

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### PART OF CHARGE TO MR. ARTHUR W. MARLING,

Missionary designate of the American Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to the Gaboon and Corisco Mission, West Africa.

BY THE REV. F. H. MARLING, OF THE 14TH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK, AT PRINCETON, N.J., MARCH 31ST 1886.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—In the faith of Christ, and the ministry of His Word—and the son of my brother, by family relationship,

It devolves upon me, at your own request and by the fraternal courtesy of this Presbytery, to say to you some words of counsel in respect to that work to which you have now been solemnly set apart. It is my desire to be simply the mouthpiece of these honoured brethren, from whom you have received ordination, of the great and noble Church of which they form a part, and, most of all, of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's King and Head.

By my lips you may also receive the assurance of the interest and sympathy with which a large family circle, in Canada and Great Britain, as well as in the United States, enter into the service of this evening, and contemplate your going "far hence among the heathen." Much love and many prayers will go with you over the sea.

This night constitutes a solemn crisis in your life, the close of many years of preparation and actual entrance on a long-contemplated work, emergence from the pupil into the teacher state, the assumption of the full responsibilities of manhood, and of the ministry of the Gospel. You now take leave of a familiar past, and turn your face toward a new future.

The words which I have to address to you come to me in connection with the fourfold position you are henceforth to occupy, as a man, a Christian, a minister, and a missionary.

1. *As a man*, my brother, *be a man!* in the full, the ideal sense of that grand old word. Not every adult male member of the human family is worthy to be called a man. And there are influences at work in the life of an ecclesiastic, of the emasculating order, against which you need to guard.

The basis of humanity, in "the life which now is," is a body of flesh and blood. "The Lord God made man out of the dust of the ground." It is through the senses of the body that the soul takes in, and through its members that the soul gives out. You will not touch any soul, here or in Africa, except through the body. Then, do not despise the body, through any mistaken ideas of super-spirituality. The laws of your physical being are as much the laws of God as the Ten Commandments given from Sinai, those literally written on "the fleshy tables of the heart," as much as those "engraven on stones" by the finger of God. You have no more right to break one than the other. Morbid conditions of the body, resulting from negligence or misuse, so far from helping the soul, grievously hamper and hinder it. It is your duty to keep healthy, if you can. Especially must we urge this on you, in going to a tropical climate, so trying to the natives of the temperate zones. Your more experienced colleagues must warn you in detail, but in general we must urge upon you the bounden duty, to God and man, of not defying danger, of incurring no needless risk, of acquiring exact knowledge of the conditions of health and the liabilities to disease on your chosen field, and of commanding material forces, not by sheer self-will, but by obeying their special laws, the laws of their and your Creator. With all your care, you may suffer from that torrid heat and that impregnated atmosphere. Do not invite, or leave your door open to "the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noon-day."

The other elements of true manhood, the spirit that dwells within the body, are included in what we shall have to say under the succeeding heads. At this point, we content ourselves with an earnest appeal to cultivate every quality that enters into our conception of manliness—clear intelligence, firm will, courage, self-reliance, knowledge of men, adaptability, constancy to your word, generosity, magnanimity, trustworthiness. Don't be small or narrow, able to run only in one set groove; but be large and flexible. Excel in that uncommon quality, or balance of

qualities, common sense. Be one whom other men can lean upon, and will be glad to rally round and follow. And if you would thus command, first obey, and let the leadership come to you, as it will, if you are worthy of it.

2. *As a Christian*. We would impress upon you, with all possible earnestness, that all your success in the work to which you are going, depends on the reality, the depth and the fervour of your personal piety. After pursuing the appointed studies, and undergoing the requisite examinations, you have been "separated unto the Gospel," and constituted a minister of the Presbyterian Church, in all due order, by the solemnities of this hour. The Church's Board of Foreign Missions has commissioned you to its field on the Gaboon. You will set out with full ecclesiastical sanction; you will be received as a regularly ordained minister. So far, all things are done decently and in order. But you know right well that, in all this, the Church does not pretend to make a minister of Christ, but simply in the exercise of its best judgment and care, to recognize a call coming direct from its Divine Head to one of its members. No more than baptism regenerates, does ordination consecrate. The Church may be mistaken, and may lay its hands upon one whom the Lord has not chosen. By this act of ordination, you are invested with a certain ecclesiastical status, you have an official right to teach and rule and administer sacraments. But the touch of the Presbytery does not convey saving grace to your own soul, or make you a necessary and certain conduit of God's Spirit to other souls. The model missionary says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." And you are not made a *priest*, but a minister of the Word. Not because you are ordained, but because you are a Christly man, will God's Word open out to you its hidden treasures in your study. Will you "so speak" that man will "believe," and will the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" accompany your words? At the deepest root, at the central heart of all your labour, lies your life. It is a popular idea, yet a most mistaken and superficial one, that the minister, being always engaged about good things, can very easily, nay, almost must perforce, be good. You cannot have come so far in your preparations without discovering, not only that this is not true, but is the very opposite of the truth; and that herein lies one of the peculiar and subtle temptations of the adversary, who, as he assailed the Master when He entered on His work as a Prophet, and as he "desired to have" the twelve whom the Lord chose and ordained, so, ever since, has laid cunning traps for the feet of preachers. The ministry demands religious utterances from us, at stated and frequent intervals. We *must* pray, or preach, or converse. The habit of using sacred language can be acquired, and the part can be performed by rote. We can "speak because we have to say something, not because we have something to say." Other men may not, always, detect the difference. We may be hardly conscious of it. But when our work is pursued as a "profession," the glory is departed. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal." No! my brother, your personal piety will not "come," it will not "run of itself," just because you are a minister. The minister will not make the Christian, but the Christian must make the minister.

Not even the missionary service, with its unworldly motives, aims and circumstances, will sustain the Christian life within you. No anchorite ever left the world behind him, when he retreated to his mountain cave or his monastery cell. He carried it thither in his own heart. No missionary of our day escapes the world or the flesh or the devil by going to any Pagan people. Still he remains a man, compassed about with infirmity, open to temptation on every side. Still he is in the world, and in contact with all its evil. And his very work, on the human side, drags downwards rather than draws upwards. An enervating climate, loneliness, an atmosphere reeking with the filth of barbarism, difficulty and discouragement in approaching and influencing these heathen of another race, perhaps ill-health, or even differences with your brethren—ah! you will find that education and ordination, clerical titles and vestments, and even theology and homiletical skill, are poor defences against such ills as these,—a paper-wrapping in a rain-storm, an old wooden hull against the shot of a thirty-ton cannon.

You need the ancient, divinely appointed and well-tried means of grace for sustaining the divine life in the soul, especially the Word of God and prayer, by which, on the one side and the other, your communion with your Father in heaven is to be carried on, He speaking to you and you to Him. Especially helpful will it be, ever to come to God *in Christ*. Never otherwise than as one "accepted in the Beloved," draw you near to God. Let no attainments as a Christian, no labours, trials or successes as a missionary, ever abate one jot of your utter dependence on the atoning sacrifice for every hope of Divine favour. And cultivate, that sacred, reverent, confiding intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ to which He invites you, in which He will take so much delight, and which will be the light and life of your soul. "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends." To those engaged in such work as yours, He gave the special promise "Lo, I am with you alway." Believe that; remember it; let it be a verity, a *real fact*, in your life.

"Within this temple Christ again, unseen,  
Those sacred words hath said,  
And His invisible hands to-day have been  
Laid on a young man's head.  
And evermore beside him on his way  
The unseen Christ shall move,  
That he may lean upon His arm, and say,  
'Dost Thou, dear Lord, approve?'  
Beside him at the marriage feast shall be,  
To make the scene more fair;  
Beside him in the dark Gethsemane  
Of pain and midnight prayer.  
O, holy trust! O, endless sense of rest!  
Like the beloved John  
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast  
And thus to journey on."

You will need to "watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation;" to resist the beginnings of evil, plucking it up by the roots while the weed is young; to order every habit of life, thought, word, and deed, after the Christian model. Your life must preach, before you open your lips, and must give weight to every word you speak. When you are thus full of Christ, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," your words will flow as from a fountain, instead of being pumped up from an artificial well, and every tone and look will interpret and confirm their meaning.

Do not be afraid to be a bright and happy Christian. Our Father wants all His children to be so, and especially those who are directly engaged in the work of His kingdom. Missionaries generally rank in this respect far higher than the average of Christians, having more of the light of God's countenance lifted up upon them. Take your place in the ranks with that radiant company, and join in their cheerful songs. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice!"

[On the third and fourth points "as a minister" and "as a missionary," Mr. Marling's remarks and counsels were equally appropriate. We are sorry our space will not permit their insertion.—ED. C. P.]

### DANCING.

While I claim the credit, if not the condemnation, of having for the while set you and your correspondents a "dancing," and while in consequence not a little has been written on the subject, alike wise and otherwise, and while you have now, and I think rightly, issued your editorial *verbum sat*, would you yet permit me to have the last word, seeing I had the first, and I shall be brief?

In as far as I recollect, very little has been said about the untimely hours of the dance and still less in regard to the very questionable character of the more frequent and favourite dances of the day, dances imported from countries where female virtue is none the highest and from associations where social morality is at a discount, while nothing has been said about the unseemly attitudes, unbecoming gestures, and unwarrantable familiarities which so frequently characterize such dances, and which, while devoid or decency, yet seem to furnish, even to women, their highest zest, and form their strongest attraction. True, I have seen these but seldom, yet sufficiently often to know their nature and to deprecate the idea of any of my friends being found in such forbidding positions, positions which if they do not bring the bulwark blush to the maiden cheek, will speedily beget that brazen-faced boldness which betokens the lack of shame, and saps the foundations, more or less surely, of all that is womanly, alike in beauty and virtue.