

Dänisch-Hallesche Mission

Propagation of the Gospel in the East

Ziegenbalg, Bartholomäus
Plütschau, Heinrich

London, 1709

Letter V. The vicious Life of the Christians greatly obstructs the Conversion of the Heathens. Some other Obstacles related. The Necessity of assisting the Missionaries with seasonable Supplies of ...

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die Digitalisate des Francke-Portals sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Sie dürfen für wissenschaftliche und private Zwecke heruntergeladen und ausgedruckt werden. Vorhandene Herkunftsbezeichnungen dürfen dabei nicht entfernt werden.

Eine kommerzielle oder institutionelle Nutzung oder Veröffentlichung dieser Inhalte ist ohne vorheriges schriftliches Einverständnis des Studienzentrums August Hermann Francke der Franckeschen Stiftungen nicht gestattet, das ggf. auf weitere Institutionen als Rechteinhaber verweist. Für die Veröffentlichung der Digitalisate können gemäß der Gebührenordnung der Franckeschen Stiftungen Entgelte erhoben werden.

Zur Erteilung einer Veröffentlichungsgenehmigung wenden Sie sich bitte an die Leiterin des Studienzentrums, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

Terms of use

All digital documents of the Francke-Portal are protected by copyright. They may be downloaded and printed only for non-commercial educational, research and private purposes. Attached provenance marks may not be removed.

Commercial or institutional use or publication of these digital documents in printed or digital form is not allowed without obtaining prior written permission by the Study Center August Hermann Francke of the Francke Foundations which can refer to other institutions as right holders. If digital documents are published, the Study Center is entitled to charge a fee in accordance with the scale of charges of the Francke Foundations.

For reproduction requests and permissions, please contact the Study Center, Frau Dr. Britta Klosterberg, Franckeplatz 1, Haus 22-24, 06110 Halle (studienzentrum@francke-halle.de)

urn:nbn:de:gbv:ha33-1-42455

LETTER V.

The vicious Life of the Christians greatly obstructs the Conversion of the Heathens. Some other Obstacles related. The Necessity of assisting the Missionaries with seasonable Supplies of Money. They set up a Charity-School in their own House, &c.

THE God of all Mercy, who, after having safely brought us hither, has, in the midst of these wild Countries, been all along our potent Father and Protector, quicken you by his Spirit, and affect you with a lively Sense of all the Tokens of his Favour attending us from the very Hour of our Departure to this Day, to the everlasting Praise of his Name and Goodness!

'Tis to Day just a Twelve Month, since you, dear Fathers and Brethren, first offered me that Pastoral Function, which I am now actually entered upon for the Service of the *Malabar-Heathens*; and having now conversed with 'em these Three Months, and together with my Fellow-Labourer pretty near viewed the Condition they live in; I thought my self in Duty bound, to acquaint you as well as I can, with the *present State of this Eastern Nation*. I must freely confess, That it is very hard to make any Impression upon their Mind, or to bring 'em over out of

of that gross Blindness that overspreads 'em, to the glorious Light of the holy Gospel. The chief Reason of their Aversion to Christianity is caused by *The scandalous & corrupted Life of the Christians*, conversing with & residing among them. This has inspired 'em with a more than ordinary Hatred and Detestation of any thing, that favours of Christian Religion; counting it a great Sin, if any of 'em should make bold, to eat or to drink with a Christian. Nay, they look upon the Christians, as the very Dregs of the World, and the general Bane of Mankind.

Secondly: Their idolatrous Worship seems to them to have more Truth and *Pleasantness* in it, than the Doctrine of Christ: Both because they fancy theirs to be of an elder Date, and contain more curious and delightful Pastimes, than the revealed Word of our God, which they think to propose nothing, but a deal of tedious and mortifying Matters, and not work so much upon the *Senses*, as upon the inward Frame of the Mind. When on the contrary, their Passions are fired by a Huddle of *material* things, (such as their Idols) striking in upon the *sensitive* Part. And though some of 'em have been so far convinced by us of the Sottishness of their Way of Worship, that they readily confessed, There was but One God, and all other Gods were but Servants or Attendants of that One: Yet they don't think this a Reason strong enough, to make 'em engage in the Christian Religion, or to hold this for the only true one. They believe, that any one, who has but led an honest Life in this World, let him be otherwise what he will, shall, after Death, receive a good *Lugas* (as they call it) or Reward.

D

Some

34 *Of the Impediments obstructing*

Some had the Confidence to desire of us to Day, that we would thrust a Book containing the Principles of our Religion, into the Fire, and they would do the same with another, containing the Rites of their Wopship: If theirs should happen to be consumed by the Fire, they wou'd all turn Christians; But if ours shou'd undergo that Fate, and theirs remain unhurt, we should all come home to them in the same Belief and Fancies: But in Case the Fire shou'd destroy both the Books, then none of the contending Parties should be in the Right. We replied: That we ought not to put the Great God to such trifling Trials, set on by the Itch of a vain and wanton Curiosity, and no ways grounded on any Revelation of God's Will. We told 'em, that every one had a *Conscience* given him as a Touch-Stone to discern betwixt true and false, good and bad; and if they should prove disobedient and refractory to this Monitor, that then God had just Reason to bind 'em over to everlasting Torments, they having obstinately rejected the Tender of Grace in time.

Thirdly: Their Conversion is also very much obstructed by the *Conduct of the Roman-Catholicks*, who use to decoy 'em into so called Christianity, by all Manner of sinister Practices and under-hand dealings. Hence they are afraid of us as of designing Men, ready to steal in upon 'em by some craftily-contrived Projects. To remove this headstrong Prejudice, we have protested all along, we never designed to use either *Force* or *Craft*, in the Conversion of their Souls, but leave every one to his free Choice and Liberty.

Fourthly:

Fourthly: Another Obstacle of the Conversion of Heathens, is the woful Sight they have of some Hundreds of Corverts brought over by Papists to the Church of *Rome*, and then left in such *Streights and Miseries*, as oblige them, to beg their Bread at other Peoples Doors. These uncharitable Doings very much offend the *Malabar-Heathens*. They say, 'twas but reasonable, *Christians* should provide for the Household of their own Faith, either by maintaining the Poor in their Necessities, or by putting them to some useful Employment, that so they might have no need of seeking their Bread in the open Streets.

Fifthly: Every one that turns Christian, (not being the Head of a Family) is presently *banished from his whole Estate* and Kindred, not daring so much as come near 'em again. They look on him as the vilest and most miserable Wretch that ever lived. All these things are of a fatal Consequence, and so obstructive to the Conversion of Heathens, that they seem to forebode, that but little Good was to be done among 'em. Nay, soon after our Arrival we were like to be disheartned by the Christians themselves, residing here. And Mr. *N. W.* told us plainly, Though we might edifie something for a while, yet all would be overthrown again with one Blow; he pretending to a certain Prognostication importing, that within the Compass of Ten Years the whole City would be swallowed up by the Inundation of the Sea. However, these ominous prefages made little Impression upon us. The more we found our selves destitute of all humane Support, Help and Incouragement; the more earnestly we applied our selves to the great

God himself, in Praying, Watching, and Wrestling; knowing full well, that he alone is able to carry us thorough so weighty an Undertaking as this. And because even this little time of our being here has not been left without a Blessing, (both Christians and Heathens having been so powerfully wrought upon, that every one's Eyes are fixed upon our Life and Conversation, and seem to expect more Good from that, then perhaps from a Sermon preached to them every Day) we think we have Reason enough to depend with the fuller Assurance upon the Paternal Goodness of God, hoping he will bestow further Supplies of his Grace upon our Life and Conduct, and not let us pass one Day without some Blessing attending our Endeavours.

We know that Hundreds of Souls daily implore the Lord, for displaying the Glory of his Name every where. And this must needs have also some Influence upon our Work among these Heathens. And though we know before hand, that we shall be exposed to the insulting and persecuting Spirit both of the *false Christians* and *wild Malabarians* here; yet perhaps all this may redound to our greater Good, and be helpful to promote the more the Work once begun, and so consequently prove rather a Cause of Joy than of Sorrow. May the Lord be pleased to support us constantly with that Presence of Spirit, he hitherto has freely conferred upon us, and enable us to spend the Residue of our Days intirely in his Service, that so we may justly bear the Character of sincere *Witnesses of his Truth*. In the mean time I am fully convinced, that God will be praised through our Ministry among the Heathens: if not by a
fa-

saving Conversion, which we labour after ; yet at least by the earnest Tender of his Grace offered to them for the Good of their Souls. In order hereunto, we are now drawing up, with all Diligence, a *Scheme of the Articles of Christian Doctrine*, and of their Coherence in the Work of Salvation ; that so they may get a competent Insight into the whole Oeconomy of the Restoration of Mankind. This is first to be done in *Portuguese*, and then to be put into *Malabarick*. If after this, we should think it necessary, to lay open also in Writing the Folly and Falsity of their Way, it may then the easier be carried on, by observing the same Method. This is the Reason, why I have taken some Pains to unravel the *Histories of their Gods*, by frequent Conversation with one or other upon this Subject, and endeavour'd to get 'em transcribed, as things that may prove subservient to the *main Scope* of our Business here.

We have also begun to set up a small *Charity-School*, designing by little and little to encrease the Number of *Malabarian* Boys ; not only providing them with Food, but instructing 'em also in their and our Language, but chiefly in the fundamental Principles of Christian Knowledge, in Hopes, they may one time prove useful, if not to us, yet perhaps to those that are like to come after us, and ingage in the same Work. Truly, the *Training up of Children*, will be of the greatest Consequence in this Matter. If we were but able, to purchase and maintain a pretty many of 'em, the Work might by these Means be undoubtedly spread in a little while, and under the Blessing of God, produce the desired Effect. Besides
D 3 this,

this, we find it very necessary, to make some charitable Foundations for the Support of such poor Heathens, as, by embracing the Christian Religion, are expelled from all their Possessions, and so at first will stand in need of some Help, whereby to subsist. And all this, you'll say, will certainly require considerable Sums. Truly, we must confess, that after God's Grace, the greatest Benefit will accrue unto this Affair from seasonable Supplies of well disposed Souls. But there is no such Charity to be expected in this Country. We have indeed put up an *Alms-Box* in our House, but we find nothing in it but what we put in our selves. For this Reason we have most humbly petitioned his Majesty, the King of *Denmark*, to assist us with some generous Relief. But since this new Work, both in its first Foundation, and the succeeding Progress, will prove very expensive, we at the same time intreat also all the Well-wishers, to the Cause of God, to commiserate the deplorable State of these poor Heathens, and by some charitable and bountiful Effusions, tending to the Maintenance of the Body, advance the Conversion of these deluded Souls. For this End, we beseech you to communicate the Letter to all such, as any ways are concerned for the Welfare of their Fellow-Creatures, and inclined, to open their Hearts to the Needy.

Mean while, seeing we cannot reap the Fruits of this Charity, nor enjoy the Royal Bounty of his Majesty till two Years hence; we shall, whatever we can possibly spare from our Salary, lay out for this Purpose, and perhaps take upon Interest some Money from the *Malabarians*, to the End we may, without any Loss of time, make
the

the necessary Disposition, both for settling our Charity-School on a better Foot, and what is more, for getting a considerable Number of Books transcribed for the Use of the Heathens. Should we be enabled in time, to build a convenient House as well for our Habitation, as for keeping therein our Church and School, it would undoubtedly prove highly serviceable for furthering the Work in Hand. We have also been considering, whether it might not be expedient, with our own Hand, neatly to transcribe the Fundamentals of our Religion, and together with a handsome Present to transmit it to the King of the *Malabarians*, called *Tranjou*, petitioning him withal, to examine and ponder the Contents thereof, with the wisest of his Men, and after due Examination, favour it with his Protection, and so let it freely pass in the Dominions subject to him.

And now, dear Friends, let a plentiful Blessing come to us over Water, and assure yourselves, that the Lord will reward you an Hundred Fold. We have drawn up certain *Proposals*, and therein delivered our Thoughts, about a successful carrying on of this Design, and sent it to *Copen Hague*. May the Lord gloriously display his great Name, in these latter times, over the whole Face of the Earth! May he bestow such a Measure of Grace and holy Boldness upon us his unworthy Servants here among the Heathens, as to make us able to rescue, by the gracious Influence of his Spirit, many Souls from their natural Ignorance, and to bring 'em over to a saving Knowledge of Christ! The same God be pleased to second also your Endeavours in carrying on
D 4 his

40 Of the Impediments obstructing, &c.

his Work. Remember us & our Heathens in your daily Prayers. My dear Fellow-Labourer Mr. *Plutscho*, and my Servant *Modaliapa*, the first Fruits of the Heathens, sent their kind Greeting to you in the Lord, &c. I remain,

Yours

*In the East-Indies at
Tranquebar, October 1. 1706.*

B. Z.

LET.