

3. He is very sharp in his antagonism. The earlier sermons are often strongly polemical in favor of Calvinism; in later years he has sometimes assailed the Establishment, and very often the popular rationalism and materialism. Thus he has changed with the changing wants of the times, treating questions of living interest, opposing present forms of unbelief, and against them all arraying the old Gospel, with its profound claims upon intellect and conscience.

4. Mr. Spurgeon has not been an originator of essential thought, but is astonishingly fertile in new modes of presenting familiar truth. In this sense he shows great power of inventive imagination.

5. He has a great deal of quiet humor. This shows itself freely in conversation and in familiar addresses, and often appears in a very subdued way in the pulpit. The accusations which used to be made that he was sometimes grotesque and irreverent, probably came from unsympathetic and over-fastidious hearers, and certainly do not hold good for the last twenty years.

6. He has a high degree of personal magnetism, which is felt both in private and in public. You could not help listening to him if you tried, and you would be apt to feel that he meant precisely you. In going several times to hear him, a few years ago, I was anxious to study the great preacher for the benefit of pupils in homiletics; but in every sermon I was made to remember some things in my recent course of life that had been wrong, and was moved with desire to right them. It would surely be difficult to find a higher test of good preaching. As it used to be said of Robert Hall and Chalmers, so one feels in hearing Mr. Spurgeon that there is more in the man than he has ever said, and the hearer feels impressed by the speaker's personality.

7. His imagination, sentiment, cheerful humor and passionate earnestness are all controlled by a very high degree

of sanctified common-sense. He is a good judge of character, knowing how to select helpers with skill and put his spirit into them, as is done by the head of some great business combination or political party, or by the leader of a great army.

II. Let us turn to the materials of his preaching.

1. He shows extraordinary familiarity with the Scriptures; not only the facts and thoughts, but the very words. This sort of familiarity, which marked Chrysostom also and many other great preachers, is at the present day often wanting in the case of highly-intelligent ministers. We do have so many other things to read! Yet nothing can take the place, for one who wishes power in the Christian pulpit, of familiar acquaintance with the Christian Scriptures.

2. In youth, Mr. Spurgeon was by no means a good interpreter of Scripture. What he got from his text was very apt to be in itself true, but was often not really taught by that text, being obtained by a process of wild spiritualizing or loose accommodation. Of late years he has greatly improved in this respect. Yet, as is perfectly natural, exegesis is with him always controlled by supposed homiletical uses. Better this, no doubt, than an exegesis exclusively grammatical or merely theological. But every busy, practical preacher ought to remember that he is specially tempted to prefer that interpretation of a text which will give him most to say. The retired student of exegesis has his peculiar perils also.

3. Mr. Spurgeon has been a great reader of the Puritan divines. He finds something congenial not only in their strong theology and devotional sweetness, but in their racy style, with its quaint turns of phrase; and in all these respects they have strengthened his own natural tendencies.

4. He, of course, draws very freely upon his own experience and observation, his knowledge of human nature and human life. Far from being content with the natural working of genius,