

language. The English language, as known by the natives, is of no value whatever as a medium through which to communicate religious knowledge. Even for secular knowledge, it is of far less value than a stranger would suppose it to be. Nothing gives a missionary such power among a savage people as to be able to speak to them correctly and fluently in their own tongue. Even the Jews in Jerusalem, though acquainted with the Greek, "when they heard that Paul spoke in the Hebrew tongue to them they kept the more silence." One of our missionaries put the matter very well when he said, that next to the power of the Holy Spirit on the heart of a native is the sound of his own language. Let your knowledge of the language be extensive and accurate. Let it be exact as to the meaning of words, correct in grammar, and perfect, if possible, in pronunciation. Some think that any sort of speaking, even the most slovenly and incorrect, may do for savages. The very reverse of this is what is required. Were there no other objection, this is sufficient, that they cannot at all understand you unless you speak somewhat correctly; and the more correctly and idiomatically you speak, the more fully will you be understood. From our extensive knowledge, and the intercourse we have had with people whose dialects are considerably different, we can without much difficulty, understand the broken English of the most illiterate foreigner; his foreign idioms may amuse us, but they do not embarrass us. It is not so with the natives; they have had so little intercourse with other tribes, or with people of other islands, that, except the language of their own narrow district, they know nothing; hence it is most important that a missionary should thoroughly know this at least. Happily there is no unsurmountable difficulty in the acquisition of these languages; a living language is always more easily acquired than a dead one. Besides, you will probably have some helps. Your predecessors may have accumulated some materials which you will not fail to turn to some good account. Vocabularies, grammars, and translations may supply you with words, and point out to you the structure of the language; to overlook these, where they exist, is to spend your time in searching out what has been discovered by others and prepared to your hand, it may be better than you could do yourself. But those who confine their study of these languages wholly or mainly to books never catch the native manner, and are never able to understand what the natives say. To mingle daily with the natives, to speak to them and listen to them, gives a readiness and a correctness in speaking that nothing else will supply. It is one thing to see a native

word or a sentence written on paper, or printed in a book, or to hear it pronounced by English-speaking lips, and quite another thing may be also indistinctly, by a native; but it is necessary that you be able to recognise the latter as readily as the former. One of the best linguists in our mission was in the habit, during the first year of his residence on the islands which he occupies, of spending some hours daily, sitting with little groups of natives and talking with them, for the express purpose of gaining a minute and accurate knowledge of their language, and he has had his reward.

Some missionaries have found it a good plan, in order to test their book knowledge, to mingle largely with the native children. Others have found it of great advantage to begin soon and continue largely to translate easy portions of the Scriptures. Every separate plan has its own advantages; but in the pursuit of knowledge, as in the pursuit of wealth—and in the pursuit of this kind of knowledge no less than in that of all others—it is the hand of the diligent only that maketh rich.

3. Keep the *secularities* of the mission in their proper place. There are many who seem to think that missionaries are, or at least should be, the most spiritual-minded of men, and that their work is specially favorable for producing spiritual feelings and holy affections, and that all of them, from the very nature of their work, should be more akin to the angelic than the human. Alas! that plain facts should so readily dispel these pleasing fancies. If a vast amount of secularities, and a great amount of manual labour, are conditions favourable to spirituality of mind, then the New Hebrides missionaries may be expected to rank high in such attainments; but if the reverse holds good, men must look elsewhere for model specimens of such a character.

It is a saying largely in circulation among the South Sea missionaries, that a missionary should do nothing himself which he can get a native to do as well, or nearly as well, as he himself can do it. This principle may keep a missionary tolerably free from manual labour among the Malay races, in the Eastern Pacific, but among the Papuan races, in the New Hebrides, after the missionary has carried this principle to the utmost, it will leave him still as much to do as he can possibly overtake. He has his house to build, by-and-by his church and his school houses, he has his boat to manage and keep in repair, he has to create—call into existence—a hundred of the conveniences and comforts of civilized life, while all the skilled labour he can obtain is that which his own hands can supply.—Some may think it beneath the dignity of the missionary character to stoop so low,