

Dänisch-Hallesche Mission

Propagation of the Gospel in the East

Propagation of the Gospel in the East: Being a Farther Account of the Success Of The Danish Missionaries, Sent to the East-Indies, For The Conversion Of The Heathens in Malabar

Böhm, Anton Wilhelm

London, 1714

The Fifth Question.

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54 *Of the Conduct of the Heathens.*

For this Reason we altogether abstain from all manner of *Pictures* and *Images*, which in other Countries may be more inoffensively used than among the Heathens in *India*.

All other *Rites* and *Ceremonies* are ordered in such a manner, that they may prove conducive to Edification. As for *Confession* in particular, it gives us a fair Opportunity to discourse our People about the State of their Souls, and to stir them up on that Occasion to an unfeigned Practice of true Religion.

The Fifth Question.

Do the Heathens tolerate by little and little the New-converted Christians? How do they get their Livelihood?

Answer: The Heathens in these Parts, being under the Jurisdiction of His Majesty the King of *Denmark*, they dare not vent their Fury on those that espouse the Christian Religion: For the same Reason, they dissemble so far, as to speak well of them in our Presence. It would prove quite otherwise in the *Dominions* of the King of *Tanjour*, where it is more than probable, they would banish them from their Country, and persecute them to the utmost of their Power. However, we can't but observe, that even in those Parts where they dare not give vent to their usual Malice, they bear however a secret Grudge to those that have left their old idolatrous Way, and embraced the Religion of Christ. They studiously avoid conversing with them, particularly

cularly if the Converted be some of their Friends and Relations. But after all, we have prevailed with some of the Heathens so far, as to suffer the Christians to live with them in their Houses, and even to eat with them. Nay, some of them have expressed a great deal of Kindness to those who have been adopted into our Holy Religion. 'Tis but a few Days since, when a Woman of our Communion fell suddenly sick, and I was sent for in the Night to visit her. When I came thither, I found the Room filled with Heathens, aiding and assisting the Patient in whatever they could. I laid hold on this Opportunity to declare to those Heathens the Gospel of Christ: I bad them to consider, ' That as they had shewed some
' Kindness to a Christian Woman, our most
' merciful God was ready to reward their Service by healing and saving their Souls, and
' this with a far greater Desire, than they
' could express towards recovering the Body
' of this Christian Woman. Accept ye therefore the Tender of his Mercy with Joy and
' Readiness, and continue to help and assist
' our Christians in their bodily Want and
' Distress.

The Heathens listened to what I said with great Attention, and freely assisted the Patient till she was fully recovered. In this manner we hope to soften the Heathens in Time, into some Love and Kindness, and to remove such *Prejudices* as have possessed them with so much Hatred and Bitterness against Christianity.

56 *Of the Maintenance of the New-Converted.*

As for getting an honest *Substance* for those that come over to Christianity, it is a Matter of the greatest Importance, and which hitherto has put us to no small Trouble and Difficulty: But we have not been able as yet to remove such Obstacles as have retarded this Work. The Children of our Congregation are maintained in our House, and freely provided with *Meat, Drink, and Cloaths*. But grown and healthy People, tho' they be obliged to earn their Bread by the Labour of their Hands, yet do we allow them weekly a small Charity towards their better Support. The Sick and Poor are sustained at our Cost, and the Dead buried on the same Score. If some have a Mind to set up some little Trade or other, we furnish them with so much as we can, to begin withal, and to get an honest Livelihood in Time. By these and other such Ways and Means, we endeavour to help them forward as much as the Nature of the Thing, and our own Circumstances will permit.

The Sixth Question.

Is it not worth while to try whether they might get their Bread by Manufactures, and their own Industry and Labour?

Answer. Nothing would be more easie and practicable, provided the Government would lay to Heart the Design, and concern themselves about it. These Heathens are born as it were to Labour and Hardships, and are willing