

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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OFFICE—NO. 6 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 1878.

ILLUSTRATION.

THERE is no quality in the public speaker more admired by hearers in general than the power of illustrating a subject. The preachers who command the largest congregations, who enjoy a great following wherever they go, and who are most powerfully influencing the hearts and lives of their fellow-men, are those who let the light fall upon their themes through the windows of parable, fable, simile, figure, analogy, and allegory. The abstract thinkers and the metaphysical writers of the day are performing a service in the interests of truth that may be higher and more valuable than the work of the illustrative speaker. They may be evolving hidden principles, discovering unknown laws of mind or matter, or laying before the gaze of the intellect the mysteries of universal truth. These are the exclusive few who are the great propellers of thought. But the work they do is not popular. Their influence is circumscribed. It takes the man who possesses the illustrative faculty to follow upon their path, and by the use of analogies to make their discoveries known and appreciated.

The ideal preacher is one who unites the creative faculty along with the gift of illustration. Jesus Christ for this very reason is the supreme speaker of all the ages. He was the Truth himself, and therefore all abstract principles and spiritual laws were profoundly grasped by him. All mystery was as clearly mapped out before his mind, as yonder mountain bathed in the dawning sunlight is distinctly outlined to the eye of the spectator. And yet the people heard him gladly, for by no other teacher was the parable ever used to greater perfection. He rivets the attention by the simple story. When the parable has gained the interested attention of the hearer, the spiritual truth is suggested or declared. The divine teacher then lays aside the figure, and presses the lesson upon the heart. The parable of the sower is most suggestive in this respect. With perfect simplicity the scene is placed before the mind. The sower stands out in prominent contrast to the surrounding scenery. The words pre-

sent clearly the different kinds of soil upon which falls the good seed. Then what a never-ending suggestiveness there is in the application, the seed of the word falling upon the different kinds of human hearts. What a beautiful method is seen in Christ's dealing with the woman at the well of Jacob! How natural His request for a drink of water. How delicate the reference in the first instance to the hidden fountain of living water. Observe how the Saviour proceeds step by step, until the woman makes the grand discovery of her spiritual thirst. Thus again with Nicodemus he advances from the natural to the heavenly birth; and with the blind man whom he leads to see by degrees first the world of matter and then the Universe of Spirit. No wonder the people heard him gladly. Are we astonished that they flocked around him? The Lord's sermons are indeed simple—exquisitely simple, so that children never grow weary of hearing them. But they are so deep, so profound, and infinitely suggestive that after millions of minds have pondered the lessons they contain, and after the creation of an expository literature before the extent and variety of which we positively stand aghast, these discoveries are as fresh and original to us as to all previous generations, and they are the themes which occupy by far the greater number of the books that are being published.

It becomes preachers to follow as nearly as possible the method of the Master, and to cultivate the faculty of illustration. In general the figures employed in a discussion are a measure of the speaker's apprehension of his subject. The gifts of God it is true are variously distributed, and hence we have metaphysical, historical, ratiocinative, imaginative, preachers, and often it will prove as impossible for the one class, the metaphysical for example, to become the imaginative as for a butterfly to be transformed into an eagle. Still we believe the illustrative faculty is capable of being cultivated to a greater or less extent by all classes of speakers. If the philosophical preacher can at the same time utter his thoughts in analogies, he will become the mighty mover of human minds. But the illustrative preachers may again be subdivided according to their peculiar gifts. There are the allegorists such as John Bunyan, the painters such as Guthrie, the poetical preachers like Macduff, speakers who, like Spurgeon, use homely and Scriptural figures, and men who, like Caird, by a pointed practical illustration, drive the nail into its place. The illustrative preachers may be divided into the microscopic, telescopic, kaleidoscopic, and stereoscopic. The first bring the minute and hidden things of God's truth before the eye of the mind, and Robertson of Brighton is an eminent example of this. The second by conveying the vastness and grandeur of God's universe compel the hearer into an attitude of devotion, and who can be compared in this respect to the illustrious Chalmers? The third present a succession of pictures that dazzle and attract, and make deep impressions, and Guthrie stands *facile princeps* in this regard. The stereoscopic, or the natural preacher, is happily illustrated by Norman Macleod and William Arnot.

It is gratifying to observe that the sermons of the day are becoming more and more illus-

trative. Metaphysical preaching has almost suffered a total decadence. But the imaginative, the illustrative, and the practical preacher is the man who is sought after, and is wielding a healthful influence upon his fellow-men.

THE PAPAL ELECTION.

WITH the very lengthened occupation of the papal throne, which the late Pope enjoyed, the election of a Roman pontiff may be regarded as an event that only occurs in a life-time. In consequence of this being not an every day occurrence, remarkable interest was taken by the public in the action of the cardinals. The Romish Church succeeds in investing every king with mystery, and of course the election of a Pope impresses the distant onlooker with a sense of superstitious awe. The electors in this case are no common men. They are the princes of the Church. They constitute a class amongst whom the Pope is *primus inter pares*. From their number the successor in the Pontifical chair must be called. The movements of the cardinals during the interregnum are watched with keen interest by governments and peoples. In the present instance, possibly, the speedy action which has placed Cardinal Pecci on the Papal chair, may be disappointing to not a few who were looking for exciting scenes connected with the election. But it is another instance of the worldly-wise policy which is so characteristic of the Roman priesthood.

To have held the election long in abeyance would have been to provoke discussion and strife among the people. There were the two classes of the public who were in danger of open antagonism—those who were the conservative supporters of the Papal pretensions, and those willing to let the temporal power go and make the best of the circumstances. The division amongst the cardinals was evidently caused by the two parties amongst them who reflected these opposite opinions. The cardinals were not divided upon a principle of nationality, or of theology, but upon a principle of politics. But delay would prove dangerous in the existing crisis, and all were eager to press to a vote.

The man who has been chosen for the office of pope is evidence of the attitude of the majority in the Roman Church towards the question of the temporal power. The new pontiff will not be an agitator for the recovery of the earthly domination. He is said to be one who recognizes the political changes which have passed over Italy, and who will maintain a policy of accommodation to the altered circumstances. It will in all likelihood be his purpose to establish and foster friendly relations with the government of King Humbert. There will certainly be much more gain to his Church from such a course than could possibly ensue from the openly declared intention of fighting for the temporal power. There could be nothing but loss from the latter course—loss of influence, loss of money, and possibly loss of position in Rome. With the policy of accommodation on the other hand the priests will acquire an insidious and dangerous influence over kings and courtiers, unless where there is a wholesome dread of their intermeddling practice as with the Emperor William and