support to the movement for Temple entry. I declined to do so and issued a statement on the subject to the Press. As it will help the reader to know the grounds for my attitude to this question I have thought it well to set it in full. Here it is !

Although the controversy regarding the question of Temple Entry is confined to the *Sanatanists* and Mahatma Gandhi, the Depressed Classes have undoubtedly a very important part to play in it, in so far as their position is bound to weigh the scales one way or the other when the issue comes up for a final settlement. It is, therefore, necessary that their viewpoint should be defined and stated so as to leave no ambiguity about it.

To the Temple-Entry Bill of Mr. Ranga Iyer as now drafted, the Depressed Classes cannot possibly give their support. The principle of the Bill is that if a majority of Municipal and Local Board voters in the vicinity of any particular temple on a referendum decide by a majority that the Depressed Classes shall be allowed to enter the temple, the Trustees or the Manager of that temple shall give effect to that decision. The principle is an ordinary principle of Majority rule, and there is nothing radical or revolutionary about the Bill, and if the *Sanatanists* were a wise lot, they would accept it without demur.

The reasons why the Depressed Classes cannot support a Bill based upon this principle are two : One reason is that the Bill cannot hasten the day of temple-entry for the Depressed Classes any nearer than would otherwise be the case. It is true that under the Bill, the minority will not have the right to obtain an injunction against the Trustee, or the Manager who throws open the temple to the Depressed Classes in accordance with the decision of the majority. But before one can draw any satisfaction from this clause and congratulate the author of the Bill, one must first of all feel assured that when the question is put to the vote there will be a majority in favour of Temple Entry. If one is not suffering from illusions of any kind one must accept that the hope of a majority voting in favour of Temple-Entry will be very rarely realised, if at all. Without doubt, the majority is definitely opposed to-day—a fact which is conceded by the author of the Bill himself in his correspondence with the Shankracharya.

What is there in the situation as created after the passing of the Bill, which can lead one to hope that the majority will act differently ? I find nothing. I shall, no doubt, be reminded of the results of the referendum with regard to the Guruvayur Temple. But I refuse to accept a referendum so over weighted as it was by the life of Mahatma Gandhi as the normal result. In any such calculations, the life of the Mahatma must necessarily be deducted.

Secondly, the Bill does not regard Untouchability in temples as a sinful custom. It regards Untouchability merely as a social evil not necessarily worse than social evils of other sorts. For, it does not declare Untouchability as such to be illegal. It's binding force is taken away, only, if a majority decides to do so. Sin and immorality cannot become tolerable because a majority is addicted to them or because the majority chooses to practise them. If Untouchability is a sinful and an immoral custom, then in the view of the Depressed Classes it must be destroyed without any hesitation even if it was acceptable to the majority. This is the way in which all customs are dealt with by Courts of Law, if they find them to be immoral and against public policy.

This is exactly what the Bill does not do. The author of the Bill takes no more serious view of the custom of Untouchability than does the temperance reformer of the habit of drinking. Indeed, so much is he impressed by the assumed similarity between the two that the method he has adopted is a method which is advocated by temperance reformers to eradicate the evil habit of drinking, namely, by local option. One cannot feel much grateful to a friend of the Depressed Classes, who holds Untouchability to be no worse than drinking. If Mr. Ranga Iyer had not forgotten that only a few months ago Mahatma Gandhi had prepared himself to fast unto death if Untouchability was not removed, he would have taken a more serious view of this curse and proposed a most thoroughgoing reform to ensue its removal lock, stock and barrel. Whatever its shortcomings may be from the stand point of efficacy, the least that the Depressed Classes could expect is for the Bill to recognise the principle that Untouchability is a sin.

I really cannot understand how the Bill satisfies Mahatma Gandhi, who has been insisting that Untouchability is a sin ! It certainly does not satisfy the Depressed Classes. The question whether this particular Bill is good or bad, sufficient or insufficient, is a subsidiary question.

The main question is : Do the Depressed Classes desire Temple Entry or do they not ? This main question is being viewed by the Depressed Classes by two points of view. One is the materialistic point of view. Starting from it, the Depressed Classes think that the surest way for their elevation lies in higher education, higher employment and better ways of earning a living. Once they become well placed in the scale of social life, they would become respectable and once they become respectable the religious outlook of the orthodox towards them is sure to undergo change, and even if this did not happen, it can do no injury to their material interest. Proceeding on these lines the Depressed Classes say that they will not spend their resources on such an empty things as Temple Entry. There is also another reason why they do not care to fight for it. That argument is the argument of self-respect.

Not very long ago there used to be boards on club doors and other social resorts maintained by Europeans in India, which said "Dogs and Indians" not allowed. The temples of Hindus carry similar boards today, the only difference is that the boards on the Hindu temples practically say : "All Hindus and all animals including dogs are admitted, only Untouchables not admitted." The situation in both cases is on a parity. But Hindus never begged for admission in those places from which the Europeans in their arrogance had excluded them. Why should an Untouchable beg for admission in a place from which he has been excluded by the arrogance of the Hindus ? This is the reason of the Depressed Class man who is interested in his material welfare. He is prepared to say to the Hindus, "to open or not to open your temples is a question for you to consider and not for me to agitate. If you think, it is bad manners not to respect the sacredness of human

personality, open your temples and be a gentleman. If you rather be a Hindu than be gentleman, then shut the doors and damn yourself for I don't care to come."

I found it necessary to put the argument in this form, because I want to disabuse the minds of men like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya of their belief that the Depressed Classes are looking forward expectantly for their patronage.

The second point of view is the spiritual one. As religiously minded people, do the Depressed Classes desire temple entry or do they not ? That is the question. From the spiritual point of view, they are not indifferent to temple entry as they would be, if the material point of view alone were to prevail. But their final answer must depend upon the reply which Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindus give to the question namely : What is the drive behind this offer of temple entry? Is temple entry to be the final goal of the advancement in the social status of the Depressed Classes in the Hindu fold ? Or is it only the first step and if it is the first step, what is the ultimate goal ? Temple entry as a final goal, the Depressed Classes can never support. Indeed they will not only reject it, but they would then regard themselves as rejected by Hindu Society and free to find their own destiny elsewhere. On the other hand, if it is only to be a first step in the direction they may be inclined to support it. The position would then be analogous to what is happening in the politics of India to-day. All Indians have claimed Dominion Status for India. The actual constitution will fall short of Dominion Status and many Indians will accept it. Why ? The answer is that as the goal is defined, it does not matter much if it is to be reached by steps and not in one jump. But if the British had not accepted the goal of Dominion Status, no one would have accepted the partial reforms which many are now prepared to accept. In the same way, if Mahatma Gandhi and the reformers were to proclaim what the goal which they have set before themselves is for the advancement of the Social Status of the Depressed Classes in the Hindu fold, it would be easier for the Depressed Classes to define their attitude towards Temple

Entry. The goal of the Depressed Classes might as well be stated here for the information and consideration of all concerned. What the Depressed Classes want is a religion, which will give them equality of social status. To prevent any misunderstanding, I would like to elaborate the point by drawing a distinction between social evils which are the results of secular causes and social evils which are founded upon the doctrine of religion. Social evils can have no justification whatsoever in a civilised society. But nothing can be more odious and vile than that admitted social evils should be sought to be justified on the ground of religion. The Depressed Classes may not be able to overthrow inequities to which they are being subjected. But they have made up their mind not to tolerate a religion that will lend its support to the continuance of these inequities.

If the Hindu religion is to be their religion, then it must become a religion of Social Equality. The mere amendment of Hindu Religious Code by the mere inclusion in it of a provision to permit temple entry for all, cannot make it a religion of equality of social status. All that it can do is to recognize them as national and not aliens, if I may use in this connection terms which have become so familiar in politics. But that cannot mean that they would thereby reach a position where they would be free and equal, without being above or below any one else, for the simple reason that the Hindu religion does not recognise the principle of equality of social status : on the other hand it fosters inequality by insisting upon grading people as Brahmins, Kshatrias, Vaishyas and Shudras, which now stand towards one another in an ascending scale of hatred and descending scale of contempt. If the Hindu Religion is to be a religion of social equality then an amendment of its code to provide temple entry is not enough. What is required is to purge it of the doctrine of *Chaturvarna.* That is the root cause of all inequality and also the parent of the Caste System and Untouchability, which are merely forms of inequality. Unless it is done not only will the Depressed Classes reject Temple Entry, they will also reject the Hindu faith. *Chaturvarna* and the Caste System are incompatible with the self-respect of the Depressed Classes. So long as they stand to be it cardinal doctrine the Depressed Classes must continue to be looked upon as low.

The Depressed Classes can say that they are Hindus only when the theory of *Chaturvarna* and Caste System is abandoned and expunged from the Hindu *Shastras*. Do the Mahatma and the Hindu reformers accept this as their goal and will they show the courage to work for it ? I shall look forward to their pronouncements on this issue, before I decide upon my final attitude. But whether Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindus are prepared for this are not, let it be known once for all that nothing short of this will satisfy the Depressed Classes and make them accept Temple Entry. To accept temple entry and be content with it, is to temporise with evil and barter away the sacredness of human personality that dwells in them.

There is, however, one argument which Mahatma Gandhi and the reforming Hindus may advance against the position I have taken. They may say : "acceptance by the Depressed Classes of Temple Entry now, will not prevent them from agitating hereafter for the abolition of *Chaturvarna* and Caste. If that is the view, I like to meet the argument right at this stage so as to clinch the issue and clear the road for future developments. My reply is that it is true that my right to agitate for the abolition of *Chaturvarna* and Caste System will not be lost, if I accept Temple Entry now. But the question is on what side will Mahatma Gandhi be at the time when the question is put. If he will be in the camp of my opponents, I must tell him that I cannot be in his camp now. If he will be in my camp he ought to be in it now.

B. R. Ambedkar."

"Almost all the Depressed Class leaders of Dr. Ambedkar's persuasion, endorsed the views of their leader. Srinivasan, Premtai and Malik upheld the views of their leader.

Gandhi issued a statement in reply in which he stated : "I am a Hindu, not merely because I am born in the Hindu fold, but I am one by conviction and choice. There is no superiority or inferiority in the Hinduism of my conception. But when Dr. Ambedkar wants to fight *Varnashram* itself, I cannot be in his camp, because I believe *Varnashram* to be an integral part of Hinduism." [1]*

[1]: Keer, P. 230.

* Comment on Temple Entry Campaign See Appendix-VI.

Regarding the above mentioned *Satyagraha* Dr. Ambedkar explained his stand in the following letter addressed to Bhaurao Gaikwad.

BHIMRAO R. AMBEDKAR, Rajgriha Colony.
M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc, Dadar, Bombay 14.
Barrister-at-law., J. P., M. L. C. 3-3-34

My dear Bhaurao,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 23rd Feb. It is very kind of you to have asked me for my views on the propriety of the Depressed Classes launching upon a *Satyagraha* at the Kala Ram Temple in Nasik on the coming Ram Navami Day. I have no position in saying that such a move would be quite uncalled for and should not merely be suspended but should be stopped altogether. This may appear strange and surprising coming as it does from one who was the author of the *Satyagraha*. But I am afraid to declare this change of front. I did not launch the temple entry movement because I wanted the Depressed Classes to become worshippers of idols which they were prevented from worshipping or because I believed that temple entry would make them equal members in and an integral part of the Hindu Society. So far as this aspect of the case is concerned I would advise the Depressed Classes to insist upon a complete overhauling of Hindu Society and Hindu theology before they consent to become an integral part of Hindu Society. I started temple entry *Satyagrha* only because I felt that was the best way of energising the Depressed Classes and making them conscious of their position. As I believe I have achieved that purpose I have no more use for temple entry. I want the Depressed Classes to concentrate their energy and resources on politics and education and I hope that they will realise the importance of both.

Your sincerely,
Sd/-B. R. Ambedkar."[1]

Accordingly the *Satyagraha* was stopped immediately. —Editors

[1]: Khairmode, Vol. 3; Pp. 357-358.

"WHY NASIK TEMPLE *SATYAGRAHA* WAS GIVEN UP

"No Longer Needed"

Nasik, November 19, 1934

Before a mammoth gathering of over 15,000 members of the Depressed Classes who assembled at Vinchur on the occasion of the 11th day death ceremonies of the late Mr. Dhondiba Runkhambe of Vinchur. Dr. Ambedkar made an important political pronouncement. He said he had been repeatedly asked why the Kalaram Temple Entry Movement had been suspended for the last two years. The only reason, he explained was that such a move was no longer needed. This, he said, may appear strange and surprising, coming as it did from the author of the temple entry *Satyagraha*.

The Temple Entry Movement, he explained, was started because he felt that was the best way of energizing the Depressed Classes and making them conscious of their position. He believed that: he had achieved that purpose and therefore he had no more use for temple entry.

Instead he strongly advised the Depressed Classes to concentrate their energy and resources on politics. Since in the coming Reforms they would be called upon to play an important part in moulding their own political future and, thus, their own standard.

Concluding, he paid warm tributes to the Nasik Temple Entry *Satyagrahis* who he said, had not only awakened their brethren and made them realise their true position in Hindu Society but had also aroused deep sympathy towards the Depressed Classes throughout the civilised world. He also stressed the necessity of educating their children."[1]

[1]: The Times of India, 21st November 1934.

Dr. Ambedkar has expressed his views on this subject in his book 'What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables' wherein he says,

"Here was an opportunity for Mr. Gandhi to advance his Anti-Untouchability campaign. He could have proposed that if a Hindu wishes to enroll himself as a member of the Congress he should prove that he does not observe Untouchability and that the employment of an Untouchable in his household should be adduced in support of his claim in this behalf and that no other evidence would be allowed to be tendered. Such a proposal could not have been impracticable for almost every Hindu, certainly those who call themselves high Caste Hindus, keeps more than one servant in his household. If Mr. Gandhi could make the Hindu accept spinning and boycott as franchise for membership of the Congress he could also make acceptable the employment of an Untouchable in a Hindu household a franchise for membership of the Congress. But Mr. Gandhi did not do it.

After 1924 till 1930 there is a complete blank. Mr. Gandhi does not appear to have taken any active steps for the removal of Untouchability or got himself interested in any activity beneficial to the Untouchables during his period. While Mr. Gandhi was inactive the Untouchables had started a movement called the *Satyagraha* movement. The object of the movement was to establish their right to take water from public wells and to enter public temples. The *Satyagraha* at the Chawdar Tank situated in Mahad, a town in the Kolaba District of the Bombay Presidency, was organised to establish the right of the Untouchables to take water from public watering places. The *Satyagraha* at the Kala-Ram Temple situated in Nasik, a town in the Nasik District of the Bombay Presidency, was organised to establish the right of the Untouchables to enter Hindu temples. There were many minor *Satyagrahas*. These were, however, the two principal ones over which the efforts of the Untouchables and their opponents, the Caste Hindus, were concentrated. The din and noise caused by them were heard all over India. Thousands of men and women from the Untouchables took part in these *Satyagrahas*. Both men and women belonging to the Untouchables were insulted and beaten

by the Hindus. Many were injured and some were imprisoned by Government on the ground of causing breach of the peace. This *Satyagraha* movement went on for full six years when it was brought to a close in 1935 at a Conference held in Yeola in Nasik District in which the Untouchables as a result of the adamantine attitude of the Hindus in refusing to give them equal social rights resolved to go out of the Hindu fold. This *Satyagraha* movement was no doubt independent of the Congress. It was organised by the Untouchables, led by the Untouchables and financed by the Untouchables. Yet the Untouchables were not without hope of getting the moral support of Mr. Gandhi. Indeed they had very good ground for getting it. For the weapon of *Satyagraha*—the essence of which is to melt the heart of the opponent by suffering—was the weapon which was forged by Mr. Gandhi, and who had led the Congress to practise it against the British Government for winning *Swaraj*. Naturally the Untouchables expected full support from Mr. Gandhi to their *Satyagraha* against the Hindus the object of which was to establish their right to take water from public wells and to enter public Hindu temples. Mr. Gandhi however did not give his support to the *Satyagraha*. Not only did he not give his support, he condemned it in strong terms.

In this connection reference may be made to two novel weapons for redressing human wrongs. Mr. Gandhi claims exclusive credit for forging and perfecting them. First is *Satyagraha*. Mr. Gandhi has put into action this weapon of *Satyagraha* many a times against the British Government for the removal of political wrongs. But Mr. Gandhi has never used the weapon of *Satyagraha* against Hindus to get them to throw open wells and temples to the Untouchables. Fasting in another weapon of Mr. Gandhi. It is said that there have been altogether 21 fasts to the credit of Mr. Gandhi. Some were for the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity and quite a number as atonements for the immoralities committed by the inmates of his *Ashram*. One was against the order of the Government of Bombay refusing to give the work of a scavenger in the goal to a prisoner by name Mr. Patwardhan although he demanded it. In these 21 fasts there is not one undertaken for the removal of Untouchability. These are very significant facts.

In 1930 came the Round Table Conference. Mr. Gandhi joined the deliberations of the Conference in 1931. The Conference was concerned with a vital question of framing a constitution for a self-governing of India. It was unanimously held that if India was to be a self-governing country then the government must be a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Everybody agreed that only when a government is in a real sense a government by the people that it could be a government of the people and for the people. The problem was how to make it a government by the people in a country rent into communities, majorities and minorities, who are charged not merely with social cleavages but also with social antagonisms. Having regard to these circumstances it was agreed that in India there was no possibility of government by the people unless Legislature and the Executive were framed on the basis of communal representation.

The problem of the Untouchables loomed large at the Conference. It assumed a new aspect. The question was : Should the Untouchables be left as they were to the tender mercies of the Hindus or should they be given the means to protect themselves by extending to them the principle of communal representation ? The Untouchables strongly objected to be left to the pleasure of the Hindus and demanded the same protection as was given to the other minorities. The contention of the Untouchables was accepted by all. It was just and logical. They contended that the chasm between the Hindus and Muslims. between Hindus and Sikhs, between Hindus and Christians is nothing as compared with the chasm between the Hindus and the Untouchables. It is the widest and the deepest. The chasm between the Hindus and the Muslims is religious and not social. That between the Hindus and the Untouchables is both religious and social. The antagonism arising out of the chasm existing between Hindus and Muslims cannot spell political disaster to the Muslims because the relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims is not that of master and slave. It is one of mere estrangement. On the other hand, the chasm between Hindus and the Untouchables must spell political disaster for the Untouchables because the relationship between the two is that of master and slave. The Untouchables contended that the attempts

to close the gap between them and the Hindus by means of social process had been tried for ages. They had all failed. There was no hope of their success. Since power is being transferred into the hands of the Hindu majority they must have political safeguards of the same sort as, if not better, than those conceded to the Muslims and other minorities.

Here was an opportunity to Mr. Gandhi to show his sympathy to the Untouchables by lending his support to their demand and thereby strengthen their power of resistance against the tyranny and oppression of the Hindus. Instead of showing his sympathy, Mr. Gandhi used every means in his power to defeat them. He made a pact with the Muslims with a view to isolate the Untouchables. Failing to win the Musalmans to his side, he went on a fast unto death to compel the British Government to withdraw their decision to give to the Untouchables the same political rights as given to the Muslims and other minority communities. When the fast failed and Mr. Gandhi was obliged to sign a pact—called the Poona Pact—which conceded the political demands of the Untouchables he took his revenge by letting the Congress employ foul electioneering tactics to make their political rights of no avail." [1]

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[1]: Writings and Speeches, Vol. 9, Pp. 246-249.

SECTION V

OTHER MOVEMENTS