Be Thou their Guide, Lord Jesus

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

PRAYER BELL

March—April, 1951
TO CONVEY HIS LOVE

BY BERNICE STEED

And let the beauty of Thy benediction
Descend upon us now:
All work our hands have wrought
All work that shall be brought
To fulness since the days of our affliction.
(Psa. 90: 17, Way's Version)

‘All work our hands have wrought.’ In caring for a
large family the work of hands has a large place. Can it
be that this is the way to fulfil the great commission?
Is it for this that called ones have left home and loved
ones and crossed the seas? Does such service as this
bring joy to the heart of Him who yearns over lost multi­
tudes? Can we look at the hands that toiled in the
carpenter’s shop, that broke the bread and fed the multi­
tudes, that gave the touch of healing to suffering ones,
that lay in blessing on children who eagerly pressed near,
that bore the cruel nail prints for our redemption, without
saying:

‘Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.’

Yes, the Saviour needs human hands today to convey His
love to India’s little ones and India’s bound ones.

He is mindful of all the day hours and all the night
hours of loving toil in Mukti and in other lands on behalf
of Mukti. We pause to pray ‘Let the beauty of Thy
benediction descend upon us now. Oh Father, let our
children be as arrows in the hands of the Mighty One,
quick to fly with the message of release to those in bondage
(Psa. 127:4); as olive plants to bring the oil of gladness
to broken hearts (Psa. 128:3); as polished corner stones
in the temple prepared for His dwelling place (Psa. 144:12);
as a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord. Lord, Thou
hast given them to us. We labour with Thee for them.’

It has been a privilege and a joy to labour together with
the devoted band of called-out ones serving our Master in
Mukti and with those across the seas whose help is just
as real though unseen by us. How oft has my heart cried
out for a spirit of devotion worthy of such a task and
such a company of like-hearted ones. There has been
much sacrificial giving and we have asked to be taught
how to use the things of time in the light of eternity that
they might yield full value for our Master. Though I shall
soon be leaving Mukti to serve Him in Central India, the
bonds of fellowship will not be broken, and may we often
meet at the Throne of Grace till He come.
OUR PRAYERS GO WITH YOU,
MISS STEED

We thank God for Miss Steed's ministry and presence in Mukti during the past months, and our prayers follow her as she goes to take up her work in Khamgaon, Berar.

Now as I take over the work from Miss Steed, I continue to count on the help of our prayer-partners and urgently request, as St. Paul did, 'Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.'—ISABEL CRADDOCK

WHEN OUR TRAINING GIRLS COME HOME

After being away from us for many years while she took her nurses' training, Subhadra Pandit has come home to serve the Lord she loves. We asked Subhadra if she would like to write something for our readers, and she sends this message to you.

'Thank you very much for praying and for helping me in many ways. There is an idiom in the Marathi language which says, "The child's feet are seen in the cradle." Since childhood I had a great desire to be a nurse. As soon as I finished my studies in Mukti, I chose nurse's training. The hospital in which I first trained was not a Government hospital. After three years that hospital was turned into a Government hospital, so I continued my studies.

'Now I have completed the Nursing Course and have come home to where I was brought up. I have decided to work and serve the Lord here. While I was taking nurse's training, some of my friends greatly urged me to stay with them and work with them in the same
hospital. But it was not my wish because I decided to work in my own Mission and I did not listen to them. I have come home and am now working in our hospital. ‘Please continue to pray for me. I will try my best to increase the Lord’s kingdom by this, my little service for Him.’—Subhadra Pandit

SAVOUR OF LIFE

BY JOSEPHINE PATTERSON

‘Far o’er the ocean lies a land in darkest night,
Rich in devotion, poor and sad its plight.’

How often have I sung these words since arriving in India three months ago. RICH IN DEVOTION—how true! If salvation could be gained by works or by suffering hardship, India would fill heaven.

I have just returned to Muktī from a three weeks’ trip down into the South of India. Travel was by train, bus, bullock cart and on foot. The roads were not super-highways and travelling in India is not to be greatly desired. However, the Lord has privileged me to lift up my eyes and look on the fields which are white already to harvest. I have seen some of the 640,000 villages in India without a gospel witness, and lived in one of them for four days under primitive conditions, living among one thousand people who had never seen a missionary and who were content to worship their household ‘gods,’ for it was all they knew. Many of these people were Brahmins of the highest caste, direct descendants of Pandita Ramabai.

In Mysore City the people worship Chamundi, the house goddess of the Maharajah. The myth concerning her is that she killed the king of demons, and, therefore, the king built a huge temple on a very high hill so that all in Mysore can see it. His summer palace is built on an opposite hill about a half mile away. The people of Mysore City count it a privilege to climb the more than one thousand steps up the hill to worship in the temple of Chamundi. My companion, Miss Dongre, and I saw an opportunity to witness for the One who became flesh and blood that ‘through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil’ (Heb. 2:14), and we climbed the hill with those who went to worship a mythological goddess.
Many were the reasons, as to why they worshipped Chamundi, that were given by the people who climbed and by those who sought gain by begging and by tending idols along the way. College boys paused at a small idol on the way up, offered flowers, red and yellow powder, sipped some water given by the attendant, threw it over their shoulders, and prayed as they went round and round.

'Why do you go round and round?' we asked.

'It is our custom.'

We marvelled that they did not feel the emptiness of these vain traditions. While we talked with them, groups of children, all of whom could read English, came along. They presented a challenge for child evangelism, and it was a thrill to hear them read John 3:16 and to give them a simple talk on the way to worship the true God.

'We believe there is one God, but idols help us to know what God is like' said the leader of the group.

'This is the Book which will tell you what God is like' we answered.

'But it is our habit to worship idols, and, besides, we like to come here to see the scenery.'

To a group of young men we put the same question, 'Why do you worship Chamundi?'

'We worship Chamundi and idols because our forefathers did.'

'You don't dress like your forefathers. Why do you worship idols because your forefathers did?' They made no reply to this query.

A little boy came running down the steps. We called to him, 'Whom do you worship?'

'Chamundi.'

'Our God is Jesus Christ. Do you know about Him?'

'I never heard of Jesus.'

In contrast, the next one we met said he had read the Bible, the Koran and Indian philosophy. He said he did it to rouse his inner power of concentration and hoped to know God that way. The next worshipper, a young man, admitted that he was an atheist, and, when told that some day he must meet God, he said, 'Well, if I do, I'll wish Him luck.'

The last step was reached and we continued for about a half of a mile to the temple of Chamundi itself. Entrance into even the outer court was refused until shoes were removed. When we refused to give an offering of cocoaanut or money, Brahmin priests came running from every
direction. The excitement was so high that we sat on the steps until it subsided. However, it did not subside, for the 'holy cow' came from the rear of the courtyard and knocked us off the steps, as though she knew we had not come to worship her nor Chamundi.

The idol itself was in an inner court and this we saw only from a distance. The powers of darkness were strongly felt and we were glad to put on our shoes and leave their 'holy place.' A temple attendant followed us outside and recited the Lord's Prayer. He said he had received his education in a Mission school, proving the truth of 2 Corinthians 2:16, 'to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.' We read portions of the Word to him and there was a far-a-way look in his eyes as he heard again things which had probably been taught to him as a child. We tried to show him how great was his responsibility, as he crucified afresh the Son of God and put Him to an open shame.

Our return walk down the steps was made in the heat of the day after all the worshippers had gone back to their homes. The only worshipper in view was a Brahmin widow, recognizable by her shorn head and coarse, widow's garments. We tried to talk to her, but she hurried on ahead all the way, never turning back. We had seen her at the door of the temple prostrating herself some distance from the idol, knocking her head on the floor and then quietly disappearing, seemingly unnoticed, as she went down the steps and slipped away into a nearby village. There are so many 'pictures' that one would like to take for the Christian public in the home lands, but the ones which make the deepest impressions can never be taken. A widow worshipping alone, walking alone, living alone, yes, and in all probability she will DIE alone. She was only ONE, but she represents millions in India for whom life is not Christ and for whom death cannot be gain.

Many years ago a high caste Brahmin widow heard the gospel. It was the savour of life unto her, and Pandita Ramabai brought light and life and hope into the lives of many such widows. Her works do follow her, and it is our privilege to follow in her train and carry on here in Mukti the work she so nobly started.
THE CHALLENGE OF THE MOUNTAINS

Jesus 'took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.' Why did Jesus climb a mountain to pray? From a distance mountains are beautiful, they are majestic, they are awe inspiring. The closer you get to a mountain, the more formidable it becomes. To actually climb a mountain takes strength, determination, persistent effort and courage. Did Jesus want to teach His disciples these lessons as they painstakingly climbed together?

Prayer is a struggle. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.' Did Jesus want to teach them that prayer is wrestling with the powers of darkness and we need determination, strength and courage if we are to win in this battle with sin?

These and many other things crowded into my mind as I also climbed the mountain of Gangamoola near the village of Mali, in the district of Mangalore. Our purpose in climbing nine miles to reach the mountain peak was to visit the birthplace of Pandita Ramabai. Over a hundred years ago her father, Anant Shastri, an orthodox Hindu, climbed the mountain, cleared a place at the top one mile in circumference, established a humble home at the source of the so-called holy river where sages lived and pilgrims came to worship. His purpose was to teach a woman to read the sacred Sanskrit language. He overcame the obstacles of his day—the obstacles of custom and prejudice—and won the victory, and he gave to India the greatest woman this land of India has known.

Our party consisted of an Indian evangelist, his servant boy who was a refugee from Bengal and who carried a gun for our protection from wild animals, three coolies who carried our bedding and food, a Brahmin widow and her friend, and then Miss Dongre, who is Ramabai's grand niece, and myself. Because of the difficulty in climbing, it took eight hours of steady going each way, so that it was necessary to make the journey in two days.

When we reached the clearing at the top of the mountain and saw what was left of the house in which Anant Shastri raised his family, we marvelled at the spirit which prompted him to sacrifice his home, his reputation and his comforts to achieve his purpose.

We saw the idol, which he worshipped, still under a tree. We saw the clear, cool water still flowing in which he bathed and in which pilgrims still bathe today, and lying
in mute silence were the stones which he had gathered to build a temple, but circumstances forced him to leave the mountain home before that was accomplished.

God in His sovereignty caused Anant Shastri to leave the forest when his youngest child was six months old. Pandita Ramabai was that child and she was chosen by God to become a living stone in His spiritual temple.

Early in the morning, before leaving Gangamoola, we stood in that deserted house in which we had slept that night and prayed that the Lord would give us strength to get down the mountain, in order that we might fulfil the purpose for which He had chosen us.

The home on the mountain has been empty for nearly a century, but the Home of Salvation (Mukti) in Kedgaon established by Pandita Ramabai is full of precious, living stones. Today there are 700 women and children within our gates who have come to us out of the darkest heathenism to find light, and love and the comforts of the gospel. These are safe in Mukti's good fold and we seek to train them that the thousands living in villages around us might have a ray of light.

There are mountains of a different nature to be climbed in Mukti and each one must be removed by faith. There are souls to be set free, and, in this land of darkness, 'this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.'

Three missionaries are leaving us this spring for a time of refreshing in the home land, one is already there and another has gone to help temporarily in a Mission hospital which is rendering us valuable service. This hospital is training some of our girls and they receive all our difficult cases requiring the services of a doctor. The gaps in Mukti are thus widening and the few remaining missionaries must bridge them.

Will you pray the Lord of the harvest to send young MEN and WOMEN to Mukti to fill up the gaps?

We need a woman doctor.

We need an experienced farmer and also a builder with knowledge of mechanics. A young woman trained to care for pre-school children, an experienced accountant or office worker, and one with knowledge of domestic science and crafts are also needed.

We need men and women, who cannot come to India, to send forth workers into this needy place by their gifts and their prayers.

We cannot continue our building programme, so ably
carried on by Miss Stone, until a builder joins our staff and the builder and his wife cannot come unless someone sends them.

We cannot train our children properly unless qualified young women are willing to leave all and follow Jesus Christ. These cannot come unless some at home are ready to send them.

We cannot reach out into the villages with a greater evangelistic effort unless we have reinforcements. 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.'

Will you climb with Christ Jesus the mountain of prayer for us, so that these 'mountains' which prevent us from reaping a harvest in India can be removed?

'Where are the reapers? Oh, who will come
And share in the glory of the "harvest home"?
Oh, who will help us to garner in
The sheaves of good from the fields of sin?'

Sometimes as we look around us and see the need. When we remember the years of toil and prayer that have accompanied the planting of the seed. And then think of the seemingly little or no fruit that has been the result of the labour of years we become disheartened and discouraged. Yet we have not been asked to concern ourselves with the result which is God's part but rather to be faithful, steadfast, unmoved, always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing that our labour is not in vain in Him. These thoughts and the poem written below have brought cheer to one discouraged heart. Perhaps they will also bring help and blessing to some who read.

NOT IN VAIN

Not in vain the tedious toil
On an unresponsive soil,
Travail, tears in secret shed
Over hopes that lay as dead.
All in vain, thy faint heart cries,
Not in vain, thy Lord replies;
Nothing is too good to be;
Then believe, believe to see.

Did thy labour turn to dust?
Suffering—did it eat like rust,
Till the blade that once was keen
As a blunted tool is seen?
Dust and rust thy life's reward?
Slay the thought: believe thy Lord,
When thy soul is in distress
Think upon His faithfulness.
Though there be nor fig nor vine,
In thy stall there be no kine,
Flock be cut off from thy fold,
Not a single lamb be told,
And thy olive berry fall
Yielding no sweet oil at all,
Pulse-seed wither in the pod,
Still do thou rejoice in God.

But consider, was it vain
All the travail on the plain?
For the bud is on the bough;
It is green where thou didst plough.
Listen, tramp of little feet,
Call of little lambs that bleat,
Hearken to it. Verily,
Nothing is too good to be.

—Amy Carmichael

FAMILY NEWS

We are glad to report that Miss Janet Callan has passed her third-year language examination, and that Miss Virginia Nicholson and Miss Ruth Bollman have passed their first-year language examination.

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