

they do not believe. So far as regards his influence over those minds whose religious emotions are strong, but whose religious principles are weak, every limitation of his mind is an increase of his force.

This theological narrowness is unaccompanied with theological rancor, A rough but genuine benevolence is at the heart of Mr. Spurgeon's system. He wishes his opponents to be converted, not condemned. He very properly feels, that, with his ideas of the Divine Government, he would be the basest of criminals, if he spared himself, or spared either entreaty or denunciation, in the great work of saving souls. He throws himself with such passionate earnestness into his business, that his sermons boil over with the excitement of his feelings. Indeed, it is difficult to say whether our impressions of him, derived from the written page, come to us more from the eye than the ear. His very style foams, rages, prays, entreats, adjures, weeps, screams, warns and execrates. His words are words that everybody understands,—bold, blunt, homely, quaint, level to his nature, all alive with passion, and directed with the single purpose of carrying the fortresses of sin by assault. The reader who contrives to preserve his calmness amid this storm of words cannot but be vexed that rhetoric so efficient should frequently be combined with notions so narrow, with bigotry so besotted, with religious principles so materialized; that the man who is loudly proclaimed as the greatest living orator of the pulpit should have so little of that Christian spirit which refines when it inflames, which exalts, enlarges, and purifies the natures it moves. For Mr. Spurgeon is, after all, little more than a theological stump-orator, a Protestant Dominican, easy of comprehension because he leaves out the higher elements of his themes, and not hesitating to vulgarize Christianity, if he may thereby extend it among the vulgar. It has been attempted to justify him by the examples of Luther and Bunyan, to neither of whom does he bear more than the most superficial resemblance. He is, to be sure, as natural as Luther, but then his nature happens to be a puny nature as compared with that of the great Reformer; and, not to insist on specific differences, it is certain that Luther, if alive, would have the same objection to Mr. Spurgeon's bringing down the doctrines of Christianity to the supposed mental condition of his hearers, as he had to the Romanists of his day, who corrupted religion in order that the public "might be more generally accommodated." Bunyan's phrasology is homely, but Bunyan's celestializing imagination kept his "familiar grasp of things divine" from being an irreverent pawing of things divine. Mr. Spur-