A Jain's Testimony

BY J. S. RINGENBERG

An Indian pastor and I were travelling from Ahmedabad to our home. With us in the small compartment of the train were several others. A friendly conversation started between the pastor and a young Hindu student. 'I have a New Testament,' he cheerfully remarked, 'and am acquainted with several Christians who used to live at Sanand.' The pastor tactfully encouraged him to study the New Testament, insisting that Jesus only could change a man's heart. The young man assented and there may have been a secret faith in his heart, as is undoubtedly the case with many among India's millions.

Another passenger who up to this time had vehemently argued with a Jain caste-fellow about a wedding arrangement, had caught the statement about the exclusiveness of Christ's ability to save. In rather a heated manner he began questioning the pastor, 'Who are you? From what class have you become a Christian? How dare you speak disparagingly of other religions by insisting that Christ only can save? Each religion will save its adherents if they are honest and careful to follow its precepts.'

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Earthquakes

‘. . . He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven . . . that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.’—Heb. 12: 26–27.

It is reported that on the evening of May 30th, 1935, the birds fled from the trees around the city of Quetta, Baluchistan, and that the dogs barked and howled mournfully because of instinctive knowledge of impending disaster. But some sixty thousands of poor, helpless, reasoning human beings, in and around that city, lay down as usual and slept. The hours crept by till a matter of fifteen or twenty minutes to three in the morning of May 31st. Then the earth shook violently and in less than a minute from the first distinct shudder tens of thousands of people were in the throes of death. The story is now known to the ends of the earth. How many of those who have read of this appalling calamity believe it to be a warning to all the earth’s inhabitants?

From the lips of our Blessed Redeemer Himself come the words concerning one of the characteristics of the end of this age, ‘There shall be earthquakes in divers places’ (Matt. 24: 7). The world scoffs and says, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? for . . . all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!’ In all this they willingly are ignorant. They heed not the voice of scientific observation to the effect that disastrous earthquakes are ten times more frequent now than they were one hundred years ago. This is one of the voices of warning from God.

God will deal faithfully and fully with the matter of sin, because His unalterable purpose is to have a universe that is full of righteousness and peace. Everything that can be shaken will be shaken. He has dealt with lost humanity at Calvary, and all who reject that dealing by failing to identify themselves with the One Who there was the whole world’s Sin-bearer will have to be dealt with on the plane of a lost world. The earthquake at Quetta, together with the others that have been equally appalling in recent years, is but a harbinger of far worse earthquakes that are to characterize the near future. Read Isa. 13: 13; Joel 3: 16; Haggai 2: 6, 7, 21; Heb. 12: 26–27; Rev. 16: 17–20, etc.

The ‘cities of the nations’ are to fall, as creation itself shudders in nausea from the unspeakable wickedness of man. All this is but a type of the righteous wrath of God against those who hate His bleeding Lamb of Calvary. It is a small thing to be killed by a falling wall in an earthquake if one’s heart has been washed clean
through the blood of the Cross. But it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Those who have fled for refuge to the Lord Jesus are not ashamed to confess that they are afraid not to be sheltered in the cleft of the Rock of Ages. Neither are they afraid of death. To them comes the voice of God in these last day warnings, to be faithful during the little while which is left to warn and to persuade and to beseech men to flee from the coming wrath and to be reconciled to God.

(Continued from page 1)

The handsome Jain merchant listened intently, though uneasily, while his questions were being answered and personal testimonies of salvation through Christ were being related. ‘Of course,’ he said, ‘I am not a preceptor in my religion, else I could answer you. Neither do I profess to live up to the requirements of our religion. My evening meal is frequently taken after sunset, which because of the destruction of insects at that time, is forbidden. There are those who strictly observe the principle of preserving life in every form and the other dictates of our religion. Such, I believe, will attain eternal bliss.’

As the conversation continued he asked if we knew Mr. Gidharlal, a silk weaver of Ahmedabad. We were glad to say that he is a friend and an aggressive Christian elder. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘Gidharlal has supplied us with silk for years. We have proven him to be an honest and trustworthy gentleman. There are manufacturers of our own caste men from whom we could buy, but sooner or later they prove avaricious and take advantage, consequently we like to deal with Mr. Gidharlal, whom we consider a close friend.’ We informed the Jain merchant that Gidharlal was not always as he now is. As a young man he was naturally wild, insolent and undependable but the gospel of Jesus Christ has made him the bhagat (religious devotee) and reliable gentleman that he is now.

The conversation lasted nearly two hours. We were impressed by his statement that where ninety-nine out of a hundred of his caste would be found false, the same proportion among Christians would be found true. Thank God, there are many whose works glorify Him and along with the blessed story convince even idolatrous India that Jesus is true and is able to transform lives.
Close to where the Western Ghats slope to meet the broad plateau of the Deccan is a little mud village perched on a low hill overlooking the Indrayani river. To the eye of the casual observer there would be nothing to distinguish this little village from the hundreds of other villages that dot the plains of the Maratha country. But to the people of this area, Dehu, the name of this particular village, connotes much that is precious to them in their religious life, for this is none other than the place where Tukeram, the great Hindu poet-saint of the Marathas, was born; the place where he spent the greater part of his life; and the place from which, according to idolatrous belief, he ascended into Paradise.

Once each year a great concourse of people gathers to do honour to Tukaram and to Vithoba, the deity of which he was so devout a worshipper. The people throng the large temple whose walls rise abruptly from the river bank. Groups of men stand within the temple courtyard before a crude shrine dedicated to Tukaram, and there sing his songs to the accompaniment of the rhythmic beat of drums and cymbals such as he was accustomed to use when he was a pilgrim himself. The celebrations reach their climax when the multitudes stand around an old pipal tree, and there wait for its few, scattered leaves to quiver in the breeze, thus indicating that Tukaram is once more ascending into heaven after having hovered over the place for a short, preceding time. In vain they search the skies for the ‘ascending’ Tukaram. With the earnest and humble sincerity of this ancient Hindu poet many of these his followers are surely seeking God and His salvation like he did of old, but like his search their search also is futile for they do
not know that God can only be found through the One who really has ‘ascended up on high,’ the One ‘who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.’

It was my privilege not long since to visit Dehu in company with one of our godly Indian Christian pastors. During the course of our visit, which was at the time of the great *yatra* (religious fair) we had occasion to meet the young head-man of the village, a sixteenth generation descendant of Tukaram. With simple grace and kindly hospitality he escorted us to various points of interest. Just before taking our leave of this young man the pastor presented him with several tracts and Gospel portions. We pray, and we trust that you, dear reader, will join us in the prayer that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the light of the Gospel will find its way into his darkened heart through the medium of the written Word. We covet this splendid, upstanding young man, the noble son of a noble family, as a part of the structure of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in India. We need him and others like him as the ‘lively stones’ which are so indispensable in the building of the Church. Remember that you along with us are ‘labourers together with God’ in this great task of spiritual construction. Only as we faithfully witness, pray, and sacrifice can these precious ‘stones’ be quarried and be cemented together in Christ, the Chief Corner Stone, ultimately to form that beautiful house which some day—we hope, soon—will be completed in the consummation of that Divine plan which was conceived before the world began.

*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*
—James 5: 16.
Concerning Nepal

Nepal is one of the greater of India's Native States and belongs to the 'Buddhist-Hindu Frontier' of India. It has a population of 5,600,000 and nearly four-fifths of this vast multitude are Buddhists.

Nepal stretches along the main range of the Himalaya Mountains for nearly five hundred miles and is bounded on the north by Tibet, on the East by the State of Sikkim, on the South by Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces. The Kali River runs along the western boundary and beyond it is the District of Almora, of the United Provinces.

Nepal, perhaps more than any other State in the world, is a land of mountains. Just west of Nepal in Almora is Mt. Nanda Devi, 25,600 feet high, the highest mountain within the British Empire, proper. At the eastern extremity of Nepal is Kinchinjunga, 28,150 feet high. Between these lies Nepal with its vast, unexplored mountains and valleys, including twenty-three peaks over 25,000 feet and one hundred over 21,000 feet high.

Nepal's people believe that Buddha visited their land and made many converts there. Today the State religion of Nepal is 'a kind of Brahma-Buddhism.' When the Muhammadans overran India they did not reach the mountain fastnesses of Nepal. There are very few Muhammadans in Nepal.
Nepal had no passenger railway until 1927. The one then started runs between the towns of Raxual and Amlekhganj, a distance of twenty-four miles.

Nepal has very little provision for medical or surgical treatment of its ailing people, with the exception of a military hospital in Khatmandu, the capital.

Nepal has no politicians. Happy Nepal!

In the valley of Khatmandu there are fairly good roads and a goodly number of motor cars.

Foot-paths constitute most of Nepal’s ‘roads’ and often it is ‘a hard day’s work’ to go over these precipitous ways from just one village to the next one.

Notwithstanding all this it should be remembered that Nepal is conservative rather than backward. Travellers say the people seem contented and that, ‘In Nepal one sees more smiles in a day than in India in a month.’

Nepal was entered by Jesuit missionaries about two hundred and fifty years ago. In 1767, the Gurkha chief, Prithwi Naryan, became master of the valley of Khatmandu, Nepal’s chief valley, and ordered the departure of all missionaries. Following this the Christians were expelled and ever since that time it has been the policy of the Nepalese government to exclude foreigners and Christians. Buddhist subjects and Muhammadan traders are tolerated.

Colporteurs are not allowed to live in Nepal and sell Scriptures but there is no prohibition against importing Bibles and Scripture portions into the country. Nepalese migrants, who come out of Nepal to labour in tea gardens each year in November, returning at the beginning of the Indian hot season, carry into their country thousands of Scripture portions.

There are about 274,000 of Nepalese in British India. Many of these are hearing the Gospel.

There are good missionaries working at different places on the borders of Nepal. Pray that the door may soon open for them and others to enter this closed land. Prayer changes things.

‘If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.’

That You May Understand Our Pictures

An Indian Christian Merchant, Gidharlal C. Bhagat, was contributed by Rev. J. S. Ringenberg. Concerning its subject Mr. Ringenberg writes, 'Brought as a small orphan to the Boarding School at Dholka, he received training which has born abundant fruit. Along with his prosperous business, he always finds time to serve our Lord faithfully in the important offices to which he has been appointed in the Church and Synod.' See also article on 'A Jain's Testimony.'

The other pictures were sent by Rev. Lauren R. Carner, whose article on 'Where Dwelt an Ancient Poet' will tell you what they mean. Besides the article the following notes, sent by Mr. Carner, will give added interest to the article and the pictures:

The Indrayani River as seen from the temple wall at Dehu, the home of the poet Tukaram. It is believed that he met death by drowning in the river, near this spot. It is said that he was wont to meditate in the nearby hills.

The Pipal Tree at Dehu with a part of the crowd that collects near it at yatra (pilgrimage) time.

The Baba Sahib of Dehu. This young man, to whom Gospel portions and tracts were presented by the Indian pastor, claims to be a sixteenth generation descendant of Tukaram. By virtue of his position the Government allows him the revenue of three villages.

News and Notes

The population of India is thirty-two and a half millions more to-day than it was ten years ago.

In 1931, when the last census of India was taken, the population of Baluchistan was over 867,000. Quetta, the capital city of this State, was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake in the early morning of May 31st. The lives of more than forty thousands of people were suddenly ended. Such a disaster appals us and well it may, but what shall we say or think of the more than twenty thousands of India's people who go out each day and most of them, nearly all of them, die without one ray of hope?
Calls for Prayer

Pray for the catechists, evangelists and pastors studying in our Summer Schools in July and August.

Pray for the teachers in the Summer Schools that they may have the anointing of the Spirit of God for this important service.

Pray for the health of the missionaries during the trying rainy months and just after the rains, when malaria is unusually prevalent.

Pray for the interested ones of the sweeper caste, at Viramgam, who are passing through severe testing. Pray that they may have courage to press on to a definite knowledge of God’s saving grace.

Pray for the wife of Khordabhai, a recent convert at Viramgam, who was persuaded by her relations to leave her husband and two small children and go back to Hinduism. Let us pray that the deceiver may be defeated in these evil designs and that she may be repentant and return to her home and to Christ. And pray that Khordabhai may be given grace to stand true to his Lord through all the persecution he is enduring for Christ’s sake.

Notice

The editor takes this means of asking his fellow missionaries to send in notes of praise and requests for prayer for insertion in the next number of the Bulletin.

‘Look on the fields.’—John 4: 35.
### Missionary Directory, 1935

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**Chairman:** REV. KIEL D. GARRESON

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Miss H. C. Bushfield  
Miss A. Little  
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| Anjangaon  | REV. and Mrs. I. E. Hartman                       |
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