

Correspondence.

(Published by request.)

THE TRAINING OF YOUNG CONVERTS

AN ESSAY READ BEFORE THE LUNENBURG AND QUEBEC CO. MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, BY REV. E. A. INGRAM.

The persons in whose interest this paper is written need special care and attention. This we find in the teaching of Scripture and experience, and that much of their future happiness and usefulness in the vineyard of Jesus Christ depends upon their early training.

Doubtless, we have each our own peculiar ideas as to the best means by which to accomplish so great a work, so that, under God our young men and maidens may become consistent christians, useful church members and faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

The vast importance of this great work I need not urge, the remembrance of such names as the Wesleys, Whitfield, Braided, in the past, together with Charles H. Spurgeon, DeWitt Talmage and many others in the present, bear eloquent testimony to the power and importance of correct christian training in early life. On the other hand, we cannot doubt but that there are many godly men and women who might to-day have been of far greater service in the christian church, had their early training been of a more systematic character, and thus the church has lost much of its power and influence, through the neglect of so important a portion of its duty. Let me now ask the indulgence of my brethren while I proceed to observe, first, the necessity of this special training. Second, the means to be employed in this great work. And thirdly, the results that may be expected to follow as the reward of our labours.

1st. The necessity of this great work.—The young brethren and sisters who have now—I am supposing a time of revival such as the churches of this province have lately been graciously permitted to enjoy—enlisted under the banner of King Jesus, are as raw recruits, who have nevertheless to battle with a three-fold enemy with whom they have hitherto been upon the most intimate terms, but whose friendship they have now and forever renounced.—They have to fight against a king to whom they have hitherto been most loyal, but whose subtlety, craftiness, and cruelty, they are to a great extent ignorant. How then are they to become successful in this great and unequal warfare! (a) by training under the supervision of an experienced officer of their Lord and King. (b) by taking upon them the armour of the gospel and learning to wield well the sword of divine truth.

Again, these converts are like newborn children, for all things are new to them, for they now form part of a new creation, and are in fact themselves "new creatures" entering upon a higher, nobler, brighter, and better life than they possessed in their previous existence. They have therefore to be cared for, to be fed with such food as is convenient for them, and to be trained to act well their part in the great drama of the christian life. Again, they are like unto the lad who has left his father's house to sail upon the mighty deep, they stand upon the shore of a sea of knowledge needing to be made well acquainted with and warned of the rocks and shoals, where others, who have travelled the same way before and having lost compass and rudder have made shipwreck, of whom are Hymenias and Alexander. And lastly we observe as a reason—and to us as pastors the most import reason—for this training is, that we may be able to present them all perfect in Christ Jesus.

2nd. We shall enquire as to what means are to be employed in this great work. As we have already hinted, we believe that in the first place men of at least average skill and ability are needed to labour in this important-portion of the great vineyard; and who is so likely to train well the children of his charge as the pastor, the father-in-law. Only one hired nurse of whom we read was successful in training her child aright, and she was the mother of Moses; and we believe that no other man can so well help to mould the character, or have so much influence over the converts, as their own spiritual parent. That being allowed, the next enquiry is, What is our first duty? And we reply, To have our spiritual children well versed in the scriptures. In this matter as in all others connected with the kingdom of Christ, Chillingworth's motto must be ours: "The bible, and the bible only is the religion"

for the converts. At the same time the bible should be used judiciously, by which we mean, that it would be well for us to have our bible classes so conducted, that the young should feel them to be pre-eminently theirs. We would also suggest that a systematic plan should be adopted by which every subject be taught in its proper connexion, remembering that order was the divine rule at the creation, in the training of the children under the Mosaic dispensation, and order is evidently the rule under the New Testament dispensation, therefore we would suggest that order should be one rule in this highly important work of spiritual training. We would suggest that they be taught 1st, their duty to Christ and his Church, then the three R's, Ruin by the fall, Redemption by the Son, and Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, as found in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Also God's method of justifying the ungodly as taught in the same epistle, the power of faith as taught in Heb. 11 chapter, and the power of prayer taught in James 4th chap. from 15 v. We would also suggest the believer's death to sin, and the heavenly relationship as taught in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, Christian liberality as taught in Corinthians, Spiritual Arithmetic as taught by Peter, not omitting the various duties of christians to the world as subjects of importance to young christians.

We would not omit the important work of conference, which seems to us peculiarly adapted to the subject under consideration. In the conference meeting the young brethren and sisters should be encouraged by every means to state the condition of spiritual life in their own souls, and thus they would learn to practice the important work of self-examination, to seek christian fellowship, and at the same time to unite their sympathies and prayers with others. The young people's prayer-meeting should in our opinion have a prominent place in this work, and thus by God's blessing will the church members of the future be fitted for the great and noble object of christian life. Thus shall they be enabled to feed in green pastures, and to drink of still waters. Thus shall our young men and maidens be led from the bondage of Egypt to the freedom of the heavenly Canaan, from the wilderness of sin, to the summit of Pisgah, and from the City of destruction to the new Jerusalem and the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

This forms part of our last division, viz., the results that by God's blessing to be expected to follow as the reward of our labours. In the first place we note that as a result the christian army will be well supplied with good soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who will not only wear the soldier's coat, be dazzled with the glorious colours and brilliant paraphernalia of the regimentals, in other words, men who will not waste their time in vain speculations, as to where heaven is to be located, or the nature of the seven trumpets, neither will they be men who will spend their time over a certain theory of 666, the two witnesses and the little horn, but men who will never, while life lasts, lay aside their armour, but, strengthened by divine grace, will wield wisely and well the sword of the Spirit, men mighty in the scriptures, with many Valiant-for-the-truth, and Great-hearts, such as will not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; men, Spartans in spirit, who will rather die than flinch, and thus, not only defend themselves from error, but if need be, will carry war into the camp of the enemy, and who will remember that "To toil or suffer for the truth, is the noblest thing to do."

Thus will the faithful pastor be preparing candidates for the more thorough study of theology. The theological professor will find the materials so well prepared that in a brief season the present destitute churches of our province will be supplied with faithful pastors, and as far as Nova Scotia is concerned the Macedonian cry will be a thing of the past. The last results of this training that we shall notice will be that our church members will be Berean searchers after the truth as it is in Jesus, our Sabbath schools will be well supplied with faithful teachers, the pastor's heart will be encouraged as he observes the growing intelligence of his congregation, and at last the sowers and reapers, the hewers of wood and drawers of water, together with those who have taken care of the spoil, will receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Suppose a church do all believe right things, and all of them feel wrong once—what is the use?

For the Christian Messenger.

"CANCELLED MEMBERS."

I have not written hastily nor in a controversial spirit. I have been glad to note the agreement between 'D' and 'E.' But if, as 'D' admits, "non-resident and resident members are alike under the watch-care and discipline of their respective churches," and no essential distinction exists as to their sin if delinquent, and its treatment, why should there be in the records of that treatment? If they are alike worthy of exclusion, and alike excluded, why should they not be reported alike? I maintain that the only reason given—if they were, "the erroneous impression that the real decrease was caused by gross immorality, or by the adoption of other religious sentiments,"—that the denomination had suddenly become loose in morals or lax (strict?) in discipline—is insufficient and unsatisfactory. I do not believe that it was the reason influencing the action of the Western Association, unless that action is immature and hasty, and I am disappointed that "D" should not have deliberately and unqualifiedly defended it. It has not always been so. In his former letters he says, "it may be well to use another term" than "excluded." "The wisdom and propriety of the third will perhaps be questioned." "Whether these suggestions will, if followed, prevent or remove the trouble at which they aim is a question. They will at least, it is hoped, call attention to this matter, and lead to the adoption by our churches of some measures for checking or removing the growing evil." Now he asserts that even "E" must see in it "A measure desirable, practicable and scriptural."

"D" takes it for granted that his interpretation will be accepted. But I seriously question whether it was generally understood in the Association that there was to be any "vote" of the church whatever in the case of those "cancelled," much less that there must be what "D" and "E" agree in regarding the only scriptural action. Let me assure "D" that if it were, and his recommendations with regard to the mode of action are carried out, there is far less danger than he supposes of the number of exclusions being thereby so augmented as to render the "cancelled" column the necessity he regards it. But it is assuming altogether too much to say or suppose that an Association has made "a provision for scriptural watch care and discipline" when it was made long ago by the Head of the church Himself. Certainly if this be not so, our churches, even including those of the Western Association, will not feel themselves bound by any provision it may make or any interpretation of that provision. Finally, since "D's" reason for reporting excluded non-residents as only cancelled, applies with equal force at least to "disorderly walk in neglecting church ordinances and Christian duties" generally, will he distinctly inform us why only the former should be reported "cancelled"? Is it desirable in any case to make such distinctions among the excluded and to tell the reasons of their exclusion? If so, why not in every case? And if you once admit the desirability or possibility of doing it in one "class" how are you to prevent it being attempted and effected in another—indeed, for all "other causes beside immorality or heterodoxy"? No! Brother "D," highly as "E" regards you, and much as he respects your judgement and ability, and would desire to agree with you, he cannot "use his influence in favor of this measure" until he gets still more light. Till then it will continue to be his earnest desire and hope that both you and your Association will see your mistake and hasten to rectify it. In the mean time he is happy to be with you heart and soul on the discipline question.

E.

For the Christian Messenger.

RELIGION IN SIAM.

No. III.

Every reliable fact connected with Siam and its history, as already intimated, must henceforth be increasingly interesting to the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces. So far as the writer can ascertain, the first Christian Missionary to Siam, was Charles Gutzlaff, in 1828. He laboured among the Chinese, and was supported by the Netherlands Society.

Between 1828 and 1870, some forty-six Missionaries laboured in Siam—eighteen with the Chinese and twenty-eight with the Siamese.

In 1835, Dr. Dean went to Bangkok. In 1870, the American Baptist Missionary Union reported seventy members. They had three Baptist Churches, one at Bangkok, and two in outlying localities.

In 1870 the Mission work was, it seems, temporarily suspended among the Siamese, and thenceforward the conversion of the Chinese population has occupied the entire attention of the American Baptist Missionary Union.

If the foregoing facts should prove to be to any extent unreliable, doubtless some of the members of the Board of Foreign Missions in the Provinces, will be able to furnish the required correction. But I am apt to think they afford a tolerably correct outline of the history of Missions in Siam. When Mr. Carpenter appeared before the Convention at Windsor in 1873, and gave such a glowing account of the prospects, as determined our people to go in, and occupy this field.

Some thirty years ago, a Mr. Chandler, formerly of Connecticut, went out as a Missionary to Siam. Vincent says of him—"He has lived here during the reign of three Siamese Kings, and has witnessed the arrival and departure of several foreign missions, (not religious, I presume), whose commercial leagues or treaties with Siam, he has often been instrumental in furthering or negotiating. He adds—"Several years ago Mr. C. gave up his missionary labours, and entered the Government service first as an interpreter, next as tutor to the King, and then as Secretary to the Foreign Office, which latter position he

retains. Mrs. C. employs her time teaching about a dozen Siamese boys the rudiments of Education and the English language."

At Pechaburi there are two Missionaries of the American Presbyterian Board, the only Foreigners in a town of 20,000 inhabitants—Rev. Mr. McFarland, one of them speaks the Siamese and Laos dialects perfectly. He represented to Mr. V. that he had made about twenty converts, but one of whom had relapsed. Mr. V. remarking that he thought the Siamese much more anxious to learn English than to acquire new religious truths, he, Mr. McFarland assented. He thought the Mission too young to have expected greater success."

The Archives of the American Baptist Missionary Union would doubtless supply much information respecting the country, past and present, but to these I have not access, and it has often been a matter of surprise to me, that our Board or its Secretary instead of accepting the statements and views of returned missionaries traveling for their health, as the basis of so great an enterprise as that in which we are engaged had not even if it involved the expense of a delegation to their rooms, endeavored to secure from the American Union official information, not only as to the causes of their suspending their operations among the Siamese, but as to the most authentic facts possessed, in reference to the Karens of Siam, their numbers, history, habits and location.

It may be, however, that the Board are furnished with all the information that can be obtained, and have already done all that is suggested or that prudence would dictate in such a case. If so, the results so far as I am aware, have not yet transpired.

That the undertaking upon which the Baptists of these Provinces have entered with such commendable zeal, is one of magnitude, and grand proportions, none can doubt. Fairly launched with ten missionaries on, or soon to be on the field, whatever the Am. Baptist Missionary Union may have done, in suspending operations as regards the Siamese, and concentrating their efforts upon the Chinese population, our plans ought to be so wisely laid, that under Providence, there should be no future suspensions on our part, but a steady, progressive, onward prosecution of the Mission, without vacillation, or hesitation. Hence the importance of a sound solid platform—a design rationally formed, which in due season, may be expected to accomplish the anticipations of its promoters.

Every contributor to this mission will naturally feel a deep interest in its future prosperity, and look forward anxiously to the time, when it should be expected to bear fruit, and the immediate friends and relatives of the missionaries, will be keenly attentive to all that concerns their present and future prospects.

The Year Book for 1874, will furnish a copy of the Report of the Board of Foreign Missions for 1873-4. But one could well wish it might have appeared in the denominational press in advance, as it should be the most generally interesting document, probably, read at the Convention.

The amount of \$7,721, the sum collected from all sources during the financial year which has just ended, represents at 6 per cent, in round numbers, a capital of say \$128,000—a pretty large sum of money for these provinces certainly—when account is taken of all other benevolences. This, unlike some other of our charities, is to be perpetual.

only say in defence, that those who know me personally and therefore best, have not hitherto accused me of possessing much "odium theologium," or polemical rancor, in my heart. But if in my part of the recent discussion, I have really erred either in spirit or in diction, my apology is that "To err is human, to forgive divine." I therefore trust friend L. will not be so ungodlike as to refuse me forgiveness, either in the next world or in this.

As to the "majority" question among the best Biblical Interpreters, I suppose I might afford to be satisfied with friend L's statements in his last communication, inasmuch as he has not adduced a single "learned interpreter" who fully sustains his peculiar view; but in answer to his challenge, I will simply reproduce the worthy names of Deau Alford, E. Robinson, D. D., McKnight, Dr. Barnes, with the remark that the list could easily be quadrupled, were it worth while.

With regard to friend L's assertion that I have brought into my correspondence "matters outside of the subject under consideration," I am astonished; but need only add that in touching the subjects of "spiritual death" and "Unitarian" sentiments, I did so because Mr. L. had unmistakably and characteristically insinuated his erroneous views of the divine penalty for sin and had used "Unitarian phraseology" in the first article he wrote. These are the facts patent to all the readers.

In conclusion I freely accord to friend L. the liberty of holding personal opinions, and of fairly expressing them through the press, but not with such dogmatism and assumption of infallibility as his communications continually exhibit. Instance the following statement in his last letter, "Yet they failed, as did Dr. Adam Clarke, to see the meaning of overwhelmed in suffering for the dead. What it means I have shown." The italics and exclamation mark are mine. "Truly," as bro. Brown remarked, "Mr. L. seems to say, Eureka, Eureka!"

Nor does it become friend L. to charge others with harsh language or bad temper in the glaring light of such unchristlike, contemptuous, and "ill-natured" sarcasm as his last letter contains.

O wad some power the gittle gie us,
To see oursel as ithers see us."
Yours, zealous for the truth,
A. C.

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Of the ability of the denomination to continue this contribution there is little room, I apprehend, for doubt—providing that affairs are so managed, that entire confidence in the mission, and its eventual success, is secured and preserved.