

The element of appositeness is likely to be present with strength, in a sermon of Mr. Spurgeon's. This great preacher knows his occasion, and he meets it with instinctive and with conscientious self-adjustment. I shall never forget an example of this that it was my own good fortune to witness.

The second great World's Fair in London had just been opened. The metropolis was thronged with strangers, and all men's minds were full of the great exhibition. Mr. Spurgeon took for his text that passage of Ephesians, "That now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." He began by remarking on the vast frequency of people present in the city from all over the world to attend the great exhibition just opened. Their object—what was it but to survey, in many forms, the triumphs of human contrivance, the manifold wisdom of man? But there was, the preacher said, a more glorious exhibition in progress. To it, through the long corridors of the ages, angelic intelligences, the principalities and powers in heavenly places, were thronging. These spectators came that they might behold and study in "the church the manifold wisdom of God." I never heard an apter, or more impressive, introduction. The effect was brilliant in oratory, but, what was far better, it was profoundly, soberingly, religious. The sermon that followed sustained the promise of the exordium. It was truly majestic. The Mr. Spurgeon whom I had heard, perhaps, half a dozen times before, was transfigured that day into the glory of a prophet. How much was due to the occasion? Much, doubtless; but nothing whatever would have been due to the occasion, if the preacher had not made use of the occasion. Let me correct myself, then, and say that, in strictness, nothing whatever was due to the occasion, but all to wise use of the occasion.

It is worth separate and emphatic remark that the opening services on the occasion referred to had signally prepared for the powerful effect of the sermon. Indeed, Mr. Spurgeon's opening services in general are quite as remarkable as the sermon that follows. Life tingles through them all like blood leaping along the veins, rather, like blood circulating everywhere through the body. The invocation, the announcement of the hymn, the Scripture-reading, with the brief, pithy comment accompanying, the prayer—in all these the preacher offers up his life not less truly than he does in his sermon. They are not mere scaffolding to the sermon; they and the sermon together constitute one noble edifice, in which the sermon may be the largest, but in which it is scarcely otherwise the most honored, stone.

Another characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon's preaching is sustained evenness of pitch. There are comparatively few violent changes of feeling in one of his sermons. He may now move you almost to smile, and now open in you the sluices of tears, but you will not experience