

exploits of David to those of Darius. It may well be added, that in all the miscellaneous fields of illustration there is need of much caution lest, even with our greatest care, we follow in the recent footsteps of some clerical predecessor who has traversed the same ground, before the same audience.

It is quite different, however, with the repeated presentation of Biblical facts and incidents. These are ever appropriate and ever approved, even by those of fastidious taste. In many of our most artistic churches the illuminated windows picture the heroes and saints of the Bible. Because of the fitness of the subject to the place our pleasure does not diminish with their appearance from Sabbath to Sabbath and from year to year. Exhaustless lessons come afresh from saints who stand in the cathedral windows. A fine taste equally approves the illumination of the sermon by a happy word-picturing of those old and honored saints through whom comes the light of heaven, taking some of their rich coloring and streaming into pious souls. We may go farther and say that the familiarity of the hearer with the incidents quoted, helps rather than hinders the effect. It gives immediate force to the point illustrated. Its inspired origin makes argument needless, and being familiar, application is often needless.

The frequent and happy use of Scripture illustrations has another great advantage. It intensifies the religious tone of the discourse. How effectively they assist in maintaining the re-religious character of the preacher's effort may be seen by examining Mr. Spurgeon's sermons, which almost overflow with Biblical facts, incidents and allusions. Now put in comparison Mr. Beecher's sermons. His illustrations, so numerous, and remarkably brilliant, are chiefly drawn from the experiences of life, and the observation of nature and society. One cause of their unfavorable criticism is the absence of Biblical illustrations. Mr. Beecher evidently seeks to put the truth in the foreground; the Bible is in the background and sometimes made almost invisible by the nearness and abundance of the things which belong only to current life.

The politician knows the value of these illustrations. In addressing the masses, how easily he exalts his personal worth by picturing his opponent as a modern Absalom, who uses the arts of the demagogue to steal the hearts of the political Israelites, while he cries, "O that I were made judge in the land, that every man that hath suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice." He also vilifies the opposite party when he compares them to Absalom's followers, who "went in their simplicity and they knew not anything." Of course they did not get possession of the government.

There is an educational value in these illustrations which should not be overlooked. The hearer gains a better acquaintance with the Bible by such incidental references. In this day, when many hearers