

tural example in introducing almost every mode of utterance into the pulpit. Between the terrific satire of Elijah and the heaven like serenity of John, he may adopt every tone of human speech. We do not forget that this liberty may be abused, and has been abused. We do not forget the readiness of worldlings to cry out on the slightest deviation from conventional decorum on the part of the preacher, that he is a mountebank, and thus to throw discredit on the gospel of Christ. In these days of sensation, affectation and false originality, it is necessary to be more than usually explicit in condemning pulpit eccentricity of all kinds. Nevertheless, it is well that the Christian preacher should know his liberty, and should dare as occasion may arise, to exercise it. The essential point is that he be earnest, that his soul be stirred to its depths by fervent devotion to his work; that no doubt be possible for the hearer that it is not of himself but of his Master he is thinking. The *Saturday Review* has repeatedly assailed Mr. Spurgeon with such epithets as "Mountebank" and "Buffoon;" but we should have no hesitation in pronouncing his pulpit practice accordant with Scriptural precedent and the example of great preachers from the Reformation downwards; and for the simple reason that, though caustic in his pulpit satire, and daring in his pulpit humour, he is invariably felt to be reverent, earnest, and intent on his work. Mr. Spurgeon, however, as a man of acknowledged and extraordinary genius, may safely venture upon ground where not one man in a thousand would have stable footing, and it is better for the overwhelming majority of preachers to seek variety and vivacity for their pulpit addresses from sources which involve no peril. Sources of this kind are inexhaustible. The Bible itself is a magazine of thought, of imagery, of language, which reveals new treasures to every new investigation. Bunyan, one of the great masters of English style, learned to preach and to write by study of the Scriptures, and much that is vigorous, nay, picturesque, idiomatic and majestic in the expression of our great modern stylists, Macaulay, Carlyle, and Ruskin, is derived from early acquaintance with the Bible. No preacher of whom it could be said that he was mighty in the Scriptures has been other than a great preacher. If we were asked to give in a single word, a rule for interesting, effective, popular preaching, we would say,—Let its basis be strict and accurate exegesis of the text; its illustration the imagery of Scripture; its centre, Christ. In the present day the literature elucidative of the Bible is so extensive and so valuable, its topography and archaeology are so complete, that there is less excuse than ever for flat and uninteresting preaching.

Our Foreign Missions.

Letter from Rev. J. D. Gordon.

DILLON'S BAY, ERROMANGA.
Dec. 1st., 1864.

My Dear Sir,

As the "Kate Kearney" a vessel in the employ of Mr. Henry, sails hence at this time for Sydney, I avail myself of the opportunity of sending you a few lines.

As I do not now remember what the contents of my last to you were, I shall merely mention a few things which have transpired since that date. But first in order I have to thank the "Parent of Good" for his goodness and protection to us ward, vouchsafed in answer to our own and your prayers on our behalf. In reference to the work of the Lord amongst us, you believe as I do, I trust, viz., that this is the rule and not the exception, "According to your faith, so be it." Faith undoubtedly is the principle of Missions. I was struck with a remark made by the late Missionary on this island, in a letter (one of his latest) written to Rev. S. F. Johnston. It was to this effect and when this night was darkest—"Our faith was never stronger than at this hour."

The rising rays of the Sun of Righteousness have chased away the shadows of that gloomy night, and blessing and praise to "Him who sits upon the throne," the Sun is still rising and dispelling from this benighted land the horrors of darkness. It is the Lord's doing.

I have now six native assistants recently sent forth and by the Lord of the harvest I trust. These young men with one exception have been receiving instruction for about three months past, chiefly in the art of reading and teaching others to read.

About five weeks ago on enquiring if any wished to be baptized two gave in their names. Subsequently three more, and at a later date two more. With these I met twice a week during the time mentioned, and on last Sabbath Nov. 27th the first five (the others having come too late) received the first of the seals of the covenant of grace. Others I consider fit subjects for baptism but