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Religious Intelligence.

CAR FESTIVAL OF JUGGERNAUT AT PURI

BY THE REV. W. MILLER.

The Puri Car Festival has passed away, leaving, like all its predecessors, effects unpeppably more calamitous than "the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or the destruction that wasteth at noon day." Having been present and witnessed its deeply affecting scenes, we are constrained to record a brief account of them, with a view of augmenting the immense mass of evidence already extant, which proves the system of idolatry maintained at Puri to be "India's greatest scourge," and that it is not only the imperative duty of her Rulers to disconnect themselves entirely from it, but also to employ legitimate means for its overthrow. On the afternoon of the 19th June, 1852, according to the lowest estimate, sixty thousand persons, two-thirds of whom were strangers and non residents of Puri, had assembled in front, and in the vicinity of the temple. Amidst this immense congregation, the cars, with their gaudy trappings, and filled with the attendants of the idols, were very conspicuous: while groups of pandas, accompanied by musicians, dancing and playing in honour of Jagannath, Bengali and Hindustani females reciting in joyous strains the deeds of Hari and Ram, - bairagis, with their whitened and naked bodies, extorting alms from the by-standers, - respectfully dressed young Bengalis from the Hughly College and Missionary Institutions in and near Calcutta, joining in all the idolatry and wickedness of the occasion, apparently with as much zeal as the most ignorant of their countrymen, - and infatuated creatures covered with dust and almost exhausted, measuring their way to the general centre of attraction, were among the more striking features of the scene.

To a stupid idolater doubtless all this appeared truly grand and imposing; while to the Christian it was the most humiliating, shameful, and distressing scene fallen humanity could furnish.

Alas! that sixty thousand rational and immortal beings could be found, so fallen and so completely the slaves of Satan, as to assemble from almost every part of Hindustan to prostrate themselves before a hideous, lifeless image, and participate in all the unutterable abominations and woes attendant upon its infernal worship! Surely, if angels could weep, it would be over such a scene.

The idols not appearing at the expected time, inquiry as to the reason was instituted, and it was found that the Raja had refused to give the Dytas, or parties who convey the images to the cars, their ordinary fee; eventually, however, he was obliged to yield to their demand, and Jagannath, his brother, and sister, proceeded in the usual complaint and graceful manner to their chariots. This, of course, was a time of intense excitement, all eyes were fixed in one direction, all hands were raised in adoration, and every tongue proclaimed "victory to Jagannath." On the following day, the cars were removed a considerable distance toward the Gandeche temple. In pulling the ropes and dancing and singing before the cars, none distinguished themselves so much as the Bengalis, male and female. They appear to be Jagannath's greatest devotees, and far outstrip the Oriyas in their zeal.

In the meantime, different cries and scenes arrested our attention. Heaven's destroying angel had passed through the ranks, and smitten hundreds of these idolaters; hence, almost in every street were seen the dead and dying: the former lying in the pathway or the gutters, or being carried to the various Golgothas; the latter occasionally attended by a friend or relative; the dying mother by an affectionate son; the husband by his young and weeping wife; and the brother by a beloved sister: each and all trying in vain to arrest the progress of the king of terrors, and impart ease and consolation to the objects of their affection and solicitude. In many instances the unhappy creatures were abandoned by their friends long before the spirit had quitted its earthly abode, and though quite near, were allowed to perish like dogs, unpitied and unaided. The manner in which the hearts of the pandas and the inhabitants of Puri at large are closed against anything like sympathy for the

dead and dying, is most lamentable. If you attempt to engage their attention in behalf of their victims, they reply, with a fiendish smile, "By dying here they obtain salvation."

Visiting one of the Golgothas, we beheld the remains of about eighty human beings: some had just been thrown down, some were being devoured by dogs and vultures, others were being consumed on the funeral pile, and many had been reduced to ashes or completely eaten up by dogs. Having neither time nor disposition, we did not visit the other Golgothas, where doubtless similar scenes were to be witnessed; as at the lowest estimate five hundred persons had, before the close of the third day of the festival, perished in the town of Puri, and probably as many more on the road to Cuttack. Standing near the Atharalla bridge, the morning of the second day, sixteen persons, apparently in the last stage of the disease, were carried by in dulis within a period of half an hour. Notwithstanding our enquiries, we could not ascertain by whose authority, or to what place these parties were being thus conveyed; and hence were forced to the painful conclusion that their inhuman bearers would, on reaching a retired spot beyond the town, after stripping and robbing them, consign them to a ditch to end their sufferings. In order, however, to form anything like a just idea of the effects of this wicked system, we must remember that the disease long survives the festival, carries off multitudes in Puri, and visits almost every district of Orissa; hurries thousands into eternity, and occasionally depopulates large villages; we must also follow its victims into the unseen world, and by the light of revelation contemplate their eternal destiny; we must at the same time visit their habitations, and hear the cries and lamentations of their bereaved families and relatives; and we must not overlook the vast multitudes who are thereby robbed, corrupted, and fitted for destruction. Having thus viewed these, a few of its legitimate effects, we are furnished with the most impressive comment on the words of Jehovah, "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god." An unanswerable argument against its being in any way identified with a professedly Christian government. A bitter reproof to those who advocate so iniquitous a connection, and a loud irresistible appeal to all Christian and philanthropic men to unite their influence and cause it to bear upon the overthrow of this, the most loathsome, demoralising, and destructive system of idolatry in the world.

In noticing the missionary labours connected with the festival, we have to state that Messrs. Bailey and Miller, with two native assistants, removed to Puri before the close of May, and were joined by Messrs. Buckley and Brooks, of Cuttack, with three native assistants, before the commencement of the festival; hence the gospel was daily proclaimed in the town over a period of thirty days. Our congregations were generally large, and composed of Bengalis and parties from the Upper Provinces, as well as Oriyas. From the former we had many hearers who were bitterly opposed to the truth, and seemed quite familiar with the objections of Paine, and other infidel writers, to Christianity. Also, an unusually large number of young men with a smattering of English, who, to use their own language, had come to see the beauties of Jagannath, but, when remonstrated with, appeared ashamed, and had recourse to some less objectionable reason for being present. The pandas maintained their character for insolence and determined opposition to the proclamation of the gospel.

One fellow had the audacity to approach the speaker, and call upon the hearers to throw dust and step his mouth; and when reproved, poured forth such a torrent of unutterably obscene language as never previously had fallen upon our ears. On the whole, we found these men much more insolent and determined in their opposition than they were last year.

We were not, however, without encouragement in our labours: multitudes listened with great attention to the gospel; proposed various questions; argued with us in a calm profitable manner, and seemed truly desirous of increasing their knowledge of Christianity. We met with several persons who had read and committed to memory a large portion of the contents of some of our tracts and gospels, and individuals occasionally came to our residence to converse on religious subjects and obtain books.

We were much interested in a man from Guzerat, who visited us several times. He had been on intimate terms with a missionary, had read with him the New Testament, and was well acquainted with its contents. He had, however, imbibed some erroneous views in reference to the personal appearance of the Lord Jesus, and believed that he was now in some part of the world; hence he declared his sole object in leaving home was to search for the Saviour. "Tell me," he would exclaim, with great emotion, "where I can find the Lord Jesus; and I will go to him wherever it may be!" On the morning after the idols made their appearance, we repaired to the vicinity of the pilgrim tax gate, and distributed a large number of tracts and gospels to the departing pilgrims. May these labours be succeeded by the Divine blessing, and eminently contribute to the glory of God and the salvation of man! - London Baptist Reporter.

THE BIBLE.

Extract from a Speech, by the Hon and Rev. Baptist Noel, delivered at the late Anniversary of the Bible Society, in London.

"If we look at what the last fifty years have done, we may well be thankful to God that He has put it into the hearts of so many to carry on this work. But the question that ought more to occupy us is, 'What can the society do henceforth? What can it do now?' This jubilee year ought to be a starting point. We shall not do our duty if we waste it in mutual congratulation; it ought to be a starting point of operations far more extensive, as they are far more mature. Permit me briefly to state the circumstances under which we are now called to action. Through these operations of laborious and pious men—a toil that we should be criminal to waste—the Bible is now prepared for 600 millions of our fellow creatures. Education is fast multiplying readers; and at the same time the books have been so reduced in cost, that a little money goes a great way, and by funds of a very moderate amount may this Book be placed in the hands of millions. It is said that there was a time when a copy of the Scriptures would cost, to a grazer, half his herd of cattle, or, perhaps, two arches of London-bridge as it then stood; but now every labourer in this land can purchase a Bible. In France, Bibles are sold for less than a franc; and even in the language of China, which it was thought, a few years ago, European intellects could hardly master, they are printed and distributed, at a cost of sixpence each copy. Now, then, that the books are ready, and the cost is cheapened, and readers are multiplying, this, surely, is a call to action. But other things combine to make it so. This country and the United States have access, by their commerce, to all the shores of the earth, and may, therefore, have connexion with those nations that demand the Scriptures at our hands. An Englishman, or an American, is protected by his national flag and by a Consular Minister; and, thus notwithstanding many impediments in the way, liberty of conscience does creep on among the nations of the world. Restrictive laws, if they have not ceased, have at least become intolerable and odious to mankind; and when they are put into exercise, as in the case of Madiat and Guicciardini, they only serve to bring out the deep hatred that is felt against persecution and intolerance. Then we have liberty of action. A short time since, in Turkey, it was death for a Mahometan to change his religion, and it was death to any Christian man who attempted to effect the change. Now, however, I believe, religious liberty is as complete, or nearly so, in Turkey as it is here. A few years ago, we prayed to our Heavenly Father to influence the heart of the Emperor of China that he might allow some moderate share of liberty to our fellow Christians. Now, in the consular cities of China, and in all populous neighbourhoods, a Christian man may engage in any Christian efforts with as much impunity, nay with as much liberty, as he could do in any of the great cities in this island. Such opportunities as these, surely we should not lose. If God has placed us in a time when the Bible is ready in many languages, when the books are cheap, and readers are multiplying, and when the influence of our country is great in every place, surely this constitutes an obligation laid on this great people not to let the Word of God be idle in our hands, but to send it far and wide to the ends of the earth. (Applause.) It has done something, my lord, already. Look where you will, it has been a blessing to mankind. It has aided those corrupt Christian Churches in which there was so much need of Gospel light. It has strengthened feeble Churches like those of the Waldenses. It has armed our population against that effort of Romanism which will never prevail among a people where the Word of God has free course. It has awakened the consciences of hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholics themselves, from whom those Scriptures had been too long kept, and who are now reading them in secret; and no one can tell the longings and eagerness with which many a man in the unknown communes of France, or in the depths of Italy, is sighing for more Christian liberty and for more evangelical light. It has offered the Gospel to the proud Mahometan, and elevated the character of the Hindoo. Every one can see that this work has not only been useful, but essential. Where would the Churches of Tahiti have been at this moment if the Bible had not been known among them? As it is, they have resisted French brandy, French bayonets, French gold, French cannon, and French priests; and in spite of all opposition the mission has survived and flourished. Where would the Church in Madagascar be but for the Bible given to it by this society? The Christians were persecuted and threatened, and forty of them fell beneath the sword of the oppressor; hundreds were reduced to captivity or sent into exile; yet, when they had no missionary among them, and had to meet in forests or caverns, the doctrines of the Cross prevailed among them; so that hundreds of believers have grown into thousands, till the very King of Madagascar is a Christian himself, and the Prime Minister is ready to second his monarch's pleasure. Why is this? Just because the Word of God has been given to those people