

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 round
And gladness be her face in scorn,
Pat off the shadow from thy brow—
No night but hath its morn.

Have Faith. Where'er thy bark is driven—
The calm'st disport, the tempest's mite—
Know this: God rules the hosts of heaven,
The inhabitants of the 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 rudest roll,
Light when thou else wert blind.

—Schiller.

Sparks From my Anvil.

BY REV. T. D. TALMAGE, D. D.

Some of our young people have read till they are crazed of learned blacksmiths who, at the forge, conquered thirty languages; and of shoemakers who, pounding sole-leather, got to be philosophers; and milliners who, while their customers were at the glass trying on their spring hats, wrote a volume of first-rate poems. The fact is, no blacksmith ought to be troubled with more than five languages; and instead of shoemakers becoming philosophers we would like to turn our surplus of philosophers into shoemakers; and the supply of poetry is so much greater than the demand that we wish milliners would stick to their business. Extraordinary examples of work and endurance may do as much harm as good. Because Napoleon slept only three hours a night, hundreds of students have tried the experiment; but instead of Austerlitz and Jena, there came of it only a sick headache and a batch of recitation. We are told of how many books a man can read in the five spare minutes before breakfast, and the ten minutes at noon; but I wish someone could tell us how much rest a man can get in fifteen minutes after dinner, or how much health in an hour's horseback ride, or how much fun in a Saturday afternoon of cricket. He who has such an idea of the value of time that he takes none of it for rest, wastes all his time.

It is our misfortune that we mistake God's shadow for the night. If a man come and stand between you and the sun, his shadow falls upon you. So God sometimes comes in and stands between us and worldly successes, and his shadow falls upon us, and we wrongly think that it is night. As a father in a garden stoops down to kiss a child, the shadow of his body falls upon it, and so many of the dark misfortunes of our life are not God going away from us, but our heavenly Father stooping down to give us the kiss of his infinite and everlasting love.

Our religion has been misrepresented as a principle of tears, and midness and fastidiousness; afraid of crossing people's prejudices; afraid of making somebody mad; with silken gloves lifting the people up from the church pew into glory, as though they were Bohemian glass, so very delicate that with one touch it may be demolished forever! Men speak of religion as though it were a refined imbecility, as though it were a spiritual chloroform that the people were to take until the sharp cutting of life were over. The Bible, so far from this, represents the religion of Christ as robust and brawny—ransacking and upsetting ten thousand things that now seem to be settled on firm foundations. I hear some man say, "I thought religion was peace." That is the final result. A man's arm is out of place. Two men come, and with great effort put it back to the socket. It goes back with great pain. Then it gets well. Our world is horribly disordered and out of joint. It must come under an omnipotent surgery, beneath which there will be pain and anguish before there can come perfect health and quiet.

Men strike their knife through the Bible because they say that the light of nature is sufficient. Indeed! Have the fire-worshippers of India, cutting themselves with lancets until the blood spurts at every pore, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Boresian cannibal, gnawing the roasted flesh from human bones, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Chinese woman, with her feet cramped and deformed into a cow's hoof, found the light of nature sufficient? Could the ancients see heaven from the heights of Ida or Olympus? No! I call upon the pagodas of superstition, the Brahminic tortures, the infanticide of the Ganges, the bloody wheels of the Juggernaut, to prove that the light of nature is not sufficient.

When you seem to be losing ground, and loss treads upon the heels of loss, turn over the good Book and read what unfading riches God has in reserve for the righteous. When your business friends fail you and you are betrayed, turn over and read about the friendship of Him who sticketh closer than a brother. When looking over your ledger and your bank account and your list of uncanceled mortgages, do the best you can, and then turn to your Bible again and read the full-hearted promises in the text, "Cast thy burden on the Lord and he will sustain thee."

Some theologians take four or five volumes in which to state their religious belief; I tell you all of my theology in one sentence: Jesus Christ—take him, and live; refuse him, and die.

The work of a religious teacher is to save men; and though every law of grammar should be snapped in the undertaking, and there be nothing but awkwardness and blundering in the mode, all hail to the man who saves a soul from death!

Satan has got thousands of men into trouble, but he never got one out. He led them into theft, but he would not hide the goods or bail out the defendant. The spider shows the fly the way over the gossamer bridge into the cobweb, but it never shows the fly the way out of the cobweb over the gossamer bridge. I think that there were plenty of fast young men to help the prodigal to spend his money; but when he had wasted his substance in riotous living, they let him go to the swine pastures, while they betook themselves to some other newcomer.

Beware of the First Drink.

A writer in the *Lutheran Observer* says: The following incident occurred during the month of September on one of the steamboats running on the Ohio river, from Cincinnati to Louisville. Those of you who have travelled any, well know that in travelling one meets all kinds of people, good, bad, and indifferent. So it was on this trip. There were sad hearts going home from a funeral of their only son and brother—glad hearts going to the Centennial Exposition at Cincinnati—among them six students who had just finished their examinations, and were the joy and promising sons of happy and indulgent parents, four of them placed in charge of the mother of the other two students, who was to accompany them to Cincinnati and show them around. All went well until a game of cards was proposed, some of the ladies playing at the so-called "innocent game of whist," in the ladies' cabin a little farther on, in the gentlemen's cabin an "interesting game of euche," and still farther front, a "hand of poker."

At ten o'clock all the ladies went to their own state-rooms, some of the men remaining in the cabin, and starting in for a so-called "good time." Some of the students thought they would just like to look on at a game of poker. Finally, all but one of the students had gone to their own apartments, when he was politely invited to take a hand and try his luck. He did try; he played and drank until he was drunk—yes, children, drunk—and he had never touched a drop of liquor before until this fatal night. Think of it! he had to be carried to his berth, and there he left alone in this sad state. And, now, the saddest part remains to be told. He fell from his berth to the floor, and died, every one thought from the effects of the fall—but the physicians said it was not the fall but that the liquor had caused paralysis of the brain. He was found lying there in the morning by his schoolmates. Just think of the feelings of his own dear mother at home on hearing such news, and the poor mother on board the boat with her two boys, who had promised to take care of the six! She was overwhelmed with grief, and her two boys could not be consoled, for their dead companion had been their room-mate for several years at college, and this was the end of their school days. O what a sorrowful ending! Here by the side of their dead school-mate they took a vow never to taste a drop of any intoxicating drink as long as they lived. It will be a life-long blessing to them.

And now, dear young people, will you all, too, try to beware of the first drink, and pray to God that he may give you grace and strength to keep your vow!

The Infidel's Sheep.

Away among the hills of northern New England were two infidel neighbors, who had lived to man's estate, sinning and blaspheming against God.

One of them heard the gospel message, and, hearing, believed unto eternal life. A short time afterward, the converted man went to the house of his infidel neighbor, and said to him:

"I have come to talk with you. I have been converted."

"Yes, I heard that you had been down there and gone forward for prayers," said the skeptic with a sneer; "and I am surprised, for I had thought you were about as sensible a man as there was in town."

"Well," said the Christian, "I have got a duty to do to you, and I want you to stop talking, and hear me. I haven't slept much for two nights for thinking of it. I have got four sheep in my flock that belong to you. They came into my fold six years ago, and I knew they had your mark on them; but I took them and marked them with my mark; and you inquired all around and could not hear anything of them. They are in my field, with the increase of them. And now I want to settle this matter. I have lain awake nights and groaned over it, and I have come to get rid of it. And now I am at your option. I will do just what you say. If it is a few years in state's prison, I will suffer that. If it is money or property you want, say the word, I have a good farm and money at interest, and you can have all you ask. I want to settle this matter up, and get rid of it."

The infidel was amazed. He began to tremble.

"If you have got them sheep, you are welcome to them. I don't want nothing of you, if you will only go away; a man who will come to me as you have—something must have got hold of you that I don't understand. You may keep the sheep, if you will only go away."

"No," said the Christian, "I must settle this matter up, and pay for the sheep; I shall not be satisfied without. And you must tell me how much."

"Well," said the skeptic, "if you must pay for them, you may give me what they were worth when they got into your field, and pay me six per cent. interest on the amount, and go off and let me alone."

The man counted out the value of the sheep and interest on the amount and laid it down, and then doubled the dose, and laid as much more down beside it, and went his way, leaving a load on his neighbor's heart almost as heavy as that which he himself had borne.

The full result of that scene is only known to God. One thing is certain; the infidel was seen to frequent the house of prayer; and we may be sure that he afterwards believed there was some power in the gospel, and that all Christians were not hypocrites.—*The Christian*.

Tested by Having Authority.

"One of my college friends," said a venerable clergyman lately, "was T—, a lad of much business ability, and a singularly high, sweet, moral nature. We parted on Commencement Day, and never met again."

"I lived in an obscure village; he became a millionaire, and at last president of one of the largest railroad companies in the country."

"I happened to be in the city on the day of his death, and I had much curiosity to know whether this successful, great man had retained to old age the generous, pure heart of his youth."

"The city mourned for him. I heard accounts of his vast wealth, of the splendor in which he had lived, of the power wielded by him as head of a great corporation, but these things told me nothing."

"In the evening I passed his house a stately mansion, closed and silent."

A side door opened, and a workman, his clothes black and grimy, came out hurriedly. The tears were streaming down his face. He stumbled against me in the dark.

"Beg Pardon!" he said. "But the best friend I ever had lies dead in there. I heard it, an' come to see if it's true. It's true! it's true!"

"The tears rose to my eyes. It was, then, my old friend dead in there. Money or power had not tainted his good, kind heart. On reading his will afterward, I found that he had made provision for all of his employees when old or sick. He had cared for them as a father while he lived, and his care extended over them from out of his grave."

The other side of this picture is found in a remark made by an American general during the Civil War, concerning an officer in his command.

"I knew B—as clerk in a country store. He was then a civil, modest, agreeable fellow. He volunteered. As a lieutenant he was rude; but as a colonel he is a brutal tyrant."

Nothing is so unerring a test of a man's nature as authority. Put a genuine man on a higher plane than his fellows, and he becomes more gentle, courteous and just to them; but if there be any cruelty, vulgarity, or meanness latent in him, it comes to light with the opportunity which power gives to it.

This is as true in a school as in the world. The boy who, as monitor or sophomore, plays the tyrant to boys beneath him, will be brutal

and overbearing as a man among men.

There is a deep significance in the prayer, "In all time of our prosperity, Good Lord, deliver us!"—*Youth's Companion*.

Home and Mother.

A young French soldier lay as if dying in a hospital at Geneva. Far away in his native village in Brittany was an old father over seventy, a mother and a sister. As he lay there one day, he told a comrade that he would dearly like to see his old father once more. A letter was written to the family, and his father started at once. Arrived at Geneva, after many difficulties, he hastened to his son, who expressed the satisfaction he felt in seeing him before he died. "Ah, no!" said the old man, "you must not die. Courage, lad! I have brought money, and will buy everything you need." But the youth protested that he had everything he needed now, and that all sorts of things were brought to tempt his appetite, but he could not touch them. The poor father was quite discouraged at the weary and wasted boy, and feared he had only come to take his dead one home.

Then, all at once, it occurred to him to draw from his knapsack one of the common loaves of rye-bread, such as are eaten by the peasants of Brittany. "Here, my son, take this; it was made by your mother!" The sick lad turned his heavy eyes, and stretched out his hand greedily, crying, "Give it me, father; I am hungry!" As he ate, his eyes lighted up, the blood came back to his face, and large tears rolled down his cheeks, as he said, "It's so good!—the bread from my mother." From that time he began to recover, and fifteen days later was able to start on the homeward journey. All the way, he repeated: When shall I get there, where I may always eat from our good black bread, made by my mother.—*Swiss Almanack*.

Things to be Remembered.

When you receive a kindness, remember it; when you do one, forget it.

The sayings of many great men would fill volumes. Their doings could be written on a postal-card.

Concentrate all your energies for good, scatter all your bad desires, and life's harvest will fill your granary with wealth.

Good temper, like a sunny day, sheds a brightness over everything. It is the sweetener of toil and the soothing of disquietude.

Every first-rate man of business can create a first-rate business. By such a man obstacles of time, situation, poverty, and competition can be overcome.

Do not preach politeness and propriety to children and violate their laws yourself. In other words, let the example you set them be a good one.

Extravagant speech is but a form of slang and scarcely less objectionable.

If the power and will to do hard work is not talent, it is the best possible substitute for it.

The great high road of human well-being lies along the old highway of steadfast well-doing.

RANDOM READINGS.

Power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring.

Good company not only makes glad, but makes good which is the best effect.

A holy act strengthens the inward holiness. It is a seed of life growing into more life.—*Robertson*.

Add meditation to hearing, practice to preaching; when you have heard a sermon then go live a sermon.

Advice should be like a gentle fall of snow, and not like a driving storm of hail. It should descend softly, and not be uttered hastily.—*J. Cox*.

Complying with the conditions of salvation does not make men perfect. It usually leaves us very far below the standard. But it involves the acceptance of a guiding principle that is ever leading us toward it.

Each man is required to take care of himself, then of some other one, and then of interests that may be only partially his own—a home, a church, a community, or some more public cause. And he is to love as he loves himself and even better than that.

Men do things which their fathers would have deprecated, and then draw about themselves a flimsy cordon of sophistry, and talk about the advance of humanity and liberal thought, when it is nothing after all but a preference for individual license.—*Rev. John Hall*.

When a lady once asked Turner, the celebrated English painter, what his secret was, he replied: "I have no secret, madam, but hard work. This is a secret that many never learn, and don't succeed because they don't learn it. Labor is the genius that changes the world from ugliness to beauty, and the great curse to a great blessing."

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