

regards, not altogether incorrectly, as wolves that devour the sheep, and thieves who climb into the fold instead of entering by the one door, wear along with a great deal of purely sacerdotal raiment, gowns and bands bearing a distant resemblance to those of the mirth provoking human turkey gobbler. "Away," he cries "with the wolf's clothing and the thief's rags if you are sheep and honest men!" "Poor Baptist Noel, and Morley Punshon, and Newman Hall are to be counted silly sheep! But the Romanists, Greeks, and High Anglicans have churches for worshipping God. They sing and pray and read portions of Scripture; they administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. True, they do all these things differently from us, who are evangelicals, but then their gowns and bands are different too. Had we not better worship in the open air; suppress singing and prayer and the reading of the Bible; and abolish the sacraments? There are infidel lecturers, John, we may tell you in confidence, who dress somewhat like your friend of the tabernacle, and deliver their horrid blasphemies from platforms in that attire. Had you not better lend him your smock, for we never heard of any public teacher of Atheism or Agnosticism that disported himself in such primitive raiment? And yet, it might be mistaken for a new kind of surplice! He must take to his shirt sleeves.

John Ploughman wants no particular dress. Perhaps he will tell us that the early ministers of the Christian Church wore no other dress than the laity, and probably John is right. But there were three reasons for this. First, the ordinary garb of early Christian days was not the stiff angular attire of modern Britons, but a more graceful dress suited to the wants of the orator. Secondly, the peculiar circumstances of missionary labour made the use of a distinctive habit inconvenient, just as it is among missionaries in the present day. And thirdly, when ministers were specially sought after by heathen persecutors, to appear in such raiment would have been equivalent to a sentence of death. John Ploughman, a kind of Plymouth brother, would have his minister dressed like a layman. What kind of a layman? If he wants to be humble, as he pretends, let him borrow the rags of the worst beggar he meets, John would cry laugh! Well, put him into the smock, as was suggested, John would rebel at ministerial dictation from a ploughman. Give him a suit of tweed and a blue necktie with white spots. It would never do: he might be asked to bet on the winning horse at the Derby. Then dress him in a black coat. What right has a minister to wear a black coat more than any other man? The priests of Rome wear black coats. Follow the Salvation army; and fit him out in red coat with brass buttons. What put the gospel of peace into the sinful uniform of the men of war? Why not give the poor man a rest there from the distracting claims of the laity's fashions, and let him preach in the fanciful wardrobe of the ancient Picts—a coat of paint? Mr. Spurgeon has the arrogance at times to wear a white necktie. If John were true to his principles he would tear that mark of the beast from his beloved pastor's throat; and invest his turn-down collar with a shoe string.

John Ploughman thinks that the gown is no manner of use to the minister, and makes him look as stupid as a duck in pattens. When the question of reform in the dress of the army was under consideration, and the opinion of private soldiers was asked, some of them replied that they could fight most comfortably in their

shirt sleeves. Yet the radical change in military costume thus suggested on principles of utility was, very properly, not carried into effect. As to the duck in pattens, the featherless biped of modern days bears a far closer resemblance to that ornithological candidate for a clog dance than the decently robed man of the gown. Trowsers representing an inartistic bifurcated human extremity, are the despair of the sculptor, who is compelled to drape those of the statesman in an official robe, and those even of the soldier in a cavalry cloak. You might as well put a cutty pipe in their mouths, or the bagpipes under their arms, as represent the apostles, fathers, and reformers in coat and trowsers. Our churches of the present day are more or less ornamental structures, adorned in accordance with the principles of sober ancient or mediæval art. What more incongruous with such surroundings than a long-legged, rawboned, angular, black-tied orator, or a chubby, toddling piece of clever and pious humanity! But, perhaps, John's pastor is neither of these; he is a handsome man let us say, with a good figure, and he knows it. If so, it is his clear duty to mortify the flesh, and hide his attractive form beneath the folds of the charitable gown which covers his brethren's multitude of sins. In this respect the gown puts all preachers on an equality, and is illustrative of presbyterial parity. More, the silly conceited pride, often lurks in the stage motions of shining broadcloth than in all the undulations of flowing silk or corded stuff.

It must be confessed, however, that there are very hideous gowns, the work generally of some Dorcas Society possessing zeal without knowledge, and such stiff, full, we might almost say baggy, travesties of orthodox pulpit dress must have greeted the eyes of the æsthetic ploughman, and reminded him of the gobbler by whom, perhaps, he was "sair hadden down" in his youthful days. Now if John's smock were badly made we could laugh at it too; but if his pastor made his appearance before us in a cut-away coat that seemed to struggle continually for the mastery over a single restraining button near the wearer's neck, and a waistcoat and trowsers mutually seeking a divorce, our sorrow would be too deep for tears.

When John talks common sense we like to hear him; when Mr. Spurgeon preaches the truths of the gospel we willingly sit at his feet. But when the ignorant, gothic clown makes sport of the simple and decent insignia of a most sacred office, insignia that has been worn by the greatest lights of the Christian Church in all lands and ages, he is worthy of no more courtesy than the miscreant who glued up the organ pipes in Toronto, or the radical levelling embryo nihilists, who delight in abusing our noble sovereign for the state which surrounds her honored throne. And when Mr. Spurgeon, who discards the title 'reverend' in his quixotic iconoclasm, will allow no outward distinction even in the pulpit between a divinely appointed order of teachers and rulers in the Church and the people to whom they minister, he is in deed and word, if not in heart, a Plymouth brother, and a fussy busybody in other men's matters, trading for a reputation of humility upon the cheap prejudice of a communistic age. There is no spark of piety or real devotion to truth in the whole tirade, and not an atom of genuine humility or honest manliness. In spite of the extravagances of a pseudo æsthetic, there is a real movement towards an appreciation of beauty and the fitness of things. Our churches are no longer the barns they used to be, but keep pace with the culture