

There is the *balancing attitude*, which consists in swinging from side to side as if walking on the deck of a rolling ship. This is the opposite of the *bracing attitude*, in which one supports himself by grasping the corners of the reading-desk, and holding on with grim determination as if the whole concern were about to fly to pieces.

There is also the *sinking and rising attitude*. This is managed by bending and straightening the knee joints alternately and at the same time extending both arms at full length in sympathy with this musical motion; or I have seen it done by gradually rising on tiptoe and then suddenly sinking. I have seen a man preach with his hands in his pockets, certainly not the most graceful or energetic position.

There is, finally, the *attitude of the hod-man* who plants his feet apart and rounds up his back for the burden; and the *star gazer's attitude*, which is assumed by looking in the ceiling instead of the faces of the people.

Eighteen years ago I saw in Britain a distinguished preacher, with his eyes wide open in prayer, vigorously gesticulating with his arms as if determined to carry his point before a jury. But what, you may say, is the *right attitude*? In prayer it should certainly be devout and reverent, whether standing or kneeling, and all eccentric movements as well as rhetorical flourishes are wholly out of place.

In preaching, the chest should be erect and the lungs well filled so as to secure readiness of utterance and distinct articulation, the head not inclining backward or forward, much less to the right or the left, in token of superior wisdom.

Gestures are worse than useless, unless naturally expressive of mental states, and, therefore, helpful in impressing on the hearers the thoughts which they accompany. For a pretty full and racy account of many other grotesque attitudes and gestures, I refer you to two lectures, illustrated by wood cuts, in Mr. Spurgeon's second volume on Homiletics.

2. *The destruction of good sermons in delivering them.*—

This, you will say, is no trifle; yet it occurs through what very many deem trifles. It occurs chiefly in two ways:—

*First*, through imperfect preparation. I do not mean in thinking out or writing out your subject, but in getting ready to deliver it. In this way you may be unable to enter into the spirit of your discourse, and thus it may be as uninteresting and uninfluential to yourself as it is to every one else.

*Second*, a discourse is often well-nigh destroyed by the utter mismanagement of the voice. This occurs when the whole discourse is set to a sort of inferior minor melody known as "the pulpit sing-song." This tune is usually rendered within the compass of less than half an octave, and admits of no change of key or variation. The composition, the rhetoric of the discourse, may be most varied and enchanting, now brilliant, now majestic,

now joyous, and now solemn and grave. It matters not, it must be all set to the one little minor rock-a-by-baby melody. The preacher may urge the people to "rejoice in the Lord;" he may tell them to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," but he seems to weep and to be inexpressibly sad while he says it. If his exhortation is to have the desired effect upon the people, it must be the very reverse of what it has upon himself.

This plaintive wailing voice, however, is sometimes strangely mingled with a shouting tone, as if the preacher were calling to some one at a great distance, as if out in a ship wreck far from shore, trying to make the listless drowsy dwellers on the shore notice his distress. There is also the screaming tone which does not increase the volume of voice so much as it deepens and intensifies the pangs of preacher and people, and hastens his getting what is called "ministerial sore throat," and it will be well if it does not destroy his lungs along with his sermons.

There is, last of all, and perhaps worst of all, the vociferating method, which consists in using the deep, guttural tone of utter displeasure and wrath. This is not very artistic and requires no special skill for its employment. Even the dog knows when to use the deep, sharp, short note of indignation. It has its uses, but the provoking thing about all these, and sundry other departures from monotony, is that they often come in most inopportune. The preacher shouts when from the sense of his statements you expect him to whisper, and he vociferates when you desire him to use a conciliatory and sympathetic tone.

I grant that one is sometimes under strong temptation to use such methods. He may try in this way to overcome the dull sleepy state of the people, or the noises which pervade the church, the tramping of heavy feet and the jarring of doors. He may be speaking in an overheated, poisonous, rotten atmosphere which deacons and beadle have kept imprisoned in the House of God for weeks, and the noxious effects of which the very best elocutionary powers are insufficient to overcome.

3. *Intervals and Pauses.*—This is a small but serious matter. Let me recommend you before announcing your text to allow the people to get quietly settled in their pews. After the text is read there is generally considerable rustling and confusion. Let it thoroughly pass away before you utter your first sentence. Keep steady and calm—give no signs of uneasiness, and let there be no smacking of the lips or tossing of the head, as if to indicate the great torrent of thought within struggling for an outlet. You may pause with good effect after the delivery of some weighty thought, or the announcement of heads. Beware, however, of making these pauses long and too frequent, or attended with any affectation or embarrassment of manner, for then they cease to be effective and become truly offensive. As a rule, what gives