

of salvation had come to be corrupted with so much of man's invention that the chaff was hopelessly mixed with the wheat. Practically, his whole ministry was a sieve, by which he sought to separate man's traditions and fashions from God's teachings and practices. In this respect he seems to us to have had no competitor for the peculiar crown that must ever rest on his brow. For forty years he preached, on an average, probably more sermons, without repetition, than any other man of his generation; his published sermons already reach more than two thousand, and yet it would be difficult to find one that does not contain, somewhere or in some form, the essential, vital seed of the saving message. In fact, he early formed the deliberate purpose that such should be the law of his ministry.

He was, in the pulpit, a preacher rather more conspicuously than a teacher—that is, he magnified his double office as *herald and witness* rather than the quite different province of expositor and instructor. The Divine Master preached "with authority, and not as the scribes," who systematically expounded the Scriptures, but made no direct, authoritative appeals. Spurgeon had a lofty conception of his office as an *ambassador*, who, while he acts within the limits of his instructions, carries all the authority of the Royal Master whom he represents.

He was a born preacher. He had the *genius homiletical*, if ever a man had it. Such crystallization of thought into striking and radiant analytic forms; such piercing insight into spiritual truth; such facility and felicity, both of diction and of illustration; such homely thrusts at practical errors and needs; such natural action and effective gesticulation; such memory, imagination, logic and love, all on fire with passion for souls!—has there been any like combination since the days of Wesley and Whitefield? and did he not largely unite in himself much of the power of both these two men?

Spurgeon had the *genius of soul-saving*, which outranks all mere homiletical faculty. He was withal so sound in the faith, such an apostolic believer, holding by a grasp so firm and sure all the facts and truths of redemption, that, like a great steamer, he swept smaller craft in his wake. Serenely calm in his conviction, he soared into the lofty realms of unclouded assurance, like an eagle, resting on sublime wing in high altitudes, while the storm of "higher criticism" and scientific irreverence was raging far below. You heard him and you said, "That man believes something." Like Goethe, men feel the need of convictions; as for doubts, they have enough already. Spurgeon gave utterance not to negations, or even mere opinions, but to unalterable positions and convictions; and there was something marvellously refreshing in the experimental vigor and vitality of his preaching. It was a *testimony*: the whole man was behind it, and in the man, as in Burke, there was something finer than he ever said; his very manner bore conviction to the hearer, who felt himself to be in the presence of one who knew God face to face as a friend.