

Selections.

MR. SPURGEON AGAIN.—[From the *Guardian*].—SIR: Your readers have before now been indebted to you for more than one friendly caution touching Mr. Spurgeon and the causes of his popularity. Perhaps the subject has thus received as much attention as it deserves, and needs no additional remark from me. But, if not, I beg to offer you the following:

Premising that I am but a visitor in England, and therefore to be excused for some curiosity to see English lions and hear them roar, I must tell you that I went with the multitude the other evening to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach in the open air in the neighbourhood of a country town. It was my first hearing, and will, undoubtedly, be my last. No consideration, I think, could induce me to "sit under" him again; yet I am thankful to have heard him this once. It enables me to know better than I did before, what the popular "religion of the day" is—how hollow, how false, how really irreligious—and by knowing it, possibly to understand better how to counteract it, and it makes me more deeply thankful for my own place and calling as a clergyman of the English Church, which, with all her shortcomings, does at least teach her children to follow holiness, and to worship God with reverence and godly fear.

It is easy to see why Mr. Spurgeon, for a time, should be popular. First, he is, what I heard a woman call him, "a powerful preacher"—that is, as she went on to explain it, he can "make himself heard," he possesses the valuable physical power of a great voice and clear intonation, together with a free use of plain English in the vulgar tongue. Then he has wit, often very poor, almost always very coarse, sometimes smart and taking. Real eloquence he has none; at least I do not think I heard more than two sentences which could possibly be called eloquent. Power of captivating the attention and mastering the feelings of the heart he has none, he shows no signs of being himself deeply impressed with the weight of his subject, and therefore must needs fail to impress others. He told us, indeed, not to criticise the man and his manner, but to listen to his message—and from some preachers the advice could be received and followed; holy and humble men of heart, men who lose sight of themselves and are absorbed in their theme, who tell us "even weeping," that of which their own hearts are full, such men constrain us to receive the Word from their lips as if it came from heaven. But with Mr. Spurgeon this is impossible; he is too much at his ease, too free and "rosy lipped," too flippant, too self-confident, to allow us for a moment to forget the man who is standing before us. With every desire to be charitable, one feels it very difficult to believe that he is sincere.—At the same time, one must make allowance for his position, and rather pity than condemn so young a man, carried away by the applause of the multitude, and continually tempted by the desire of praise.

But I fear there are graver counts than these to be laid to his charge. Mr. Spurgeon's favorite way of handling his subject, it is well known, is the dramatic. He brings before you the persons of the sacred narrative, and you hear them, as it were, speaking by his mouth. And a very profitable way, no doubt, it is, when carefully and reverently employed; but how when all care and all reverence are utterly discarded? Can it profit any one, for instance, to carry away the idea of St. Paul, which many doubtless carried away the other night; to imagine the Apostle a second rate debater, great in his own line, coarse and cunning and confident, grinning at the Corinthians, and exulting when he can catch them tripping? Yet this is Mr. Spurgeon's representation. "Yes," says Paul, "you are mighty clever in detecting my faults, suppose you look a little at your own—examine yourselves!" with a shout of defiance; and a shake of the fist in their imaginary faces.

If this is bad enough, how much worse is it when the person brought upon the stage is no less than the Holy One of God, and His words, spoken as man never spake before, are travestied and defiled by the preacher's flippancy and irreverence!

Is it God's work, or whose work is it, to call forth the laughter (!) of an assembly by an off-handed dialogue between Christ and Nicodemus—"Now, then, I'll puzzle ye—read me My riddle if you can!" Poor Nicodemus scratches his head, and "I can't make it out," says he, &c. Of course the drama would not be complete without specimens of the Judge upon His throne, the cries of the damned, &c., and accordingly these also were freely and broadly introduced.

As for the doctrinal views of this preacher, they are

such as might be expected, and are only less dangerous than his profaneness of speech. "Are you at peace with God? Do you feel that you are? Can you say that you are? Then you are all right—no fear of you!"

In accordance with this, a string of sarcasms is levelled at certain "gentlemen who preach what they call () duty-faith" (probably, those who teach the necessity of a faith that worketh by love), and they are told that "they are quite welcome to their doctrine, Mr. Spurgeon would not take it from them for the world—it's not worth the stealing," &c. Believe that you are in Christ and you are in Christ; and once in Christ, in Christ forever, so never mind your duties. Such is the Spurgeonism of the day, very palatable, of course, to all those who prefer a fancy religion to "patient continuance in well-doing."

I came away from that strange meeting, and asked myself, Is this religion? The low earthly standard that this man raises before his hearers, can this represent the holiness of the Gospel, the mind of Christ? and the people who habitually attend upon such teaching as this, can they possibly be made more holy, more humble, more faithful Christians than they would be without it? I fear not; and if not, what are they made? And the openly ungodly and unbelieving, who hang upon the outskirts of Mr. Spurgeon's crowd, "just to hear what the man has got to say for himself," what shadow of a hope is there that they through such means will be converted from Satan to God? None whatever: the display is much more likely to be the theme, an hour hence, of tap-room merriment, if it does not even furnish them with fresh materials for bringing reproach upon religion. I think with wonder and sadness, not so much upon the phenomenon of this man's popularity, which is easily to be accounted for, as upon the delusion that seems to possess so many, that he is really doing the work of an evangelist, and preaching the Gospel of God unto salvation.

July 17.

Yours, &c.,

TASMANIENSIS.

THE TURKS.

AT this moment, almost everybody we speak to is more or less interested about the Turks. All want to know what sort of people they are. The best notion many of them have is that they wear long, loose, flowing robes, and a turban; and as they certainly are not Christians, people think of them as of other pagans and idolaters.

Now, as to the first, we are not to look upon their dress as belonging to them as Turks; it rather belongs to them as Easterns. The Eastern nations generally wear loose clothing, and have done so for thousands of years. We see this by the prints in our large Bibles, where from first to last we find flowing garments, but nothing like the tight-fitting clothes worn by the men of our own country and the greater part of Europe. The case is the same with the long beards of the Turks. A long beard is considered as great an ornament to their men as long hair is to our women. This, too, is common among all Eastern nations, who think that we Europeans unfigure God's work by cutting off our beards.

We find a curious proof of the antiquity of both these customs in 2 Samuel 10th chapter. The ambassadors sent on a friendly mission by King David, were grievously insulted by the King of the Ammonites, who caused the one-half of their beards to be shaven off, and their garments to be cut short in the middle. The ambassadors were thus reduced to a state which was so dishonorable, that they remained at a distance from court and the presence of the king, until their beards were grown. David so highly resented this ill treatment, as to go to war with the King of Ammon.

A few years ago, the Sultan or Sovereign of the Turks became unpopular by attempting some alterations in the dress of his army, bringing it nearer to that of the European troops, by leaving off the loose dress and the turbans. Not, however, that the loose flowing robes of the Eastern troops need prevent their being active in war. We know that many warlike nations were dressed in this fashion in ancient times, and that leaping, running, and wrestling were regular parts of the education of the young men, who were carefully trained to great activity and agility in all bodily exercises, as the best preparations for becoming soldiers. On these occasions, their loose robes were either thrown off or drawn up around them with a girdle, so as to be no hindrance or inconvenience. In 1 Kings xviii. 46; we find that the prophet Elijah "girded up his loins" when he ran before the chariot of Ahab; that is, he fastened up his loose robes, confining them with his girdle, so that they might not be

in his way while he was running with great speed in order to keep before the chariot in which Ahab was riding. Again, in Kings iv. 29, when Elijah heard the sorrowful tale of the poor mother, whose only child was lying dead, and sent Gehazi to lay the prophet's staff upon the face of the child, he says, "Gird up thy loins,"—let not thy loose garments hinder thy speed. The very same thing would take place at this day in the East. If a messenger were to be sent off in haste, he would naturally gird up his loose robe before he started.

Let us stop here for one moment to notice the figurative use in Scripture of this expression of "girding the loins." It is easy to understand how it came to signify a state of preparation for any active service—a readiness to obey any command of God. "Let your loins be girded about," said our Saviour, (Luke xii. 35,) "when charging his disciples to be watchful and always ready to receive their Lord and Master. St. Paul, too, (Eph. vi. 14,) describing the virtues and graces of a Christian under the image of a military dress, uses the expression, "having your loins girt about with truth;" that is, being ever ready to do the whole will of God with earnestness and sincerity.

Many other such passages may be found both in the Old and New Testaments.

This paper would be too long if I were now to enter upon the subject of the religion of the Turks, so I will only add one more remark upon their dress. We are apt to think that the turban must be very unpleasant as a covering for the head in hot climates; but those who have tried it say that it keeps off the heat of the sun much better than our hats and caps; so that probably the turban, as well as the loose robes, are more suitable to the climate than at first they appear to be. Indeed, we often laugh at the manners and customs of foreign nations without sufficiently considering the difference between their climate and employment and our own. The dress and the diet which suit us might be quite as disagreeable to them as theirs would be to us. The nations of the earth may, in these respects, be compared to a garden of flowers, where the variety of color, and form, and scent increases the general beauty.—*Cottager's Monthly Visitor*.

A FIRST-RATE HEARER.

I had heard much, very much said, about a first rate preacher, and was much interested in the picture drawn by my informant. But as one blade of a pair of scissors sadly lacks the other, and is in a very pitiful state of bereavement without it, so a first-rate preacher must have the counterpart, and I propose to complete the picture by setting forth a first-class hearer.

1. He is prompt in attendance. He not only means to be at public worship—lots of lazy people have very good purposes—but he will be on hand in time. The preacher counts upon him always being in his place when the service begins. Nobody can think it is him, as the late-lifted latch, the untimely creaking door, sends an unwelcome sound through the sanctuary.

2. He is an unfailing attendant. There are now-and-then hearers, half-a-day hearers, once-a-month hearers, and semi-annual hearers. There are such all over the parish: but not a soul of them ever gets him on to their books. He is not a bird of their feather. He thinks that, if public worship is worth being established at all, it is worthy of having an whole-hearted and unfailing support. He thinks "Reverence my sanctuary" means something more than an intermittent attendance—that such a precept presses not a half but a whole day worship; not merely a now-and-then visit, but visits that shall know no intermission but what Providence compels. He goes for the whole Sabbath, and all the Sabbaths of the year; and if that does not make him a first-rate hearer, we will look up another element of his character to help fill out the picture; and

3. He gives eyes, ears, and thought to the preacher. Eyes, because it helps him to hear, and the speaker to address him; ears, because his ears were made to be thus used, and he came for the purpose of hearing; and thought, because eyes and ears, too, might be on the preacher, and yet imagination, in its antics, might make eyes and ears utterly useless, as it sailed away with the hearer to the ends of the earth. Eyes, ears, and attention of mind make one, soul and body, a hearer; and we venture to call that a first-rate sort of hearing; though there remains one characteristic more to complete the picture.

4. He profits by what he hears. He gives the truth a cordial, hearty welcome. He takes truth, the heavenly dove, into the ark, and does not compel it to fly away upon the cold and cheerless waters. He muses