CHAPTER 3

NATURE-MAN-GOD

"O Thou, who fill' st the heaven, who fill' st the earth, art manifested light, Transcending thought, Thou boundless One! Thy glory great..."

"O Truth! as the Òngãram dwelling in my soul,"

Tiruvãcagam I:23,24,33.

Reality is one single whole; this whole cannot be perceived at the ordinary level of perception. What is seen at the normal level of awareness is only a part of this reality which when compared with the complete whole is only an appearance. It is possible through proper preparation and discipline to penetrate into that which completely is. Mystics are pioneers of the spiritual world and we have no right to deny validity to their discoveries merely because we lack the opportunity or the courage necessary for those who would attempt such explorations. Mystics have also agreed with extra-ordinary unanimity that beyond the world of appearance there is another way, another secret, by which the conscious self may reach the actuality it seeks. They point out that the mere hunger for such a reality is sufficient proof that such reality exists. Mysticism and mystical
speculations rise from the very depths of human spirit.

Nature reveals little of her secrets to those who look and listen with the outward eye and ear. The condition of all valid seeing and hearing upon every plane of consciousness lies not in the sharpening of the senses but in a particular attitude of the whole personality, in a self-forgetting attentiveness, a profound concentration, a self-merging which operates a real communion between the seer and the seen in contemplation. Mystical experiences penetrate and inter-penetrate one another. In spite of much formal agreement the path to its achievement and thereby the fundamental attitude of the mystic himself can be entirely different. They often combine and may even help one another occasionally towards completion and fulfilment. Perhaps only in their combination do they represent the ideal of mystical experience. There also exists a secret affinity in their goal which the mystic himself recognises and considers natural; but to the non-mystic their extreme difference is striking. There is the mystical intuition of 'unifying vision' adapted by the extrovertive mystic or the way of unity, and there is the inward way of the introvertive mystic.
In the 'way of unity' the mystic perceives the physical objects as all One and as permeated by the One or Divine. Rudolph Otto advocates this idea and writes "This does not mean that all things in the fullness and richness of their individual being disappear, but rather that each with each and all with all is identical - one and the same." The barrier between the object and subject and between object and objects melts away. "Seen thus, a thistle has celestial qualities; a speckled hen a touch of the sublime. Our greater comrades, the trees, the clouds, the rivers, initiate us into the mighty secrets, flame out at us 'like shining from shock foil.' The 'eye which looks upon Eternity' has been given its opportunity. We have been immersed for a moment in the 'life of the all': a deep and peaceful love unites us with the substance of all things, a 'Mystic Marriage' has taken place between the mind and some aspect of the external world."

The vision of unity is one which shows stages of ascension, these gradations are not necessarily separate chronological stages in the history of mystical experience or in the lives of the individual mystics. The gradation present

1 Rudolph Otto, Mysticism East and West, p. 44
seems to lie in the nature of vision itself. In the lowest stage things and events as they are conceived by this intuitive vision are no longer many, separate or divided, but are perceived as an all, a sum, a whole and therefore one. The essence of all creatures is seen as one. Closely connected with this is what we call their 'transfiguration.'

"They become transparent, luminous, and visionary." Together with this there now appears not only the identification of all things with all, but also of the perceiver with perceived. As Eckhart says: "All that is dead here, is life there. And all that is here, gross and tangible is there spirit. It is as when a man pours water into a clean vessel and lets it stand, and then, if he holds his face over it he sees his face at the bottom (resplendent) as it is in itself." No consideration is given to the soul of the perceiver which is very different from the introverted mystic intuition. "He is what everything is, and everything is what he is."

Stace qualifies extroverted mystical experience as

"an incomplete kind of experience which finds its completion and fulfilment in the introverted kind of experience." to 6

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3 Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West*, p. 46
4 Ibid. p. 46 (quoted from Eckhart)
5 Ibid. p. 47
6 W.T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 132
Extravertive mysticism can be graded on a lower level since the multiplicity has not been fully obliterated, it has been only half absorbed in the unity. The multiple items are still there, together with spatial relations between items and in some cases relations of time also.

Instead of looking out, in introvertive experience the gaze turns inward towards the unchanging, the undifferentiated 'one without a second'. This requires the contemplation of spirit and those who practise it are required to deliberately refuse all the messages of the senses, a withdrawal from all outward things, a retreat into the ground of one's own soul. This is sinking down into the self in order to reach intuition and hence in the inmost depth of the self the finite is drawn to the Infinite or God or Brahman. As Sri Gnanananda has taught,

"There where nothing exists

is Fullness!

There where nothing is seen

is the Vision of Being!"

The mystic must learn to concentrate all his faculties, his very self upon the invisible and the intangible, so that

7 Abhishiktananda, Guru and Disciple (London: SPCK, 1974) p. 87
all visible things are obliterated.

"Penetrate to the depths of yourself, to the place where thought no longer exists and take care that no thought raises its head!"

"In mystical language he must 'sink into his nothingness': into that blank abiding place where busy, clever reason cannot come. The whole of this process, this gathering up and turning 'inwards' of the powers of the self, this gazing into the ground of the soul is that which is called introversion." Introversion can be acquired. In its early stages introversion is voluntary, difficult and deliberate, later like any other art it becomes a part of the mystic. Such a mystical education presupposes the awakening of the deeper self which can be educated. It is a psychological process and obeys psychological laws. There is in it no element of the unexpected or the abnormal. Its emphasis is on the indwelling God who may be found by a journey towards the centre.

"The Self-existent (Svayambhu) pierced the openings of the Senses outward; Therefore one looks outward, not within himself (antarātman)."

8. Ibid., p. 87 9. Evelyn Underhill, Mystician, p. 303
A certain wise man, while seeking immortality, introspectively be held the Soul (Atman) face to face."

In Eckhart's teaching beneath sense perception, beneath the sensuous will, beneath the higher powers of memory, reason, and reasonable will, lies the soul, the apex, the spark, the heaven within. To find the depths within the self and discover the self as divine in its inmost depth is the core and pivot of Eckhart's teaching. Absolutely parallel to this is the lofty Atman faith of Sankara and his inner self. Deep within the Atman there dwells for Sankara, the Lord, in mystical union with man.

Mystical experience is capable of great diversity. Its contents can be curiously varied. The mystic's particular psychological make-up, his geographical, environmental, metaphysical, and theological background, the particular urge which has started him on his quest, all affect the character of his vision. It is not possible to assert that all mystics see the same thing, that all have identical experience. These factors also influence the descriptions differently.

10 Robert Ernest Hume, The Thirteen Principal Upanishads (Katha Upanished), 4.2. p. 353
rent mystics have left of their experiences and the varying ways they have interpreted them. Their unanimity is found at a deeper level, for it is difficult to escape the conclusion that all have glimpsed in different degrees and in different forms the same reality and found the same Truth. We need not be satisfied with the partial truths revealed by astronomy, physics, biology, history, each true in its own field, sometimes contradicting or seeming to contradict each other, none complete in itself, none giving the whole picture. Beyond all these, beyond the contradictions of each separate truth, lies concealed the supreme and final Truth, the ultimate synthesis which mankind has longed to find and in its chosen souls have occasionally found.

The mystic experience, it has been seen is the direct experience of the One, the Universal Self, God. This gives rise to fresh problems dealing with the relation of God to the world, in respect of identity or difference. Is God identical with the world or are they wholly distinct or is there some other possibility? "Monism is a name for a group of views in metaphysics that stress the oneness or unity of reality in some sense." The term "monism" was coined by

Christian Wolff (1679-1754) and he used it only in a narrow sense, applying it to the two opposite theories that everything is mental (idealism or mentalism) and that everything is material (materialism). The term was further applied to a particular doctrine of the relation between mind and matter, namely, the theory of their absolute identity. This theory actually originated with Spinoza, while Schelling and Hegel were the main proponents. This theory holds that mind and body are only modes of the same substance, and it is this substance to which they are both reducible, and not one to the other. A more recent version of this theory is the "neutral monism" of William James.

In the nineteenth century the word monism came to be given a wider application. "Since then any theory that tries to reduce all phenomena to a single principle, or to explain them by one principle, as to make statements about reality as a whole, has been labelled "monism". This kind of monism can be effective as long as we treat the problem in a general manner. The moment one aspect is given more importance either the physical becomes predominant and the

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12 Ibid. p. 363
13 Ibid. p. 363
psychical a mere reflection, or the psychical is assigned the superior position. Thus monism breaks into two forms, an idealistic or a naturalistic monism, exhibiting the fatal consequence of theoretically recognising unity and in practice admitting two principles.

Monism again can be understood as substantial monism, in which the apparent multiplicity of substance is really due to different states or appearances of a single substance, which is God or Nature for Spinoza, the Absolute for Bradley and Brahman for Sâkara.

"The One God, hidden in all things,
All-pervading, the Inner Soul of all things,
The overseer of deeds (karma), in all things abiding,
The witness, the sole thinker, devoid of qualities \(^{14}\) (nir-guna)"

Attributive monism is the view that whatever be the number of substances, they are of a single ultimate kind, that is, there is one realm of being. According to partial monism within a given realm there is only one substance. These varieties of monism need not all stand or fall together. Each can be

\(^{14}\) Robert Erpeh Hume, The Thirteen Principal Upani-
shads, (Svetasvatara Upani-
shads,) 6.12. p. 409
examined on its own merit.

Thus there are many forms of monism. Extreme forms of monism tend to question the world of change and multiplicities altogether. There is only the One, an undifferentiated whole in which there are no distinguishable parts. All else is illusion an unreality, a kind of dream world perhaps from which we may escape by a happy identification of ourselves with the One whole of being, an immersion of ourselves and our private identity in the Reality. This escape may be achieved in various ways. It can be through high and selfless moral attitudes and through certain forms of meditation.

Writers like Stace point out that the view that God and the world are identical may take two forms one of which amounts to atheism and the other to acosmism. It is that nothing exists apart from the sum-total of finite objects, sun, stars, trees, rocks, animals and individual cells and that God is merely another name for this collection of finite objects. This is atheism. The acosmic form of monism will have to say that the world of finite things as separate from God does not exist at all. God alone is real and God is an undifferentiated unity, wherein there is no multiplicity of finite objects. It is commonly accepted that illusion or ignorance is the cause of the appearance of the multiplicity of finite
objects.

Such a view can be refuted by the application of Descartes' 'I think, therefore, I am', if there is an illusion then at least one finite being, myself, exists. On the other hand if the world is an illusion it should be someone's illusion and that someone must be myself, therefore I must exist to have an illusion; and if I am an illusion in another's mind then that person must exist to have an illusion. Thus we get a vicious circle or infinite regress.

There are two other alternatives in Indian literature which attempt to avoid difficulties mentioned above. It may be held that the finite world is an illusion or false imagination which has its seat, not in the minds of finite individuals but in the mind of God. This view leads to self-contradiction though not to the infinite regress as in the earlier case. "For it introduces the multiplicity of the world into God, into the Pure One which is beyond all multiplicity." The difficulty we are confronted with is that according to monism the whole of reality is pure and undifferentiated unity, and this view cannot accept a multiplicity of illusion in God. If we were to substitute the cause of the multiplicity in appearance by ignorance instead of by

illusion as some Indian philosophers do, then too difficulty is not successfully met. Ignorance too has meaning only in relation to a state of mind, for it is not impersonal. So any version of monism faces difficulties.

The monistic position in its full vigour is that there is only one reality, Brahman, who is identical with the individual soul. The individual soul imagines both the internal world of the soul and the external world of objective phenomena and is deceived by his imagination. This condition which is the state of normal human consciousness is usually described as the state of one "bound". Release, moksha or mukti consists in the destruction of the illusion imposed on oneself by oneself and against one's own will. The state of release is absolutely unqualified and more akin to the state of dreamless sleep.

In pantheism God and the universe are identical. In philosophy and theology pantheism is the theory that God is all and all is God, the universe is not a creation distinct from God, God is the universe and universe is God. This is the view predominant more in the West. According to this view reality is conceived of as one in essence and form, God is an entity not separate from the world and remote from it, but in it and of it — immanent, not transcendent, every-
thing partakes of the nature of God. "The particular objects and individuals have no absolute existence of their own, but are either modes of the universal substance or parts of the divine whole." Indian Pantheism however originated and developed in a different direction. In the hymns of the Rg Veda a pantheistic strain of thought is discernible from the beginning. Polytheism of the superficial type failed to satisfy the more earnest thinkers and this led to a kind of unifying all gods, all existences, into one. Agni especially was the centre of this assimilating movement. The essence of fire appeared to pervade all things, and to give them warmth and being, when Agni withdrew himself the life also vanished.

The Pantheistic speculative thought in the Upanisads regarded the universe as immanent in God, and not God immanent in the universe. The universe does not in reality exist at all, for God alone is. The development of pantheistic theories goes hand in hand with the development of monism, which springs from the intellectual craving for unity.

**Dualism** is the view that the relation between God and the world, including the relation between God and the individual human person, is not one of unity or oneness. Dualism posits a distinction between the spiritual and the material realms, and often involves the concept of a second principle or force in opposition to the spiritual. This opposition can manifest in various forms, such as good versus evil, light versus darkness, or life versus death.

16 James Hastings (Ed) *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark). Vol.9, p.613
dual self when in a state of union is a relation of pure otherness or difference with no identity. Dualism is any system of thought which divides everything, in some way into two categories of elements, or else derives everything from two principles or refuses to admit more than two substances, or two kinds of substances. The Pythagoreans afford an early example of this view. They give a whole series of opposites which they reduce in turn to two basic principles, the limited and the unlimited. The most outstanding and influential example of dualism of an early time is Descartes' division of the world into extended substance and non-extended substances (matter and thinking substance or the mind). This kind of dualism might be called attributive since there are two kinds of attributes. The term dualism can also be applied rather loosely to philosophical systems, which have as their core some important oppositions as in Plato, between the world perceived by the senses, and the world of forms known by the mind; or as in Kant, the distinction between the phenomenal world and the noumenal world.

In the dualistic view man and God are mutually exclusive; they remain alien and separated. In monism man is identified with God. Man has no independence of his own. "It sees in man only a manifestation of the divine life, a transi-
tory moment in the development of divinity." The relation between man and God cannot be one of separation as in dualism, or one of identification as in monism. "...denying realities to souls, granting them only phenomenal or relative reality...is to deny bondage and release. If the one alone is, there is no bondage, neither is there release. The personality of the individual will disappear in a monistic system; and so there will be no problem of divine human relation..." "The mystics maintain that the crown of their experience is the 'Unitive' life. But this does not warrant the conclusion that there is absorption." In dualism on the other hand there is no relation between God and man. Both monism and dualism are not fair to the dynamic relation between the creator and the created.

In the context of this thesis such problems are relevant to the extent to which they are comprehended within the direct mystical experience. All discussions regarding the relative merits of monism, dualism, pantheism etc., would

18 V. A. Devasenapathi, Saiva Siddhanta, p. 300
19 Ibid., p. 300
arise only as a sequel of an attempt to interpret mystical experiences. The mystic himself is not bothered about these labels. The mystic starts with a sense of separation from the source and he wants to get united with the spirit. In the initial stage there is no sense in denying duality, but when he enters into a mystical experience it is a world of unity. This experience cannot be confined within the dimensions of concepts and categories. Since the vision of truth and reality cannot be attained through the dictates of reason or the senses, experience is the way of ultimate knowledge, the relevance of mysticism stands self-established. Hence metaphysical problems like monism, dualism etc., cannot be applied to mystical experience which is a pure experience comprehending all these denominations.

"To consider man in isolation from God and the world is to fulfill a victim to the process of abstraction. Nor can we know anything significant about the world and its destiny apart from God and man. The three - God, man, and the world - are related in such a way that one serves as a pointer to the other." God is in the world, and in man. "To bring belief in God within the bounds of possibility and to make it morally possible to accept him can only be done by recogni-

zing the truth that God reveals himself in this world. He reveals himself in the Prophets, in his Son, in the breath of the Spirit, and in the uplifting spiritual aspirations of men." Such a revelation is witnessed in both St. Māṇīkka-
vaṇcagar and St. Paul. God is sovereign, and indwells all creatures out of love for men, and his love is perfect and unfailing. The sovereignty of God is proclaimed throughout in the Epistles of St. Paul and in the Tiruvācagam. It is stressed that God is the Lord of creation, ruler of the universe, indweller of all beings. God is the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of the Universe in so far as he is present in the inmost essence of all beings.

"... All worlds
Thou dost create, protect, destroy, enrich with grace release.
Thou causest me to enter 'mid Thy Servant band."

sang Māṇīkkaṇācagar and Paul writes to the Ephesians the same thoughts. "God who is the Creator of all things, ... God did this according to his eternal purpose, which he achieved through Christ Jesus and through our Lord. In union with Christ and through our faith in him we have the boldness to

22 TV 1:41-43
go into God's presence with all confidence." The "filling presence" of the Lord is affirmed in the words,

"O Thou who fill'st the heaven
who fill'st the earth art manifested light,"

and "So the one who came down is the same one who went up, above and beyond the heavens, to fill the whole universe with his presence." Since the views on God, man, and nature are many and varied emphasis in this work is mostly laid on the views held by St. Paul and St. Mūnīkkavacagar. Also it is to be noted that the views of Christianity adapted in this thesis are mainly the Eastern view of Christianity propounded by Gregory of Nyssa who has based his teachings on those of St. Paul.

Eastern Christianity denies the view that creation is an emanation from the essence of God. It is not an extension of His Being, neither is it created out of nothing. On the other

23 Eph. III : 9-12 (TEV)
24 TV I : 23
25 Eph. IV : 10 (TEV)
26 Gregory of Nyssa (330-394). The most mystical of the Greek Christian Fathers. His mysticism has got four features, he insists that the outward universe is a symbol of the unseen, he believes in the ascent to Spiritual Beauty. The object is to become oneself  

(Foot-Note No.26 contd...P/76.)
hand it is a product of His will. It is this will that constitutes the principles, the causes and the energies of all created things. Matter and its various forms are the divine will made concrete. "It is God's will that is the very being of creation. And God is immanent in creation by will not byousia or essence. But because it is the dynamic will of God, who is freedom, the creation itself is dynamic and free." God is in all things but not as a part of their essence or as a quality but in the manner that an efficient cause is present to that on which it acts. So God's immanence is not his presence in the cosmos but his will. The immanence does not imprison God in creation. He remains free. God's will is a dynamic will which is constantly in motion towards a goal, or a purpose. Thus the material creation is moved by the will of God towards its God-appointed destiny. "This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as

Foot-Note No.26)

as beautiful as the Beauty which he has touched and entered as a result of the communion with the light he has experienced. The aim is to change into something better than one is, and with clearer vision to see God, the archetype of all Beauty. Man's essential being is like God. This is associated with an ancient Greek notion that like perceives like and attracts like.

27 Paul Verghese, (Paulos Gregorios), Freedom and Authority (Madras, Diocesan Press, 1974), p. 69
28 Edward Paul (Ed). Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Vol.3, p. 344
The world to the Siddhāntin is real. The efficient cause is Purī (Śiva). The auxiliary cause is Śiva Sakti, the material cause is māyā. The final cause is the purification and perfection of souls. Through His Sakti Śiva engages in the activities of creation and dissolution. "Not only is God's loving presence and activity the very condition of the continued existence of the world and men, but his direct action upon the minds and hearts of his devotees leads them to final liberation." The Lord is immanent in the world and in the soul by his multiform Sakti. God and his power Sakti form a union. Sakti is the creative principle in God, and the Lord's very nature is to bestow grace upon the souls. He fills the heaven and the earth and the whole creation is bright with his manifested light. He is the truth dwelling in the soul. He abides especially in the thought of men. He is the unseen light that abides within the souls who did not see him melting their hearts with love. He indwells as the precious life of souls. His glory and greatness consists

29 Eph. I : 10 (TEV)
30 Mariususai Dhamamoney, Love of God, according to Saiva Siddhanta, p. 160
31 TV. I : 23
32 TV. I : 33
33 TV. I : 17
34 TV. I : 68,69
in residing with overflowing love within his devotees' inmost souls. He minglest with all beings and he cherishes everyone of them. The self-sufficient Being seeks the souls out and enters into their inmost beings. Nānāikkavācāgar speaks of the divine immanence in the world and in souls. He is the Lord to whom he belongs, who is the mother of the Universe and who penetrates and rules the seven worlds. He is the essence of all that lives, in the sense that every living being is the embodiment of God's goodness and finds its ultimate destiny in him. God does not leave his heart even for an instant. He is the king "who soothed his soul's unrest, and made him His..." He is pleased with those who worship him with adoring hands... He is the glorious One who uplifts those who are in sin.

"O king of those above! - O Ceaseless Plenitude of mystic bliss! - To me defiled Thou cam'st,

Fruit newly rip'd, and mad'st me. Thine own dwelling place

Balm, yielding bliss all earthly bliss beyond!"

35 TV II : 7, 8
36 TV III : 48
37 TV I.66-68
38 TV VIII : 7
39 TV XXXVII : 1
It is to be noted that this divine immannence is not understood in the pantheistic sense. "He is the Life of all lives, with none confused!"

The importance of divine immannence is further emphasised when Mānatuvari tries to explain it in the sense of utter dependence of the creature on God.

"...... But, if Thou leave,
I perish; none but Thee upholds Thy slave;
Source of my being's bliss.
...... Indwelling Lord."

The very existence of the world and man depends on God's loving presence and activity. God brings the whole world into being by an unetermined choice. He does not need the world to complete his nature. God is self-existent in a unique and incomprehensible way. Creatures on the other hand are contingent. Their essence, while pre-existing ideally in the mind of God would not have achieved independent being if he had not chosen to grant it by a free act of love. Though they participate in him both by nature and by grace, they never can be free of their created status. They can be deified but they cannot become divine. "Man is a link between the phenomenal and the noumenal, between nature and God."

40 TV XXII : 4
41 TV VI : 23
42 R. Balasubramanian, The Personalistic Existentialism of Buber, University of Madras, 1979, p. 42
The views of both St. Maṇikkavacca and St. Paul maintain the truth that God is not simply someone at the top of all perfections. God remains inaccessible only to our concepts or words, we can have a partial conceptual knowledge of the derived being or the cosmos. This knowledge is consistently increasing through science, but it is too much to expect scientific knowledge to be exhaustive as envisaged today.

From the standpoint taken in this thesis it can be stated that God is by nature everything whatever we are able to conceive as the good. Even for the creation of the human life, and the cosmos, there is no other reason but that He is good.

Human nature is the image of God. God has made man not because He needed to do it but in His abundant love and freedom He chose to create a being like himself, in whom He would reveal Himself. God and man are not identical; Man alone is created in the image of God. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image..." (43) God is immanent in Man in a manner different from that in which He is immanent by will in the creation. Man was not created in the same way as the rest of the creation. The rest of the creation was created by the Word of God. In the case of man, God first said "Let us make man in our image after our likeness." "...God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath..." (Gen. I : 26, 27)
of life; and man became a living soul." A free immenance of the transcendent God was breathed into man. Man is aware of this presence within him, though this awareness is clouded by the environment in which he is. There is in man an inborn knowledge of God, a deep desire to behold him, and even to become like him. Man can know God because God is at the very depths of man's very being. This immenance of God in the soul of man is not static, it increases and decreases according to the measure in which the soul approaches and responds to the transcendent freedom of God.

It is seen that in St. Nānākkāvācāgar's and St. Paul's way of thinking, creation itself is an act of grace on the part of God.

"... All worlds
Thou dost create, protect, destroy, enrich
with grace, release."

"Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made."

Gen. II : 7
TV I : 41-43
Rom. I : 20 (TNV)
The same idea is reaffirmed again in "God's plan to make known his secret to his people, this rich and glorious secret which he has for all peoples. And the secret is that Christ is in you, which means that you will share in the glory of God." From this angle even fallen man, so far as he exists, exists by grace. If man is totally evil, he cannot exist but become pure-non-being. Together with men all other creation - animal and the material universe is an act of grace and so awaits redemption. "All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his sons. For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves, as we wait for God to make us his sons and set our whole being free. To be saved it is necessary to attain a 'deathless' and 'evil-less' state. "Mankind and creation are destined to attain to this deathless and evil-less whole of everything." Only that which has become good can endure. That which is evil must experience dissolution and death. Christ came to save the whole of unity, 47 Col. I: 27 (TEV) 48 Rom. VIII: 14-23 49 Paul Verghese, Freedom and Authority, p. 85
but only the good will be saved. His gift is incomparable with the poor gift they make of themselves.

"What Thou hast Given is THINE, and what hast gained is Mine."

The very same thoughts are echoed by St. Paul "...who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son." The intensity of God's love is expressed by Paul again "For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below — there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord." God's whole activity is motivated by his love; there is no act of his which does not express this love. He loves his devotees and governs them by his grace. "Loving to loving Ones". To those who seek him he is the lover who embraces them in his vast sea of grace and love.

50 TV XXII: 10;37
51 Rom. VIII : 32 (TEV)
52 Ibid. 38, 39
53 TV I : 71
"Deep in the vast ambrosial sea of grace Thy perfect saints
Have sunk Lo, Lord, I wearied bear this frame with darkness filled!
Men see and cry, 'A madman, one 'wilder'd mind is here'.
..... Like gleam of quenches lamp!
and I, Thy servant too, shall I reach Thee, and ne'er again know NEED?
Thou all-abounding love."

His love is manifested more than anything, in God’s gift of himself. However unworthy the creatures are, God out of love bestows on his bhaktas no less a gift than himself.

"His throat is black; His nature passes far all powers of thought that men possess;
I went, drew near, took refuge at His Feet;
and He straightway, delusions all
From changing deaths and births that ceaseless rise
within my being caused to cease."

Again Paul writes to the Ephesians "Let us praise God for his glorious grace for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son!"
For by the death of Christ we are set free, that is our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, which he gave to us in such large measure." Lord Siya taking the poison, and Christ dying on the cross to save humanity are God's sacrifice for mankind. Man's love for God is again a free gift of God bestowed on a religious soul, eager to follow the path of liberation.

"Thou did'st not call me 'stony heart,'
'deceiver,' 'obstinate of mind.'
But Thou did'st cause my stony heart to melt
and in compassion mad'st me Thine."

When there is love in the devotee's soul and when this love reaches its culmination, the mystic is said to be liberated from the bonds of puṣa and is most intimately united with God. This state of liberation for both St. Maṅgalkavācagar and St. Paul was an experience of love in union with a personal God. This state of liberation is a state in which the mystic participates in and totally dedicates himself to the Lord. The mystic responds to the divine gift of the Lord with the total gift of himself and total surrender.

56 Eph. I : 6-8 (NIV)
57 TV X: 11
"That very day my soul, my body, all to me
pertaining, didst Thou not take as Thine Own
Thou like a mountain strong! when me
Thou mad'st Thy slave?
And this day is there any hindrance found in me?
... To all resigned, I'm Thine and wholly Thine."

St. Paul's view on the state of liberation is in no way different. "I am dead-killed by the Law itself — in order that I might live for God. I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. This life that I live now, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life. I refuse to reject the grace of God."

In the mystical state, the soul is 'oned' with God in such a way that God is said to be more intimate than the intimate self, and is possessed by the self more really and deeply than in the state of bondage. God is immanent in the soul in such a way that it is a permanent state of inseparability. God is actively present in the soul in all its activities.

58 TV XXXIII: 7
59 Gal. II: 19-21 (TEV)
This kind of union, a union with the immanent God from the point of view upheld in this thesis is not one of identity. God and the soul are not in a state of identity, each losing the individuality. At the same time God and the soul do not stand apart. In such a union there is the entry of God into the soul as an illumination of his grace in the soul. The soul becomes conscious of God, realizes the immanence and acknowledges its dependence on Him. All thought of 'I' and 'mine' are ceases. All worldly desires, all ego, all 'tarpadham' vanish giving place to Sivapatham or Christ consciousness.

The vision of the mystic not only contains an existential perception of the Presence and Being of God, a joyous apprehension of the Absolute, of the reality upholding all things, but is also a new vision of the phenomenal world, the world is seen differently from what it was before. This new vision of the phenomenal world is essentially one of immanence, of the One present in and permeating the all. Here all the chief characteristics of the pan-en-theistic experience are present. There is the underlying love upholding and permeating everything. There is the unity of the knower and known; and, through it all a feeling of intense joy, sureness and serenity. "...he traverses all that is transitory, his eyes fixed firmly on the intrinsity; he sees in everything what is beyond all things."

60 Abhishiktananda: Guru and Disciple, p. 97