CHAPTER II

AUTHORITY

1. The chief authority on which Śrī-Vallabhārya relies for his System of Suddhādvaita Vedānta, otherwise known as Brahmatāda as contrasted with the Māyāvāda of Śrī-Śāṅkarācārya, is undoubtedly the Vedas, especially the Upaniṣadic portions thereof. But before we deal with it, it will be well for us to consider certain general matters relating to this system. This system obviously belongs to the sphere of metaphysics, i.e., that branch of philosophy which deals with the Ultimate Principle. The phenomena presented to our senses are, as all thinkers know, impermanent; not only impermanent but also many. We know from our own experience that behind our thoughts which are both impermanent and many, there lies one permanent thinking subject. This tempts us to think that it is also possible that the external phenomena which are impermanent and many may also have one permanent principle behind them. In spite of this temptation in that direction we know it for certain that our external sense-organs never inform us about some such Ultimate Principle. Nevertheless the internal demand for some such Ultimate Principle is always there. Deep thinkers, past as well as present, have always tried to find out some such Principle unifying the diversified phenomena which are not only many but at times even incoherent. Scientists in the external sphere and philosophers in the internal one
have tried their level best to discover simple laws governing this diversified phenomena. And incidentally we may say that as history of Science and Philosophy clearly shows, their efforts have not been entirely wasted. They have certainly met with some amount of success. But that is not our point here. The most material point here is the hankering after some such unifying principle. Take, for instance, what Dr. Annie Besant writes in her Autobiography:

'The first step which leaves behind the idea of a limited and personal God, an extra-cosmic Creator, and leads the student to the point whence Atheism and Pantheism diverge, is the recognition that a profound unity of substance underlies the infinite diversities of natural phenomena, the discernment of the One beneath the Many. This was the step I had taken ere my first meeting with Charles Bradlaugh, and I had written:

"It is manifest to all who will take the trouble to think steadily, that there can be only one eternal and underived substance, and that matter and spirit must, therefore, only be varying manifestations of this One substance..... Matter is in its constituent elements, the same as spirit; existence is one, however manifold in its phenomena; life is one, however multiform in its evolution. As the heat of the coal differs from the coal itself, so do
memory, perception, judgment, emotion, and will differ from
the brain which is the instrument of thought. But nevertheless
they are all equally products of the one sole substance,
varying only in their conditions."' (1)

2. Leaving this abstract field of philosophy, if we
come down to the concrete field of physical science, it has
been demonstrated beyond all doubt that all matter, however
diversified in its manifestations, is ultimately constituted
of the same electric particles.

3. From what has been stated above it will be amply
clear that the enlightened human soul in its innermost depth
hankers after some simplicity likely to underlie the vast
complexity of the universe, external as well as internal.
And what simplicity can there be other than unity? It is
in this way that we can arrive at unity instinctively. And
Suddhādvaita means nothing else but unity pure and simple.
But will this instinctive approach suffice? Will it satisfy
rational thinkers, whose motto is "No trusting without testing"
and who in this age of universal doubt would take nothing for
granted? So let us see if we can find anything pointing out
in this direction.

4. For this let us first turn to physicists and their
latest theory about the constitution of matter. Some of the
Greek Philosophers, like their oriental counterparts, the
Vaiśeṣikas, believed that atoms are the ultimate constituents
of matter. But this belief of theirs was instinctive rather than scientific in the modern sense of the term. The latest scientific research has, however, confirmed this view of theirs. Nevertheless, their approach was not strictly scientific; so let us turn to modern scientists, especially, physicists. These latter study the constitution and the working of the external universe. Their attitude is strictly objective. They have no preconceived notions to mislead them. Their sincerity is beyond reproach. Their sacrifice of material comforts is almost ascetic. They proceed with as few assumptions as possible. They have built their theoretical structure on a few fundamental laws of thought and the solid facts which repeatedly and invariably present themselves before their sense-organs and their instruments which are perfectly faultless. They are precise to a point. They believe first in what is unmistakably presented before them, and next in that without which what they have thus observed cannot be satisfactorily explained. For instance, Newton, the Sage among Scientists, believed in the falling down of an apple and in the gravitational pull by the earth without which the phenomenon of this falling down of the apple could not be satisfactorily explained. And even when he extended his theory of gravitation to other parts of the universe, every step of his was strictly cautious. He went on, no doubt, but strictly checking every step of his. Coming to the point, let us see to what this strictly scientific method
has brought them. Their latest discoveries point to the fact that all external matter is ultimately constituted of electric particles, which are nothing but a form of energy, thus establishing that matter and energy are in the ultimate analysis but one, and thus substantiate what the ancient philosophers had roughly arrived at instinctively or speculatively.

5. When, however, we come to the sphere of what is within, both our hands and tongues are tied. We have no scientists and research scholars worth the name. Such philosophers as Aldous Huxley had tried to explore this field. But they had not advanced sufficiently enough to demonstrate the results of their research. At best they could only hold forth rational explanations for spiritual beliefs. Such explanations may to some extent satisfy spiritually-minded persons. Nevertheless, their appeal is certainly not universal. It is being reported that Yogins have achieved considerable progress in the internal sphere. But, unfortunately, they do not come out in public. If some venture to come out, they miserably fail. We may have at times a solitary instance of a true spiritual scientist like Svāmī Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa, the Guru of Svāmī Vivekananda. But such instances are very very rare. That he was a real spiritual scientist was amply clear to those that had come in personal contact with him. He repeatedly warned his disciples never to take anything on trust. Svāmī Vivekananda was the last man to take anything on trust. So
steeped was he in western speculative philosophy. Not only had Svāmī Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṃsa repeatedly asked Svāmī Vivekānanda to test him (i.e., Svāmī Śrī-Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṃsa), but the latter had actually tested the former, and the former had come out of that test unscathed. Coming to the point, we, in the present state of things, in all humility admit our weakness in this sphere; and in spite of our desire to the contrary, we have to rely, unwillingly of course, on the views of ancient masters. Nevertheless, we shall, in this matter, be as rational as possible, and perhaps the least dogmatic.

6. As stated above our philosophical instinct points in the direction of Ultimate Unity, whereas our intellect refuses to believe in it. For we perceive diversity everywhere. This is not the only thing. The dictum "Variety is the spice of life" shows its desirability too. Moreover, without this diversity, all our mutual commerce would come to a standstill. We cannot conceive how any activity would at all be possible without this diversity. To make dealing possible we are, moreover, compelled to create diversity where there is none: e.g., in the case of currency notes of the same denomination which are all alike, we have to number them and thus create diversity; or, in the case of drinking water which is the same everywhere, we have to break it up in different convenient parts. Is, then, Unity the Ultimate
Principle or diversity? Incidentally it may be mentioned that the quarrel whether anything like God exists or does not exist is a height of folly. For, after all, "God" is a convenient term for some such unifying Ultimate Principle. Moreover, let it be mentioned that this term "God" will be freely employed in the sense of this unifying Ultimate Principle whenever and wherever it will be felt convenient to do so in this dissertation.

7. That reason by itself cannot lead us to such an Ultimate Principle, conveniently termed "God", is clear not only to orthodox philosophers but also to clear-headed sincere free-thinkers. Take, for instance, the following excerpt from Dr. Annie Besant's Autobiography. Before she became an ardent Theosophist, she was a devout disciple of Charles Bradlaugh, a British Free-thinker of spotless character and of highly noble nature. She writes:

"Proceeding to search whether any idea of God was attainable, I came to the conclusion that evidence of the existence of a conscious Power was lacking, and that the ordinary proofs offered were inconclusive; that we could grasp phenomena and no more. ... Our faculties fail us when we try to estimate the Deity, and we are betrayed into contradictions and absurdities.

'This refusal to believe without evidence, and the
declaration that anything "behind phenomena" is knowable to man as at present constituted - these are the two chief planks of the Atheistic platform, as Atheism was held by Charles Bradlaugh and myself.' (2)

8. Now, let us see what an orthodox philosopher, our Sutrakāra Śrī-Bādarāyana Vyāsa, has to say on the point. In his Tarkāpratisthāna Sūtra (3) he has categorically declared that so far as the search of the Ultimate Principle is concerned the human reason by itself is futile. Objects are of two types - those that lie within the range of sense-organs including mind, and those that lie beyond this range. Omniscient God alone knows the latter. Or he whom God favours can know them. As for the rest, faith pure and simple in the words of God or of some such Prophet is the only means. In the case of such objects reason simply misleads. Reason may go a great way in the case of the objects of the first type, but never in that of the second.

9. Having considered the negative side of the question, let us now turn to the positive side. Here, too, the following paragraphs from Dr. Annie Besant's Autobiography will be of great help:

'Thus was ushered in 1889, the to me never-to-be forgotten year in which I found my way "Home", and had the priceless good fortune of meeting, and of becoming the pupil of, H.P. Blavatsky. ....
'... Into the darkness shot a ray of light - A.P. Sinnett's "Occult World", with its wonderfully suggestive letters, expounding not the supernatural but a nature under law, wider than I had dared to conceive. I added Spiritualism to my studies, experimenting privately, finding the phenomena indubitable, but the spiritualistic explanation of them incredible. ...

'... I know, by personal experiment, that the Soul exists, and that my Soul, not my body, is myself; that it can leave the body at will; that it can, disembodied, reach and learn from living human teachers, and bring back and impress on the physical brain that which it has learned; that this process of transferring consciousness from one range of being, as it were, to another, is a very slow process, during which the body and brain are gradually correlated with the subtler form which is essentially that of the Soul, and that my own experience of it, still so imperfect, so fragmentary, when compared with the experience of the highly trained, is like the first struggles of a child learning to speak compared with the perfect oratory of the practised speaker; that consciousness, so far from being dependent on the brain, is more active when freed from the gross forms of matter than when encased within them; that the great Sages spoken of by H.P. Blavatsky exist; that they wield powers and possess knowledge before which our control of Nature and knowledge of her ways is but as child's play.' (4)
10. From the above citation it becomes clear that we need not get disheartened if our reason leads us no far. The Revelation is there. Inspired souls do appear on this earthly plane from time to time. They are our best guides. They are there to lead us in the right direction. Their human limitations will in no way come in our way. In spite of their human limitations, they possess limitless powers of lifting us up to the limitless. What is needed on our part is whole-hearted and even blind faith, which is of greater service to us than an open-eyed one working with caution. An analogy will drive the truth home. One person sits in a motor-car. Another runs along with it minding his every step. Who will profit more? And in this connection I can do nothing better than quote Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, one of the great modern spiritual aspirants, who had had direct experience of Ultimate Reality in this very life. He writes:

'It is not the human defects of the Guru that can stand in the way when there is the psychic opening, confidence, and surrender. The Guru is the channel or the representation or the manifestation of the Divine, according to the measure of his personality or his attainment; but whatever he is, it is the Divine that one opens to, in opening to him; and if something is determined by the power of the channel, more is determined by the inherent and intrinsic attitude of the receiving consciousness, an element that comes out in the surface mind as simple trust or direct unconditional self-
giving, and once that is there, the essential things can be
 gained even from one who seems to others than the disciple
 an inferior spiritual source, and the rest will grow up in
 the sadhak of itself, by the Grace of the Divine, even if the
 human being in the Guru cannot give it. ... In my own case,
 I owe the first decisive turn of my inner life to one who was
 infinitely inferior to me in intellect, education, capacity,
 and by no means spiritually perfect or supreme; but having
 seen a power behind him and [having] decided to turn there for
 help I gave myself entirely into his hands and followed with
 an automatic passivity the guidance. He himself was astonished
 and said to others that he had never met anyone before who
 could surrender himself so absolutely and without reserve or
 question to the guidance of the helper. The result was a
 series of transmuting experiences of such a radical character
 that he was unable to follow and had to tell me to give myself
 up in future to the Guide within with the same completeness of
 surrender as I had shown to the human channel. I give this
 example to show how these things work; it is not in the
 calculated way the human reason wants to lay down, but by a
 more mysterious and greater law.' (5)

11. The above citation will thus amply justify the
 Upanisadic dictum, to be found at the end of the Svetā-
 śa[r]opanisad, that he alone will be able to grasp thoroughly
 these spiritual truths, who has absolute faith in God as well
 as in Guru. (6)
Moreover, from these citations, it will be amply clear that the Kathopanisad dictum, namely, the Ultimate Reality being highly subtle is beyond the ken of human reason, and, as such, can never be known except through a proper spiritual guide, (7) and the Chandogyopanisad dictum, namely He who has a spiritual guide alone knows it, (8) are not altogether without justification. To drive the truth of this doctrine home, the Chandogyopanisad further employs the following parable:

A person was taken out completely blindfolded from his native land and was set free still blindfolded in a distant alien land. He ran here and there. But such efforts of his were of no avail in taking him back to his native country. Somehow, by God's Grace, a good person who happened to pass by, took pity on him, removed the bandage from his eyes, and showed him the direction in which lay his native land. Then alone it was possible for him to get back to his native country. (9)

The case with us is the same. The life of Spirit is our native life. Somehow or other, we have strayed away from it. We do not know in what direction it lies. We grope here and there, but find nothing. If, by God's Grace, some Guru takes pity on us and removes our ignorance by pointing out the right direction, then alone there is some possibility of our returning to it and of consequently finding perdurable peace. Thus revelation and not reason is our final resort in matters.
13. Though revealed scriptures may be different for different religious, yet the fact that they are the starting points is common to all religions. Our parents are different. Nevertheless we have derived our life from them. Because our parents are different, that does not mean that we are children and others are not. This equally applies to all religions. Prophets and their teachings are like parents and religious followers are like children. There may be people having no religion worth the name. Missionaries may give them their religion and may make them happy. This is certainly a laudable task. This is as good and philanthropic a task as finding out a husband for an unmarried girl. But to go beyond this is not good. Getting husbands for unmarried girls is one thing. But to ask married girls and even those that have far advanced in married life to leave their husbands because they (i.e. the husbands) are, somehow or other, believed by us to be bad is quite another. Those that have got a real religion and have far advanced in it should never be asked to leave it. When such persons are asked to do so, the true missionary spirit degenerates into blind bigotry. That is why Svāmi Vivekānanda wanted Hindus to be better Hindus, Christians to be better Christians, and Mohammedans to be better Mohammedans.

14. Returning to the point let us remind ourselves that, in matters spiritual, books of revelations are our first and
the last resort. That is why Bādarāyana Vyāsa, the author of the Brahmasūtras, in his very famous Śrutestu Śabdasmūla Sūtra (10), boldly declares that there is no harm whatsoever in immolating Reason at the altar of Revelation. And Śrī-Vallabhācārya, too, in his Bhāṣya on the Janmādi Sūtra (11), with equal boldness states that one is welcome to him if one has absolute faith in Revelation and never otherwise (12); and further states that because Revelation has declared so, it cannot be otherwise (13).

15. After thus establishing not only the importance but also the indispensibility of Revelation, let us now turn to which revealed scriptures Śrī-Vallabhācārya relies on. He, in his Tattvadīpa-Nibandha (14), enumerates them as follows:

The Vedas, the words of the Lord in the Bhagavadgītā, the Aphorisms of Bādarāyana Vyāsa, and the Inspired Portions of the Bhāgavata. As to their mutual relations, he states that the succeeding work amplifies the meaning of the preceding one. (14) Thus, being at the root, the Vedas are the most important.

16. Now let us consider what these Vedas are according to the Orthodox Belief. According to this Belief, they embody the Eternal Truth in Eternal Words. Not only the Truth taught therein is Eternal, but the very Words, the very order of these Words and even of Letters constituting these Words are also Eternal. All these are neither created nor destroyed.
They eternally exist in the bosom of God, the Eternal Ultimate Principle. As every morning reveals the Sun, so every dawn of creation reveals them. As the Sun was already there simply hidden from the view of men, so they were already there simply hidden from the view of men. As such, according to the Orthodox Belief, their Authority is Absolute, i.e., by itself and not depending on any other external factor. As such to tamper with them is sacrilege.

17. As for the remaining three works, they do embody the Eternal Truth, but the words embodying it are not eternal. Their authors did visualize the Eternal Truth as embodied in the Eternal Words, but for conveying it, they employed their own words. In doing so, they amplified the meaning of the Vedas. The Vedas are absolutely clear and categorical in their statement of the Eternal Truth. But through human weakness, certain persons are unable to grasp it. In their minds doubts arise as to the exact nature of this Eternal Truth. These latter works serve to dispel them. Thus their service is also very great.

18. Incidentally, from the rationalistic point of view, one point requires clarification; and without this clarification, whatever has been stated above becomes almost meaningless. Had there been only one Book of Revelation, e.g., the Vedas, in and for the whole world, no trouble would have, at all or ever, arisen. All would have had the same belief and the matter
would have ended there. But, unfortunately for the peace of the world, this is not the case. Besides the Vedas, we have other Books of Revelation too, namely, the Bible and the Koran. For the Christians and the Mohammedans, the Bible and the Koran are respectively as authoritative as the Vedas for the Hindus. Moreover, had their contents been the same though their language differed, even then much trouble would not have arisen. For, nowadays we do find these Books of Revelation translated into different languages. But that also is not the case. Now, last but not the least has come the Positive Science dealing a death-blow to a number of orthodox beliefs based on statements to be found in these Books of Revelation. Take for instance the Christian belief about the date of creation of this world. According to the Bible, the world was created some four or five centuries before Christ. The evolutionary science has given a direct lie to this belief. To cite another instance let us go to the Bhāgavata, one of the four authoritative works for the Hindus according to Śrī-Vallabhācārya. According to this Bhāgavata, it is not the earth that goes round the Sun but vice versa, i.e., it is the Sun that goes round the Earth. Now, no sincere student of modern astronomy can accept this, however great an admirer of the Bhāgavata he may be in other respects. Such being the case, how are we to satisfy our rational sense and at the same time stick to our Orthodox Belief? This is really a very serious problem. And in the present age of strictly scientific mental attitude, we cannot afford to evade this issue if we really want the educated public to be sincerely
religious. So let us face this problem fairly and squarely.

19. To do so, let us first amplify this issue. The conflict detailed above on close analysis takes two distinct forms: one, that of the various Books of Revelation with Positive Sciences; and the other, that among the various Books of Revelation themselves.

20. Let us consider first that between the various Books of Revelation and Positive Sciences. The spheres of the two are ordinarily distinct. And if they restrict themselves to their respective spheres, no conflict will arise. Body, bodily comforts, and the external universe are the proper sphere of Positive Sciences. If they turn the gaze inward, they introspect and analyses the mind. Beyond that, they do not go. Nor do they care to go. They confine themselves to this life on this earth. They generally never worry about the life hereafter; nor do they worry about the life that might have preceded the present one. Thus, in a way, their sphere is limited. Nevertheless, it must be said to their credit that their pursuit of knowledge is sincere and objective, their sacrifice very great, and their consequent achievements really astounding. Individual conduct, individual and universal peace, peace extending beyond the present life to future ones constitutes on the other hand, the proper sphere of the religious Books of Revelation. The real religion consists not in what one believes but in how one lives. If the followers of religion strictly confine
themselves to this sphere of theirs, there will arise no occasion to come into conflict with Positive Sciences. On the contrary, they will have to learn a lot from the sincere conduct of the pioneers of Positive Sciences. But the trouble starts when the followers of religion cross the boundary of their sphere and attack the theories of Positive Sciences; and also when the scientists leave their sphere and begin to give their opinions on matters of which they know nothing, e.g., when they proudly proclaim that there is nothing like soul or the next life. Religion with its promises of peace and happiness in the life after death will not succeed in a conflict with Positive Science which has materially contributed to the comforts in this very life. The technological advance has brought about a number of material comforts to a large majority. The advance in medical science has reduced mortality, disease, and even physical pain. Famines there are; but they have lost their virulence. Trainloads of foodstuff are immediately rushed to the famine-stricken areas. Wars there are; but weaker nations receive immense help to fight for preserving their freedom. Sometimes even a forced reconciliation puts a sudden stop to a hotly waged war. There are travelling facilities. There are communication facilities. Dailies, periodicals, and books keep people in constant contact with not only what is happening in the various parts of the world, but also with what progress is being made in various fields from day to day. Cinema and
television have enabled men to enjoy various scenes without leaving their towns or houses. This being the case, can an ordinary man have patience enough to wait for the happiness in the life after death leaving that of the present one, especially when there is no guarantee for it? Moreover, the majority of those who preach or teach religion lead a life full of material comforts. How can such religious preachers or teachers induce others to let go material comforts? So it is in the interest of religion to confine itself to its proper sphere of conduct and not to quarrel with science. On the other hand, in what way has Science really profited by neglecting or even destroying Religion? Its evident goal is to make mankind more happy. But has it succeeded in achieving its goal? It is the selfless and spotless character of scientists that has made the present scientific progress possible. But has not Science hopelessly neglected the character of mankind in general? And with what sad result? The potential weapon for making mankind happy has become the potential weapon for its complete annihilation. Better it is for all if Science and Religion join hands, one supplementing the other.

21. Next let us turn to the conflict among the various Religions themselves. The goal of all of them is invariably the peace here and hereafter. They all believe in life after death, i.e., in the life of Spirit. They are more after mental peace than after material comforts. The saints of all
Religions have amply demonstrated in their very lives that this mental peace is a reality to be attained to in this very life. That Prophets appear from time to time to guide people aright is a fact admitted by all Religions. Follow any Prophet sincerely and wholeheartedly and the spiritual peace is yours in this very life. Hinduism respects all Prophets alike. According to it Prophets are God incarnate on this earth. And the real beauty of the Hindu Scriptures lies in the fact that Gautama Buddha who openly condemned them is also declared by them to be an incarnation of God. For he lived the life of peace and taught it to others in the way that suited him and his followers. Moreover, Śvāmī Vivekānanda not at all hesitates in declaring Christ too to be an incarnation of God. Although, according to the Hindu Scriptures, there is a hierarchy among the various incarnations, yet there is no insistence on some one and on no other. An aspirant is free to worship any Incarnation it likes. Śiva and Sākṣī are not among the twenty-four famous Incarnations of God. Nevertheless they are widely worshipped among the Hindus. The fundamental belief of the Hindu Scriptures is that the Selfsame Ultimate Principle receives various names. And this belief is as old as the Vedas. "The Substance is One, though the Sages have given different names to it." (15) One highly current stanza of the Hindu Religion states that salutation to any form whatsoever reaches the Ultimate Substance. (16) The Bhagavadgītā also declares in the same strain that the worshipper of any
other deity is the worshipper also of God the Almighty. (17) The worship of different deities may yield different fruits. But the fact that such a worship does yield a fruit is never doubted. Moreover, Hinduism believes in many lives for the same Spirit. Mistakes of one life may be rectified in another. In this respect Christianity and Islam differ materially from Hinduism. The Bible and the Koran do state that Prophets appear from time to time. But somehow or other the Christians and the Mohammedans respectively came to believe that Christ and Mohammed were the only Prophets; and that liberation was possible through them alone and through no other. Had the matter stood here and gone no further, no trouble would have arisen at all. But by way of a corollary the Christians believed further that those who did not believe in Christ's divine personality went to hell even though they believed in someone else's divine personality. Not only this. They went a little further and believed that anyone who did not make a public profession that he believed in Christ's personality or who professed to believe in someone else's divinity was a menace to the spiritual welfare of the community and as such deserved either to be exiled or executed. As for the Mohammedans, they came to believe that since Mohammed had taught that God is formless anyone who worshipped God in any form was an infidel and as such deserved to be put to sword. Both of them could do as they liked as long as they were backed by temporal power. But what are they now? Their past
deeds have simply served to alienate the minds of men from Religion with the inevitable result that the many good points of religion are missed by them. Now there is little respect for an individual. The gross material gain has become the sole guiding motive. Individuals as well as nations give promises as long as such promises further their self-interest. As soon as these promises have done that, they are openly violated. In religion the ideal of God is always before a person. This always reminds a person of his shortcoming. This in turn leads to self-improvement of individuals first, and through them that of the society next. Before materialism there is no such ideal. Moreover there is an implicit belief that the fault lies with external conditions. And certain scientific researches have served to strengthen this belief. Destroy germs and you will be free from diseases. Supply vitamins and deficiency-diseases will disappear. This belief does not stop here. It penetrates the sphere of social conditions. Masses are unhappy not because there is something wrong with them. But this is so simply because of a few vested interests. Destroy them and the masses will become automatically happy. The worst outcome of this belief is that what one thinks is assumed to be right and anything contrary to it is assumed to be wrong. This leads to the belief that you are always right and your opponents are always wrong; and that as long as your opponents live, there is no hope of peace. So, if they are physically weak, they have
to be destroyed openly; if they happen to be physically strong, they have to be destroyed secretly. But opponents should not be allowed to remain alive. Every sort of opposition has to be crushed outright. And there is an idle dream born of mental inertia that if this sort of crushing opposition is carried on for some time, opposition will be completely destroyed and there will be harmony everywhere. Religionists should remember that though religions are destroyed, the spirit of persecution is not destroyed. So, they must learn to tolerate other religions. There is some hope of universal peace then alone. The best way is to concentrate on religious behaviour rather than on religious belief. Beliefs are bound to be different as are our bodies. Do we not tolerate others' bodies? Why not then others' beliefs?

22. As has been suggested above, not only different Religions among themselves, but Sciences also should stick to their proper sphere; and should not only tolerate one another but cooperate also with one another. Can we not put different flowers in a bouquet and enhance its beauty? To drive home the utility of Religion, let us further consider it together with Science, its modern great rival. As has been said above, the respective spheres of Religion and Science are quite distinct. But that cannot mean that they should be at daggers drawn. Two men can fight and kill each other if they want to do so. But does this mean that because they can do so, they also should do so? Can they not help each other
and live peacefully together? Time makes worst enemies
friends. Can they not do voluntarily what they are willing
to do under compulsion? Let it be asserted point-blank
that such considerations are a contribution of Religion and
not of Science. Neglect of Religion has resulted in the
fact that the most wonderful resources of Science are today
in the hands of human beings who can only be described as
biped beasts. As long as Science, without heading Religion,
will go on studying and exploring the external universe, it
will not be able to teach or convince men that they are
brothers, and as such they ought to love and help one another.
The external nature is red in tooth and claw; and its study
by itself will teach men only to become red in tooth and
claw. It is Religion which teaches us that we are the
sparks of the Self-same Fire. If a mosquito sits on the leg
of a person, his hand instinctively hurries there to drive
it away. Why? Because they belong to the same person.
The same analogy will work in the case of human beings too,
provided they have assimilated the truth that they belong
to the self-same Entity, that they are different sparks of
the Self-same Fire. That is why such might/divine persona-
lities as Buddha and Christ taught us to love even our
enemies. Their teaching proceeded from within and not from
without. It is Religion that teaches us to protect the weak
instead of exploiting their weakness and getting fatter at
their expense. It is Religion which has universal peace and
prosperity for its goal. Do we find anything of the sort
in the teachings of material Science? Science is neutral. It is after all a means. It can be utilized either for a good or a bad end. But whether an end is good or bad will be taught by Religion.

23. It has been repeatedly stated above that the spheres of Religion and Science are distinct. So it is wrong to judge one from the standards of the other. Take an ordinary instance from our common experience. In our everyday commerce, i.e., in our day-to-day transactions we give and we take. The laws of giving are different from those of taking. When we purchase a thing, we follow the laws of taking. Before purchasing a thing we first examine it. We also look to the person who sells it. If the thing is found to be defective, we refuse to purchase it. If it turns out that the person concerned happens to be a thief, we refuse to have any more dealings with him. Moreover, when both the thing and the person concerned are found satisfactory, we try to bring down the price. When the price is settled, we only pay that much and no more. These are laws generally applied to an ordinary act of purchasing. But they are not applicable to all acts of purchasing. Suppose, for instance, that we have to purchase a thing out of strict necessity. Then the above laws become wholly inapplicable. We have an adage "Necessity knows no law." When a strict necessity arises, we do not look much to the quantity of a thing. For instance when we purchase food-stuff...
at a fair-price-or a ration-shop, we receive willingly or
unwillingly whatever is supplied to us without looking to the
quality or otherwise thereof. Moreover, when a thing is
urgently needed, we do not look to the person selling it.
We do not even higgle-haggle for the price of that thing.
Now, let us turn to the other act, namely, that of giving.
There we try to pass on even a defective thing. Then we do
not look to the character of a person purchasing it. If he
is a fool prepared to pay the price demanded by us without
looking to the thing purchased, so far so good. We want
just such a customer. If from the act of selling we turn to
that of feeding liberally, new laws emerge. We serve the
best dishes. We do not look to the character of the persons
fed. Let us now, in order to make the point still more clear,
consider business-relations and love-relations. In business-
relations we always look to the persons and to their respec-
tive merits. We pay more to persons who are more serviceable.
"Get on or get out" is the maxim of business-relations. But
the case with love-relations is just the opposite. Suppose,
a mother has two sons. One earns a lot, the other is a young
child. Will the mother pay greater attention to the earning
son, and less to the younger one? From these instances it
will be amply clear that laws applicable to one set of
relations are not applicable to another such set. Thus to
apply the standards of Science to Religion and then discredit
it is absolutely wrong.
24. After this general consideration of the difference of standards in different spheres, let us now come to the close consideration of those in the spheres of Science and Religion. "No trusting without testing" is a very healthy maxim of not only Science but of general commerce too. But if we strictly stick to this maxim, our progress though definite will be very slow and sometimes impossible. In a number of cases, trust and unconditional surrender become indispensable conditions. When we sow a seed, we do not make a stipulation with the soil. We surrender it to the soil unconditionally. If in ninety-nine cases the seed sprouts, in one case it rots too. Similarly, when we invest a sum in a business enterprise, we do not make a stipulation with the enterprise. We invest our sum unconditionally. In ninety-nine cases we make a profit, but in one case we may lose also. And even in the field of scientific research, we never stipulate with our experiment first and then proceed with it. Here out of ten, only one succeeds and nine fail. When we are serious, our attitude at once changes. All idle talk ceases, and we willingly take a risk. Here trust comes first. It is the very starting point. Science starts with doubt, Religion starts with faith. Now what this faith is can be seen from the following lines from the pen of no less a personality than Mahātmā Gāndhī himself:

'It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains, and faith that jumps across the
the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased he is spiritually healthy; physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches.

'Without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.

'Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations .... And I want every one of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion.' (18) Sṛī-Vallabhaṁcārya, too, lays full stress on this Faith in God. He advises us not to lose this Faith even for a moment. He says: Where everything fails, Faith succeeds. The doors of this Faith are closed to none; they are open to all and at all times. (19) This Faith, however, is not something to be toyed with. Flouting God in periods of prosperity and then praying to him in hours of adversity and then forgetting him completely and thereafter returning to the old ways will generally never succeed. The scientific spirit of doubt works
in the sphere of Religion too. Here the Faith itself is tested. Love of humanity or of all creation is the fundamental constituent of Real Religion. The Ultimate Principle governing the Universe, it is immaterial whether you call it God or Nature, tested Christ. And Christ passed the test. And this is the invariable experience of all the lovers of God and the world, the great saints of all Religions who have shed and have continued to shed the light in order to dispel darkness which, somehow or other, envelops this world of mortals. According to Hinduism, Faith in an idol is just its beginning. It gradually goes on increasing till it embraces the whole universe which is its point of culmination. This may take a number of lives. But fortunately at times such persons do incarnate on this earth in whose life this culmination point is seen to have been reached in this very life as a result of strenuous efforts in past lives. According to Hinduism, Buddha was such a person. Reaching this point of culmination, such persons cease to be human and become divine. They are no more men. They are God incarnate, God in flesh and blood walking upon this earth and talking to us mortals.

25. To resume the thread let us return to the Orthodox Belief that the Vedas are Eternal Words embodying Eternal Truth. Unfortunately, all the truths embodied in these Scriptures are not borne out by later historical as well as scientific research. At times they are given a direct lie. How are we to stick to the Orthodox Belief in such
Moreover, what justification can we find for such personalities as Śrī-Vallabhaścārya, whom we are tempted to regard as at least omniscient, holding such Orthodox Belief as finds little justification in the light of latest research? And it is this point which we shall now consider. In the immediately preceding paragraph it has been stated that, according to Hinduism, Religion starts with a faith in an idol. An idol is believed to be God. Objectively such an idol is either a well-shaped or ill-shaped or even shapeless piece of metal or stone. But, subjectively it is God. And it is this subjective belief that is at the root of all religious progress. Let it be a piece of metal or stone for others and even for our physical eyes and even our physical mind. But in our heart of hearts it is God incarnate, it is God who is manifest for us in this form, limitless God, manifest in a form having limitations, in spite of these limitations. With open-eyed nevertheless blind faith an aspirant proceeds further. The God of Belief gradually becomes the God of actual experience. And this is not a piece of idle imagination. We had amidst us just a century ago a historical personality having such experience in the person of Svāmī Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa. It is on this line only that we can justify the Orthodox Belief held by such personalities as Śrī-Vallabhaścārya. Whatever these Scriptures are objectively, subjectively they are Eternal Words embodying Eternal Truth. And, just as an idol, which to others remains an idol but to a sincerely devout worshipper becomes God walking before and talking to him, in the same way...
Eternal Truth manifests itself to such a sincere believer. This belief is part and parcel of spiritual discipline. In military discipline also we have:

'There's not to reason why;
There's but to do and die.' (20)

In this connection I am tempted to quote again the remarks of Mahātmā Aurobindo Ghosh who had had the direct vision of the Ultimate Reality in this very life. He writes:

'It is not the human defects of the Guru that can stand in the way when there is the psychic opening, confidence, and surrender. ... In my own case, I owe the first decisive turn of my inner life to one who was infinitely inferior to me in intellect, education, capacity, and by no means spiritually perfect or supreme; but having seen a power behind him and [having] decided to turn there for help I gave myself entirely into his hands and followed with an automatic passivity the guidance. ... I give this example to show how these things work; it is not in the calculated way the human reason wants to lay down, but by a more mysterious and greater law.' (21)

In all humility I say that this is my only way of justifying Śrī-Vallabhācārya's belief and bold remark that there is not a single letter in the whole of the Veda that is not true. (22)

26. Apart from all that has been stated above, it must be admitted, from the objective point of view, that there are
many Scriptural statements and beliefs which are contrary to the facts established unmistakeably by Science. To resolve this conflict a way has been suggested, which is not altogether unreasonable. Scriptures have recorded beliefs current at the time when they came to be composed. All these beliefs, especially those connected with the objective universe, were based on the imperfect knowledge of the persons of the age. To such beliefs we need not attach any great importance. Moreover some statements might have been poetic exaggeration. They too need not be attached any great importance. Certain portions may be apocryphal. It is certainly very difficult to separate the genuine portions from the dross. But that does not mean that because of some dross, the genuine portions too should be thrown away. Suppose, a limb of a certain person is diseased. That does not mean, however, that that person should be killed outright. As long as he is alive, he is allowed to remain so. Something of the sort has to be done with regard to Scriptures. The Orthodox Believers, including Śrī-Vallabhācārya, are conscious of this fact. And with regard to Bhāgavata, he has even stated in unmistakeable terms that its inspired portions (Samādhi-Bhāṣā) alone are fully authoritative. As for the remaining ones he states that they are authoritative in so far as they conform to the inspired ones. (23) But, ultimately, his attitude is more that of a mystic than of a critic. Moreover, the real beauty of Śrī-Vallabhācārya lies in the fact that he is never a fanatic.
27. As stated above Śrī-Vallabhācārya is never a fanatic. He is very liberal-minded. In his Tattvādīpa-Mibandha he enjoins his followers to respect anywhere and everywhere what conforms to the Vedic Teaching. (24) Physically a strict adherent of the caste-system and a sincere observer of all rules pertaining thereto, he was nevertheless mentally very liberal. He respected more those who were on a higher spiritual plane. And in that case he did not look to their lower social status. That is why some of the devotees of his and of his son's come from very low castes and communities. He is, however, not in favour of making a mess of everything on this account. He fully respects all social institutions, especially when these latter have scriptural sanction. But, at the same time he believes and boldly teaches that social shortcomings are no barriers to spiritual progress and even to spiritual success. (25)

28. After so much digression necessitated by the sceptical attitude of modern readers, we may now safely turn to what type of attitude Śrī-Vallabhācārya has towards his Scriptural Authorities.

29. In his Anubhāṣya, (26) he himself has described four such attitudes: (i) To attach greatest importance to the direct import of the words neither adding to nor subtracting from the meaning thus obtained. (ii) To attach equal importance to the words as well as to their meaning. (iii) To
attach greater importance to the meaning rather than to the words. (iv) To attach greatest importance to the meaning and not to the words. How these four different attitudes arise will be clear from the following consideration. As stated above, according to the Orthodox Belief, the Vedas are the Eternal Words embodying the Eternal Truth. And as such, not every word but even every letter thereof is authoritative for a strictly Orthodox Person. So the only attitude consistent with this belief is to show equal respect to all the passages. But such a consistency lands us into a trouble. For, there are certain passages of the Vedas the meaning whereof conflicts with that of certain other passages. Take for instance the following two passages: (i) One, meaning that the Ultimate Reality cannot be seen with the eyes. (27) and (ii) the other, meaning that some wise person did see this Ultimate Reality with his eyes. (28) No man in his senses can accept both these. How is it possible to see a thing that cannot be seen at all? Even an ordinary fellow knows it full well. That a thing can be seen and cannot be seen at the same time is logically impossible. If you want to show equal respect to both the above passages, then you will have to let go your logic. And if you want to stick to your logic, you will have to let go your respect for one of the above two Vedic passages. And the trouble is not to end even there. You will have to justify yourself why you respect one passage and reject the other. And for that too you will
be relying on your logic. So logic and human reason become supreme. Thus if logic and human reason can decide the nature of the Ultimate Reality, what is the use of these Scriptures at all? Why leave the liberty of logic, a sure science, and make yourself dependent on the words of others? But the trouble is that our logic does not carry us far; and that is just the reason why we go to the Vedas leaving logic behind. (This has been amply shown in the beginning of this Chapter.) You will have then to make a choice between two clear-cut courses: Logic or the Vedic Word. If logic, let go the Vedic word. If the Vedic word, let go your logic. Śrī-Vallabhācārya is for the Vedic word and not for logic, a product of the human mind having a lot of limitations. He is for the first attitude and cares little for logical consistency. Others cannot reject logic altogether. They literally accept one of the two passages that suits their temperament and then in order to remain consistent with the meaning of that passage they try to explain the meaning of the other passage metaphorically. Śrī-Vallabhācārya cannot tolerate such liberty with the Vedic Word, his Supreme Authority. But more of this in the next chapter in its proper place. But before doing so, I am tempted once more to quote the following words of Śrī-Aurobindo Ghosh:

"I give this example to show how these things work; it is not in the calculated way the human reason wants
to lay down, but by a more mysterious and greater law.' (29)

Do these words not amply justify Śrī-Vallabhācārya's attitude towards the Scriptures?