

In the month of February the Hindu bathing festival was held. The place was then crowded with people from the adjacent villages, who had come to bathe in the sacred waters of the Godavari, to obtain salvation. We had a grand opportunity of speaking of Christ and Him crucified, to a great number of men and women, who have never heard the Gospel before. We rejoice even in this, remembering that each new man or woman means one more wandering sheep hearing the call of the Good Shepherd.

My pupils, I am glad to say, are making rapid progress, and some of them showing a deeper interest in the study of the life of Christ, and in memorizing portions of Scripture.

Just a few notes from my journal:

One dear woman said that she has given up idol worship entirely since hearing of Christ and His sufferings for sinners, and is trusting the Saviour I love.

Another woman said, "We could see clearly that Christianity is the true religion, and O that all would trust in the Lord Jesus. I am ready to follow Him." This poor woman is evidently afraid of the people and her caste.

Another said, "God is truly punishing us by sending famine, plague, pestilence and earthquakes, because we are not hearkening unto His word. This woman has asked us to pray for her, that she may love the Lord, and follow Him alone.

Another woman said, "I have given up all. I have nothing in this world, and am trusting in the Saviour, and waiting for His summons to be with Him."

Dear readers, please remember this woman in your prayers, that she may have the courage to confess the Saviour openly.

One dear woman says that she repents every day for what she has done, and prays to God to forgive her.

Two others asked us to teach them to pray, as they would like to pray to the true God before going to bed. Oh, how many are saying that they have given up idol worship. We trust that they have all given it up, and may the time soon come when every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus.

In conclusion, may I ask the prayers of the dear readers of this report, that we may realize more of the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be enabled to work more earnestly the next half year.

Yours in the Lord,  
P. H. N. BEGG.

#### REPORT FOR THE HALF YEAR ENDING JUNE 18, '97.

In the early part of January we had the opportunity of meeting numbers of women from other parts of the country as they came in to attend a bathing festival a few miles out of Cocanada and made it their business to visit this town, as they say it is the greater attraction.

When asked why they bathe in the Godavari, they excuse themselves by saying that was only an excuse to visit Cocanada and see such persons as ourselves, and how should we hear these good words otherwise. In our own villages ladies like you never come. Some, however, had heard the name of Jesus from a lady who visited their town. These strange women usually listen most attentively to the Gospel message and almost all will acknowledge that after all there is no merit in the waters of the Godavari, and after this, say some, we will worship the true God alone and give up these things. This is very refreshing after the indifference of many who have so often heard the Gospel in this town. The subject of being reconciled to God was one which impressed a good many of the women lately as I spoke on it. They understand from the famine that God is angry with them because of their sins, and when taught that each individual soul needs to be reconciled to God, many appeared anxious for it and several would ask how it was to be effected, thus enabling us to point them to the only Way. Some eagerly asked if I could make peace for them. In this time of distress they can understand that the land is under the curse of idolatry and quite a number of women surprised me one day, by agreeing amongst themselves that it would be a blessed thing if the filthy idol temples were destroyed off the face of this land and all this people would turn to the worship of the true God. Would that the government would abolish idol worship they said, then could God bless our land. It is not often that we get the opportunity of praying in the houses as there is usually some confusion going on and all who are present do not pay attention to us, but one day lately I had such an opportunity in a house where I have long visited and where the women are a good deal attached to me. When speaking on the necessity of the forgiveness of their sins they appeared quite anxious, so I asked them if I might pray for them. They all readily consented, and when I knelt down did so also and seemed to be so much impressed that after I had done they said it was so good, God seemed so near. One dear young girl of fourteen said "I do not want to stay here any longer, take me away with you." One of our school girls is a member of this family, she enjoyed the prayer very much; she has learned to pray herself. This girl professes to believe on Jesus as her Saviour and often talks to her mother and others about their sins. She was reading the Pilgrim's Progress with me and found illustrations of her own case. She says she would so like to come away and become a Christian, and like Christian in the book, would put her fingers in her ears and run so as not to hear her people calling her back. The school girls are very often a great help to us when visiting at their homes for they will sing the Gospel hymns to the astonishment of their elders. One woman