CAN A DEAD MAN PRAY?

"Dead." Can a dead man pray? Can these dead bones live? Can they praise the Lord? Four hundred villages lie all around us, "dead in trespasses and sins." Can they live? Is the Gospel, if preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth? Must we trust in schools and the teaching of the young in them to bring salvation to these dead and lost thousands? Or, will not the printed Word and the spoken Word, and living epistles seen and read of men, bring repentance unto life and salvation, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost?

On Saturday, November 22nd, a new joy came to my heart and home in Chandur. Yes, a new homekeeper has come to Chandur and already many of the women of the district have seen her smiling face and heard the name of Jesus from her lips. On November 23rd, the day after her arrival, two men called at our back door and said, "Let us pray." It was 9 P. M. and time for bed, but the call to prayer had come, and so we said, "Come in."
They had walked that day twenty-five miles to see the new homekeeper and hear her pray. One man was named Junkulu or the Jungle. He is a poor man, but he can read his Bible. He and his wife and baby came to the Saviour last year, and at once laid hold of the truth of salvation and of a Spirit-filled life. What a change has been wrought in this man and woman by the Word and the Spirit. They have set up family prayers and truly the dead live, and stand upright upon their feet. The other man was an old neighbour who had heard the Word from Junkulu, and he and his wife have believed and turned from sin and their idols. He is about fifty years of age. Now this couple await baptism and have also set up the family altar. "Behold they pray." Now others in that same village are about to turn to God. Yes, the gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to them that believe. "Let us pray." So at 9 p.m. we prayed. It did us good to hear Junkulu and the brother whom he had led to Jesus pray with much fervour.

A few weeks after this, on Christmas Day, we had the joy of baptizing two young women and a young man from a village twelve miles out. Just as the service ended, in walked Junkulu and Dusserat—one from his village twenty-five miles out, and the other from his, twenty-two miles out. Both of these men were saved last year and are leading others to the Saviour, and both of them have family prayers. That night, i.e., Christmas night, my wife and I were having some music when, about 9.15, these two saved village men came on the scene again. They said, "We were late for the Christmas service so, 'Let us pray.'" We were tired and ready for bed, but gladly answered, "Very well." I prayed and then Dusserat followed. Then Junkulu began. "Oh but, say, when will he stop?" thought I. On and on he went with such earnestness. He took up one subject after another, and at the end of each began afresh by saying, "And not only this, Lord, but—" and on again, taking in local needs, the heathen around,
the Church at Home and in India, the new homekeeper and myself, the masters—still on he went, including our missionaries, etc. "Now," said I to myself, "Surely he will stop; there is nothing else for him to say." But he said, "Not only this, Lord, but—" For alas! he opened up on our Home Board and those in America who give and help to bring the gospel to them. "But, now," said I, "Now, he cannot find anything else to pray for." But, on he went, "And, Lord, not only this but what about all those who are going to believe in our district—God bless them, etc., etc." Ah, what a prayer! A prayer full of interest and power and with the Spirit's kick in it that did us good. While my wife was thinking over a little prayer in Marathi, Junjulu forstalled her, and finished off in the orthodox style!

Do we look ahead and pray for those who will yet believe on Jesus in these dead villages? Can these dead bones live? Yes, if we get down to it like Junjulu, the Jungle man. Have we a vision, and do we expect the Gospel we preach to be the power of God unto salvation? Shame on us, at least some of us, who have so few souls. Is there no vision? Are we looking ahead and saying like Junjulu, "Lord what about those who are going to come? Bless them!" Yes, God even knows where they are. That reminds me of my daughter when she was fifteen. I said, "Pray, Sis!" and, after thanking God for His love, she said, "Forgive us all our sins, Lord, and all the sins we are going to commit in the future." She looked ahead too, dear child.

We are on tour now, camped not far from where these praying men live. We have held a meeting in Poroha and heard them all pray. The old Guru, who used to carry around a dried pumpkin shell and a stick stuck through it and one string strung on it, was there. We baptized him last year also. His pumpkin-skin guitar has gone, and his begging spirit has gone, for he was a beggar. But the
spirit of joy and the spirit of prayer that he received last have increased. The people all about here call him the Mad Grandfather. There is nothing mad about this aged man who has turned from his begging and praising the gods of stone to serve and praise Jesus. As he prayed in the service last Sunday, he broke out into holy laughter and his face was radiant with joy and peace. Yes, even these old idol worshippers can live, "for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death." Praise His Name! Some others in this town are seeking too.

Three Sundays ago we held a service in Junjulu's town, and what a service it was! First in the street and then for prayer in his wee hut. All prayed, also one or two who are waiting for baptism. A wee bit of heaven in a little Indian village Christian's grass hut. The next Sunday we went to Yeotmal and there preached in their big church. Returning home at about 9-30 p.m., we passed Junjulu's village and I sent to call him to the car to "salaam" him and the others. The word came back, "They are at prayer and cannot come." Yes, at prayer in this far off Indian heathen village at 9 p.m. Later they came around the car and there we prayed and said "Good night" and were off, through bad jungle roads to our camp, tired but happy in His service.

Touring is in full swing and the people generally welcome us. There is a growing demand for the Bible and New Testament and where we left books last year we find a very friendly and enquiring spirit. Pray for us. May you hear the cry of the lost millions of this land!

WILLIAM AND MAVIS FLETCHER.

TYPES OF ENQUIRERS

We were resting, one noon, when the bedroom door was suddenly pushed open and a strange young Hindu man
walked in. (His bare feet had permitted his noiseless approach.) "Saheb," he said at once, "I want you to make me a Christian." We hastily escorted him to the sitting room, where, after first dressing a little more fully, we conversed with him in an effort to find out the motive behind this unexpected request. Little by little it leaked out. No, he hadn't met any missionary, nor had any teaching from any Christian worker. But he had heard, and from very reliable sources, that we gave wives to all men who accepted our religion, also found them employment and fed them in the meantime. He was hungry, penniless, (so he said) and wanted a wife. Hence his application for admission.

Of course we explained to him that what he had heard was all untrue. That, on the contrary, when people became Christians they had to make their living just the same as they did before, and one's getting a wife depended upon whether one could induce any Christian man to betroth his daughter to him or not. The missionary had nothing to do with such private affairs. We tried not wholly to discourage our friend, however, lest he waver in his good intention, and since he had said he was hungry, we offered him food. But how could he take food from us? That would defile him, we were informed. If we would please give him money he would buy his meals daily in the Hindu restaurant. After he had received his wife and had become a Christian, he could eat with us but not before. When we talked about sin, and the need of a saviour and of the life and work of Jesus, our "enquirer" lost all interest, and soon excused himself. We haven't seen him since. This is an example of the superficial type of enquirer, who has no real interest in spiritual things, but thinks he can secure some material advantage through the missionary's credulity. We meet his kind quite often, though it usually takes such longer to discover what this gentleman so readily blurted out.
There is another enquirer here—a servant maid in a Christian Anglo-Indian home. Her mistress has told her of Christ, and what is more, has lived a godly, consistent life before her for years, and it is entirely due to her efforts that this ignorant servant is now asking for baptism. May God help more of our professing European and Anglo-Indian friends, and even some of us missionaries, to see the responsibility and opportunity of witnessing to the non-Christians who serve us, the postman and the sweater included. This woman represents those enquirers who come as a result of contact with Christians, and I am ashamed to confess, that here in Bhusawal town at least, this kind is very, very scarce.

Then there is old Ramchandra Patil, in the small village of “Five Temples,” fifteen miles from Bhusawal, who could stand for those enquirers who become interested through the direct preaching of the missionaries and Indian workers in the district. Ramchandra is a retired police patil. (The police patil is the chief man in the village). Here is what he told us this year, “For twelve years I sought salvation through Krishna but without success; then twelve years through Ram, but to no profit: now for two years I have been praying to Jesus and I hope to get salvation through Him.” Later, when we showed the lantern slides on the life of Christ in his village, he came up to us at the close and said, “Sahib, didn’t you hear me continually grunting approval to all you were saying?” The people of the village even tell us, “He’s following your religion now.” Of course Ranchandra is not ready to be baptised. Hindu ideas are still mixed in with the newer Christian ones and only God can give him perfect light. We have made several trips to his village recently mainly to meet and instruct him more fully, but have been disappointed in not finding him at home. We hope you will pray for him and for the hundreds of others who shall be classed as “enquirers” throughout our whole field this touring season.

Fred W. Schelander.
OPPOSITION AND OPPORTUNITY

We praise God that the doors of opportunity have been left open to us, another touring season, to sound out the note of salvation in the many villages of our district. Nearly everywhere we go we find some hungry souls, eager to listen to what we have to tell them. Many times we have had men and women voice the penitent’s prayer of, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” On the other hand, there is strong opposition that is ever present to counteract any attempt of a seeking soul to accept the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

Recently we visited a village where we were conscious of God’s Spirit working in the hearts of a few men and women, while the enemy lurked near, through scoffing men, trying to dissolve their interest and longings after God. A group of Kanbies (men of the farmer caste) had gathered to listen to “the Sahib’s lecture.” As we proceeded to explain the need of the new birth through faith in the Lord Jesus, our attention was drawn to two men who showed unusual interest in the message. One of these men had received a copy of the New Testament on a previous occasion, and was reading it—so he told us. His heart seemed stirred with a desire to learn more and he asked a number of questions, such as, “How can I get this new birth? Will there be no chance of salvation after death?” etc. We tried to show him from portions of God’s Word the only way of obtaining salvation. The other man, a gosavi (religious beggar), had been listening intently and was heard to remark to someone in the group, “From now on I will forsake taking the names of idols, and I will worship the Lord Jesus.” We asked the other man to pray and call upon God for mercy in the forgiveness of his sins. This he did in the presence of the people. Then came the ridicule of some of the men who had withdrawn themselves in order to find occasion to disturb. Because of this opposition from their fellows these two interested ones became fearful and one of them left the place. But who
can tell how deep a work of grace may have been done? We will believe God that the seed sown may some day yield a harvest for God's glory.

Meanwhile, away in another part of the village, a group of caste women had gathered to hear the "Memsahib" tell "the wisdom of God." There was the usual confusion of crying babies, noisy children and restless, talkative women, making it difficult for the speaker to be heard by all. Besides, several of the women were on their way to work in the fields. They stopped long enough to listen to the story of God's love. Then, one of their number blurted out, "Oh yes, it is easy for you to talk about God's love. You do not have to work at pulling up cotton stalks, in the fields, as we do. Your story can not benefit us poor women!" They were shown that God's mercy is for all people and all circumstances, where there is repentance and faith. The company of women had now left, all except six or eight. These had listened intently. One of them, a middle-aged woman and a devotee of the good Vitoba, quietly and almost tremblingly asked, "What must I do to merit this mercy of God?" After a bit of instruction she prayed audibly and promised that she would continue to believe in the name of Jesus. Later, as if she were convicted of her sins, she said, "I offer a little piece of jowari bread daily to my cow. Now is this a sin?" We sought to show her that the only merit she could find was through the blood of Christ. Poor darkened soul! She seemed sincere in her desire for salvation, but there, standing a little distance away, were women of her own caste making fun of her for thinking of accepting the Christians' God! Before leaving we prayed for her and for others who had listened to the story.

May the Lord watch over the little seed of faith which was, we believe, implanted that day in that heathen woman's heart.

ERNEST AND ESTHER CROCKER.
NEWS ITEMS

Let us praise our Heavenly Father for the full allowances and the overplus in the past two months. Is it not like Him to send rain in the time of drought? How rich we are with such a Father!

The touring parties report interest in the gospel in nearly every place. Let us preach as never before just the gospel, and believe that God will, through it, make the dead to live and praise Him.

Reports of more baptisms are coming in; also of new enquirers.

The following fellow missionaries will soon be leaving for furlough:—Mr. and Mrs. Moyser; Mr. and Mrs. Conant and children; Mr. and Mrs. Crocker and little Ruth; Mr. and Mrs. Siegel, and Miss Agnita Hansen. Let us ask the Lord to rest them, refresh them, heal the suffering ones among them, use each one of them to bless His children wherever they go. Pray also for money for the passage of the others who should have a furlough at this time, viz., Mr. and Mrs. Kerr and family, Mr. and Mrs. Brabazon and Betty Ruth, and Mr. and Mrs. Gustafson and family. These all have served faithfully and should have the rest and inspiration afforded by a furlough.

A number of our missionaries had the privilege of listening to blessed messages from Rev. Paul Rader in his recent visit in India. All who heard this man of God were helped, and received new inspiration and new light as to the methods by which to promote the work of the Lord in this hardest of fields.

In connection with Mr. and Mrs. Moyser’s leaving India, it is fitting that we should quote the following, from a recent letter sent by the Executive Committee to our Home Board:—

“Mr. Moyser now feels that the time has come when he and Mrs. Moyser should retire from the field. As we
think of their absence from our midst it gives us real sorrow. They are among the very few living landmarks of the work of the Alliance from the time of its inception in India. Their kind and sympathetic attitude toward the missionaries has endeared them to us all. Mrs. Moyser's health has been such as to preclude her doing much active service in recent years, but she suffered patiently and has given her sympathy, so that we shall greatly miss her when the time comes for them to leave. Brother Moyser has been a faithful and efficient worker through all the years we have known him. In these later years since he has been our chairman, he has rendered most capable service for all of us. We can think of no one else among us who will be able to handle our business meetings in annual convention and the meetings of the Executive Committee with the same buoyant energy and contagious cheerfulness that are so characteristic of him. When he goes from us we shall miss a loyal, fearless brother and a kindhearted friend. We are honoured in being the friends of such a man, and feel that we are richer for having known him. Even after Mr. and Mrs. Moyser go from us we shall hope and pray that the Lord will spare them a long time or until He comes to reward them for their many years of service in India."