



# PSALMS OF A SAIVA SAINT

BEING SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
TAYUMANASWAMY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS book is a Christian layman's endeavour to understand a great Hindu poet-saint. My Christian prepossessions will, I believe, be found to be evenly balanced, if not altogether neutralized, by that bias which belongs to my being a Tamil. In my interpretation of S. Tāyumānavar I have striven, it is for the reader to say with what success, to maintain the historic sense and the literary judgment undimmed by either religious inclinations or racial sympathy, by keeping down prepossessions at the lowest level of the safest minimum. The production of this book has cost me over fifteen years' study. A faultless work—well, who is faultless? What is? Faultlessness is the frailty of the few: the many must make mistakes. One merit I may courageously claim for this work—it is the very first of its kind, the precursor of better ones.

The *Introduction* was planned on a small scale, but it had stealthily grown under my hands into one hundred and eighty-nine pages. I do not regret the length, considering the variety of subjects that called for necessary discussion. The treatment of some of them has been accorded an amount of fulness needed for a just appreciation of the poet. And so, I wonder if the reader will really rejoice to have what, in all good faith, is intended for his help, boiled down to the barrenness of superficial brevity. For myself, should the opportunity for re-writing the *Introduction* be ever mine, I would rather add somewhat to it.

Thus, the discussion of the subject of Part I of the *Introduction* might be supplemented with a notice of Professor S. Krishnasamy Aiyengar's views as expressed in his two books.<sup>1</sup> He, perhaps induced by pro-Aryan predilections to belittle the antiquity of Tamil literature and to make the Tamil language dependant on Sanscrit, is for trailing old heresies across

<sup>1</sup> *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, Calcutta, 1923. *Beginnings of South Indian History*, Madras, 1918.

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