RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

PRAYER BELL

PANDITA RAMABAI

MARCH—APRIL, 1948

KEDGAON, POONA DISTRICT

INDIA
A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

‘Christ is Risen.’ This is the message we want to send to our friends in the Master’s service as this Prayer Bell goes forth at another Easter Season.

India is going through ‘growing pains’ as she develops her independence, and her leaders need the help and guidance which comes with wisdom given from above, but, not realizing this, they are attempting to rule in their own strength and understanding. As a result, we find discord where it was hoped there might be unity, and it is sad to see the communal divisions which have arisen during the past years; but as in the past the prayers of God’s people have saved this land in her hour of need, so may they prove effectual now in this perhaps her greatest hour of need.

With the death of Mr. Gandhi, India has been bereft of a leader who had united people of various castes in seeking political freedom, but failed to make them one in his ideals for breaking down the barriers of caste and bringing all to a relationship where each would seek the other’s good. This he failed to do because such a relationship is impossible apart from the redemption of Jesus Christ our Saviour and allegiance to Him as our divine Lord and Master.

We ask you to join in thanksgiving for God’s provision during the past months, for, as grain and other rationed commodities have been decontrolled, there has been a rise in prices, yet such a situation leaves our Heavenly Father unperturbed, and we remember He cares for each tiny sparrow and knows His children’s needs. Often we have proved the promise to be true, ‘Before they call, I will answer’, and therefore we only ask to be kept with untroubled hearts and minds as we go into the uncertainties of the future in the certain and sure knowledge that God is still Almighty.

Our thanks are due to the many friends who have sent food-stuffs which have so frequently helped to provide just what was lacking.

ISABEL CRADDOCK

‘Who will roll the stone?’ they questioned,
Christian, question not today;
Rise up early, seek the garden—
God will roll the stone away.

H. F. B.
A DEDICATION UNTO GOD

In Memory of Krishnabai

Bearded and turbaned they came—red turbans, yellow turbans, green turbans, clean white turbans, and dirty grey turbans. From six different villages they came with their walking sticks, their children carried on their hips, their foreheads painted with Hindu marks. Through the brightly decorated gate three hundred of them walked, while 'Welcome’ sparkled in silver over the gate.

They stood quietly as Pastor Hivale spoke of friends in America who had given the big bell in the tower to ring out the praises of a living God; they heard him dedicate it to God's glory, and they listened to it ring out its loud, clear tones for the first time in India, calling people to come and worship.

And then the turbaned heads turned to look at the white dedication stone set in the front of the new, red-brick Gospel Hall.

KRISHNABAI MEMORIAL
CHRISTIAN GOSPEL HALL

Erected by Gifts from New Zealand 1947

As Mr. Modak spoke of the friends in New Zealand who had given the money for the erection of this temple, and as he spoke of Krishnabai's desire for a church in which the Hindus might feel free to come at any time to hear the news of salvation, they listened attentively, listened because they knew the speaker, Mr. Modak. In years gone by he had been their District Magistrate. Some had been tried in court by him, some fined by him, some defended by him. They knew from years of experience that he was a fair man, a good man, a man they could trust to tell them the truth, a man who would speak words of wisdom and words to which it would be well to hearken. They heard him speak of a God who is a Spirit, not a wayside stone. They heard him dedicate the new building with its arched windows to the glory of a living God in memory of Krishnabai, who had taught many of them in school and had yearned over them in years of the past.

As Miss Craddock turned the key in the lock and opened the shiny, new doors, they heard her say, 'We open the door of this Gospel Hall to the glory of God in the service of Jesus Christ.' And then they poured into the
building, all three hundred Hindu men sitting Indian fashion on the floor in the new temple built especially for them, built that they might come to know the living God. Among them was the language teacher who had been teaching missionaries the Marathi language for twenty years and who had time and again turned away from the Words of Life. This last year his oldest son was drowned in the village well just before his wedding, and now the teacher sat there with the heavi ness of his heart and the hopelessness of Hinduism written on his face. Will he be among those who will find light in that temple dedicated unto the glory of the Lord? Then there was the head man of the village of Kedgaon, a proud Brahman who through the years has frowned on Mukti. He listened attentively because he knew that any words Mr. Modak would speak would be words of importance. There was the man whose hair was all shaved off save for a tuft at the back, which he had left for the Hindu gods to take hold of and drag him across the river of death. And there was the tall, broad-shouldered, bearded sub-inspector of police whose huge frame filled the doorway.

In the background stood our Christian men, their clothes clean and neat, their ribbon badges fluttering in the breeze and marking them as the reception committee. Their faces were intent as Mr. Modak presented to them their responsibility in keeping the temple a lighthouse throughout the years for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and in memory of Ramabai, Krishnabai, and others in whose train they follow.

After the service Hindus put caste aside and they all sat down together for tea. Even the arrogant Brahman sat side by side with the Christian. For the first time in his life the heretofore unfriendly head man of the village publicly ate with the Christians. Hearts prayed that this might be a foreshadowing of fellowship in the years to come in sitting around the table of the Lord.

As the people left the courtyard, our Christian men gave out free of charge Gospel portions, New Testaments, and tracts which they had purchased with their own money.

As the new bell rings out its call to worship, and as the Word of Life goes out in the new Gospel Hall, will you pray that souls may be born again out of midnight darkness into eternal light? As Krishnabai yearned over the souls in the villages round about, will you yearn over them in prayer until out from among them there comes a glorious church? May there be eternal souls born into eternal life for the eternal glory of our eternal God.
IN MEMORY OF RAMABAI

The widow coming, with her head bent low,
   The girl cast out from home by friend and kin,
The blind, the sick who have no place to go,
   The babies, and the burdened down with sin.

Where'er one looks one thinks of Ramabai
   And sees the fruit that's come as faith's reward,
The human scraps she rescued did not die,
   They're living, serving, praising Christ the Lord.

The Buds are cooing in their cradle swings,
   The Blossoms laughing in their childhood joys,
The school girls running as the school bell rings,
   The women caring for the girls and boys.

The waifs are Bible-women, teachers now,
   The seed she planted long ago has grown,
Before her faith for India's scraps we bow,
   By faith she called the scrap-heap 'cornerstones.'

While these living cornerstones are Ramabai's true memorial, it is our desire that the inspiration of her life might be kept fresh in the minds of India's youth. The India Sunday School Union has suggested silver medals to be given annually to the winners of their Scripture Memorizing Contest. This year 57,000 young people from all over India took part in this contest.

In memory of Ramabai's love for the Scripture, in memory of her love for children, in memory of the inspiration of her life which we wish to keep before the youth of India, we invite you to have a part in the endowment of the Pandita Ramabai Memorial Medal.

A MILE-STONE PASSED

We are glad to report that Misses McGregor, Siemens, Stone, and Terry passed their first-year language examination and have received their Certificates from the Language School Board.
DEDICATED FOR SERVICE

We praise God for a year of blessing in our Sunday School, a year of learning more of Himself and His precious Word. While the children look forward eagerly to Promotion Sunday, when they go into a higher class or better still a higher department, the teachers feel anew their responsibility in teaching them the things of God. The first Sunday of the year is Promotion Day, at which time we have a dedication service for the teachers appointed by the four Departmental Superintendents.

The minister who dedicated the teachers this year was Mr. Modak, a fine Indian Christian gentleman who is a retired Collector and District Magistrate. Mr. Modak read from II Kings 4: 18-37 concerning the story of the raising of the Shunammite woman's son by Elisha. Gehazi with his stick was powerless, but Elisha, who was in touch with God, was powerful, making the dead to live again.

Mr. Modak said, 'You teachers may be either Gehazis or Elishas. Only the Spirit-filled life will see the unsaved saved, the indifferent won and filled with love and zeal. You yourselves must be in constant touch with the Master, and prevailing prayer for your scholars and for yourselves must ascend the throne.'

One was conscious of a solemn hush over all as sixty Sunday School teachers stood there before the congregation and dedicated themselves afresh to the Lord Jesus Christ's service, conscious of their own weakness, yet knowing that He has promised to be unto them 'wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.'

GLADYS FLETCHER

INTO THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

Mrs. Marvin Payne, sister of our own Jean McGregor, went to be with the Lord on January 16, and her father joined his daughter at His feet on March 2. Miss Julia Woodward's mother was called to her eternal Home on January 21. For many years Mrs. Barratt has served faithfully as our Secretary in England. We know that as she went into the presence of her Lord on February 24, He said unto her, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' We surround those who will miss these dear ones with our prayers, that the glory of it may overcome the shadow of the parting.
HOUSES WITHOUT WINDOWS

‘Why did the white woman come?’
‘Is she going to steal the girls whose pictures she tried to take?’
‘Is she married?’

Such were the questions that the villagers plied our Bible-women with when I accompanied them to a little out-of-the-way village. When the Bible-women explained that I had not come to steal their children, that I had twenty-five of my own, called Blossoms, at Mukti to care for, they wanted to know how I obtained them. Had I gone to villages and stolen them as I had come to theirs? The minds of the women seemed all darkness. It was utterly beyond their comprehension that a person might come with a sincere desire to help them, for in their lives nothing but self-gain by fair means or foul was known.

After the open-air meeting, we went from house to house to tell the women of the Lord who sought them. The walls of their homes were of mud-brick, the floors of cow dung, the air thick, smelly, and dark, for there were no windows. As we left the village, the news of Gandhi’s death came. The men gathered together, but the silence of death was upon them. The women went on with their work, for in their ignorance it meant nothing to them. As I turned and gave one last look at that village, my heart was filled with the darkness that pervaded the place—darkness of houses without windows spoke to me of the darkness of souls without light, and the gloom caused by Gandhi’s death brought to my heart a gloom over their souls dead in sin.

The next day I went with Nurse Callan into the village of Supa. From house to house we went with our medicines. There were men and women lying in dark corners who were dying with tuberculosis; there were tiny babies crying because of fly-covered, sore-covered bodies; there were little ones ill because of wrong treatment by ignorant mothers. There was the Mohammedan with three sick children who were lying on the ground crying. One child needed to go to a hospital, but the man was afraid to go out of his house because of the trouble over Gandhi’s death. He just sat with his head bowed in his hands, not able even to go out and earn bread for the sick children lying at his feet. The neck of the boy who was so sick was laden with prayer beads. We asked the boy to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He refused, but finally in response to the father’s consent, he uttered the words after us.
As we walked home dirty, tired, and weary, my heart was indescribably heavy. Some people were following us, mostly children, and a man standing in a doorway called out, ‘Don’t follow those people. They will throw a bomb at you.’ It seemed almost too much to bear—these people we loved so intensely and who needed such help turning away from the light back to their darkness. As I looked at the little stone gods on every hand, I wondered how they could still hold faith in them, for the worship of them had brought them nothing but ignorance, sickness, and evil. When I reached our bungalow, my tired legs collapsed on a bed, and I wept for dark, lost India.

But the next morning eighty-six children from that village came to Sunday School, and then two educated Brahman men came to inquire earnestly about the gospel, and I realized our sowing had not been in vain. People were hearing, sometimes listening, and in some hearts a little ray of the light of the gospel was piercing the darkness. My heart cried out for more prayer warriors who would pray for those who are in such great darkness that they seem unable to understand that there is light, glorious light, for them from the living God.

There are many souls in Supa and the districts round about who have heard and are thinking. Souls, precious souls, are hanging in the balance. Will you pray them through to glory?

Carol Terry

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