

advocating *baptism at midnight*. There are, specially, truths touching on points in casuistry, where the misconception is easy and good illustration is all important. If any one will look through Mr. Beecher's sermons, he will be very much impressed with the way in which he uses them to clear up dark or doubtful points. An example is found in his sermon on "Evils of Anxious Forethought" (Sermons, Second Series, p. 139). The whole sermon is built on two parallel lines, "Forelooking is right; *anxious* forelooking is not." It is one of his simplest, in treatment. But to leave the hearers fully possessed of the clear distinction between the forelooking which is essential to our happiness, and that which cuts it up by the roots, demanded a fund of apt illustration as well as abstract definition. This is given, and it would have been a very foggy brain which could not have taken in and carried away a clear idea of Christ's meaning in that wonderful teaching which closes the sixth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. In fact, I doubt whether any better service could be rendered human happiness than by curing the habit of "borrowing" trouble. Perhaps, however, the most important use of illustration in sermons is *interesting a class of minds not touched or not readily touched by abstract truth*. Children form a very considerable part of every congregation. If they are to be taken account of in preaching, it must be in this way. How natural it is to think of the children in Palestine in the days of Christ clinging to their mothers and looking up to the Great Teacher with their wistful eyes! Who does not imagine them telling the parables over again at home to other children who had not heard about the Good Samaritan, or the woman who lost her coins, or the story of the Prodigal Son.

But it is not only children who are most readily touched by illustration. Some of our best minds are, and then there is always the great middle class, who have had no very thorough mental training, and who are always most deeply affected by illustrated truth. The great merit of many of Mr. Moody's illustrations is that they stir the feelings so that the soul comes into contact with the truth, warmed as well as roused. We are doubly interested, first, on the side of our feelings, and then on that of our mental cognition. The truth is not only seen but felt in the very moment of seeing it. So, too, of Mr. Beecher's. Take his sermon on "Discouragements and Comforts in Christian Life" (Sermons, Second Series, p. 367), read the illustration in that wonderful family picture (pp. 373-4)—it is too long for me to quote—and you will see and feel the power of what I have been saying. Any one conversant with much of the preaching in vogue must be aware of the abuse connected with this element in preaching. One hears sermons every now and then where some very striking illustration, or what was meant to be such, was used as a *tour de force*. It was led up to very skillfully by the shaping of the discourse. Evidently the illustration,