

expected, with each succeeding repetition of those words, to hear the preacher's voice break and fail. I might as well apprehensively expect to see the Atlantic give out, when a storm was wreaking its wave after wave on a shore. Six times, I should think, by count, the repetitions rose one upon another in volume or in pitch, and the voice was as clear, as firm, as apparently unstrained, at the last as at the first. And I had needlessly been saying with myself, a number of times, "Now, pray, do not try that again. The human voice *can* no further go."

Such is Mr. Spurgeon's voice. The farthest hearer can hear with ease and pleasure, while not even the nearest hearer is discomforted with noise.

The next thing to strike the observant and thoughtful listener is the unflinching flow and the pellucid strain of Mr. Spurgeon's diction. The absolute ease of the vocal delivery is completely matched by an absolute ease in the mental supply. You seem to see a "long bright river" of silver speech unwound, evenly and endlessly, like a ribbon from a revolving spool that should fill itself as fast as it emptied itself. The quality of the words is, in general, as pure as the volume of them is copious. Occasionally, a word not up to the standard of good taste may escape; occasionally a word chosen for its sound rather than for its exact aptness to the sense—the speaker's fancy caught, or the speaker trusting that his hearer's fancy will be caught, by an alliteration or an assonance—but, for the most part, Mr. Spurgeon's diction is a true "well of English undefiled."

The syntax is as noteworthy as is the vocabulary. There are no tangles of construction. There are no long suspensions of sense. There are no harsh inversions of order. There are no laborious ambitions of climax. The sentences are short and direct. They go straight on their way to their goal. Following one of them is like watching the flight of an arrow to its mark.

Presently you rouse yourself to consider, "Is there adequate thought represented by all this affluence of words, by all this manifold facile construction of sentences? The discourse goes on, true, but does it go on saying something?" You notice carefully and you are reassured. You perceive that there is always meaning, and always worthy meaning, conveyed. The thought is not often new, not often startling, not often profound; but there is thought, just thought, wholesome thought, useful thought. Mr. Spurgeon is not a great thinker, thinking in public aloud. He does not make an enlarged minister's study of his auditorium, and take his congregation into the confidence of his private intellectual activities. To enter his pulpit, or rather to go upon his platform, he leaves his study behind him, with all its methods and all its processes, and comes forth, a man among men, to communicate his results in language that common people cannot fail to understand, because in language taken out of the common people's mouths.