Be Thou their Guide, Lord Jesus

RAMABAI MUKTI MISSION

PRAYER BELL

May—June, 1951
WHERE DWELLEST THOU?

O what is it that wanders in the wind?
And what is it that whispers in the wood?
What is the river singing to the sun?
Why this vague pain in every charmed sense?
    This yearning, keen suspense?

Often I've seen a garment floating by,
Fringe of it only; golden-brown it lay
On the ripe grasses, fern-green on the ferns,
And in the wood, like bluebells' mist blue
    Whitened with mountain dew.

I laid me low among the mountain grass,
I laid me low among the river fern.
I hid me in the wood and tried to hold
The lovely wonder of it as it passed,
    And tried to hold it fast,

It slipped like sunshine through my eager hands,
See, they are dusted as with pollen dust;
Soft dust of gold, and soft the sense of touch,
Soft as the south wind's sea-blown evening kiss,
    But I have only this,

This dust of vanished gold upon my hands,
This breath of wind blowing upon my hair,
Stirring of something near, so near, but far,
Glimmering through colour's fleeting preciousness,
    The fringes of a dress.

O Wearer of that garment, if its hem
Hardly perceived can thrill us, what must Thou,
Its Weaver and its Wearer, be to see?
Master, where dwellest Thou? O tell me now,
Where dwellest Thou?

The grasses turned their golden heads away,
And shyer and more wistful stood the ferns,
The little flowers looked up with puzzled eyes;
Only the river, who is all my own,
    Left me not quite alone.

But mixed his music with my human cry,
Till somewhere from the half-withdrawing wood
Sound of familiar footsteps: Is it Thou?
Master, where dwellest Thou? O speak to me.
    And He said, "Come and see."

—AMY CARMICHAEL

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**DARKNESS AND LIGHT**

**BY KAIHLYN HOLMES-LIBBIS**

It was "the night on which He was betrayed," and throughout the villages and towns of India, heathen drums were beating. One of the vilest of Hindu festivals had coincided with the lovely Easter season. The full moon rode serenely in a cloudless sky, and the leaves of the trees whispered together in the wandering night breezes as they did in the garden of Gethsemane on that tragic night long ago. There was a holy hush within the heart as the thoughts lingered there in the garden where the Man of Sorrows knelt in an anguish of prayer wrung from a breaking heart, and then followed the lonely, suffering Christ, betrayed and forsaken by all whom He loved, to the judgment hall, but still the drums were beating. Interwoven with all the deep solemnities of Eastertide was that deep, insistent throb and beat of the drums. On through the long night watches, and long after dawn had flushed the eastern skies, that relentless throb and beat continued.

The unspeakable things which are the motive for this Hindu festival, and the frenzied yelling of abusive and vile swear words, seared the soul and made the heart cry out in an agony of pain to God. The drums beat on and on, like some evil thing which had the power to draw all men to its evil heart. It was evil, black and foul, and one could feel the power of it like a whirl-pool seeking to drag and suck human souls down into its horrible depths. The drums beat on, and throughout the villages and towns of India those for whom Christ died made revelry in homage to the powers of darkness. It was "the night on which He was betrayed," and it was night in the hearts of millions of India’s people.

"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came . . . at the rising of the sun.” In the pale light of the waning moon just before dawn, a rejoicing throng streamed out of the gates of Mukti, singing as they wended their way along the canal banks to some low, boulder-strewn hills some distance away. Some were old and feeble, some were blind, and some were lame, but all were rejoicing. The eager, dancing feet of the children could not walk sedately. Hither and yon they skipped, their voices ringing with all the joy and wonder of that first Easter morn as they repeated over and over again like some well-loved refrain, "Christ is risen, Christ is risen." All the wondering joy of Mary when she found the empty
tomb and saw her risen Lord standing before her in the garden, was heard in that refrain. “Christ is risen,” and hearts rejoiced because sin and death are vanquished for­ever.

The first bright rays of the rising sun quivered above the horizon, tipping the edges of a low band of clouds with living gold, and filling the world with tremulous light. As the last lingering shades of night were banished, voices were hushed. Then as the triumphant “Hallelujahs” of the Easter hymn sounded across the wide plains, the sun greeted the glad new day in a blaze of crimson glory, symbol of the Sun of Righteousness who alone can banish the night from human hearts. For those who had gathered there on the hilltop, the Sun of Righteousness had indeed risen with healing in His wings. Redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, they have been called out of the kingdom of darkness which holds the world in thrall. But there are millions yet in this great land who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death who wait for the messengers of peace and salvation.

Where are the messengers of God? Where are they to whom He gave the command “Go ye into all the world . . . to every creature?” Their numbers are few and seem­ingly lost in the midst of the millions they seek to bring to the Light—the millions that still wait for the Words of Life which will release them from the slavery and bondage of sin. They who have obeyed their Lord’s command are out in the thick of the fight, looking for reinforcements. Around them the world lies in darkness, but above are the open heavens and Him before whom every knee shall bow, saying, “All power is given unto Me. Go ye therefore . . . to every creature, and, lo, I am with you alway.”

“He is waiting with long patience
For His crowning day,
For that kingdom which shall never
Pass away.

And till every tribe and nation
Bow before His throne,
He expecteth loyal service
From His own.

He expecteth—but He heareth
Still the bitter cry
From earth’s millions ‘Come and help us
Or we die.’

Shall we—dare we, disappoint Him?
Brethren, let us rise!”
THESE ALSO I MUST BRING

BY JOSEPHINE PATTERSON

“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” 1 Cor. 4:7.

As I walked the narrow streets of Brindavan, stepped into the filthy temples and looked into the faces of hundreds of high caste widows chanting the names of Hindu gods I thought of the above verse over and over again. Who made me to differ from another? Why has my heritage been Christian while these women have been born to heathen bondage?

“What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people.” Psalm 116:12, 13, 14.

Here in the north of India is a city named Brindavan where Krishna, one of the Hindu gods, was supposed to have been born, lived and performed his godlike dallyings with the maidens. It is to this place that five thousand high caste widows have come to spend the remainder of their days.

Some are young, some quite old and the marks of sin and suffering on the faces of many make it difficult to determine how much of life has passed for them. How long each has been a widow is also unknown, but we do know that to each one came a day when she was made to say, “I am a widow.” From that day onward she ate but once a day and that meal she ate alone. Her food was coarse and meagre, her brightly coloured sarees and her jewelry were all taken away. The vermillion spot on her forehead, the bracelet on her left wrist, marks of a married woman, were removed. Her long hair, an Indian woman’s pride, was cut off.

“I AM A WIDOW”
Life became entirely different. She must devote herself to the worship of her idol, tend and worship the **tulshi** plant, mark her forehead, breast and arms with the temple design. Instead of her golden necklace she must wear a necklace of wooden beads made from **tulshi** wood.

Many widows are forced out of their homes and so many of them choose to come to Brindavan to spend the remainder of their days. Here they chant the names of Hindu gods and in so doing believe that they are atoning for their sin which has caused the death of the husband.

These widows become prostitutes. There is no other choice in this wicked city. Once a widow is caught in this net and becomes a temple devotee and tool of the priests there is little hope for escape even if there is desire in the heart for deliverance.

Eight hours a day is spent in the temples sitting on the floor fingering the 108 beads on her rosary and muttering the names of gods over and over again. The name of each god must be said 108 times. In exchange for this service each widow is given a bag in which to hold her beads, two garments a year and a pittance of rice each day by the temple warden who sits and checks the attendance of each one upon arrival early in the morning. At night she lives in some hovel or on the street and becomes the public property of evil men. Many a new born baby is thrown into the Jumna river. Some of the young widows have found their way to the Mission hospital located in the city. I saw three older widows being tenderly ministered to by a Christian nurse from America in this hospital. There they lay with broken legs and hips.

In the famous city of Benares one is again confronted with thousands of widows living the same miserable existence. There is a constant stream of these pitiable creatures coming out of some ‘hole in the wall’ into the narrow lanes which lead down to the most sacred of all rivers—the Ganges. Each with her drab widow’s garment draped around her body, her bag of beads around her neck, and her shorn head covered with the end of her saree. In her hand is a brass water carrier with a spout. After taking her bath at the river’s edge she dips and fills her vessel with the sacred water, then comes up the steps to worship the many idols standing in the temples. She pours water on them as she walks round and round the temple, pausing here and there to prostrate herself before the symbol of Shiva.

I saw one widow too old to walk to the river being
carried in a litter by two men. Each day is the same and
day after day, month after month, year after year she per­
forms her duties until she is released by death from this
weary round of existence. Her life-long prayer is that she
may die on the banks of the Ganges river. Then only
can she be saved from innumerable unpleasant and degrad­
ing rebirths for "whosoever dies in Benares, the favoured
city of the Hindu gods, whether saint or the foulest of
criminals will have the blessedness of heaven."

To one young widow we talked about Mukti and gave
her literature telling about Pandita Ramabai. Ramabai,
who many years ago was a Brahmin widow and whose
fate might have been the same had not God in His sover­
eignty placed in her hands the Book of Books and as a
result the course of her life was changed.

Let us thank the Lord for those in India who minister
to the women in their homes such as the missionaries of
the Zenana Bible Mission who offered us gracious hospitality
in Benares. Let us thank God for those who work among
children in schools, orphanages and hospitals like the
Methodist missionaries who live and work in these so­
called holy cities of India. Let us thank Him for the
Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries who main­
tain Bible schools and evangelistic centres. Let us uphold
and encourage all who are serving the Lord in this difficult
land and ask Him to bless whatever means they are using
to make Christ known. The Gospel light is so feeble
here in India that it behoves us to strengthen any who
are 'on the Lord's side.'

Have you received the cup of salvation from the hand
of the Lord? If so, will you do what you can to offer
that cup of salvation to others? Have you made any vows
to the Lord which you have not paid? If so, will you
pay them?

"His lamp am I to shine where He doth say,
And lamps are not for sunny rooms,
Or for the light of day,
But for the dark places of the earth,
Where sin and wrong and crime have birth."
FAMILY NEWS

Miss Carol Terry is at home in America for a short leave of absence because of the sudden ‘Home-going’ of her mother. Carol will need our upholding prayer these days as will her father and brothers.

Miss Amstutz, Miss Asbery, Miss Fletcher and Miss Stone are all home on furlough. We are missing them but we know that you with us will pray that the time away may be rich and full in blessing—a furlough that to each may be all that God has planned that it should be.

Hot season days have rolled around again. Will you pray that those who will be going away may be strengthened and refreshed—refitted by God Himself to take up work again when they return. And very especially will you pray for those who must stay on the plains and bear the heat and burden of the day. Pray that God may wonderfully sustain them each day and all through the day.

Secretary in America:
MISS L. M. WABELTY
P.O. Box 415
Philadelphia 5, Pa.

Treasurer in England:
MISS E. B. BUTLER
Flat 4
6 Arundel Avenue
Liverpool 17

Secretary in Australia:
MISS M. S. JONES
C/o Mr. A. J. THORP
623 Inkerman Rd.
Caulfield S.E. 7
Victoria

Treasurer in New Zealand:
MISS MARY PASCOE
168 Victoria Avenue
Remuera, Auckland, S.E. 2

Treasurer in Scotland:
MISS M. LAIRD
Lynton
Kilmacolm
Renfrewshire

Treasurer in Ireland:
MISS M. REA
‘Bethany’
Ormiston Crescent
Knock, Belfast

Secretary-Treasurer on the Field:
MISS J. I. CRADDOCK
Kedgaon, Poona District