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"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

The Training of Converts.

The excellent paper here presented to our readers is the "Circular Letter" of the Philadelphia Association, adopted at the 159th meeting of that Body, held with the tenth Baptist Church, Philadelphia, in October last. The Rev. W. H. H. Marsh, Pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Wilmington, Delaware, is the writer of the letter.

The Philadelphia Association comprises 63 churches. The number of baptisms reported last year was 2029; whole number of members, 16,795. Twelve of the churches were destitute of Pastors; among them, the church with which the Association was held, and which consisted at that time of 974 members.

There appears great appropriateness in the letter to the circumstances of the body from which it emanates, there having been so large a number of converts gathered into the churches under its jurisdiction.

The Committee of the Association on the Digest of Letters commence their report by saying "The Letters indicate such an unprecedented prosperity during the past year as should elicit the profoundest praise to the God of all grace." Out of 63 churches there were only 2 that sent no letter to the Association—a condition to which our Associations may hope to attain at some distant period.

During the past Association year many have been added to our churches, not only within the bounds of our own body, but throughout the denomination. As a prominent denominational organ has observed, "so large are the numbers in this one ingathering that the future of our churches, and of the influence of our churches in the evangelization of the world, is to be greatly modified by the character as Christians and Baptists they shall form and maintain." This revival has largely increased our numerical strength, and has supplied us with much additional material by the prompt and judicious employment and thorough education of which, we may increase our moral power, extend our influence, strengthen our ranks, and thus prepare the way for greater conquests and more enlarged prosperity in the future. The accessions we have received embrace persons of nearly all ages, from every grade of society, and include a great variety of talent; but if we desire to gather all the fruit, if we want to reap for Christ, and for the churches (the full harvest of this revival), we must give our immediate attention and well-directed labors to the employment of all the elements of power and usefulness it has brought within our reach, and made subject to our moulding and educating agencies. Allow us, then, dear brethren to address you on *The Training of Converts*.

It is mainly to our failure to give timely and appropriate instruction to the accessions we have received during seasons of revival that we may trace the fact of which we hear so much complaint, the *unemployed resources and undeveloped talent found in our membership*. Nearly every year we hear reports of "extensive revivals" and "large ingatherings" at different points, and at frequent periods we have had "general awakenings" extending to all the churches. By these our numerical strength has been greatly increased, but we have not been gratified by a corresponding increase in our effective available working force—in our moral power in the vigor of our church life, and the extent of our Christian activity. The yield of the harvest has not been what we anticipated when we looked joyfully upon the luxuriance of the spring growth. Every means and all agencies, regarded as desirable for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ, has been added; but much of the strength thus acquired lies dormant, these energies are not now exerting the potent influence they might in aiding the cause of Christ—they are not vitalized by a genuine Christian life, and thus

"made mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds." The want felt by our churches to-day is not so much a deficiency of any of appliances or agencies needed to carry forward the blessed work of the world's redemption from the curse of sin, as that they do not employ what they have—that they possess so many latent energies, which, if disciplined and brought into active service, intelligently directed, would "make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

We do not say, brethren, that we have exhibited an over-zealous desire to bring souls to Christ, that we have done or are doing wrong by the earnest employment of every divinely authorized means of multiplying our membership. We would rejoice in a more prevalent missionary spirit and greater efforts to "win souls," but have not our churches and their pastors in many instances forgotten that they have another mission beside this; that on them is placed the responsibility of training such as God may from time to time add to us; that every convert needs to be "taught the way of the Lord more perfectly," that he ought to be instructed in righteousness and trained for active service as we drill our volunteers for military duty, and that this instruction and training must and can only come from the churches and their ministry. Here is where we have failed—here is where we are failing—and it is for this cause that so many of our members who, by "the time they ought to be teachers, have need that some one teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat." We have received our members rather as graduates in the knowledge of all the principles that underlie, and duties arising from, the new "life in Christ," than as pupils, knowing only, and in many instances exceedingly superficially, the rudimentary principles of religion, and needing immediate and careful instruction in the way of life. We have been too much accustomed to regard them as ready to enter at once upon all the duties of their new vocation, than as requiring tuition in the nature of those duties, and it is to this that we may attribute the fact that we have so few, comparatively, who are "ready for every good word and work." Their early Christian nurture was neglected, and hence the lamentable deficiency in hearty consecration to Christ we witness in after years, when because of their maturer powers, they ought to be more efficient than ever before; but the time for their successful culture has passed. Their characters as Christians are fixed; they have determined their standard of piety, and if they are not illustrations of that higher life we believe attainable; if they are not "living epistles known and read of all men;" if they do not fill the gospel measure of Christian obligation, we cannot hope, however faithfully and clearly we may endeavor to instruct them, that they will be very progressive pupils.

We must, therefore, commence their training now. If we defer it they will in a little while be beyond our influence—their ardor will cool and indifference will succeed. They are now teachable—their hearts are tender, their minds are in readiness to receive instruction. They desire to be useful, they want work, and are not only willing and desirous to be set at work, but they crave instruction in order that they may work, under the direction of intelligence and with the certainty of success. Their hearts glow with love to Christ, and they inquire, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" They hunger and thirst after religious knowledge—knowledge that they can make practical—knowledge that they can verify by experimental tests—but if we do not avail ourselves of the many advantages afforded by the inviting present, it will be too late when the glow of their espousing love shall have passed, and when the ardor following their conversion shall have cooled. Then indifference will have succeeded enthusiasm, then dissatisfaction with the formal, will have supplanted longing for the spiritual, and the maintenance of a respectable Christian exterior—a frigid morality—will have followed their present longings after attainments in the divine life. There are now many in our churches who are "neither cold nor hot," who show but little of the spirit of Jesus, and who do but little to convince the world that they are under the power of His life; who have wealth, talent,

education, social influence, every means desirable for usefulness, who might be shining lights in the world and blessings to mankind; but they are not, and we have not much hope that they can now be reached and influenced by any system of discipline or attempts to give them more thorough instruction respecting their duties as Christians, yet, in most instances this same class of persons were, when they were brought into the church, easily reached; they had the spirit of disciples; they were in a condition to be moulded, they would have received instruction and profited by it; but either their training was entirely neglected or else it was not thorough, hence the result. A similar result will inevitably follow if we do not give that immediate attention to the Christian training of the thousands God has added to our churches during the past year. The present is the golden opportunity—if we fail now we can at best expect in the future to repair but partially the neglect of the present.

These converts need training. In whatever aspect or relation of the new life we view them they need the most careful instruction. They need instruction in the doctrines of the Gospel—the fundamental truths of Christianity. Of these they generally know but little. Their ideas of them are crude, and undigested. They are not acquainted with them in their systematic form and relation. Their faith is rather assent to the proposition, Christianity is true, than an intelligent idea of the truths embodied in the gospel. Of these they are comparatively ignorant and must remain so, unless immediate and well directed efforts be made to give them carefully defined and distinct ideas of each fundamental doctrine of salvation and of the value and relation of each to the entire system. They require the most painstaking and exact instruction respecting the nature of regeneration, of justification by faith, of indwelling sin, of consecration to Christ, of growth in grace, of the forgiveness of sin, and the relation of Christ's death to their forgiveness, pardon, justification, sanctification and eternal salvation. We cannot insist with too much emphasis upon their comprehending these. We cannot explain too carefully, or call their attention to them too frequently. Nor ought we to pause here. They, as they may be able to bear it, need instruction upon what we may term the higher and more difficult doctrines of the Word of God: as the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, the necessity of his presence and power to convert sinners and to vitalize the church; the certain efficacy of the Redeemer's death in the salvation of all for whom He died; our personal, eternal and unconditional election to eternal life in Christ Jesus; the doctrine of the Trinity; the divinity of the Son of God, and the Godhead of the Holy Spirit. All these doctrines, brethren, lie at the foundation of a correct Christian life. There can be no such thing as genuine Christian life without them, for all true religious life is evolved from a correct understanding of the doctrines of Christianity, and their power, because correctly understood, over the heart. There is at this time a growing indifference to doctrinal preaching. It is decried, and the demand is echoed from every quarter, give us more practical preaching. The precept must be the constant theme of discourse, but few are willing to listen to a presentation of the law that underlies the precept. They forget that the practical part of religion is only another phase of the doctrinal—only the doctrinal vitalized. The consequence of the long continuance and too general prevalence of this, is that many members of our churches are to-day as ignorant of the doctrines of the word of God as Pharaoh's lean kine were destitute of flesh.

It is right indeed that we should insist with frequency, and earnestness upon the practical part of religion, that we should urge the convert to activity and stimulate him to devotedness; but if we would make him an efficient laborer in the Master's vineyard, we must give him the doctrinal food necessary, not only to sustain him while working, but to supply the nutriment requisite to feed and produce a development of his gifts, and graces, that will fit him for more enlarged usefulness. This doctrinal instruction on which we insist, is rendered the more necessary by the many and multifarious insidious and seductive attempts now so covertly made, to moderate the sever-

ity of Bible doctrines by the wide-spread and growing indifference of Christians to doctrinal correctness; by the semi-infidelity that pervades much of the literature of the day, as well as by the bold and daring assaults that are so persistently made not merely upon the doctrines of the Bible, but on the authenticity and credibility of almost every book of which it is composed. Never was there greater danger threatening "the faith once delivered to the saints" than at the present time, never did the inquiring young Christian mind so much demand guidance and confirmation as now, and never was Satan more insidious in his attempts, or did he possess more effective appliances for undermining the foundations upon which the church rests than now. The evils exist, the danger threatens; the enemy in many cases "clothed as an angel of light," is at the door. We have but one safe course, only one effective means of counteraction, that is to instruct these converts, to indoctrinate the entire membership of our churches more thoroughly. We dare not with safety repose on our orthodoxy, or assume that these converts will be kept from doctrinal error, without any attention being given to their instruction. If we do, we shall have members without stability, "carried about by every wind of doctrine," uninstructed themselves, and and hence unable to impart instruction to others.

We must reserve the remainder for another number.

For the Christian Messenger.

VALEDICTORY.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF PORTAUPIQUE TO THE REV. JAMES REID.

Dear Brother in Christ,—

Having accepted your resignation to this Church, the union which has existed between us as Pastor and people is now in the order of Providence dissolved, yet we wish to present you this testimony of our affection and esteem.

Dear Brother, since we became associated with you in the bonds of the Gospel, we have ever felt to repose unshaken confidence in you as a minister of Christ. You have broken to us the bread of life for ten years, and your labors have been blessed. A goodly number through your instrumentality have been brought into the fold of Christ. You have faithfully laboured and watched over the flock as a good shepherd who cares for the sheep. The happy seasons we have enjoyed together cannot easily be effaced from our memory.

We also cherish the remembrance of your late beloved wife with endearing emotions; as a Christian she stood high in the ranks of our sex. We also desire to remember with Christian regards your present partner, hoping she may be long spared—a blessing and a comfort to you. And we do earnestly pray that the blessing of God may rest upon you, that wherever you may be called to preach the Gospel, the Great Head of the Church may crown your labours with abundant success.

Portaupique, Aug. 16th, 1867.

REPLY.

TO THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT PORTAUPIQUE.

Dear Brethren,—

As I am now in the course of Divine Providence, about to leave you and seek another field of labour, I thank you for the good character which you have given to me on my departure. As the Lord enabled me, with much imperfection, for ten years, I have endeavored to preach amongst you the unsearchable riches of Christ. Though a considerable number, during that time, have been baptized and united with the Church, all praise is due to the Lord alone. It is He who gives the increase. I shall ever remember the happy seasons we enjoyed under the ministration of the word and ordinances. Many times we could say that we sat in heavenly places—the Lord was there. I thank you for the kind notice of my late beloved wife and also for your kind regards to my present partner. May the Lord richly reward you for all your kindness both to me and mine. That he may abundantly bless every member of the church, and all other friends who came to hear me, that he may savingly convert all your young people, and