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"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Three words of Strength.

There are three lessons I would write—
Three words as with a burning pen,
In tracings of eternal light
Upon the hearts of men.

Have Hope. Though clouds environ now,
And gladness hides her face in scorn,
Put thou the shadow from thy brow—
No night but hath its morn.

Have Faith. Where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm's disport, the tempest's mirth—
Know this: God rules the hosts of heaven,
The inhabitants of earth.

Have Love. Not love alone for one,
But man, as man, thy brother call;
And scatter, like the circling sun,
Thy charities on all.

Thus grave these lessons on thy soul—
Hope, Faith and Love—and thou shalt find
Strength when life's surges roughest roll,
Light when thou else wert blind.

—Anon.

Religious.

Church Missions in Madagascar.

The *Ch. Missionary Intelligencer* presents an interesting portion of the journal of one of its missionaries sent to Madagascar, and stationed in Vohimare. The document is every way a curiosity, exhibiting a simplicity which is truly primitive. It so happens that the Malagasy Governor of the district is a Christian, and of course he is favourable to missionary labour. The journal describes a dinner at which he entertained the missionaries, which is quite unique:—

"Nov. 17, 1864.—In the evening I attended the Governor's dinner, which was served at half-past six o'clock. Covers were laid for twenty persons, and that number sat down. There were sixteen men and four women—the Governor's wife and three others. The plates were nicely arranged, with a glass, knife and fork, and spoon beside each. There were several bottles of beer, claret, and rum arranged along the middle of the table, and four candlesticks. There were two long bottles, which were placed upon plates to prevent the grease from spoiling the tablecloth. The first dish was soup, then beefsteak; afterwards roast beef; next jurry and rice; then stewed fowls; and lastly, cutlets. As I was pretty hungry I enjoyed a little of these dishes. Before dinner and after it there was a toast drunk to the Queen of Madagascar. It was drunk with the greatest solemnity, while the troops outside presented arms at the word of command from one of the officers, who bawled out to them from the dinner-table. The other toasts drank were, 'The Governor and his wife,' 'Captain Rosalie, of the *King Radama*,' and 'The two missionaries.' The toast-drinking was not such an extensive business as it is at home, as one small bottle of beer was quite enough for eight or ten persons, and the same might be said of the claret. The Governor is a very abstemious person, and drinks scarcely anything but water. Mr. Mundrell and I were placed by the Governor at his right hand, while the captain of the *King Radama* and a French gentleman were placed at his left. During the whole time we were sitting at dinner the band strummed away outside, and I felt it to be the greatest relief imaginable when the fiddlers stopped for a moment to resin their bows. At nine o'clock the Governor suggested that it was time to retire, which we did, after spending a very pleasant evening."

We say this is a curiosity, and we presume not a few of our readers would have been right glad to have been present to witness for themselves the singular scene. It is invested with a moral beauty which will not fail to produce its effect wherever it appears. The toasting and the liquor are quite exemplary, and we presume few of our total-abstaining friends will find much fault with it. So much for the feast. Now let us return and pay a visit to his Excellency on Sunday, and see how the missionaries get on. The journal proceeds:

"The Governor came to us at about two o'clock, and remained with us till the evening. The greater part of this time we sang hymns and chants, the string band leading us. Occasionally Mr. Maundrell electrified the natives by his performances on the harmonium. The only part of the Church Service which we had to-day was the Litany, to which the Governor and all who were able to read responded. His Excellency expressed his admiration of this part of our service."

"We had a very long conversation with him on Acts xv. 29. He wished to know why Christians were to 'abstain from things strangled and from blood,' especially the latter. We endeavoured to explain it to him by references to other parts of the Scriptures, especially 1 Cor. x., and also by telling him something of the characteristics of the ancient idolatries. It was a difficult business to explain all this in Malagasy; but I believe we succeeded in satisfying him. In speaking of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' he told us that that book was the means of leading him to Christ. I was much pleased at hearing this, as I am much indebted to the same book for my own conversion to God."

"Before we separated the Governor proposed that we should have prayer. I requested him to pray, and told him that I should conclude with the Lord's Prayer. He knelt down, and prayed in a most solemn manner before all his soldiers and attendants."

This is the way; when shall we find the places of authority throughout all our counties all our boroughs filled with such men? This is a lesson to those who make much of Scripture account of "nursing fathers and nursing mothers," and we should be very glad to hear that all who contend for the doctrine are ready to unite with this Governor in its exemplification. We are not quite sure that this Governor would not put to the blush the great majority of our stipendiary magistrates. The following is worthy of what has gone before:—

"Before I started I threw my great coat upon the filanana, as I expected we should have a shower of rain, and was about to sit down upon it, when the men called out that there was a scorpion on it. It was soon taken off and killed, and we proceeded on our journey. When we had travelled for about three hours, my bearers sat down to rest under a tree, and I took off my hat to enjoy the cool breeze in the shade. Imagine my astonishment when I found another scorpion quietly sticking to the inside lining of my hat. I wondered that it did not fall upon my head with three hours' jolting, but the Lord mercifully preserved me. My bearers were frightened when they saw it, and cried out to me not to touch it with my hand, which I had not the slightest notion of doing. One of them took it out with a piece of wood and killed it. When I told the Governor, he quoted the passage, 'They shall tread upon scorpions,' &c."

On the whole, the reception of the missionaries has been very encouraging, and there seems every reason to believe that the work of evangelising will shortly cover every portion of the island, containing, we believe, between four and five millions of people.—*British Standard*.

"The Speaking Man."

We propose taking a look at the Christian ministry needful for our time. One of the ablest thinkers of the age, though by no means one of our most devout or spiritual age-leaders, in referring to the grandeur of a Christian ministry and its perpetuity, thus writes:—

"That a man stand and speak of spiritual things to men—it is beautiful; even in its great obscurity and decadence, it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on the earth. The speaking man has indeed, in these times, wandered terribly from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point; yet, at bottom, when have we to compare with him? Of all public functionaries boarded and lodged on the industry of modern Europe, is there one worthier of the board he has? A man ever professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavour to save the souls of men;—contrast

him with a man professing to do little but shoot the partridges of men! I wish he could find the point again, this speaking one; and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy; for there is need of him yet! The speaking function,—this of truth coming to us with a living voice, nay, in a living shape, and as a concrete practical exemplar,—this, with all our writing and printing functions, has a perennial place. Could he but find the point again, take the old spectacles off his nose, and, looking up, discover, almost in contact with him, what the real Satan and soul-devouring, world-devouring devil now is!"

A fine appreciation we have here of the power, and influence, and need, which there is for speaking men for Christian ministers. Pity it is that this thinker should not have defined his view of the point from which the speaking one has wandered. Is it that he has ceased to be a seer—a prophet? From this high platform the speaking man has indeed been lowered, and that because the seer has told his vision—the prophet has proclaimed his prophecy. What then? Seeing the Satan is ever at the speaking one's elbow; the real devil ever by him to mar his work; ever there to dim with his poisonous breath the mirror of truth by which the speaking man would reflect; the very image of a present God upon God-needing men—what then? Verily, the speaking man needs to feel the yet greater weariness of the living Lord, the realisation of His life in him, the possession of His power, the almightiness of the truth to cast out the devil, and the untold sublimity of His wonder-working words, who is ever with him who goeth forth to preach the Gospel, raising the dead from a deeper, darker grave than that of earth, and putting a new song into his mouth, even his God to glorify. To speak these words of eternal life is seership enough for any speaking man, and such is the high honour of him who is a true Gospel minister.

But do we believe that the speaking man has thus "wandered from the point?" In crowds we must admit they have. All Christendom sends forth a cry to that effect. Altars for tables; sacrifices of wafers and wine for written and spoken words of eternal life; burning candles for burning and shining lights of man-life, setting "living epistles" before a reading but a reckless age; spoken pardons for speechless but tearful repentance that needs not to be repented of; ghostly admonition in the confession-box, for "the cry aloud, spare not, preach the word, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear;" in one word, the going to heaven through priestly manipulations and oil-anointings, instead of cross-bearing, Christ-accepting, self-denying, holy living, and holy dying—all this setting up of a saint-factory system, beginning with Baptismal Regeneration and ending with dying Sacramental grace, ministered by priestly hands, has shown that the speaking man has really long "gone from the point," and become no speaking one at all—a system, we fear, which has not yet become tired of its show for substance, its ceremonialism for spiritual worship. Still, we cannot allow that the real speaking man in the Gospel ministry is not to be found. Puritanism is essentially preaching for priestism, as thoroughly as it is Protestantism for Popery. Nor is Puritanism dead; this we must affirm, however much we may long to see it in more vigorous life, with more trenchant energy doing its Divine work. Puritanism, wherever it exists, constitutes its true adherents a living power against the real Satan, their holy lives ever withstanding the whiles of the devil, makes of its ministers everywhere speaking ones, reckless of forms—sometimes too much so—their great work being to proclaim, by lip and life, the blessed example, the true atonement, the finished salvation of the one Lord and Saviour. In these truths, or nowhere, do we find the speaking man coming to the point."

It is more than interesting—it is refreshing to see how clear a conception the poet Chaucer had, in his day, of what the speaking man and true Gospel minister ought to be. Thus does he describe one:—

"He was a shepherd, and no mercenary;
And though he holy was and virtuous,
He was to sinful men full pitous;
His words were strong, but not with anger fraught;
A love benignant he discreetly taught,
To draw mankind to heaven by gentleness

An I good example, was his business.
But if that any one were obstinate,
Whether he were of high or low estate,
Him would he sharply check with alter'd mien;
A better parson there was nowhere seen.
He said no court to pomps and reverence,
Nor spiced his conscience at his soul's expense;
But Jesu's love, which owns no pride or self,
He taught—but first he followed it himself."

This picture is perfect. Such speaking ones are the great want of the age,—spiritual, humble, holy men, resolved, at all hazards, to be faithful, constrained by Christ's love. No colleges can make ministers such as these, however much they may do endless good in training them, so as to enable them to accomplish their work. They are God-endowed, if they are man-made. Many of our colleges are now parting with their students,—sending them forth to preach. Ministers and churches are not doing their duty in not keeping their eyes open to discern God's endowed ones, and in not putting their hands upon them, claiming them for the Master's service,—sending them to the schools of the prophets, till the time comes when it ought to be said to them, "Go speak."

A rather curious account of "a young raw minister" is furnished to us by Bishop Earle, which our juniors may find of some value carefully to study, and which our professors, also, would do well to consider, so as not to send forth to preach those who have not yet ballast sufficient, whose imitative faculty may be their snare, and whose zeal may outrun their knowledge. Says he, "A young raw preacher is a bird not yet fledged, that hath hopped out of his nest to be chirping on a hedge, and will be straggling abroad at what peril soever. The pace of his sermon is a full career, and he runs wildly over hill and dale, till the clock stop him. The labour of it is chiefly in his lungs; and the only thing he has made in it himself is the faces. His action is all passion, and his speech interjections. He has an excellent faculty in bemoaning the people, and spits with a very good grace. His style is compounded of twenty several men's, only his body imitates some one extraordinary. He will not draw his handkerchief nor blow his nose without discretion. His commendation is, that he never looks upon book, and, indeed, he was never used to it. He preaches but once a year, though twice on Sunday; for the staff is still the same, only the dressing a little altered; he has more tricks with a sermon than a tailor with an old cloak, to turn it, and piece it, and at last quite disguise it with a new preface. If he have waded further in the profession, and would show reading of his own, his authors are postils, and his school-divinity a catechism."

This account is doubtless exaggerated, but there is truth in it. It is worthy of study; it requires to be read and re-read. Most of us who have passed through our novitiate, and who can look back upon the period without flattering ourselves, cannot fail to recognise features of truthful painting, though the whole may not fit,—exaggerations which nothing but long study and careful self-examination can precisely correct. We have our fears of the rock of imitation being the one of danger to the students of Mr. Spurgeon's college. They are all so full of his praises, as well they may be; so charmed with his success, that they seem to imagine all that is needful to their own popularity is to imitate his manner. Nothing can be further from the fact. That they may learn much from one so honoured of God, no sensible person can doubt; but to secure true success in public speaking we must not be stiffened into the artificial by adopting the manner of another, but we must be educated into the pleasing effective by being natural, and seeking to rectify our natural defects. We remember hearing of a young minister who asked another, after coming from the pulpit, "whether he saw any likeness in his manner and mode of preaching to Mr. Jay's," to which the other replied, "Yes, you coughed like Mr. Jay." Endeavours at imitation generally end in exaggerating the defects of the originals. The grand lesson ever to be impressed on all young speakers is, "Be natural." Take every hint as to the secret of efficiency from any and every quarter where it has been attained; but be yourself, and yourself in the most interesting, devoted, and quickened form of Christian earnestness. Our age is one of hurry. Men hurry to be rich, men hurry to be famous, men hurry