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## The Pandita Ramabai Story in Her Own Words

The following excerpt from “Autobiography Pandita Ramabai Woman of the Millennium” (Nasik India: Genesis books, 2008) and Pandita Ramabai <http://panditaramabai.org/>.

### An Honorable Heritage

Pandita Ramabai, born in southwestern India, was raised in the Hindu faith by a scholarly Brahmin family. Brahmins, who were generally priests and scholars, were at the top of the caste system that governed Hindu society. Ramabai said that my father, though a very orthodox Hindu and strictly adhering to caste and other religious rules, was yet a reformer in his own way. He could not see why women and people of Shudra caste should not learn to read and write the Sanskrit language and learn sacred literature other than the Vedas. He found an apt pupil in my mother. However, soon he met the objection of the Brahman Pandits who thought the teaching his wife the sacred language of the gods was the heretical course. He had fully prepared himself to meet their objections. My father appeared before the guru, the head priest, and the assembly of Pandits and gave his reasons for teaching his wife. He quoted ancient authorities and succeeded in convincing the guru and chief Pandits that it was not wrong for women and Shudras to learn Sanskrit Puranic literature. My mother fell in line with his husband’s plan and became an excellent Sanskrit scholar.

My father used to get his support from the rice-fields and coconut plantations which he owned. The place he had selected for his home happened to be a sacred place of pilgrimage, where pilgrims came all the year round. He thought it was his duty to entertain them at his expense, as hospitality was a part of his religion. For thirteen years he stayed there and did his work quietly but lost all his property because of the great expense he incurred in performing what he thought was his duty. So, he was obliged to

leave his home and lead a pilgrim's life. I was only about six months old when they left their home.

### An Unique Education

When I was about eight years old, my mother began to teach me and continued to do so until I was about fifteen years of age. Moreover, my parents did not like us children to come in contact with the outside world. They wanted us to be strictly religious and adhere to their old faith. Learning any other language except Sanskrit was out of the question. Secular education of any kind was looked upon as leading people to worldliness which would prevent them from getting into the way of Moksha, or liberation from everlasting trouble of reincarnation in millions and millions of animal species and undergoing the pains of suffering countless millions of diseases and deaths. So, all that we could or did learn was the Sanskrit grammar and dictionaries, with the Puranic and modern poetical literature in that language. Most of this, including the grammar and dictionaries, which are written in verse form, had to be committed to memory.

Ever since I remember anything, my father and mother were always traveling from one sacred place to another, staying in each place for some months, bathing in the sacred river or tank, visiting temples, worshiping household gods and the images of gods in the temples, and reading Puranas in temples or in some convenient places. The reading of the Puranas served a double purpose. The first and the foremost was that of getting rid of sin, and of earning merit in order to obtain Moksha. The other purpose was to earn an honest living, without begging. My parents followed this vocation. We all read Puranas in public places but did not translate or explain them in the vernacular. The reading and hearing of the sacred literature is in itself believed to be productive of great merit - "Punya," as it is called by the Hindus. We never had to beg or work to earn our livelihood. We used to get all the money and food we needed, and more; what remained over after meeting all necessary expenses was spent in performing pilgrimages and giving alms to the Brahmins.

### Famine, Death and Doubts

This sort of life went on until my father became too feeble to stand the exertion, when he was no longer able to direct the reading of the Puranas by us. We were not fit to do any other work to earn our livelihood, as we had grown up in perfect ignorance of anything outside the sacred literature of the Hindus. We could not do menial work, nor

could we beg to get the necessities of life. For three years we did nothing but perform these religious acts. At last, all the money which we had was spent but the gods did not help us. We were too proud to beg or to do menial work and were ignorant of any practical way of earning an honest living. Nothing but starvation was before us. My father, mother and sister all died of starvation within a few months of each other.

My brother and I survived and wandered about, still visiting sacred places, bathing in rivers, and worshipping the gods and goddesses in order to get our desire. We had fulfilled all the conditions laid down in the sacred books and kept all the rules as far as our knowledge went, but the gods were not pleased with us and did not appear to us. After years of fruitless service, we began to lose our faith in them and in the books which prescribed this course and held out the hope of a great reward to the worshippers of the gods. However, we still continued to keep caste rules, worshipped gods and studied sacred literature as usual.

We wandered from place to place, visiting many temples, bathing in many rivers, fasting and performing penances, worshipping gods, trees, animals, Brahmins, and all that we knew for more than three years after the death of our parents and elder sister. We had walked more than four thousand miles on foot without any sort of comfort sometimes eating what kind people gave us, and sometimes going without food, with poor coarse clothing, and finding but little shelter except in Dharma Shalas, that is, free lodging places for the poor which are common to all pilgrims and travelers of all sorts except the low-caste people. We wandered from the south to the north as far as Kashmir, and then to the east and west to Calcutta in 1878.

## **Introduction to the Bible**

We stayed in Calcutta for about a year and became acquainted with the learned Brahmins. Here my brother and I were once invited to attend a Christian gathering. We did not know what it was, for we had never come in social contact with neither the Hindu Reformers, nor with Christians before that time. We were advised by our Brahmin acquaintances to accept this invitation. So, we went to the Christian people's gathering for the first time in our lives. We saw many people gathered there who received us very kindly. They ate bread and biscuits and drank tea with the English people and shocked us by asking us to partake of the refreshment. We thought the last age, Kali Yuga, that is, the age of quarrels, drunkenness, and irreligion, had fully established its reign in Calcutta since some of the Brahmins were so irreligious as to eat food with the English.

We looked upon the proceedings of the assembly with curiosity but did not understand what they were about. After a little while one of them opened a book and read something out of it and then they knelt before their chairs, and some said something with closed eyes. We were told that was the way they prayed to God. We did not see any image to which they paid their homage, but it seemed as though they were paying homage to the chairs before which they knelt. Such was the crude idea of Christian worship that impressed itself on my mind. The kind Christians gave me a copy of the Holy Bible in Sanskrit and some other nice things with it. I liked the outward appearance of the Book and tried to read it but did not understand. The language was so different from the Sanskrit literature of the Hindus, the teaching so different, that I thought it quite a waste of time to read that Book, but I have never parted with it since then.

### **Deeper Hindu Studies and Skepticism**

While staying in Calcutta we became acquainted with many learned Pandits. Some of them requested me to lecture to the Pardah women on the duties of women according to the Shastras. I had to study the subject well before I could lecture on it, so I bought the books of the Hindu law published in Calcutta. Besides reading them I read other books which would help me in my work. While reading the Dharma Shastras I came to know many things which I never knew before. There were contradictory statements about almost everything. What one book said was most righteous, the other book declared as being unrighteous. While reading the Mahabharata I found the following: "The Vedas differ from each other; Smrities, that is, books of sacred laws, do not agree with one another; the secret of religion is in some hidden place. The only way is that which is followed by great men."

This I found true of about everything, but there were two things on which all those books, the Dharma Shastras, the sacred epics, the Puranas and modern poets, the popular preachers of the present day and orthodox high-caste men were agreed: women of high and low caste, as a class, were bad, very bad, worse than demons, and that they could not get Moksha as men. The only hope of their getting this much desired liberation from Karma and its results, that is, countless millions of births and deaths and untold suffering, was the worship of their husbands. The husband is said to be the woman's god; there is no other god for her. This god may be the worst sinner and a great criminal; still HE IS HER GOD, and she must worship him. She can have no hope of getting admission into Svarga, the abode of the gods, without his pleasure; and if she

pleases him in all things, she will have the privilege of going to Svarga as his slave, there to serve him and be one of his wives among the thousands of the Svarga harlots who are presented to him by the gods in exchange for his wife's merit. The woman has no right to study the Vedas and Vedanta, and without knowing them, no one can know the Brahma. Without knowing Brahma, no one can get liberation; therefore no woman as a woman can get liberation, that is, Moksha.

The same rules are applicable to the Shudras. The Shudras must not study the Veda and must not perform the same religious act which a Brahman has a right to perform. As for the low-caste people, the poor things have no hope of any sort. They are looked upon as being very like the lower species of animals, such as pigs; their very shadow and the sound of their voices are defiling; they have no place in the abode of the gods, and no hope of getting liberation, except that they might perchance be born among the higher castes after having gone through millions of reincarnations. They may sometimes get the benefit of coming in contact with the shadow of a Brahman and have a few drops of water from his hand or wet clothes thrown at them and feel the air which has passed over the sacred persons of Brahmans. These things are beneficial to the low-caste people, but the Brahmans lose much of their own hard-earned merit by letting the low-caste people get these benefits! The low-caste people are never allowed to enter the temples where high caste men worship gods.

These are the two things, upon which all Shastras and others are agreed. I had a vague idea of these doctrines of the Hindu religion from my childhood, but while studying the Dharma Shastras, they presented themselves to my mind with great force. My eyes were being gradually opened; I was waking up to my own hopeless condition as a woman, and it was becoming dearer and dearer to me that I had no place anywhere as far as religious consolation was concerned. I became quite dissatisfied with myself. I wanted something more than the Shastras could give me, but I did not know what it was that I wanted.

One day my brother and I were invited by Keshab Chandra Sen to his house. He asked if I had studied the Vedas. I answered in the negative and said that women were not fit to read the Vedas and they were not allowed to do so. It would be breaking the rules of religion if I were to study the Vedas. He could not but smile at my declaration of this Hindu doctrine. He said nothing in answer, but advised me to study the Vedas, and Upanishads. New thoughts were awakening in my heart. I questioned myself as to why I should not study Vedas and Vedanta. Soon I persuaded myself into the belief that it was not wrong for a woman to read the Vedas. So, I began first to read the Upanishads, then the Vedanta, and the Veda. I became more dissatisfied with myself.

## **Marriage and Life in Bengal**

In the meanwhile, my brother died. As my father wanted me to be well versed in our religion, he did not give me in marriage when a little child. So, I had remained unmarried till I was 22 years old. Having lost all faith in the religion of my ancestors, I married a Bengali gentleman of the Shudra caste. My husband died of cholera within two years of our marriage, and I was left alone to face the world with one baby in my arms.

I stayed in Bengal and Assam for four years in all and studied the Bengali language. While living with my husband at Silchar, Assam, I had found a little pamphlet in my library. I do not know how it came there but I picked it up and began to read it with great interest. It was the Gospel of Luke in the Bengali language. There was a Baptist missionary, Mr. Allen, living at Silchar. He occasionally paid visits to me and preached the gospel. He explained the first chapter of the Book of Genesis to me. The story of the creation of the world was so very unlike all the stories which I read in the Puranas and Shastras that I became greatly interested in it. It struck me as being a true story, but I could not give any reason for thinking so or believing in it. My husband, who had studied in a Mission school, was pretty well acquainted with the Bible but did not like to be called a Christian. Much less did he like the idea of his wife being publicly baptized and joining the despised Christian community. He was very angry and said he would tell Mr. Allen not to come to our house any more.

After my husband's death, I left Silchar and came to Poona. Here I stayed for a year. Miss Hurford, then a missionary working in connection with the High Church, used to come and teach me the New Testament in Marathi. I had at this time begun to study the English language but did not know how to write or speak it. She used to teach me some lessons from the primary reading books, yet sometimes I was more interested in the study of the New Testament than in the reading books.

## **England: Being Drawn to Religion of Christ**

I went to England early in 1883 in order to study and fit myself for my lifework. When I first landed in England, I was met by the kind Sisters of Wantage, one of whom I had been introduced by Miss Hurford at St. Mary's Home in Poona. The Mother Superior once sent me for a change to one of the branches of the Sisters' Home in London. The

Sisters there took me to see the rescue work carried on by them. I met several of the women who had once been in their Rescue Home, but who had so completely changed, and were so filled with the love of Christ and compassion for suffering humanity, that they had given their life for the service of the sick and infirm. The Hindu Shastras do not deal kindly with these women. The law of the Hindu commands that the king shall cause the fallen women to be eaten by dogs in the outskirts of the town. They are considered the greatest sinners, and not worthy of compassion. After my visit to the Homes at Fulham, where I saw the work of mercy carried on by the Sisters of the Cross, I began to think that there was a real difference between Hinduism and Christianity.

I asked the Sisters who instructed me to tell me what it was that made the Christians care for and reclaim the "fallen" women. She read the story of Christ meeting the Samaritan woman, and His wonderful discourse on the nature of true worship, and explained it to me. She spoke of the Infinite Love of Christ for sinners. He did not despise them but came to save them. I had never read or heard anything like this in the religious books of the Hindus; I realized, after reading the [4th Chapter of the Gospel of John](#), that Christ was truly the Divine Saviour He claimed to be, and no one but He could transform and uplift the downtrodden womanhood of India and of every land. Thus, my heart was drawn to the religion of Christ. I was intellectually convinced of its truth on reading a book written by Father Goreh and was baptized in the Church of England in the latter part of 1883, while living with the Sisters at Wantage.

I was comparatively happy and felt a great joy in finding a new religion which was better than any other religion I had known before. I knew full well that it would displease my friends and my countrymen very much, but I have never regretted having taken the step. I was hungry for something better than what the Hindu Shastras gave. I found it in the Christian's Bible and was satisfied. After my baptism and confirmation, I studied the Christian religion more thoroughly with the help of various books written on its doctrines. I was much confused by finding so many different teachings of different sects; each one giving the authority of the Bible for holding a special doctrine, and for differing from other sects. I came to know after eight years from the time of my baptism that I had found the Christian religion, which was good enough for me; but I had not found Yeshu Christ, Who is the Life of the religion, and "the Light of every man that cometh into the world."

### **Finding Yeshu Christ**

It was nobody's fault that I had not found Yeshu Christ. He must have been preached to me from the beginning. My mind at that time had been too dull to grasp the teaching of



the Holy Scriptures. The open Bible had been before me, but I had given much of my time to the study of other books about the Bible and had not studied the Bible itself as I should have done: hence my ignorance of many important doctrines taught in it. I gave up the study of other books about the Bible after my return home from America and took to reading the Bible regularly. **One thing I knew by this time: I needed Yeshu Christ and not merely His religion.**

For some years after my baptism, I was comparatively happy to think that I had found a religion which gave its privileges equally to men and women; there was no distinction of caste, colour, or sex made in it. All this was very beautiful, no doubt. But I had failed to understand that we are of "God in Christ Yeshu, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." (I Cor. 1:30). **I had failed to see the need of placing my implicit faith in Christ and His atonement in order to become a child of God by being born again of the Holy Spirit and justified by faith in the Son of God. My thoughts were not very clear on this and other points. I was desperate.** I realized that I was not prepared to meet God, that sin had dominion over me, and I was not altogether led by the Spirit of God and had not therefore received the Spirit of adoption and had no witness of the Spirit that I was a child of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans 8:14-16)

What was to be done? My thoughts could not, and did not help me. **I had at last come to an end of myself and unconditionally surrendered myself to the Saviour; and asked Him to be merciful to me, and to become my Righteousness and Redemption, and to take away all my sin.** Only those, who have been convicted of sin and have seen themselves as God sees them under similar circumstances, can understand what one feels when a great and unbearable burden is rolled away from one's heart. I shall not attempt to describe how and what I felt at the time when I made an unconditional surrender and knew I was accepted to be a branch of the True Vine, a child of God by adoption in Christ Jesus my Saviour. Although it is impossible for me to tell all that God has done for me, I must yet praise Him and thank Him for His loving-kindness to me, the greatest of sinners.

The Lord, first of all, showed me the sinfulness of sin and the awful danger I was in, of everlasting hellfire and the great love of God with which He "So loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16) And He gave this Son to be the propitiation for my sin. The Bible says that God does not wait for me to merit His love but heaps it upon



me without my deserving it. It says also that there is neither male nor female in Christ. "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:22-26).

### **An Overflowing Joy**

I do not know if anyone of my readers has ever had the experience of being shut up in a room where there was nothing but thick darkness and then groping in it to find something of which he or she was in dire need. I can think of no one but the blind man, whose story is given in St. John chapter nine. He was born blind and remained so for forty years of his life; and then suddenly he found the Mighty One, Who could give him eyesight. Who could have described his joy at seeing the daylight, when there had not been a particle of hope of his ever seeing it? Even the inspired evangelist has not attempted to do it. I can give only a faint idea of what I felt when my mental eyes were opened, and when I, who was "sitting in darkness saw Great Light," and when I felt sure that to me, who but a few moments ago "sat in the region and shadow of death, Light had sprung up."

I was very like the man who was told, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk... And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God." I looked to the blessed Son of God who was lifted up on the cross and there suffered death, even the death of the cross, in my stead, that I might be made free from the bondage of sin, and from the fear of death, and I received life. Oh, the love, the unspeakable love of the Father for me, a lost sinner, which gave His only Son to die for me! I had not merited this love but that was the very reason why He showed it to me.

### **Free from the Fetter of Falsehood**

How very different the truth of God was from the false idea that I had entertained from my earliest childhood. That was that I must have merit to earn present or future happiness, the pleasure of Svarga, or face the utterly inconceivable loss of Moksha or liberation. This I could never hope for, since a woman, as a woman, has no hope of Moksha according to Hindu religion. The Brahman priests have tried to deceive the women and the Shudras and other low-caste people into the belief that they have some

hope. But when we study for ourselves the books of the religious law and enquire from the higher authorities we find that there is nothing, no nothing whatever for us. They say that women and Shudras and other low-caste people can gain Svarga by serving the husband and the Brahman. But the happiness of Svarga does not last long. The final blessed state to which the Brahman is entitled is not for women and low-caste people.

But here this blessed Book, the Christians' Bible says: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." (Romans 5:6-10) "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that We loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (I John 4:9, 10). How good, how indescribably good! What good news for me a woman, a woman born in India, among Brahmans who hold out no hope for me and the like of me! The Bible declares that Christ did not reserve this great salvation for a particular caste or sex. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12,13). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (Titus 2:11) "The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." (Titus 3:4).

No caste, no sex, no work, and no man was to be depended upon to get salvation, this everlasting life, but God gave it freely to anyone and every one who believed on His Son whom He sent to be the "propitiation for our sins." And there was not a particle of doubt left as to whether this salvation was a present one or not. I had not to wait till after undergoing births and deaths for countless millions of times, when I should become a Brahman man, in order to get to know the Brahma. And then, was there any joy and happiness to be hoped for? No, there is nothing but to be amalgamated into Nothingness-Shunya, Brahma. The Son of God says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death to life." (John 5:24) "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that GOD HATH GIVEN TO US

ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."(1 John 5:9-13) **The Holy Spirit made it clear to me from the Word of God, that the salvation which God gives through Christ is present, and not something future. I believed it; I received it; and I was filled with joy.**

## Telling Others

Since then, I have come to know the Lord Yeshu Christ as my personal Savior and have the joy of sweet communion with Him. **My life is full of joy,** " Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2) Now I know what the Prophet means by saying, " With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isaiah 12:3) I can scarcely contain the joy and keep it to myself. I feel like the Samaritan woman who "leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:28-29) I feel I must tell my fellow-creatures what great things the Lord Jesus has done for me, and I feel sure, as it was possible for Him to save such a great sinner as I am, He is quite able to save others. The only thing that must be done by me is to tell people of Him and of His love for sinners and His great power to save them.

My readers will not therefore find fault with me for making this subject so very personal. The heart experiences of an individual are too sacred to be exposed to the public gaze. Why then should I give them to the public in this way? Because a "**Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!**" (1 Corinthians 9:16). I am bound to tell as many men and women as possible, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners like me. He has saved me, praise the Lord! I know "**Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.**" (Hebrews 7:25).

**God has given me a practical turn of mind. I wanted to find out the truth about everything including religion by experiment. I experimented on the religion in which I was born. I did not leave a stone unturned, as it were, as far as I knew; not only in the way of studying books, but of doing myself what the books prescribed. I have seen many others also doing the same thing. I saw them doing everything that was commanded them. The sad end was that I found that they were not saved by it, nor was I. It was a dire spiritual necessity that drove me to seek help from other sources.**

I would urge on you, dear brother and sister, to make haste and get reconciled with God through Christ. For the great day of judgment is fast coming on us, so make haste and flee from the wrath of God, which you and I have justly merited. God is Love, and He is waiting patiently for you to accept His great salvation, so despise not "the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering," and know "that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." (Romans 2:4).

### **The Holy Spirit in Me**

I found it a great blessing to realize the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in me and to be guided and taught by Him. I have experienced the sweet pleasure promised by the Lord in Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." The Holy Spirit taught me how to appropriate every promise of God in the right way and obey His voice. I am sorry to say that I have failed to obey Him many a time, but He tenderly rebukes and shows me my faults. Many a time He finds it most necessary to punish me in various ways, His promise is: "I will discipline you but only with justice; I will not let you go entirely unpunished." (Jeremiah 30:11).

### **Bombay: Founding of Mukti Mission - Home of Salvation**

When starting from San Francisco, and on landing in Bombay, I had resolved in my mind, that although no direct religious instruction was to be given to the inmates of my home, yet I would daily read the Bible aloud and pray to the only True God in the name of Christ; that my country women, seeing and hearing what was going on, might be led to enquire about the true religion, and the way of salvation. There were only two day-pupils in my school, when it was started a little more than eighteen years ago. No one was urged to become a Christian, nor was anyone compelled to study the Bible. But the Book was placed in the library along with other religious books. The daily testimony to the goodness of the True God awakened new thoughts in many a heart.

After the first ten years of our existence as a school, our constitution was changed slightly. Since then, every pupil admitted in the school has been receiving religious instruction, retaining perfect liberty of conscience. Many hundreds of the girls and young women who have come to my Home ever since its doors were opened for them have found Christ as I have. They are capable of thinking for themselves. They have had their eyes opened by reading the Word of God, and many of them have been truly

converted and saved to the praise and glory of God. I thank God for letting me see several hundred of my sisters, the children of my love and prayer, gloriously saved. All this was done by God in answer to the prayers of faith of thousands of His faithful servants in all lands, who are constantly praying for us all.

## **The Spiritual Revival of 1905**

I was led by the Lord to start a special prayer-circle at the beginning of 1905. There were about 70 of us who met together each morning and prayed for the true conversion of all the Indian Christians including ourselves, and for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all Christians of every land. In six months from the time we began to pray in this manner the Lord graciously sent a glorious Holy Ghost revival among us, and also in many schools and Churches in this country. The results of this have been most satisfactory. Many hundreds of our girls and some of our boys have been gloriously saved, and many of them are serving God, and witnessing for Christ at home, and in other places. Soon the number swelled to 700 and the Church had to be used for the meeting. I have responded to the Lord's challenge, "[Prove Me now,](#)" ([Malachi 3:10](#)), and have found Him faithful and true. I know He is a prayer hearing and prayer answering God. His promise, "[My people shall never be ashamed,](#)" ([Joel 2:16](#)), and all the thousands of His promises are true. I entreat you, my readers, to prove the Lord as I have proved Him. I am not aware that anything like the present Holy Ghost revival, has ever visited India before the year 1905. I am genuinely happy that I have seen it in my lifetime.

## **Glorious New Hope**

This has been literally fulfilled in me and mine. I praise the Lord Who has done great things for us. Hallelujah, Amen. The most precious truth which I have learnt since my conversion is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. I firmly believe, as taught in the Bible, that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon. He will most certainly come and will not tarry. The signs of the times in the last decade have taught me to be waiting for Him. I was totally ignorant of this particular subject. It is not generally taught in this country. The hope of the appearing of our Saviour to take His redeemed ones to be with Him has been a great help to me in my Christian life. I praise the Lord for the great promise of His coming, and His counsel to watch and pray. "[Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.](#)" ([Matthew 24:24](#)). "[Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.](#)" ([Mark 13:33](#)).

## A Natural Result

(The following excerpt from Pandita Ramabai <http://panditaramabai.org/>.)

On February 1, 1889, Ramabai again stood on the shores of her native land, after an absence of six years. In less than six weeks a school was opened in Bombay, named the Sharada Sadan, signifying a Home of Wisdom. It opened with two pupils, one of whom, Godubai, then became the educated wife of a professor in Fergusson College, Poona. In 1891, Ramabai was led to a clearer understanding of the spiritual nature of Christianity and to a perception of the deep things of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "One thing I knew by this time," she wrote, "that I needed Christ and not merely His religion... I was desperate... What was to be done? My thoughts could not and did not help me. I had at last come to an end of myself, and unconditionally surrendered myself to the Savior, and asked Him to be merciful to me, and to become my righteousness and redemption, and to take away all my sin..." Her personal life was bound to influence the pupils, who requested to be permitted to join Bible studies and later requested baptism. There was strong opposition from the press and Indian reformers. Ramabai strongly objected to the pressure to close her door while reading the Bible to her daughter. "I have the same freedom to practice Christianity which these girls have to practice their religion. Why should I shut the door of my room, which I do not shut at any other time during 24 hours of the day?"

In 1904, Ramabai commenced translation of the Bible in Marathi. She learnt Hebrew and Greek and worked on a translation into Marathi. A translation into Marathi had already been completed in William Carey's day. There had been subsequent revisions too. But Ramabai thought that these translations relied too heavily on Sanskrit words and phrases; they did not speak to women of lower castes. Her translation had a specific audience: uneducated women of lower castes. In 1913, the first edition of the New Testament of Ramabai's translation in Marathi was published. In 1924, the complete Bible was printed in the Mukti Printing Press.

During the famines of 1896-97 in Madhya Pradesh and 1900-01 in Gujarat, Ramabai was instrumental in bringing over 2000 women and girls who were rescued. These girls were housed in the temporary sheds at the 100-acre farm which she had purchased in 1895 at Kedgaon. Ramabai was awarded the Kaiser-I-Hind medal for community service in 1919. July 24, 1921 was a sad day for her. Manorama, her only daughter, had died. She herself did not wait long after that, and on April 5, 1922, herself left for her heavenly

abode. And as she quoted, "A life totally committed to God, has nothing to fear, nothing to lose and nothing to regret."