

## EXTEMPORE PREACHING.

Many persons make extempore preaching more formidable than it really is by attempting great things. Truth, simplicity, and good sense, are the things to which attention should be mainly paid.—It was the saying of a truly great man, that all he took care to do was to speak sense. Great plainness of speech is what is most suitable to Divine truths. "Excellency of speech" makes the gospel of no effect. What pleases a refined taste generally withdraws the attention from the hearing and application of what is delivered. In order to be plain, there is no necessity for being grovelling and vulgar, or incoherent and desultory. These evils should by all means be avoided. Simplicity, chasteness, correct ideas, and regular connexion, should always go together. The true greatness of a sermon consists in its being calculated to answer the great end, humanly speaking, it is not the eloquence or the elegance of the discourse, but the heavenly spirit with which it is delivered. The greatest truths are often spoken in such a way as to produce no effect, while the plainest and the most simple may be rendered by the earnestness of the preacher exceedingly impressive. The published sermons of popular preachers scarcely ever answer the expectations formed of them; and for this reason, because they derived their chief excellency from the impressive manner in which they were delivered. It is not so much what is said, that gives it power and interest. This spirit, when genuine, no doubt proceeds from above, and is obtained by earnest prayer and much holy intercourse with Heaven. It is indeed possible for us to create a fervour of our own, to kindle our own "sparks." The animal spirits may be excited in a high degree by the efforts of self and pride. A desire for popularity may produce earnestness. The grandeur or the awfulness of the subject may have an astonishing effect on the feelings. But the holy and heavenly fervour, the infusion of the Divine Spirit, is very different from any thing of this kind. It proceeds from a concern for the honour of God, and from love to immortal souls. It is the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, and combined, as in him, with a humble, compassionate, and heavenly temper of mind. It is a holy fire, which, instead of feeding, burns up pride and self-importance, and warms and cheers all that come within its reach; and from it the same fire is often lighted in the breasts of others, the minister being made the channel of communication. Wherever this heavenly element exists, the gospel is made successful; sinners are brought from darkness into light. It is this very thing, the possession of which is of far greater consequence than any other qualification or endowment. This being possessed, success will to some extent surely ensue; but being wanting, all labours will comparatively be in vain.—*Christian Observer.*

*The French Soldier saved from Suicide.*—In the last report of the Bible Society of Nismes, in France, we find an affecting anecdote of one of their subscribers, who was formerly attached to Bonaparte's army. An officer of the society, struck with his modest zeal in support of the cause, ventured to ask him whether his attachment to the society did not proceed from a knowledge of the soul-enlivening contents of the Bible. "It is so," said he, "and I will inform you how it took place." He then added:—

"Under the late emperor I was attached to the army, and being taken prisoner and carried to England, I was confined in one of the prison ships. There, huddled together one above the other, and deprived of every thing that could tend to soften the miseries of life, I abandoned myself to dark despair, and resolved to make away with myself. In this state of mind an English clergyman visited us, and addressed us to the following effect: 'My heart bleeds for your losses and privations, nor is it in my power to remedy them; but I can offer consolation for your immortal souls, and this consolation is contained in the word of God. Read this book, my friends; for I am willing to present every one with a copy of the Bible who is desirous to possess it.' The tone of kindness with which he spoke, and the candour of this pious man, made such an impression upon me that I burst into tears. I gratefully accepted a Bible; and in it I found abundant consolation,

amidst all my miseries and distresses. From that moment the Bible is become a book precious to my soul: out of it I have gathered motives for resignation and courage to bear up in adversity, and I feel happy in the idea that it may prove to others what it has been to me."

*New Churches in Bristol, (Eng.)*—As evidence of an increasing attention to religion in England we may mention the rapid multiplication of churches and meeting houses in different parts of the kingdom. Stephen Prust, Esq. of Bristol, in a letter to his friend E. P. Esq. of this city, dated September 12, says that there are now eight churches and meeting houses going up in Bristol, a city which contained at the last census less than 100,000 inhabitants. The following is an extract from the letter.

Mr. Haro is building a chapel by the Iron Bridge at Bedminster, which will cost him above £3,000; a new Episcopal church is commenced near it, another Episcopal church near my house and a third in St. Philip's, where it was much wanted. The Methodists have built a large chapel in Langden-street near Radcliff Church, and the Baptists are building in St. Philip's. The Independents are also about to build in that populous but neglected parish. Lady Huntingdon's congregation likewise are preparing the ground at the foot of Lodge-street to build a new and spacious chapel. Thus the church is to shake herself from the dust, to arise and shine—to evidence that her light is come, for alas! alas! our City Mission and the London Christian Instruction Society have discovered that half the population do not go to any place of worship. In one large manufactory in London employing 500 of the primest mechanics that money can produce from all parts of the empire, not 20 it is said go to church!

*Probability of the Extinction of Egypt.*—If we turn to the valley of the Nile of Egypt, we shall see at this moment the very process going on by which the lower part of the Niger or Nile of Bornou, has been choked up and obliterated by the invasion of the Great Sahara, under the names of the Deserts of Bilmah and Libya. Thus has been rubbed out from the face of the earth a river which had once its cities, its sages, its warriors, its works of art, and its inundations like the classic Nile; but which so existed in days of which we have scarcely a record.

In the same way shall perish the Nile of Egypt and its valley! its pyramids, its temples, and its cities! the Delta shall become a plashy quicksand—a second Syrtis! and the Nile shall cease to exist from the lower cataract downwards; for this is about the measure or height of the giant principle of destruction already treading on the Egyptian valley, and who is advancing from the Libyan Desert, backed by other deserts whose names and numbers we do not even know, but which we have endeavoured to class under the ill-defined denomination of Sahara.—advancing, I repeat, to the annihilation of Egypt and all her glories, with the silence, but with the certainty too, of all devouring time! There is something quite appalling in the bare contemplation of this inexorable onward march of wholesale death to kingdoms, to mighty rivers, and to nations; the more so, when we reflect that the destruction must, from its nature, be not only complete, but eternal.—*Sir R. Donkin's Dissertation on the Course of the Niger.*

*The Post in India.*—On my return to Sheravara, I found a letter from Madras waiting for me at the bungalow: it had been forwarded from Salem, to which place, as to other stations occupied by Europeans, there is an established post. The mail-bags, are carried by men, who run, singly, ten or fourteen miles each, having no other weapon for defence than a staff with a few links of iron chain at the upper end, whose sound, they say, frightens serpents out of their path; at night they frequently carry a lighted faggot of eight or ten feet in length, whose blaze enables them to choose their way. Nothing was more common, in whatever direction I traversed the country, than day and night to be passed or met by these posts at full trot, who, in the South of India, are usually called Tappals; in the north they are called Dawks. These mails, at an average, are carried about a hundred miles in twenty-four hours;

and the letters are charged about four annas, or six-pence, every hundred miles. Parcels of small weight are forwarded to the principal stations by the same sort of conveyance, but not quite so quickly; the post for the conveyance, of parcels is called the Baugly: the expense is regulated by the weight and distance.—*Hool's Missionary Narrative.*

## EXTRACTS

*From the Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Boston Prison Discipline Society.*

CONTINUED.

*This Society shows the importance of unceasing vigilance in government.*—In the house of reformation at South Boston, before the boys were subject to unceasing vigilance, there were frequent escapes, which indicated a habit of discontent, and unwilling submission: there was besides, but little industry, in the shop or school-room; few cases of reformation; and generally a state of things affording little satisfaction to the directors or friends of the institution. Also, in the state prison at Charlestown, while there were numerous apartments, in the old brick building, removed from vigilant and increasing inspection, and while the officers were not found in their places, exercising unceasing vigilance, there was little or nothing like a salutary discipline. In the house of correction in Leverett-street, too, among the females, until the matron was placed there, and began to exercise a constant inspection, there was no control; but as soon as the inmates took their places under the eye of their matron, knowing that she would be always in her place, and they should be always under her eye, the improvement was manifest. And at Newgate, Connecticut, as there was little vigilance there was less order; while at the new prison in Wethersfield, in regard to the officers, as well as the convicts, there is a place for every man, and every man in his place, and they are all kept in their places, and at their business, by unceasing vigilance. In the prisons at Sing Sing and Auburn, whenever an overseer leaves his place, even for a few minutes, he calls another to take it, so that the supervision may be uninterrupted. To all this vigilance, and the benefits of it, there is a striking contrast, in some of the penitentiaries, and in the county prisons generally. In the county prisons, to a vast extent, the keeper may be a farmer, a deputy sheriff, a tavern keeper, or almost any thing else, which requires his absence, except perhaps when he turns the key. The consequence is, profane swearing, gambling, sal bath breaking, universal disorder and idleness; and it seems not yet to have been thought, that vigilance is necessary in county prisons. So long as it is supposed that any class of prisons can be properly managed without unceasing vigilance, so long they will remain nurseries of vice. This brings into view a principle of very extensive application to families, schools, academies, colleges, factories, mechanics' shops; i. e. the importance of unceasing vigilance. If therefore this society does in any degree magnify the importance of unceasing vigilance in government, it will be useful in this respect. That lessons never to be forgotten are taught on this subject in the prisons at Auburn, Sing Sing, and Wethersfield, and in the houses of refuge in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, is certain.

*This Society shows the importance of family government.*—Among the causes of crime, the neglect of family government stands next to intemperance; it is, in fact, not unfrequently the cause of intemperance. Youth, when unrestrained and neglected by their parents, find their way to the tavern and the grog-shop; and others, whose parents have attempted unsuccessfully to govern them, have become abandoned to vice, till they forsake their father's house. It is the confession of many convicts from the prisons at Auburn and Wethersfield, that the course of vice, which brought them to the prison, commenced in disobedience to their parents, or in their parents' neglect. And it has already been stated, that about 60, which is one-third of the whole number of the youth who have been committed to the house of reformation at South Boston, were committed for being stubborn and disobedient. And among old convicts, for the higher crimes, especially those which were the offspring of unrestrained and sudden passion, there is evidence from prisons, that they who have been guilty of such crimes, were never subject to family government. And there is further evidence, in a few cases, where parents and children have been found together in the same prison, that the father's