

contribution, but most frequently chooses to illustrate his points from the human experiences which make the great sum of what we call human life.

Before saying anything on the importance of this element in preaching, it may be well to say that it is not true that all effective preaching depends on it. It would be easy to name preachers, living and dead, who used little of it in their sermons. They rely on clear-cut sentences which made their meaning always intelligible; on an "art of putting things," which needed no illustrative element added thereto; on a discussion of truths which went home to "men's business and bosoms," to borrow Lord Bacon's phrase. If a preacher have such powers, he need not trouble himself overmuch about illustrations. I suspect, however, that almost any preaching, no matter what other gifts of popular impression it may have, will always have a wider audience, if the power of illustration were combined with them. And for the average preacher, for the man of two or three talents in the pulpit, it certainly holds good that he must have some illustrative gift, or his preaching is—I will not say dull, but radically deficient. What, then, is the importance of this element? *How it fastens truth in the memory!* This is its most obvious, perhaps its greatest use. Abstract truth is easily forgotten. But the same, illustrated well, has some points for association to take hold of and recall. When you hear plain folk or children recalling sermons or points in sermons which impressed them, they do it most often by means of the illustration which riveted it on their attention. I heard Dr. Shedd once say in the pulpit of the Brick Church, while speaking of our very dim knowledge of the life to come, *the dead Hottentot knows more than the living Plato*. That sentence has been with me for years, recalled numberless times, and fastening the general doctrine he was setting forth with rivets. Dr. South's illustrations nearly all have this mission. His great discourse on "Concealment of Sin" is crowded with instances. "Justice, we know, used to be pictured blind, and therefore it finds out the sinner, not with its eyes, but with its hands; not by seeing, but by striking." "God sometimes makes one sin the means of discovering another; it often falling out with two vices as with two thieves or rogues, of whom it is hard to say which is worse, and yet one of them may serve well enough to betray and find out the other." These are samples of what will amply confirm the point made above. *Apt illustrations do a good service often in clarifying conceptions of the truth.* There is a good deal of fog in the brains of hearers as well as in the sermons of preachers. It is curious to see with what fatal facility many people miss the point of the preacher. A dear friend of mine, Professor Diman, told me that he preached once on the conversion of the jailor at Philippi, and was horrified next day on being called to account for