *kanmam* and *māyai* by the commentators of *Yāthirigam*.²³ In another place the poet refers to the three *malas* as fetters, 'with the fetters of the three *malas*'.

அம்மலைச் சாரலை அடுத்தங் கோர்சிறை
மும்மலத் துளையொடு முடங்கிப் பார்தன் போல்
அம்மகே டுணர்கிலா அசடர் மூவர் தாங்
கைம்மிகு துயில்கொளக் கருதி நோக்கினான்²⁴

Speaking about the grip of sin, the poet calls it 'the inherited human guilt' (நரஜென்ம தோடம்') and asserts that it could be removed by the grace of God. Describing the experience of *Christian* at 'the pond of life' (ஜீவ புஷ்கரிணி) the poet remarks,

தாகந் தீர்ந்தது; தீர்ந்தது பசிப்பிணி; சமழ்த்த
சோகந் தீர்ந்தது; தீர்ந்தது நரஜென்ம தோடம்²⁵

The poet states emphatically that the natural sin, attached to human life from antiquity or the sin which comes through birth—however strong this fetter of sin might be—could be cut off by the power of grace of God. This saying of the poet is an adaptation of the thought of St. Appar. However big the heap of piled firewood may be, a tiny spark of fire will suffice to

burn it to ashes; likewise the heap of the sin of *karma* could be burnt off with merely the name of God.

விண்ணுற அடுக்கிய விறகின் வெவ்வழல்
உண்ணிய புகிலவை யொன்று மில்லையாம்
பண்ணிய உலகினில் பயின்ற பாவத்தை
நண்ணி நின்றறுப்பது நமச்சி வாயவே²⁶

Krishna Pillai who is hailed as the Poet of Redemption is also a poet of the great devotion. In his *Yāthirigam* and *Manōharam* he has included hundreds of devotional hymns. Most of them are confessions. In them are found very humble confessions expressed in terms and phrases such as the following:

‘I am the worst offender of all’, ‘I am one with a hardened heart’, ‘I am a liar’, ‘a cur’ (‘எண்ணப் போன்ற பாவியர் எவருமில்’ ‘பொய்யன்’ ‘நாயேன்’).

We find in him the attitude of humility and submission arising out of a conviction, “I am helpless in the presence of God”. I would like to quote a hymn of his written in the metre of one of Appar’s confessional hymns which begins ‘I do not sing Thy praise as a devotee’ (பக்தனாய்ப் பாடமாட்டேன்).

பக்தனாய்ப் பாடேன் சுத்தனா யொழுகேன்
பகலெலாம் பாவமே பழகி
எத்தனாய்க் கழித்தேன் இன்றுளே னானை
யிலனென எண்ணவும் படுவேன்
பித்தனைற் குனது பேரரு ளெலால்
பிழைக்குமா நில்லையா தலினால்
அத்தனை யடியேன் நின்சர னடைந்தேன்
அஞ்சலென் றடைக்கல மருளே²⁷

Krishna Pillai depicts in many of his songs the state of his close relationship with God through devotion by addressing Him as father, mother, intimate friend and master. Especially, posing himself as the wife, he describes in twenty nine stanzas the lamentations of the soul yearning for the coming of the husband. Here is one of the stanzas in which he shows the love of the soul for Christ.

அருமை நாயகன் முட்டிய ஆசைநோய் தனியா
தெரிமுகத் துற்ற மெழுகென விளகியுள் ஞாடவாள்
திருமுகச் செவ்வி காண்குறுஞ் செவ்வி நீளிதெனக்
கருமுகிற் றுளி காண்குறுப் பயிரெனக் கரிவாள்²⁰

The poet beseeches in one of his songs that God should take hold of him firmly and never let him loose, since he does not have the ability to holdfast to him.

பரசேன்பற் றுகில்லேன்எனைப் பற்றியப் பற்றுவிடாய்
அரசே உன்னையல்லால் எனக்கார்துணை யாருறவே²⁰

When one reads these lines one is able to discover the poet's *Vaiṣṇavite* background in which the fact of the mother cat grasping its young one with its mouth is emphasized. It is apparent, that he concedes the idea of the young monkey clinging to its mother. Here is a stanza in which he shows how tightly he takes hold of Lord Jesus in his heart.

முக முண்முடி முடித்திட முனிவுரு முகசரோ ருகப்போதும்
நேச மோடுடு , துருமனங் கசந்தழ நோக்கிய நெடுங்கண்ணுந்
தேச குன்றிவெங் குருதிநீர் பொழிதரு செய்யமே னியுமெம்மான்
ஏசு நாயகன் சரணதா மரையுமென் னிதயம்விட்டகலாவே²⁰

It is to be noted here that the idea of the devotee getting hold of God tightly and at the same time resting in the embrace of God Who is like a human mother feeding her baby is a Biblical thought which attracted Krishna Pillai in the book is Psalms, a devoted Hebrew Poet sings; 'My soul clings to thee; thy right hand upholds me'.²¹

The *bhakti* poets of our land saw in the temples the significance of the sacred form of God, rejoiced over it and expressed the feelings of their heart in their songs. Likewise, Krishna Pillai also visualizes Jesus hanging on the cross and depicts elaborately the excellence of that holy vision. In a section entitled 'Vision of Faith' (விசுவாசக் காட்சி) he describes in ten stanzas the vision of the cross as he sees it, following Pēyālvār who saw the sacred form at *Tirukōvalur* and song as follows:

திருக்கண்டேன் பொன்மேனி கண்டேன் திகழும்
அருக்கன் அணிநிறமும் கண்டேன்—செருக்கினரும்
பொன்னுழி கண்டேன், புரிசங்கம் கைக்கண்டேன்
என்னுழி வண்ணன்பால் இன்று⁸²

Krishna Pillai has also followed Appar who was given the holy vision at *Tiruvaiyāru* to which he refers thus :

“கண்டேனவர்திருப் பாதங் கண்டறி யாதன கண்டேன் :”⁸³

He has understood quite well that the cross is a symbol of contradiction and paradox. He observes that things that cannot be united are blended together there. He is eager to point out that he who hangs on it helpless, abandoned by everybody, bearing a strong blow of defeat, is in truth the victor. In a stanza he brings out the idea thus :

படிசாய்த்த பெரும்பாவப் பரஞ்சுமந்து பரமர்திரு
மடிசாய்த்த திருமேனி வதைந்திழிசெங் குருதியுக
முடிசாய்த்த பெருமாணை முதலகை தலைநசுக்கிக்
கொடிசாய்த்த கொற்றவனைக் குருசின்மிசை கண்டேனே⁸⁴

He sees that the One hanging on the cross bleeding and head bowed down is the One Who crushes the head of the devil and pulls down his standard. Things that cannot be united, he sees united. He presents a new kind of scene before the mental eyes through the hymn. He shows that humiliation and exaltation are inseparable in the cross. Exaltation is not just embodied in humiliation. Humiliation is indeed exaltation. The poet has sung all the ten stanzas with this understanding of the Cross. He rejoices in ascribing to Jesus hanging on the Cross such figurative words as the *bhakti* poets of our land use in reference to the beautiful sight of God, as gold (பொன்), ruby (மணி), pearl (முத்து), the over burning lamp (தூண்டா விளக்கு), nectar (அமுது), and sweet fruit (தீங்கனி). These are to be found in the following two verses.

காயொளியிற் கதிர் பரப்புங் களங்கமினீ தியின்சுடரைப்
பாயொளிகொள் பசும்பொன்னைப் பணிக்கருஞ் சிந்தாமணியைத்
தூயொளிகொள் நித்திலத்தைத் தூண்டாத சுடர்விளக்கைச்
சேயொளிகொள் செம்மணியைச் சிலுவைமிசைக் கண்டேனே⁸⁵

உள்ளமுதவப் புறுதேனை யுயிர்க்குயிரை யுலவாத
தெள்ளமுதைத் தீங்குனியைச் சிலுவைமிசைக் கண்டேனே⁸⁶

Following the *Saivite* Saints in their composition of ‘*Namacivāya Padigam*’ Krishna Pillai has composed eleven verses under the caption *Tirunāmappadigam* (திருநாமப்பதிகம்). The first verse runs as follows :

மன்னுயிர்த் தொகுதியீ டேற வானினும்
இந்நிலத் திலும்பிறி திலையென் றேமறை
பன்னியேத் தெடுப்பது பாவ ஜீவருக்
கின்னமு தாயது இயேசு நாமமே⁸⁷

We do not know at what stage in his life the poet composed this hymn. But there is an instance which took place at the last stage of his life, just a little before he breathed his last. This incident indicates to what extent the statements of his verses in “*Tirunāmappadigam*” were bound with his life and convictions.

Am Carmichael came to call on him at his death bed. She was informed that the poet was unconscious. She wrote the name ‘*Jesus*’ (இயேசு) on a piece of card-board and held it before Krishna Pillai. His face brightened at the sight of it. He smiled and turned to raise his right hand. Those who were near helped him. He fixed his index finger on those letters and it remained there when his life departed.⁸⁸

When we read through this hymn with this background we can understand how inspiring are the words in the stanzas of *Tirunāmappadigam*.

நன்னெறி புகுத்திடும் நவையி னீக்குடும்
இன்னலை யகற்றிடும் இகல்செ குத்திடும்
உன்னதத் துய்த்திடும் ஒருங்கு காத்திடும்
எந்நலத் தையுந்தரும் இயேசு நாமமே⁸⁹

Such stanzas are found in it.

Epilogue :

In the past century when many of the Tamil Christians disregarded, deliberately Tamil culture and Tamil religious ideas

and practices, the literary services of Vedanayagam Sastriyar and Krishna Pillai are praiseworthy indeed.

Dr. P. D. Devanandan while describing the background of the religions points out the relation between creed, cultus and culture.⁴⁰ Culture is wide and extensive. Many religions can come under its sway. In the background of their worship could be seen the pleasing and creative interaction. Creed will not easily yield to interaction. Nevertheless, there is a scope for rethinking which will result in what Hocking calls 'Reconception' of the doctrines of one religion in the light of the corresponding ones in other religions.

These two poets have beautifully related Christian Creed and worship with the Tamil cultural heritage in their works and have shown the importance of indigenisation for a meaningful presence of Christianity in Tamil Nadu.

It is true these poets did not endeavour to produce systematic theological works. But it may be boldly said that they paved the way for theologians like V. Chakkarai, Chenchaiyah, A. J. Appasamy, Savarirayan Jesudasan and others of the present century to spread among Christians deeper understanding of inter-religious encounter and fellowship. In this respect, these two poets are pioneers in their own right to the present day Indian Christian Thinkers.

TANJAI VEDANAYAGAM SASTRIYAR IN TAMIL LITERARY TRADITION

1. G. S. Vedanayagam, *Amalaguru Satakam*, Stanza 81.
2. Mayuram Vedanayagam, *Tiruvaruḷ Malai*, Stanza 38.
3. V. P. K. Sundaram, *Arutpugazh*.
4. Satyanathan, கிறிஸ்தவக் கீர்த்தனைகள், C. L. S., Madras. Stanza 296.
5. D. W. Devanesan, *Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar*, C. L. S., Madras, p. 8.
6. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Christian Lyrics*, Jepamalai, C. L. S., Madras, Stanza 188.
7. Ibid, Stanza 9.
8. Ibid. Stanza 27.
9. Ibid. Stanza 80.
10. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Jñānattāḷḻṭṭu*, Stanza 15.
11. Ibid. 26.
12. Ibid. 27.
13. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Pralāba Oppari*, Stanza 21.
14. Ibid. 22.
15. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Jñānattachan Nāṭṭagam*.
16. " " " " " 4 : 14.
17. Tirukuda Rasappa Kavirayar, *Kutrala Kuravanji*, Kanni. 32.
18. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Pethlahem Kuravanji*, Veṅṇilātaru, 3.
19. Ibid., Palaiya Adam Taru, 1.
20. Tirukuda Rasappa Kavirayar, *Kutrala Kuravanji*, 50.
21. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Bethalem Kuravanji*, Singi Natana Sindu, 2
22. Tirukuda Rasappa Kavirayar, *Kutrala Kuravanji*, 54.
23. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Bethalem Kuravanji*, Malai Vaḷam, 1.
24. Tirukuda Rasappa Kavirayar, *Kutrala Kuravanji*, 120.
25. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Bethalem Kuravanji*, Singan Tuyara Sindu, 4.
26. Tirukuda Rasappa Kavirayar, *Kutrala Kuravanji*, 125. 5. 6.
27. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Bethalem Kuravanji*, Singan, Singi conversation, 6.
28. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Aranadhindhan*, 19.
29. Ibid. 19. 12. 14.
30. Ibid. 19. 20. 17,

31. P. A. Sathiasatchi, *Tanjai Vedanayagam Tamil Virundhu, Christian Arts and Communications Service, Madras-18.* pp. 57-58.
In this book the author has introduced very well the works like *Jñāna Nondi Nadogam, Jñāna Thachan Nadogam* and *Jñāna Kummi*.
32. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai*, 25-23.
33. Ibid. Ahapatru 1.
34. Ibid. 12. 5.
35. Ibid, 26-8.
36. V. A. Devasenapati, *Of Human Bondage and Divine Grace, Annamalai University, pp. 71-72.*
37. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai, Confession of Sins.*
38. Many of these are found in தேவ தோத்திரப் பாடல்கள், C. L. S., In கிறிஸ்தவக் கீர்த்தனைகள் used by Tamil Christian Congregations. 74 songs of Sastriyar are included.
39. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, தேவ தோத்திரப் பாடல்கள், C. L. S., Madras, Pātal 237.
40. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, கிறிஸ்தவக் கீர்த்தனைகள், C. L. S., Madras 81.
41. Ibid. 9.
42. D. W. Devanesan, *Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, C. L. S., Madras, pp. 92-93.*
43. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, தேவ தோத்திரப் பாடல்கள், 62. C. L. S., Madras.
44. D. W. Devanesan, *Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, C. L. S., Madras, p. 90.*
45. G. U. Pope, *The Tiruvācagam Translation, Oxford, 1900, p. xiii.*
46. Cited by S. Balasingam Satya in his preface to D. W. Devanesan's *Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, p. iii.*

TANJAI VEDANAYAGAM SASTRIYAR IN TAMIL RELIGIOUS TRADITION

1. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Tamil Christian Lyrics, Stanza 176, C. L. S., Madras.*
2. Ibid. 49.
3. Ibid. 12.
4. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai, 3. 1.*
5. Ibid. 3. 1.
6. Ibid. 3. 10.
7. John, *Bible, 1:1. 2,*

8. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Jepamālai*, p. 6.
9. " *Perinbakkāḍal*, 10. 84.
10. *Tiruvācakam*, Tiruttejjeṇam, 1.
11. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Āraṇadhintam*, 11-5.
12. " *Jepamālai*, 6. 3.
13. *Ibid.* 6. 3.
14. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, தேவ தோத்திரப் பாடல், C. L. S., Madras, 1957, Stanza 150.
15. *Ibid.* 256.
16. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 176.
17. *Ibid.* 93.
18. *Ibid.* 3.
19. *Ibid.* 86.
20. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Jepamālai*, 4. 6.
21. Saint John, *Bible*, 4 : 24.
22. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 93.
23. " *Jñāna Ula*, 51.
24. " *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza, 111.
25. *Ibid.* 93.
26. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Jñāna Ula*, 51.
27. " *Jepamālai*, 13-10.
28. " *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 3.
29. " *Jñāna Ula*, 79.
30. " *Jepamālai*, 5. 85.
31. " *Āraṇadhintam*, 8.
32. " *Jepamālai*, 5. 4,
33. " *Perinbakkāḍal*, 4. 37.
34. " *Jñāna Ula*, 81.
35. " *Jepamālai*, 22. 21.
36. *Ibid.* p. 6.
37. *Ibid.* 1-4.
38. *Ibid.* p. 6.
39. *Tiruvācakam*, Tiruvembavai, 9.
40. *The Bible*, Adhiyagamam, 1-1.
41. *Ibid.* Revelation, 21 : 5.
42. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastryar, *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 21.
43. *Ibid.* Stanza 234.

44. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Ula*, 172.
45. „ *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, 350.
46. Ibid. 27.
47. Ibid. 188 & 27.
48. Ibid. 20.
49. Ibid. 89.
50. Ibid. 12.
51. Ibid. 92.
52. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai*, p. 6.
53. Ibid. 1.1.
54. *Tiruvācakam*, 3-51.
55. Ibid. 5.97.
56. Ibid. 4.212.
57. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Ula*, 68.
எண் குணங்கள் சைவராலும் ஆருகதராலும் குறிக்கப்பெறுகின்றன. ஆருகதர் குறிக்கும் வரம்பில் ஞானம், வரம்பில் காட்சி, வரம்பில் இன்பம், வரம்பிலாற்றல், நாமமின்மை, கோத்திரமின்மை, ஆயு வின்மை, இடையுறின்மை ஆகியவற்றைச் சாஸ்திரியார் அடிக் குறிப்பில் தருகின்றார். (செபமாலை பக். 196)
58. „ *Jepamālai*, p. 6.
ஐசுவரியம். வீரியம், புகழ், திரு ஞானம், வைராக்கியம்.
59. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Betlahem Kuravanji*, Mangalam 4.
பத்து லட்சணங்கள் : ஆதியந்தமிலாமை, மாறாமை, அனைத்தாற்றல், அனைத்தறிவு, வரம்பில் ஞானம், மீநிறைவு, வாய்மை, தூய்மை, நீதி, நன்மையும் கிருபையும். இப்பட்டியல் “வேதசாஸ்திரம்” ஏடு 10ல் தரப்பெறுவதாகக் கூறுகின்றார். (செபமாலை பக். 19)
60. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai*, 10.1.
நெறியாறுநாலும் என்பது ஆறும் நாலும் கூடிய பத்துக் கட்டளைகளைக் குறிக்கின்றன.
61. Ibid. 1-10.
62. Ibid. 1-10.
63. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Ula*, 427-474.
64. „ *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 81.
65. Ibid. 21, 86.
66. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai*, 5. 10.
67. *The Bible* (O. T.), 3. 16.

68. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Thacha Nātagam*, 1. வீடு கட்டி
னானே, 20.
69. Ibid. 1. வீடு கட்டினானே, 1.
70. *The Bible*, 1. Corinthiam 3. 16.
71. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Thacha Nātagam*, 1. வீடு கட்டி
னானே, 10.
72. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jñāna Ula*, 68-69.
73. *The Bible*, Exodus 20.5; Neumbers 14:18.
74. Ibid. Romans 5. 12-14.
75. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Tamil Christian Lyrics*, Stanza 27.
76. ,, தேவ தோத்திரப் பாடல்கள் 222.
77. கம்பராமாயணம், கடல் தாவு படலம், 62.
78. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Jepamālai*, 2-3.
79. Ibid. 1.2.6. & வருகைப் பதிகம் 1.4.
80. Ibid. 2.7.
81. R. P. Sethu Pillai, *Kristava Tamil Tonḍar*, Tirunelvely, 1946, pp. 67-75.
82. Ibid. p. 71.
83. Ibid. p. 75.
84. Tanjai Vedanayagam Sastriyar, *Perinbakāḍal*, 22-41.
85. ,, *Jepamālai*, 31-2.

KRISHNA PILLAI—THE SALVATION POET

A General Introduction

1. H. A. Krishna Pillai, *Rakshanya Yathirgam*, S. P. C. K. Press, C. L. S.,
Madras, 1894, p. xvi.
2. R. P. Sethu Pillai, *Kristava Tamil Tonḍar*, p. 62.
3. The Rt. Rev. Solomon Doraiswamy, Presidential Address, pp. 5-6.
4. Krishna Pillai, *Rakshanya Manōharam*, 3.4.
(Translation by A. J. Appasamy, Vide, *Tamil Christian Poet*, U. S. C. L.,
London, 1966. p. 30).
5. John Brown, *John Bunyan*, His life, Times and work, The Hulbert Publi-
shing Company (Ltd.), London, 1928, p. 481.
6. This book was in the form of Manuscript for a long time. Only recently
Dr. V. Gnanasigamony has seen it through the Press. He has published
the booklet with useful editorial notes.

7. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Marshal Morgan & Scott Ltd., London, p. X.
8. Ibid. p. 10.
9. John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Mordy Press, Chicago, 1959.
10. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yathirigam*, Cirappupayiram, 10.
11. கலிங்கத்துப்பரணி, சைவசித்தாந்த நூற்பதிப்புக்கழகம், சென்னை, 1965, பக். 9-31.
12. *Op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.
13. Quoted by M. D. Devadoss in "A Historical Sketch of Some Leading Converts to Christianity" Vide "Fifty Years Pilgrimage of a Convert", A. S. Appasamy, C. L. S., Madras, 1924, p. 150.
14. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yathirigam*, Adhiparuvam, Varalatu Padalam, 8 & 9.
15. Ibid. pp. XII-XIII.

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1. *Kambarāmayanam*, Bala Kandam, Atrupadalam, 19.
2. *Periyapurānam*, Tirumalai Carukkam, 56.
3. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yathirigam*, Adiparuvam, Parama-Rajyapadalam, 5.
4. *Kambarāmayanam*, Bala Kandam, Atrupadalam, 20.
5. *Op. cit.* Stanza 10.
6. Ibid. Adiparuvam, Sirushtipadalam, 13.
7. *Kambarāmayanam*, Bala Kandam, Naharapadalam, 73.
8. *Op. cit.* Jivapushkaranipadalam, 9.
9. Ibid. Nidhanaparuvam, Marana choozhal irutha Padalam, 16.
10. Ibid. Kumaraparuvam, Ratshanya Carithapadalam, 320.
11. Ibid. Adiparuvam, Suvishesha Margapadalam, 23.
12. Ibid. 15.
13. Ibid. Kumaraparuvam, Ratshanya Carithapadalam, 308.
14. Ibid. 271.
15. John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 55.
16. *Op. cit.* Nidhanaparuvam, Marana choozhal irutha padalam, 75.
17. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Manōharam*, Balya Pirarthanai.
18. Apparadigal, *Tevāram*, 4th Tirumurai, 78-1.
19. Toṇḍaradipoḍiālvār, *Tirumālai*, 26.

20. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Manōharam*, 19-1.
21. Dr. V. Jnanasigamony, Editor, *Potri Tiru Ahaval* of Krishna Pillai, Vedaga Manavar Pathippaham, 7, Angadi Street, Madras-23, 1977, p. 15.
22. Krishna Pillai, *Potri Tiru Ahaval*, 1,
23. Ibid. 40.
24. Ibid. 42.
25. Ibid. 51.
26. A. J. Appasamy, *Tamil Christian Poet*, U. S. C. L., London, 1966, p. 69.
27. Ibid. p. 99.
28. The second Edition of *Ratshanya Samaya Nirnayam*, has been published by K. S. A. Vedaratnam, Candra Printers, Sivakasi, 1956.

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1. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yatirigam*, 94.
2. Ibid. 156.
3. Ibid. 125.
4. Umaruppulavar, *Sirāpuranam*, Vilathathukkandam, Pugaiyara Kanda Padalam, 2.
5. M. M. Ismail, *Sevi Nahar Kanigal*, Vanathi Pathipagam, Madras, 1974, p. 71.
6. Ibid. p. 73.
7. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yatirigam*, Adhi Paruvam, Sirusti Padalam, Stanza 17.
8. Ibid. 8.
9. Ibid. Kumara Paruvam, Katohi Padalam, 49-71.
10. Ibid. Stanza 62.
11. Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 47.

இந்நற்பேறுகளை பனியன் மிகச் சுருக்கமாகச் சில வரிகளில் தருகிறார்.

“He saw a most pleasant mountainous country, beautiful with woods, Vinyards, fruits of all sorts, flowers also; with springs and fountains, very delectable to behold. Then he asked the name of the country. They said that it was Immanuel's Land, and it is as common, said they, as this hill is, to and far all the pilgrims. And when thou comest there, from thence, said they, thou mayest see to the gate of the celestial city, as the shepherds that live there will make appear”.

(Pilgrims Progress, p. 47).

12. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Manōharam*, 20, 1.
13. „ *Ratshanya Yatirigam*, Ratshanya Paruvam, Swargarohana Padalam, Stanza 2.
14. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Yatirigam*, Adhi Paruvam, Sumai Neengu Padalam, Stanza 16.
15. Ibid. Sirusti Padalam, Stanza 15.
16. Ibid. Parama Rajya Padalam, 33.
17. Ibid. 29.
18. Ibid. Adhi Paruvam, Suviseṣha Marga Padalam, 160.
19. Ibid. „ *Sumai Neengu Padalam*, 15.
20. Ibid. „ *Suviseṣha Marga Padalam*, 19.
21. Ibid. „ *Sirusti Padalam*, 3.
22. Ibid. „ *Loukika Padalam*, 53.
23. Ibid. Uraipahuti, p. 499.
24. Ibid. Adhi Paruvam, Tuyilunarthu Padalam, 3.
25. Ibid. „ *Jiva Pushkarani Padalam*, 39.
26. Apparadigal, *Tevaram*, Namasivaya Tiruppathigam, 3.
27. Krishna Pillai, *Ratshanya Manōharam*, Kaiyadai Pathigam, 2.
28. „ *Anma Pralābam*, 5.
29. „ *Ratshanya Manōharam*, 20, 7.
30. „ „ *Pan Mani*, II. 2.
31. *The Bible*, Ps. 63 : 8.
32. Peyālvār, *Mūndram Tiru Antati*, 1.
33. Apparadigal, *Tevāram*, 27-1.
34. Krishnā Pillai. *Ratshanya Manōharam*, Visuvasa Katchi, Stanza 2.
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