

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

Vol. XLII.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1897.

No. 18.

The Training of Young People in World-Wide Evangelization.

An address delivered at the Missionary Conference, Truro, N. S., April 28th, by Rev. J. H. McDonald, of Amherst.

This is a council of war. Our Commander has given us our marching orders, and we, officers and soldiers, are here to consult with him and with one another as to the best means of carrying out these instructions.

I cannot but regret that a subject of so great importance has been assigned to me. It is one which requires ripened years and experience for its intelligent discussion, for if you solve this question, the enlisting of our young people in world-wide evangelization, the mission of the church is in a fair way to its accomplishment. In any case the training of the young is a matter of principle rather than of method. The first great exponent of missionary evangelization laid down three principles in his letter to the Roman Christians, embodied in the words, "I am debtor," "I am ready," "I am not ashamed." One hundred years before Paul penned these words to the church at Rome, a similar, yet dissimilar, message was sent to the same city. Caesar went east on a war of conquest. He attacked Alexandria and burned its magnificent library. Then turning to Asia Minor he directed the eagles against the king of Pontus and so quickly succeeded in conquering him that he sent a message to Rome that has become proverbial, "I came, I saw, I conquered." The one message was sent to Rome concerning the kingdom of the Caesars, the other concerning the kingdom of Christ. Rome has perished. Even at that day men with prophetic vision saw the coming fall. One looking upon it said as the poet sang before the fall of Troy:

"Yes, come it will that day decreed by fates,
How my heart trembles as my tongue relates,
The day that thee, Imperial Rome, must rend,
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end."

Rome perished, and the principles underlying Caesar's message, dependence on coveting and cruel conquering, killed it. The kingdom of Jesus has extended, and will continue to flourish. One with prophetic eye has sung:

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

The kingdom of Jesus flourishes, and its triumph is due, humanly speaking, in a long measure to the principles underlying Paul's message. To instill our young people with these principles is to train them in gospel extension. There is no spiritual jugglery by which the pastor may utter some cabalistic words and lo, the ordinary congregation of thoughtless young people is changed into an enthusiastic, devoted, intelligent mission band. He may by some method succeed in working up a sort of momentary enthusiasm, but that is evanescent and passes away like the morning dew. A sister said to me in speaking of this convention, "I hate enthusiasm." She meant the volatile kind that is produced from without and by the method of the juggler. But the enthusiasm which means, according to its derivation, "in God," that which counts for something in world-wide evangelization, is no plant that grows up in an evening like the prophet's gourd, but one which is deeply rooted in the soil of principle. Therefore it is that I believe in instilling our young people with the principles which Paul enunciated, "I am debtor," "I am ready," "I am not ashamed."

1. *Our obligation to engage in missionary work.* "I am debtor." This obligation is due to our relation to our fellow-men. As soon as we begin to live we have relations which place us under obligation to those who cared for us. The longer we live the further our relations extend, until it comes to pass that we find ourselves indebted to the whole world. So far-reaching is this law that the Son of Man himself could not get rid of it. Once he identified himself with the race, he felt under obligation to serve it. The disciples would have prevented him from washing their feet, but he would not be hindered as he gave his argument, "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." So an apostle caught the example and wrote, "the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." "No man liveth unto himself." The physically, the intellectually, the financially, the spiritually strong should bear the burdens of those who are correspondingly weak. This law cannot be broken without sin. On one occasion the enemies of Jesus watched him to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath day. Turning to them he asked, "Is it lawful to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath?" He meant that having the power to do good and doing it was good, but having the power to do good and withholding it was evil. If Canada, with her abundance of food, had refused aid to the appeals which came this year from starving India, what apology could we offer. Apology, there would have been none. We would have been held up by the nations of the world to execration and contempt. The same India in common with other nations is starving for the bread of life, and as brother

men we owe it to them to supply this need. Jesus, on his resurrection day, emphasized this as he said to the men with whom he walked, "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" They could not understand his suffering and death. It was the one great mystery to them. But suffering was an obligation of his humanity. Having become a man and having power to make an atonement, he could not get clear of that obligation without sin. He owed it to us to suffer. Even a heathen writer, reaching out his hand in the darkness, grasped this principle and wrote, "Whatever is of importance to mankind is not unimportant to me." We need to teach our young people to be men and women and not less than that. The training which makes provision for our being less than men is not worthy of the Son of Man. It is not worthy of the sons of men.

We are under obligation to engage in world-wide evangelization because of our relation to Jesus Christ. When Saul went on his mission of persecution to Damascus his relation to God was one of enmity. But God spoke to him, and from the time the messenger came to announce that he was a chosen vessel to declare God's name to the Gentiles, till his death, his relations were changed and he said, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." And so firmly was he convinced that this was his duty that he affirmed, that though an angel from heaven should try to convince him to the contrary he would not believe him. No voice comes to us from the Syrian sky, but the call from the Word and the Spirit is just as distinct. Our risen Lord did not leave behind him many instructions. He left us under the guidance of the Spirit with but few directions, and the missionary obligation was one of these. He repeated this as he did no other. It is the very finis of the gospel. It is his last command. It is as obligatory upon us as baptism or the Lord's Supper. He makes our obedience the test of discipleship. "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I have commanded ye." If we cannot go to the forefront ourselves, we must send, and our sacrifice in sending should be as great as in going. Our obligation is a debt ever due to our relation to our fellows and to our God. Our young people must be trained to be men and women and to be Christian men and women.

2. *The vindication of the gospel* is the next principle in which our young people must be trained. "I am not ashamed." An eminent scientist remarked that no institution had a right to exist which cannot vindicate its existence. Paul does not boast of the gospel, but wishes it to be tested on its merits. To him salvation was more than pardon. He knew that his life bore witness to the transforming power of the gospel. He knew that what it had done for him it could do for the world. He believed that by changing the individual it could redeem society. He had some experience in this. He had planted churches in Asia Minor on a former journey, and now as he visited them he marked the change. He went to Corinth, from which he sent his message and saw its effects in redressing wrongs, in infusing the principles of honor and justice, and raising men to a higher plane of life and hope, and so he wrote to proud, imperial Rome steeped in all manner of iniquity "I am not ashamed." He saw in the bud what we today see in the fruit—that the gospel is the power that produces the best manhood. History cannot be blotted out. The nations which have received the gospel compared with those which have not testify to this fact.

Our young people before they can have a true missionary spirit must be taught this, and to be impressed with the fact that this is the only power that can lift society to the mountain top. The votaries of science and education sometimes say as they see the works of these agencies that have been used of God for the betterment of mankind, "These are the gods which have brought us out of Egypt, and these are the gods that will lead us into the Canaan of social prosperity." But these things left alone and unsanctified will curse and not bless us. Rome said arms must conquer—sharp words and cruel yokes. Rome took the sword and perished by the sword. And those who take materialism for their god will perish by materialism. Bishop Colenso said "give me a company of Zulu youth and I'll uplift them by culture." A missionary furnished the raw material. He gave them a first class education and they went straight back to barbarism. A New Zealand chief came to England and received the very best education the country could give him. He returned to his native land, and in the very first battle in which he was victorious he plucked out his opponent's eye and swallowed it. He dug out his heart and ate it, and he and his followers enjoyed a cannibal feast upon the prisoners. Unsanctified education gives greater power for evil.

Occasionally we find some of our young people ashamed of the gospel, as they are surrounded by those who regard it as something which they, by virtue of their superior intelligence, have quite outgrown. Those who are ashamed to stand in its defence do not know its power. No man can be ashamed of the gospel who knows its triumphs. James Russell Lowell says: "Show me a place ten miles square where a decent man can live decently, supporting and educating his children, unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is revered, infancy respected, and womanhood held in true regard, and I will show you a place where the gospel of Christ has gone and

cleared the way and made decency and security possible." The man who is ashamed of the gospel in this age is an ignoramus. The young people of our churches need information. Without intelligence as to the needs of the gospel and its triumphs, there can be no missionary conviction. It was because Carey studied the map of the world that he became a missionary. A pastor said, in recommending a course of missionary reading to his young people, "Remember this is dangerous work. Carey studied the needs of the world, and he gave himself to India. Brainard studied the needs of the North American Indians, and prayed for their welfare, and for them he laid down his life. And if you give yourselves to the study of the needs of any people in the light of what Christ has done for you, you cannot call your money or yourself your own. Zeal is good; it is the fire of God's own kindling; but facts are the fuel by which the fire burns. Another reason why men are ashamed of the gospel of Christ is because they are not acquainted with Christ of the gospel. Paul loved to call himself the slave of Christ. The Romans fastened a strip of brass on the wrist of a slave and wrote the word "slave" upon it. On the forum and in the market place the haughty Roman citizen drew his toga about him and commanded his slave to keep to his own quarters like a dog. But the apostle who knew this took pride in his slavery. With him it was not ever thus. He once aimed at the high priesthood. It was once his ambition to be senior wrangler in the college of Judaism. Why this change? He saw the Christ of the gospel. He felt his love. He saw his power. He knew his principles must triumph, and therefore it was that the marks of Christ's ownership which he bore on his body were dearer to him than the high priest's robes or the imperial purple. The disciples of Christ have not outgrown the need of a similar vision. We want men, Christian men, intelligent men, men who have had a vision of Christ and are transformed by it. The paucity of intelligence is the reason why there is often found cold grey ashes on our missionary altars, where there ought to be a living flame. Such information as we have recently received from India as to the way God used a poor erring Telugu and the magnificent fruits of his labors, a few weeks ago gathered in by Mr. Churchill, should be burned into the hearts of all young people.

3. *Readiness.* "I am ready." This principle is the outcome of the other two. When an honest man is presented with a bill honestly contracted he will not repudiate it. Paul, in looking at his debt and the power of the gospel to meet the world's needs, held himself in readiness to the extent of his ability to pay it. Festus could not understand his attitude, and those who have not been brought face to face with a lost world and the world's Saviour can not understand the position of the missionary.

Two young men are entering upon life. They are brothers. The one has a genius for understanding the truth and presenting it, and his friends say he must not withhold his talent from the work of the ministry. But the other has a genius for financing. Everything he touches turns into gold. His friends with one consent say he should become rich and live in luxury. But has God given to one man a talent to use in his service and to another an equal talent to be spent selfishly? God lays tribute upon all our gifts and endowments, whatever our possessions or attainments are, and the one who is shown clearly his debt will say "as much as in me is" by my labors, my money, or my time, I will endeavor to pay it. God receives his payment not only in the coin of preaching, but every possession is legal tender in his kingdom. As much as in me is "exempt none from active service."

If I should go to a business man of this town who owes me five dollars, and should endeavor to persuade him to pay me fifty, no amount of persuasion would lead him to pay beyond that which he knows is the extent of his indebtedness. We frequently complain that those to whom God has entrusted his gold and silver do not pay more into the missionary treasuries, and that those whom he would have in active service are withholding themselves. We expect fifty dollars from them when they read but five in the missionary account, which we as leaders present to them. When our young people are trained to know that all gifts and callings are sacred, and that one is acceptable as the other in payment of our debt, the men and money for which we pray will be forthcoming.

Three hundred years before Paul penned this message another warrior looked toward Rome. He crossed from Carthage to Spain. He entered a heathen temple with his nine-year-old son, and there made young Hannibal swear eternal vengeance to Rome. That oath became the moulding power of his life. He consecrated himself to the humbling of the enemy, and the day came when Rome felt the power of his wrath. He spent his years in discipline and at length crossed over the Alps. Rome's armies were scattered and thousands of her veterans lay dead upon the field, as she, crushed and bleeding, lay at the feet of the King of Carthage. We too have taken an oath, not in the temple of a heathen god over a bleeding sacrifice, but over the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of our Redeemer, and pledged ourselves to his work: And shall we cease till the whole world lies at the feet of our divine Master, the King of Kings.

To accomplish this the young people in our churches must be taught the debt, the needs and triumphs of the and an intelligent stewardship of every gift and possession.