

speaker so absolutely independent of opinion. "I am not very scrupulous," says Mr. Spurgeon, "about the means I use for doing good. I told the people of Scotland, when they said I preached in such an extraordinary way, that they really did not understand me, 'Why, bless your hearts, I would preach standing on my head, if I thought I could convert your souls, rather than preach on my feet.' I am not very particular how I preach." My motto, says he, "is *Cedo nulli*; I yield to none. I have not courted any man's love; I ask no man to attend my ministry; I preach what I like, when I like, and where I like." This language is explained by complaints of the persecutions endured by some of his hearers, because they will hear "that ranting fellow;" and, while he claims for such the right to hear him, if they like, "without asking the lords and governors of the present day, whether he is really clerical or not," he insists for himself on the right to preach as he pleases.

It would be lost labour to try one who holds this view of the matter by the rules of art. We must be content to take him as we find him, and to value him for what he is. It were a mistake, however, to conclude, that he is self-conceited. "Recollect," he says, "who I am, and what I am—a child, having little education, little learning, ability, or talent." "Without the Spirit of God, I feel I am utterly unable to speak to you. I have not those gifts and talents which qualify men to speak; I used an afflatus from On High; otherwise, I stand like other men, and have nought to say. May that be given me, for without it I am dumb!" Give him the polite and noble,—give him influence and understanding, and he should fail; but give him his own praying people, "meeting in such multitudes to pray to God for a blessing," and he will "overcome hell itself." When, moreover, invited to ascend the pulpit from which Wardlaw used to preach, he "dared not recollect what classic words had once been spoken there, or what sweet musical tones had once been heard from the lips of that eminent minister." One gains a glimpse of his decision of character from an incident in his northern trip. Finding that the ferryman on the Clyde had allowed six-and-twenty persons to get into a boat fit for no more than twelve, and that the man was drunk, Mr. Spurgeon took the oars from him, and, in spite of his oaths, insisted that so many lives should not be at the mercy of his unsteady hands.

From whatsoever cause it springs whether from force of native character, or from a vigor superinduced from that basis by the grace of God, there is that in Mr. Spurgeon's reported sermons which marks him a superior man. Models of different styles of preaching are so numerous, that originality must be of rare occurrence; but he appears to be an original genius. To the pitl. of Jay and the plainness of Rowland Hill, he adds much of the familiarity, not to say the coarseness of the Huntingtonian order of Calvinistic preachers, "It has been my privilege," he says, "to give more prominence in the religious world to those old doctrines of the Gospel." But the traits referred to present themselves in shapes and with accompaniments which forbid the notion of imitation, and favor the opinion of a peculiar bent. Neither in the style and structure, nor in handling, is there appearance of art, study, or elaboration. Yet, each discourse has a beginning, a middle, and an end; and the subject is duly introduced and stated, divided and discussed, enforced and applied. But all is done without effort, with the ease and freedom of common conversation, and with the artlessness, but also with the force of spontaneous expression. "This" he says, "I am sure of; I tell you all I know, and speak right

on. I am no orator, but just tell you what springs up from my heart." "Speak, my heart," he exclaims in another place, "for heart thoughts are the best thoughts."

Mr. Spurgeon waits for nothing which requires what we understand by composition, and he rejects nothing by which attention may be arrested, interest sustained, and impression made permanent. The vehicle of his thoughts is constructed of well-seasoned Saxon speech; and they are conveyed to the hearer's mind in terms highly pictorial and often vividly dramatic. Great governing principles are freely personified; and religious experience, past, present, and future, appears in life-like action upon the scene. Tried by such tests as the unities, Mr. Spurgeon might sometime be found wanting; but it is enough for him, that, as face answers to face in a glass, so do his words elicit a response in the hearts of those who hear them. This end secured, what cares he for mixed metaphor or a rhetorical anachronism? Were it his aim to rival the Melvilles and Harrisses of the day, he lacks neither the talent nor the taste; and, with these, he has the faculty of gathering what is to be learned from men or from books, and of turning all to account. But his single aim is, to preach the Gospel; and he depends for success, not upon the enticing words of man's wisdom, but upon the influence of the Spirit of God, and, with a view to that, the prayers of his people.

We meet with numerous characteristic references to his personal history, feelings, and experience. "When I hear sweet syllables fall from many lips, keeping measure and time, then," he exclaims, "I feel elevated, and forgetting for a time every being terrestrial, I soar aloft towards Heaven." He represents himself as having "delighted in the musty old folios which many of his brethren had upon their library shelves," and "as for new books he leaves them to others."—To the Bible he ascribes the discipline of his mental faculties, as well as his knowledge of Divine Truth. Once, he declares, he put up all his knowledge together in glorious confusion; but now he has a shelf in his head for every thing, and whatever he reads or hears, knows where to stow it away. "Ever since I have known Christ, I have put Christ in the centre as my sun, and each secular science revolves round it as a planet, while the minor sciences are satellites to their planets." He can learn every thing now; and from his experience he exhorts thus:—"Oh! young man, build thy studio on Calvary! There raise thine observatory, and scan, by faith, the lofty things of nature! Take thee a hermit's cell in the garden of Gethsemane, and lave thy brow with the waters of Siloa!"

Mr. Spurgeon evinces much aptitude in borrowing illustrations, not only from the pages of antiquity, and from modern life and literature, but also from the most familiar incidents, as well as from public events. Thus the War suggests to him the idea, that even the believer "carries within him a bomb-shell, ready to burst at the slightest spark of temptation." In like manner, the fatal exposure of the officers to the sharp-shooters of the enemy, furnishes him with a comparison by which to illustrate the peculiar liability of Christiana ministers to hostile attack, though with a great difference in the result. "Some of us," he says, "are the officers of God's regiments; and we are the mark of all the riflemen of the enemy. Standing forward, we have to bear all the shots. What a mercy it is, that not one of God's officers ever falls in battle! God always keeps them."

Sometimes, no doubt, he lapses into a rude colloquialism, bordering upon coarseness. "If," he observes, "I were to preach nothing but what would