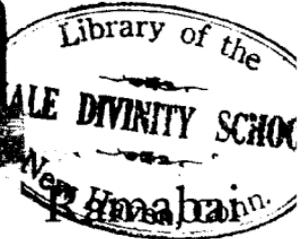




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PRAYER BELL



Mukti Mission

January—
March, 1945

KEDGAON,
POONA DISTRICT

OUR DEAR FRIENDS AND PRAYER HELPERS,

This Prayer Bell goes forth amidst the jingling of Christmas Bells and Wedding Bells, and the Bells ringing out another year and ringing in the new one. For many, and perhaps for most, the festive season touched a chord of sadness and brought an ache of loneliness, but in the remembrance of God's great Love-Gift we trust new comfort was ministered and many received joy in place of sorrow. We send our best wishes for 1945, that

"You may have the joybells ringing in your heart,
And a peace that from you never can depart."

How happy we all shall be if soon now the bells proclaiming peace peal forth, and the death knell is sounded to much that has caused such sorrow and sadness during the past years.

Thinking of bells, we are reminded of the bells on the hem of the robe that 'was upon Aaron to minister'; 'a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate'; 'and his sound was heard when he went into the holy place before the Lord and when he came out'. Oh that we might function as never before as a kingdom of priests unto God, and as our Lord Jesus has opened up for us the way into the holiest of all, that there may be much going in and coming out and a mighty ministry in His Name.

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CHRISTMAS CHIMES

At the time of Christmas bells and all their joys, hearts well up with love; and who could help but love our buds in Kalika Bhuvan? They are a lovable group! The little ones with their smudgy little hands and faces, who rush up, grip you tightly round the legs and put their little oiled heads against you, leaving tell-tale smudges all over; and the older ones who are always eager to help in everything. Christmas decorations were hung up in the Nursery on Saturday, 23rd December, and what excitement! Little Sulochana said, 'What nice things you give us!' We were glad to be able to tell of the best Gift of all, the Babe, Christ Jesus.

On Christmas morning they were up early waiting for me to come along. The candles on the table Christmas Trees were lit and how big their little eyes became as they saw the little trinkets dazzling on the tree! They sang sweetly all the Christmas songs they knew and were delighted to get a lollipop, some sweets, two glass bangles, and—thanks to the kindness of a dear friend—a large sweet lime each.

Later on, the new frocks which had come all the way from America were donned with great glee, and after the service in Church when they each received a packet of sweets and a ball, which the C.E. boys had made for them, they were almost too excited to take them!

It had been a busy morning and there was no promise of rest for them in the afternoon because their big sisters from the children's compound came along to visit their former *akkas* and little sisters, and to tell them of all the good things they had received.

When night came there was no need to coax anyone to go to sleep. All lay down tired but happy, clutching something precious.

We thank all who by their loving prayers and gifts caused the bells of Christmas to peal out joyously once more in Kalika Bhuvan.

JANET CALLAN.

About a fortnight before Christmas the younger members of our Bartimi Sadan family came to ask for time off from school to prepare for an entertainment to be given during the Christmas holidays. This was easily granted; but when could the event take place? So many things happen about this time that it is not easy to fix dates and times for all, but Mrs. Phillips' mother had kindly sent

a gift to be spent in some way for Bartimi Sadan so we decided to have a feast and let the entertainment take place at the same time. So at 8 p.m., on December 30th about 60 of us gathered in Bartimi Sadan Compound. We had chosen this time because it was cool, and it was a moonlit night and as we entered the gate it was a pretty sight to see small lighted candles burning on the walls of the dormitories on one side, and the moon coming up in all her glory on the other. As the candles burnt out the moon rose higher and revealed the women and girls, sitting in two rows along the raised pathway, each one having a brass plate in front of her. On two fires nearby were large pots of water, into which, after it came to the boil, were put tea, sugar and milk, and there it stayed simmering until the fires died down!

But what could possibly be provided as eatables for so large a picnic party? Sweetmeats are scarce and too expensive to buy! However, Divalibai, the senior matron, had been commissioned to get provisions and she is a woman who can always be relied upon to see a thing through satisfactorily, so when we had enquired rather anxiously about what could be obtained she had said, 'Do not be anxious: it will be all right', and we found it was. She asked one of the women to pray, and then we went up and down the rows putting on each plate first two large bananas, then some savoury tit-bits made of chili-peppers and other vegetables dipped in a paste of gram-flour and fried in deep oil, and finally two biscuits. By the time these were distributed we were ready for the entertainment, and nine of the young people very sweetly sang and acted songs relating to Christmas and the Christmas spirit. The audience loudly applauded at the close and then the tea was served. Mrs. Phillips was asked to send many thanks to her mother, and then she and I came away, while the girls and women were left to enjoy their feast. By this time the moon was up, and as we left with its beautiful light shedding all around, our hearts turned very gratefully to the Maker and Giver of all good things, 'Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy'.

ISABEL CRADDOCK.

'Hospital' is not a word which anyone wants to hear as Christmas draws near. All want to be making Christmas delicacies or joining in the fun with their sisters; so the hospital is rather a deserted place at that time. On Christmas Day even the old chronic patients, if they are

at all able, go to their compounds and spend the day with their sisters.

However, this year we had to have a few in hospital. One, Jeewiebai came in on Saturday 23rd, with a very inflamed arm, and a temperature of 104°. When asked why she had not come earlier to the Dispensary, she said, 'Why, I have been so busy in the kitchen, helping with the grinding of pulses and other things which are needed for Christmas for the children; and I thought each day, "It will be better tomorrow".'

Zhakubai, one of the Matrons from Bartimi Sadan would have liked very much to be home for Christmas; but we were sorry to have to deny her that privilege. She had had a heavy cold and tried to carry on with her work; but when her kidneys became affected she had to give in. The condition is clearing up very slowly, but we have marvelled at the grace which the Lord has given her to endure patiently and have a triumphant spirit.

We were glad to be able to string up a few paper garlands to give even the Hospital a festive appearance, and although Christmas Day in the hospital was fairly quiet, it was a happy one. The patients were very grateful to have some fruit and sweets; and all had some visitors from among their friends, who sought to cheer them up and pass on the Christmas spirit of love and goodwill.

JANET CALLAN.

The children in the Rescue Home wanted to have a Christmas Tree, but as we did not have one, nor anything to put on a tree, we decided to have something else. So instead, at about 8 o'clock on Christmas Eve, we had our little garden lighted up with candles. Candles were put in each of the plant pots, and wherever there was a bush on which we could fix them, we did. There was no wind, so the candles burned nicely, and it looked very pretty. The children's eyes were fixed on the lights, and they wondered what was happening. Women, mothers and children all gathered around and sang Christmas carols until nearly 10 p.m., after which they all reluctantly went to bed. At 3 a.m., they were up again to sing carols, but were sent back to bed until 6 a.m. Sweets were given to all the women and children in the Rescue Home, and the mentally deficient ones came from their Compound for their portion. It was amusing to hear them exclaim, 'Happy Birthday Auntie', 'Happy Christmas Auntie' or

'Happy New Year Auntie'. Some of them did not know for which of these special occasions they were receiving sweets! After the Service in the Church all received a little present, and another little packet of homemade sweetmeats.

The Village Dispensary also had to be visited with little gifts. Mothers who knew nothing of what Christmas means, each were given a piece of material to make a jacket, and the babies a pair of warm socks. A little boy who had been gored by a bullock was very surprised when material for a shirt was given to him. This gave us another opportunity of telling them how God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; and how Jesus came as a babe to be our Saviour.

ELIZABETH MORRIS.

The Sharada Sadan School had their splendid Christmas Programme on December 22nd. A busy day for Mrs. Phillips and the teachers, but a happy, exciting time for all the children. A great many village people were present, and also some of the relatives of boarders.

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all our dear friends who helped by their prayers and gifts, to make it possible for our people to have a happy Christmas.

GOSPEL BELLS

We have been obliged this season to leave the Bible-women in Supa alone so far, although Bhimabai, Miss Schrag, Okhambai and I paid them visits, each staying a few days. There were many sick ones, and some of the leaders said, 'Come here and build a dispensary and teach our women. We will pay for it'.

The enemy of souls, of course, does not give up any ground without a fight. A great Hindu festival was held in Supa. Priests and priestesses of the Jain caste came and the merchant people had new gods established in their town with a priest in charge. This attracted large crowds and caused many who seemed interested to be drawn away. However, some remain interested, especially amongst the outcastes, and there are those who show desire for baptism.

This is all a challenge to more concentrated prayer. Prayer changes things. Before you get this we will be in Supa again in His Name breaking down the strongholds of Satan. We hope to be able to report soon of victories won in hearts and lives.

JANET CALLAN.

JOYBELLS

Our New Year Special Meetings were conducted this year by Rev. Lauren Carner of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and we thank God for his faithful, unstinted ministry. Owing to lack of space it is impossible to give a detailed report of these meetings, but the following gleanings will cause your hearts to rejoice, and we trust call forth prayer. The Watch Night Service was the first to be held, and this ended soon after the bell pealed forth at midnight; then there were two meetings each day, besides gatherings with the outside people.

'The children listened most intently to the messages' Miss Schrag writes. 'It was encouraging to see them gather of their own accord for special times of prayer in the evening asking the Lord's blessing upon the meetings. Several testified to definite dealings with the Lord, and are now asking for baptism. One little girl, Mary, who had never before seemed responsive to spiritual things, has been especially blessed and has seen her need of a Saviour. She has made things right and is walking in newness of life.'

Miss Schrag also tells us that 'Several Hindu people along with our own Christian boys attended a service held by Mr. Carner with the farm hands. Before the service, one of the Hindu men told the others to be careful, not to be deceived and become Christians. At the meeting, this man was one of the first to raise his hand in response to the question "Who really desire to become Christians and to know the Saviour?" At the same time five other Hindu farm workers raised their hands. We request prayer for these men that they may have courage to come out boldly for the Lord even in the face of certain persecution'.

'Yamuna Mane came to me' writes Bhimabai, 'and said, "I am a saved girl now. I had a real blessing through these meetings". Praise the Lord for His work! I would like you to uphold this girl at the throne of Grace. She came to us from a Hindu home, and not being bright mentally found it hard to understand. Yamuna is a good worker and helps in cooking for our children. I do trust she will keep on growing in grace. Some of the other girls also were blessed during the meetings'.

The girl in Anandi Sadan who had oedema of the scalp last year said that she believed God raised her up from the brink of the grave to glorify Him and to serve Him.

She asked forgiveness for all the failures of the past, and said that the New Year Messages seemed just for her. After reading the passages at the close of one meeting she said a peace filled her heart that she has never known before. 'I am sure', she says 'that I am saved, and God has removed my transgressions from me as far as the East is from the West. Please pray that I may have a hunger and thirst after righteousness, and grow up in Him, and be prepared for His service'.

F. PENNY.

WEDDING BELLS

During the holidays two of our girls were happily married. Mogri Nagarkar to Albert Desai, a son in one of our Bethel families, and Hira Bhasker to Moses Bankar, the son of an evangelist in Dhond, about seven miles away. Both girls have been through our Bible Class, and have helped in the work here in different ways for the past two years and more. We are sorry to lose them, but pray that they may be a sweet savour of Christ and make manifest the knowledge of Him in every place. We commend them to your prayers.

TEMPLE BELLS

The other day we took the bigger schoolgirls for a walk, and coming alongside a small temple heard a confusion of children's voices and the ringing of a bell. The children told us that their people had just started to cut the corn and they were invoking help of the gods and seeking to keep off evil spirits and bad weather. We found that some of the children attended a local school and some had heard from our bands at different times something about the Lord Jesus. The Matron then pointed out that they were having opportunities of studying and that they knew those idols could not hear nor help them; they must learn all they could about the true God and seek to give real help to their people. They were quiet and attentive, and answered questions brightly, and we trust the little word in season will bear some fruit even after many days, not only in the lives of these boys and girls, but also in the lives of our own girls who stood around listening. F. PENNY.

Word has come of the Home Call of our faithful and devoted Melbourne Secretary, Mrs. McKay, and we ask your prayers for her husband and loved ones and our Council in Victoria. She will be greatly missed.

'Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.'

Let us continue in prayer for Miss Fletcher in her Deputation Work in Australia and New Zealand. Encouraging letters have come. God is answering prayer and is working. We thank Thee, Lord.

Please continue to remember before the Throne of Grace, Misses Amstutz and Terry, in the Philippines.

Also please unite in prayer with us for those who feel God is leading them to offer their lives to minister here in Mukti. Co-workers are greatly needed.

Vimal Dongre from College and the girls from High School, and Teachers' Training were with us for the Christmas holidays, and there are evidences that prayer is being answered for them. The girls in Hospital Training could not be with us. They are getting on nicely. Please continue in prayer for them all.

We would also ask your prayers for Miss Ferguson and her work at Junnar. Miss Joan McGregor, who worked here in Mukti, as perhaps many of you remember, for many years, and afterwards joined Miss Ferguson in her work (primarily for boys) followed quickly after Miss Hastie into the presence of the Lord. She was much loved and greatly mourned. For many years she struggled against bodily weakness, but now for her the fight is over. Several of our Mukti women attended the Funeral Service.

Some of our girls will be taking their Final Examination this year, and passing out of school in April. Please pray concerning them.

Our Matrons and Teachers, young girls helping in the work; farm hands and workmen; and all our big family of blind, ageing, mentally deficient and sick ones; as well as children and little babies all need much prayer: and for us. . . . And let us praise Him for all that is past.

'And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

Treasurer in America:

MISS J. PATTERSON,
P.O. Box 415,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Treasurer in Australia:

MR. H. P. SMITH,
315 Collins St.,
Melbourne.

Treasurer in New Zealand:

MR. D. W. KAYE,
43 Queen's Drive,
Musselburgh, Dunedin.

Treasurer in England:

MRS. M. BARRATT,
Chalfont, Carleton Ave.,
Pontefract, Yorks.