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The Use of Illustrations in Sermons

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THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS
IN SERMONS

Table of Contents

Outline-----111

 A Thesis Presented to----- 1

 I. The Faculty of Concordia Seminary----- 4

 II. Department of Practical Theology----- 12

 III. The Sources of Illustrations----- 20

 IV. The Employers of Illustrations and
 Samples of Their Illustrations----- 28

 V. The Object of Illustrations----- 46

 In Partial Fulfillment
 Bibliography----- 49

 of the Requirements for the Degree
 Bachelor of Divinity

by

Norman L. Wolff

October 1944.

Approved by

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Trust-Boy

The Use of Illustrations in Sermons

Table of Contents

Outline----- (Outline) -----111

The preaching of the "law" and the "gospel" 1

1. The Need of Illustrations in Sermons--- 4

11. The Kinds of Illustrations----- 12

111. The Sources of Illustrations----- 20

1v. The Employers of Illustrations and their the knowledge of Samples of Their Illustrations----- 28

v. The Object of Illustrations----- 46

Bibliography----- 49

Now, if the Lord Jesus made such an extensive use of illustrations to teach men the way to God and to eternal life, it is proper for all other preachers and teachers of the Word to employ them.

This paper has the object of setting forth the subject: The use of illustrations in sermons.

- 1. There is a need for illustrations in sermons.
 - A. it is necessary but not absolutely to have illustrations in sermons.
 - B. it is expedient.
 - C. As the Saviour found it necessary to use them, so should all other preachers be conscious of this need.

2. Which are the kinds of illustrations?

A. Picturesque word.

B. Simile.

C. Metaphor.

D. Parable.

E. Proverb.

The Use Of Illustrations in Sermons

(Outline)

The preaching of the "law" and the "testimony" is the business of the preacher.

The Law and the Gospel must be preached that men understand.

When Jesus sojourned among men, He taught them the knowledge of salvation. His preaching awakened a response in His hearers. Why? It was because He spoke to them in a way that they could understand. His profuse engagement of illustrations made His sermons and teachings comprehensible to His hearers.

Now, if the Lord Jesus made such an extensive use of illustrations to teach men the way to God and to eternal life, it is proper for all other preachers and teachers of the Word to employ them.

This paper has the object of setting forth the subject:

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A. It is necessary but not absolutely to have illustrations in sermons.

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2. Which are the kinds of illustrations?

- A. Picturesque word.
- B. Simile.
- C. Metaphor.
- D. Parable.
- E. True story.
- F. Proverb.
 - 1. Historical.
 - 11. Metaphorical.

3. There are various sources of illustrations.

- A. Bible.
- B. Hymnology.
- C. Pastor's personal experience.
- D. Current events.
- E. Nature.
- F. History.
 - 1. Church.
 - 11. Secular.

4. Who are the employers of illustrations and some samples of their illustrations?

- A. Employers of illustrations are:
 - 1. The Master Preacher.
 - 11. Those divinely inspired.
 - 111. Those not divinely inspired.
- B. Samples of their illustrations.
 - 1. By the Master Preacher.
 - 11. By those divinely inspired.
 - 111. By those not divinely inspired.

5. What is the object of illustrations?

- A. The difference between the need of a thing and the object of a thing must be noted.
- B. The object stated from a negative viewpoint.
- C. The object determined from a positive viewpoint.

1. Is-8:20; 2. Ibid. 1:23; 3. Ibid. 1:23; 4. Ibid. 1:23; 5. Romans 10:17; 6. 1 Cor-2:14; 7. Phil. 2:14; 8. Ibid. 2:14; 9. Ibid. 1:23; 10. St. John 6:45.

word, as outlined in the Holy Scriptures.

When Jesus sojourned among men, He taught them the knowledge of salvation, by preaching His word to them. His redeeming love opened the "gate of heaven" for them. His preaching awakened a response in his hearers, "for the common people

THE USE OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN SERMONS

Introduction

The preaching of the "law"¹ and the "testimony"² is the business of the preacher. Its objective is to lead men to the conviction of their sins, and to direct them for their forgiveness to Christ Jesus, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world".³ To attain this soul-saving purpose of preaching, the Lord Jesus commanded the proclamation of "the word of truth",⁴ "for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God".⁵

The Law and the Gospel, the two great principles of the Holy Bible, must be preached that men understand. In his unconverted state, man is spiritually blind and dead, "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God".⁶ The non-christian has no true respect for God's holy will and cares not for His gracious will. "The word of life"⁷ to the unconverted heart is either "foolishness"⁸ or a "stumbling block".⁹ The unbeliever must be "taught of God"¹⁰ thru His

1. Is. 8:20; 2. Ibid. 8:20; 3. St. John 1:29; 4. 2Cor. 6:7;
5. Romans 10:17; 6. 1 Cor. 2:14; 7. Phil. 2:16; 8. 1 Cor. 1:23;
9. Ibid. 1:23; 10. St. John 6:45.

11. Genesis 22:17; 12. Mark 12:37; 13. Matthew 13:18;
14. Ibid. 13:31; 15. Ibid. 13:33; 16. Ibid. 13:44; 17. Ibid.
13:46; 18. St. John 3:2.

word, as outlined in the Holy Scriptures.

When Jesus sojourned among men, He taught them the knowledge of salvation, by preaching His word to them. His redeeming love opened the "gate of heaven"¹¹ for them. His preaching awakened a response in His hearers, "for the common people heard Him gladly".¹² Why did the fisherman, the tax collector, the housewife, and others of humble standing love to hear Him preach? It was because He spake to them in a way, that they could understand. His profuse engagement of illustrations made His sermons and teachings comprehensible to His hearers. His relation of parables illustrated that which He wanted the people to know and believe. The parables of "the sower",¹³ of "the mustard seed",¹⁴ of the "leaven",¹⁵ of the "treasure hid in the field",¹⁶ of "the pearl of great price",¹⁷ tell of commonplace things known to all men, but when employed by the Lord Jesus Christ, they become the pictures which convey the message of salvation to their hearts.

Now, if the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Teacher come from God",¹⁸ made such an extensive use of illustrations to teach men the way to God and eternal life, it is proper for all other preachers and teachers of the Word to employ illustrations in their sermons, that their hearers too may arrive at a fuller and deeper understanding of their salvation thru

11. Genesis 28:17; 12. Mark 12:37; 13. Matthew 13:18;
14. Ibid. 13:31; 15. Ibid. 13:33; 16. Ibid. 13:44; 17. Ibid.
13:46; 18. St. John 3:2.

Beholdest thou the mote that is in thine brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye"? 25

employed these metaphors, as illustrations. They were the

The Need of Illustrations in Sermons

"windows" of His sermon thru which the light of His word

The use of illustrations in sermons is necessary but not
absolutely. Divine Truth can and may be taught without the
of illustrations. Although, the Saviour thruout the greater
part of His prophetic office used illustrations in His preach-

ing, for "without a parable spake He not unto them", 20 there

were occasions when He did speak especially to the twelve
without their employment. "When Jesus knew that His hour was

come that He should depart out of this world", 21 He defi-

nately tells His disciples of His crucifixion and resurrec-

tion on three different times without illustrating His re-

marks. Then, the Lord informs His apostles, that "He must go

to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and the

chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised on

the third day". 22 The forgoing indicates, that it is not

entirely necessary to use illustrations yet it is expedient.

The Saviour found it so.

According to Dawson C. Byran, in His Sermon on the Mount,

Jesus used "fifty six metaphors". Why did Jesus used so many

metaphors? Why did He employ metaphors as "ye are the salt

of the earth", 24 "ye are the light of the world", "why

20. Matthew 13:34; 21. St. John 13:1; 22. Matthew 16:21;

23. Dawson C. Byran, The Art of Illustrating Sermons, "The

power of the metaphor", pp. 55-56;

24. Matthew 5:13; 25. Ibid 5:14.

26. Matt. 7:3; 27. 2 Cor-4:6; 28. Eph-4:12; 29. Peter 3:18;

30. Acts 20:32.

beholdest thou the mote that is in thine brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye"? 26 He employed these metaphors, as illustrations. They were the "windows" of His sermon thru which the light of His word shined into the hearts of His hearers," to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".27

Now, as Jesus realised the need of "windows" in His Sermon on the Mount, so should all preachers of the Word be conscious of this necessity. The informed preacher keeps in mind that all his preaching and teaching is for the "perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ".28 Accordingly, he will write a sermon, that will indoctrinate, or reprove, or correct, or instruct the hearer, that he "may grow in grace and in the knowledge of" his "Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ",29 that he may receive "an inheritance among all them that are sanctified".30 Although, his sermon has these important phases, yet it may lack "windows". In order not to forget to put "windows" in his sermon, the preacher should bear in mind that the construction of a sermon is much like the building of an house. There are buildings without windows, constructed so purposely. But an house to be used for a family dwelling must have windows. Of what value to a family is an house without windows? By way of necessity a family could live

31. Genesis 1:16; 32. 2 Cor. 4:6.

26. Matt. 7:3; 27. 2 Cor-4:6; 28. Eph-4:12; 2. Peter 3:18;
30. Acts 20:32.

in such an house, even though, it is as dark as a tomb, but not with comfort or happiness. Such an house too could have all modern conveniences, its rooms furnished with the best of furniture, its floors carpeted with the finest oriental rugs. Its occupants might too be aware that the house contained the best of everything, but because of the lack of windows would be unable to enjoy the conveniences and comfort it offered. To avoid these conditions, the carpenter builds windows into the house which permits the light to enter from every side. When God created the world, He "made two great lights",³¹ and lesser lights, the myriad of stars, to illuminate it, that man could behold its magnitude and glory, over which the Creator made him, overseer. Now, if the Almighty Maker found it necessary to illuminate the world, by "commanding the light to shine out of darkness",³² that man may enjoy its usefulness, as fully as possible, and if the carpenter constructs the house with plenty of windows to light it, it is just as necessary for the preacher to build his sermon with enough "windows" or "lights" that his message may be properly lighted for all who have come to hear his message. The "windows" or "lights" of his sermon are his illustrations. But what creates the need of illustrations in sermons?

There are several considerations. These are the intelligence of the congregation, its secular and spiritual educa-

31. Genesis 1:16; 32. 2 Cor. 4:6.

33. Schwinkel Lectures, Psychology, Summer School, pastors, 1938.

tion, and its physical make-up. These categories of hearers present various problems deserving of careful attention.

The intelligence of the various members of a congregation is not alike. The measuring scale whereby the Intelligence Quotient of the human mind is measured ranges "from zero to one hundred and fifty plus".³³ It is probable that the intelligence of the average congregation ranges from 84 to 132. A person having an I.Q. of 84 is considered normally intelligent, whilst a person possessing an I.Q. of 132 is considered a person of superior intelligence. Undoubtedly, the person having an I.Q. of 132 has greater power of comprehension than a person registering an I.Q. of 84. But, how about such who have an I.Q. ranging from 70 to 84, which indicates that they are below normal intelligence but above moron classification. It is difficult to say how many people of the average congregation belong to the 70-84 type. It is safe to say that most congregations have some members belonging to this category. Accordingly, the preacher must take these people into consideration, as he preaches to them, that they too may get their portion of the grace of God, for the salvation of their souls. Even as, the 70-84 group presents a preaching problem for the preacher, that they may understand, so too do the people of moron classification, only to greater degree. Morons are also in need of salvation and should be given careful consideration, for Christ died also for them.

33. Behwinkel Lectures, Psychology, Summer School, pastors, 1938.

of Idiots and imbeciles, whose I.Q. ranges from 0 to 50 do not belong to the rank and file of hearers. To minister to these unfortunate people by way of preaching is impossible. They are served in other ways. In addition, to the above mentioned classes, there are those hearers who are blessed with superior intelligence, whose I.Q. ranges from 132 to 150 plus. These people are the most capable hearers of all, for they have the greater power of comprehension. But it matters not whether the hearer is highly intelligent, normally intelligent, sub-normally intelligent, his attendance at Divine Service is an indication that he has come to hear the Word of God. But he must hear understandingly and believingly, if he is to hear profitably.

Now as, all hearers are not equally intelligent, so too they are not equally educated. Some are highly educated, not a few have a mediocre education, whilst some have little or no education. Although, they stand not on the same level, as far as their education is concerned, yet, when they come to church they are on the same ground, for they are all hearers of the Word. There is no doubt, there was a great difference between the education of Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria. Yet, Christ taught both of them His Word. He helped them to grasp His teachings by the use of illustrations. In the case of Nicodemus, He used the illustration of the "wind", blowing here, there, and everywhere; and in the case of the woman

35. St. John 4:14; 36. St. John 3:10; 37. Phil. 3:10
38. Eph. 3:15-19.
34. St. John 3:8.

of Samaria, He employed the illustration of "Jacob's well".³⁵

If it is imperative to consider the secular education of the hearer, it is more important to determine his spiritual knowledge and understanding. Christ's question to Nicodemus, "art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things",³⁶ should remind the preacher not to suppose too much of his hearers, as far as their Scripture knowledge is concerned. It is true that some have had the opportunity to acquire a fine biblical education, for they had the advantages of the family altar, attended a parochial school, and came to Sunday school regularly. Others, however, did not have these favourable benefits. Will these people with the lesser spiritual education "know Christ, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering",³⁷ to the same degree, as those with the better knowledge of the Word of God? Must not the preacher present his message in such a manner, that they too understand thoroughly, that they may "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; "that" they "being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that" they "may be filled with all the fulness of God".³⁸

35. St. John 4:6; 36. St. John 3:10; 37. Phil. 3:10
38. Eph. 3:16-19.

10
11

To achieve this end, the preacher must use illustrations that the gist of his sermon may touch the hearts of all his hearers.

In addition, to considering the intellectuality and the secular and the spiritual knowledge of the hearers of a sermon, the physical make-up of the congregation must not be overlooked. A congregation consists of "old and young and middle aged people, where there are working men and men of leisure, dull men and sharp men, practised worldlings and spiritual and guileless men; in fact all sorts of men".³⁹ To preach to adults, youths, and children at the same time is a difficult task, for it requires the preacher to touch all of them with his message. If the preacher can get the children to understand, he can be almost certain that his sermon has been understood by the older members of his congregation. But how can a child not acquainted with theological terms and big words be made to understand? By way of illustration. When the child begins public school, it is taught thru illustrations. The school is provided with charts, pictures, maps and other devices to enable the child to understand and to think. It is hardly possible for a preacher to take such illustrative material into the pulpit, to teach the children the lesson of the sermon. He must have other means to quicken their understanding and attention: illustrations take the place of these devices. If the preacher illustrates his sermon that the child can understand

39. Consult A.S. Hoyt, D.D., "The laws for the use of illustration", The Work of Preaching, p 268.

he can be certain that the older members also understood. Of course, this does not mean that all will hear alike profitably, for as there are degrees of intelligence and of secular and spiritual knowledge, there too will be degrees of profit for the hearers. But, it should be so, that everyone, man, woman, and child receive his or her portion of the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation".⁴⁰

Now, if preaching must be understood by the hearer to profit him and illustrations are a means to help him to understand, the preacher should recognise the need of illustrations in his sermons, and should use them extensively. But what kind of illustrations should he use? This will now be answered in part two of this paper.

40. Romans 1:16.

The picturesque word must not be understood literally, but figuratively. To illustrate, one may say, "his hands flew up and down on the keyboard of the piano". Taken literally, this expression would mean that the hands of the pianist had wings, which moved up and down on the keyboard of the piano, as a bird in flight. This same idea could be stated, "his hands moved quickly up and down on the keyboard". It is evident, that the expression "flew" is more graphic than the words, "moved quickly". To illustrate furthermore, one may say, "he was scared stiff".

The Kinds of Illustrations

If illustrations are needed in sermons to throw light upon the message, that it may be understood, it is of great value to know the kinds or types of illustrations, which best serve this purpose. There are various kinds of illustrations. They are the picturesque word, simile, metaphor, true story, and proverb. The nature of these illustrations is noted by a description or definition of them.

What is a picturesque word? It is a word which presents an idea to the mind in a striking manner. It is a verbal photograph of any life situation. The picturesque word must not be understood literally, but figuratively. To illustrate, one may say, "his hands flew up and down on the keyboard of the piano". Taken literally, this expression would mean that the hands of the pianist had wings, which moved up and down on the keyboard of the piano, as a bird in flight. This same idea could be stated, "his hands moved quickly up and down on the keyboard". It is evident, that the expression "flew" is more graphic than the words, "moved quickly". To illustrate furthermore, one may say, "he was scared stiff".

which is more effective than saying, "he was badly frightened". Or one may say, "the earth is marred and scarred with the graves of men", which is more powerful than stating, "the earth is full of the graves of men". It is evident that picturesque words give "vitality and color",¹ to one's speech. It takes thought and practice to be efficient in the use of picturesque words. But when the preacher has learned the art of using them, his message will be more striking and appealing to his congregation.

Another kind of illustration is the simile. A simile is a "rhetorical figure expressing comparison or likeness by the use of such terms as like, as, so, etc."² Examples of common similes are, "he acted like a beast"; "stingy as a miser", "bitter as gall", "sour as vinegar", "sweet as sugar", "light as a feather", and are used in ordinary conversation.

This type of illustration is found extensively in the Holy Writings. A few biblical similes are the following: "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away",³ "so fight I not as one that beateth the air",⁴ "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of

1. J.H.C. Fritz, D.D., The Preacher's Manual, Concordia Pulpit, 1942, vol. XIII, p. 44.
2. Frank H. Vizetelly, Litt. D., LL.D., The Standard Desk Dictionary, new edition, Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1936, p. 724.
3. Psalm 1:4.
4. 1 Cor. 9:26.

5. 1 Cor. 13:1; 6. St. Matthew 13:12; 7. 1 Cor. 13:12; 8. 1 Cor. 13:12; 9. 1 Cor. 13:12; 10. 1 Cor. 13:12; 11. 1 Cor. 13:12; 12. 1 Cor. 13:12; 13. 1 Cor. 13:12; 14. St. John 8:12; 15. 1 Cor. 13:12; 16. 1 Cor. 13:12.

mustard seed",⁵ "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking costly pearls",⁶ "ye are like unto a whited sepulchre".⁷

Although, it is easier to employ the simile than the picturesque word, the simile is as illustrative as the picturesque word. The employment of the simile, as an illustration should cause the preacher no difficulty.

Like the picturesque word and simile, the metaphor is also used as an illustration. But, what is a metaphor? A metaphor is a "figure of speech in which one object is likened to another by speaking of it as if it were that other. It is distinguished from the simile by not employing any word of comparison, such as 'like' or 'as'".⁸ The Bible is rich in metaphors. The best way to get acquainted with this type of illustration is to note a few biblical metaphors, such as, "Moab is my washpot",⁹ "and they remembered that God was their rock",¹⁰ "the Lord is a sun and a shield",¹¹ "they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence",¹² "her house is the way to hell",¹³ "I am the bread of life",¹⁴ "I am the door",¹⁵ "I am the good shepherd".¹⁶

The parable is also a kind of illustration. But what is a parable? Taylor gives the following definition of it.

life, used for the purpose of conveying spiritual truth to the mind of the hearer.¹⁷

5. St. Matthew 13:31; 6. St. Matthew 13:45; 7. St. Matthew 23:23
8. Frank H. Vizetelly, op. cit., p. 499;
9. Ps. 108:9; 10. Ps. 78:35; 11. Ps. 84:11; 12. Proverbs 4:17;
13. Proverbs 7:13; 14. St. John 6:35; 15. St. John 10:9;
16. Ibid. 10:11.

In the New Testament, two Greek words have been rendered by this one English term. The one of these, *paroimia*, is translated "proverb". Literally, it signifies "something by the way"; and in its secondary sense it denotes a figurative discourse or dark saying, in which more is meant than meets the ear, and into which valuable though hidden meaning has been packed. The other more common term, *parabole*, which is simply the English word in Greek letters. It comes from a verb which signifies to throw or place side by side, and denotes a placing one thing besides another for the purpose of comparison, or, more generally, an utterance which involves a comparison. It is used by the sacred writers both in a wider and in a narrower sense. In the wider, it is employed sometimes to denote an adage, or proverb properly so called; 1 sometimes to signify a sentiment so briefly and darkly worded as not to be understood; 2 sometimes to designate a pithy instruction couched in the form of an aphorism; 3 sometimes to describe a lesson which is confirmed by a simile drawn from nature. 4 But, in its more restricted sense, it is the name given to a connected narrative, whether of events in human life, or of a process in nature, by which some great spiritual truth is illustrated or enforced. It is not a mere simile, which may be expressed in a single clause; or even a detailed comparison of one thing to another; but a little history, which might be read merely for its own sake, but which, as used by the Great Teacher, was made a vehicle of instruction or warning, of comfort or condemnation. The little girl was very near the mark, when she said a parable is "an earthly story with an heavenly meaning"; and we may not be far wrong if we define it to be a narrative true to nature or to life, used for the purpose of conveying spiritual truth to the mind of the hearer. 17

17. William M. Taylor, D.D., LL.D., The Parables of Our Saviour, Introductory, pp. 1-2.

18. Dr. J. S. C. Frits, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

In connection with Taylor's definition of a parable, it may be well to consider another reference concerning it.

Dr. Fritz points out in "The Preacher's Manual", as follows:

Bible students distinguish between the typical or prefigurative and the symbolic or emblematic parable. The prefigurative parables in the New Testament are found in the narratives of the Good Samaritan, of a Certain Rich Man, of the Rich Man and Lazarus. As Bugge suggests, the subject-matter and doctrine lie on the same plane, belong to the same sphere. These parables present characters, as representatives of the religious or religio-moral relation, which is to convey to the hearers a lesson for imitation or admonition. To the symbolic parables belong, e.g., the story of the laborers in the Vineyard, of the Great Supper, and of the Prodigal Son. Here, the subject matter and the doctrinal instruction belong, respectively, in a different domain, inasmuch, as an event which takes place in the realm of human experience or even in nature is emblematic of a certain religious or a religio-moral conception. A special group within the symbolic parables are the nature parables. Of these, these are seven in number in the New Testament, the parables of the Sower, of the Tares among the wheat, of the Mustard Seed, of the Fig Tree, of the Growing Seed (Mark 4), of the Net of Fishes. The material is sought in processes that belong to the natural world". 18

The Bible has many parables. The greater number of them are in the New Testament. In themselves, all of them are subject matter for sermons. However, they too serve well for illustrative purposes. In view of the fact, that they present their message in an illustrative manner, the

19. Frank, op. cit., p. 627.
20. Popular Commentary, New Edition, Proverbs, Intro. p. 111.
21. Ibid. Proverbs, Intro. p. 111.

preacher may use them as they are for illustrations. He may introduce them as illustrations to his hearers, by such remarks, as is illustrated in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, etc.

Another kind of illustration is the true story. True stories are incidents or events which occur in daily life. They may be stories, which present various phases of human conduct in different places under divers circumstances. Many interesting stories have come out of the present war. There are stories of heroism, of distress, of devotion to God and fellowman, of loyalty, of sacrifice, of attendance, to duty, of responsibility, of rescue, of confession, of faith and the like. These stories, when used as illustrations at the right time, and in the proper way in the sermon are of great value to the preacher in the presentation of his message.

Proverbs may too be used as illustrations. As such, a proverb presents, "homely truth in condensed, practical form".¹⁹ There are a variety of proverbs. Mention is made of only two types, "the historical, and metaphorical proverbs".²⁰

The "historical proverb",²¹ when used illustratively, alludes to some historical event or famous statement made "at a momentous occasion", which "has passed into a

19. Frank H. Vizetelly, Litt.D., LL.D., *op. cit.* p. 627.

20. *Popular Commentary, New Edition, Proverbs, Intro.* p. III.

21. *ibid.* Proverbs, *Intro.* p. III.

22. James C. Fernald, L.H.D., *English Synonyms and Antonyms*, p. 52.

popular saying",²² or which expresses "some general statement or idea".²³ To illustrate: The situation of a person performing an office not associated with his regular station in life, may be set forth by the proverb, "is Saul among the prophets"²⁴ Or, the unpopularity of a minister among his own people, or in his home congregation may be demonstrated by the Lord's saying, "no prophet is accepted in his own country".²⁵

"The metaphorical proverb",²⁶ when used illustratively "enunciates some moral truth under a figure drawn from nature or life".²⁷ An example of the "metaphorical proverb"²⁸ is "in vain the net is spread in the eyes of any bird".²⁹ Surely, this proverb illustrates the truth, that the alert christian is not trapped by the snares of Satan, no matter how skillfully he baits them with his wicked inducements. In a similar way, other historical and metaphorical proverbs may be used.

The above types of illustrations are different from one another; yet all may be used with good taste at the right time. Hence, it may be said, "any comparison, analogy, instance, example, tale, anecdote, or the like which serves let light upon a subject may be called an illustration, this word in its widest use including all the rest".³⁰

²² Popular Commentary, new edition, Pro., Intro. p. III.
²³ Ibid.; ²⁴ 1 Samuel 10:12; ²⁵ St. Luke 4:23.
²⁶ Popular Commentary, new edition, Pro., Intro. p. III.
²⁷ Ibid.; ²⁸ Ibid.; ²⁹ Proverbs 1:17.
³⁰ James C. Fernald, L.H.D., English Synonyms and Antonyms, p. 52.

It takes study and practice, however, to determine when and how to use them. But before illustrations can be used, they must first be found. Where, then, may good illustrations be found? This question is answered in part three of this paper, under the heading, the source of illustrations.

He must know of these sources, not in a general but in a specific way. He too will classify his illustrations, gleaned from the various sources, according to importance, and fitness for desirable practical purposes.

The foremost source of illustrations is the Holy Bible. Illustrations taken from the Bible are the best illustrations, for their author is the Holy Ghost. To illustrate with biblical illustrations is to illustrate, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth".¹ Biblical illustrations are reliable and trustworthy, for they are the word of God, "which cannot be broken",² and "which liveth and abideth forever".³ Furthermore, biblical illustrations are colorful and striking. They are more than "windows" and "lights" to a sermon. They are "searchlights" for they penetrate the darkness of unbelief. When Jesus related the "Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen",⁴ the chief priests and pharisees "perceived that He spake of them".⁵ But, "how can

1. 1 Cor. 2:13; 2. St. John 10:36; 3. 1 Peter 1:23; 4. St. Matthew 21:33-46; 5. Ibid. 21:46.

The Sources of Illustrations

Where may good illustrations be found? There are a number of sources, which provide the preacher with excellent illustrations. He must know of these sources, not in a general but in a specific way. He too will classify his illustrations, gleaned from the various sources, according to importance, and fitness for desirable practical purposes.

The foremost source of illustrations is the Holy Bible. Illustrations taken from the Bible are the best illustrations, for their author is the Holy Ghost. To illustrate with biblical illustrations is to illustrate, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth".¹ Biblical illustrations are reliable and trustworthy, for they are the word of God, "which cannot be broken",² and "which liveth and abideth forever".³ Furthermore, biblical illustrations are colorful and striking. They are more than "windows" and "lights" to a sermon. They are "searchlights" for they penetrate the darkness of unbelief. When Jesus related the "Parable of the Wicked Husbandman",⁴ the chief priests and pharisees "perceived that He spake of them".⁵ But, "how can

1. 1 Cor. 2:13; 2. St. John 10:35; 3. 1 Peter 1:23;
 4. St. Matthew 21:33-46; 5. Ibid. 21:45.

these things be".⁶ It is because "the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than a twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart".⁷ Although, the Bible is the best source of illustrations, they will not be available to the preacher, unless he searches the Bible for them. The divine injunction, "search the Scriptures"⁸ takes in a study of the sacred text also for illustrations. To make such a search requires an analysis of every book of the Bible, Old and New Testament. Not all books of the Bible are rich in illustrative material to the same degree. A comparison of the books of Law and History of the O.T. with the books of Poetry and Prophecy of the O.T. shows the latter group excels the former in these things. The books of Poetry and Prophecy are replete with picturesque words, similes and metaphors. Nevertheless, the Saviour illustrates His crucifixion to Nicodemus by the historical event, that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up".⁹ On another occasion, the Lord Jesus illustrates the world conditions, at His second coming by the remark that they would be as they were "in the days of Noe".¹⁰ These examples taken from the books of

6. St. John 3:9; 7 Hebrews 4:12; 8. St. John 5:39;
9. St. John 3:14; 10 St. Luke 17:26.

in Brighton, England,
discovered the cause of
plexity, and became a real

Law show that these books also provide fine illustrative material. But, what has the New Testament to offer in regard to illustrations?

Like the Old Testament, the New Testament has its division of books. They are the Biographical Books, the Pauline Epistles, the General Epistles, and the Prophetical Book. It is certain that the Biographical Books have the most illustrative material, for they contain the Parables of Jesus. The other books do not come far behind for illustrative material, for they are well stocked with picturesque words, similes and metaphors. It must also be noted that the New Testament surpasses the Old Testament in Parables which suggests their value for illustrative purposes, considering the fact, that they are in themselves highly illustrative.

Later on, in this paper samples of illustrations gleaned from both Testaments will be listed.

Another source of illustrations is hymnology. There are thousands of christian hymns. Every hymn has a story connected with it. For example, the story associated with the beautiful hymn, "Just as I am", by Charlotte Elliot is:

Though a daughter of the Church, brought up in a pious home, it seems that Miss Elliot had never found true peace with God. Like so many other seeking souls in all ages, she felt that men must do something themselves to win salvation, instead of coming to Christ as helpless sinners and finding complete redemption in Him. When Dr. Caesar Malan, the noted Swiss preacher of Geneva, came to visit the Elliot home in Brighton, England, in 1822, he soon discovered the cause of her spiritual perplexity, and became a real evangelical guide

and counsellor. "You have nothing of merit to bring to God", he told her "You must come just as you are, a sinner, to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world".¹¹

Other hymns have their. These stories deal with all phases of Christian experience, of joy, sadness, faith, temptation surrender to Christ, and combat with the devil. Every story may be used as an illustration and in a very delightful way. It depends what the preacher wishes to illustrate. If, he would illustrate the truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin",¹² he may quote the hymn verse:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.¹³

How beautiful!

The pastor's personal experience with people and his knowledge of them is another source of illustrations. His daily contact with people of all types and classes gives him occasion to study human nature in its unconverted and regenerated state. If, he is a student of human nature and a keen observer he will study the personality and character of every person with whom he deals. He will note that the

and financial world, and whatsoever has to do with daily life.

- 11. Ernest Edwin Hyden, The Story of Our Hymns, pp.276-277;
- 12. 1 John 1:7;
- 13. Ludwig von Zinzendorf, Tr., John Wesley, The Lutheran Hymnal, Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness, 371, v.1.

14. Acts 24:25; 15. Acts 8:27; 16. Ibid. 8:29;
17. Galatians 6:10; 18. 1 Cor. 13:27.

conduct of the unconverted will be different than that of a Christian. "Felix trembled", when Paul spoke to him of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come",¹⁴ but the "man of Ethiopia",¹⁵ after his contact with Peter "went on his way rejoicing"¹⁶.

But the pastor does not deal with non-Christians only, but ministers to Christians also. Accordingly, he has the behaviour of his parishioner frequently under observation, not in the spirit of the F.B.I., but in the spirit of the pastoral heart. Therefore, he studies his member, as he behaves at church, in his home, on occasions of joy, such as a wedding, a baptism, a family reunion, in time of sorrow, the death of a loved one, in the hour of misfortune, in his association with his fellowmen, who may be those of "the household of faith",¹⁷ or those not of "the body of Christ".¹⁸ Care, however, should be exercised that illustrations taken from the field of pastoral experience do not divulge the occasion, when they occurred or the person or persons concerned. Such a mistake would defeat the purpose of the illustration.

Current events serve as fine illustrations. They made selected from the medical, industrial, musical, agricultural, and financial world, and whatsoever has to do with daily life. Also, in this connection, the biographies of great men should be forgotten. The stories of their lives relate outstanding

14. Acts 24:25; 15. Acts 8:27; 16. ibid. 8:39;
17. Galatians 6:10; 18. 1 Cor. 12:27.

achievements and dismal disappointments, heights of joy and depths of sorrow, perseverances and sacrifices, blessings and tribulations, loyalties and disloyalties, strength and weakness of character. To select illustrations from this world source requires the pastor to be acquainted with the times in which he lives, and at the same time to be an extensive reader. All these phases of Church and Secular History furnish

Nature is another source of illustrations. Plant and animal life furnish many of them. The Saviour presented His teachings by illustrations about such things as the lilies of the field, the fowls of the air, the lightning, the light, the salt, the leaven, the bread, the water, the fig tree, the soil, the vine, the branches, the fox, the wolves, the vipers, the hen and chickens, and the like. Other and other Christians

know History is the final source of illustrations to be considered. It is of two kinds. They are church and secular.

Church History, especially that portion of it written by the "holy men of God, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost",¹⁹

excels Secular History, as a source of illustrations. See,

Church History is the record of the Church's march thru the ages, from generation to generation. It is the story of its origin, its promotion, its depression, its triumphs over sin and wickedness, its blessedness, its heroes, its influence for good, its certainty of existence to the end of time.

19. Frank B. Vinton, M.A., Ph.D., pp. 211, p. 363.

Similarly, Secular History is the "record of past events especially of those in which man has taken part".²⁰ It concerns the nations of the world, as to their origin, as to their governments, as to their contributions to the world, as to their wars, as to their loyalty or disloyalty to God, as to their decline, fall and disintegration.

All these phases of Church and Secular History furnish illustrations for sermons. It depends upon that which, the preacher desires to illustrate. If, he speaks about the horror of persecution of the Church let him illustrate it by cases of persecution. If, he preaches of the steadfastness and loyalty of sincere Christians to God and the Scriptures, let him illustrate these principles out of the lives of Paul, Huss, Wickcliffe, Luther, Walther and other Christians known to possess these qualities. A similar procedure is followed as to the choice of illustrations selected from Secular History. Care, however, should be exercised in the choice of illustrations from these sources as to their authenticity, as to the time and place of their occurrence, and as to the people involved.

Now if, these sources of illustrations are kept in mind, there should be no dearth or difficulty in the acquirement of ample supply of them. The great abundance of them ought to incite a desire to use them frequently and judiciously.

20. Frank H. Vizetelly, Litt.D., LL.D., *op.cit.*, p.383.

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Figuresque words, employed by Christ according to the Gospels.

The Employers of Illustrations and Samples of their Illustrations

The employers of illustrations: Who are they? As far this paper is concerned, they are the preachers of the Word of God. A simple classification of them would be: The Master Preacher, the divinely inspired preachers, and those not divinely inspired.

The Master Preacher of the Word is the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Teacher come from God",1 Who has "in all things the pre-eminence"2 and "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge".3 The divinely inspired preachers of the Word are the prophets, apostles and evangelists, "the holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".4 Those not divinely inspired are all other Christian preachers, whose hearts are "sanctified by the Word of God and prayer",5 and who have the divinely prescribed qualification, "apt to teach",6 that they "may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayer".7

Some samples of the illustrations of these preachers now follow.

- 1. John 3:2; 2. Colossians 1:18; 3. Colossians 2:3; 4. 2 Peter 1:21; 5. 1 Tim. 4:5; 6. 1 Tim. 3:2; 7. Titus 1:9.

Matthew 13:31 The Kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed. Matthew 25:32 As a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Luke 13:34 As a hen doth gather her brood. Luke 18:11 That I am not as other men are.

**icturesque words, employed by Christ according to
the Gospels.**

Matthew	4:19	<u>fishers of men</u>
Matthew	6:26	Behold the fowls of the air: for they <u>sow not</u> , neither do they <u>reap</u> , nor <u>gather</u> into barns.
Matthew	7:3	And why beholdest thou the <u>mote</u> that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the <u>beam</u> that is in thine own eye. Go rather to the <u>lost sheep</u> of Israel.
Matthew	10:6	Go rather to the <u>lost sheep</u> of Israel.
Matthew	23:24	<u>Strain at a gnat</u> and <u>swallow</u> <u>a camel</u> .
Mark	3:17	He surnamed them <u>thunders</u> , which is, the sons of thunder.
Mark	10:25	It is easier for a camel to <u>go thru the eye of a needle</u> which <u>devour widows' houses</u> .
Mark	12:40	The <u>stones</u> would immediately <u>cry out</u> .
Luke	19:40	The <u>stones</u> would immediately <u>cry out</u> .
John	1:42	<u>Cephas, a stone</u> .
John	2:19	Destroy this <u>temple</u> and in three days I will build it up. He was a <u>burning and shining</u> <u>light</u> .
John	6:27	But for the <u>meat</u> which endureth unto everlasting life.
John	7:38	Out of his belly shall <u>flow</u> <u>rivers of living water</u> .
John	15:1	I am the true <u>vine</u> .
John	15:2	Every <u>branch</u> that beareth.
John	21:15	<u>Feed my lambs</u> .
John	21:16	<u>Feed my sheep</u> .

Similes employed by Christ according to the Gospels

Matthew	10:16	Wise as <u>serpents</u> , harmless as <u>does</u> .
Matthew	11:16	<u>Like unto children</u> sitting in the market place.
Matthew	13:31	The kingdom of God is <u>like</u> <u>to a grain of mustard seed</u> .
Matthew	25:32	As a <u>shepherd</u> divideth his sheep from the goats.
Mark	14:48	Are ye come out <u>as against a thief</u> .
Luke	10:3	As <u>lambs</u> among wolves.
Luke	10:18	As <u>lightning</u> fall from heaven.
Luke	13:34	As a <u>hen</u> doth gather her brood.
Luke	18:11	That I am not <u>as other men are</u> .

Luke 21:35 For as a snare shall it
come on all them.
John 9:9 He is like him.

Metaphors employed by Christ according to the Gospels.

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth.
Matthew 5:14 Ye are the light of the world.
Matthew 7:15 Inwardly they are ravening
wolves.
Matthew 16:18 Upon this rock, I will build
my church and the gates of
hell shall not prevail
against it.
Matthew 16:19 I will give thee the keys
of the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of
vipers.
Luke 7:24 What went ye out to see?
A reed shaken in the wind.
Luke 11:52 Taken away the key of know-
ledge.
Luke 13:32 Go ye and tell that fox.
John 6:35 The bread of God is He
which cometh down from heaven.
John 6:35 I am the bread of life.
John 8:12 I am the light of the world.
John 10:7 I am the door of the sheep.
John 10:14 I am the good shepherd.
John 15:1 I am the true vine.
John 15:5 I am the vine and ye are the
branches.

Parables employed by Christ according to the Gospels.

The Saviour used many parables in His preaching and teaching. His use of the parables was so extensive, that Matthew makes the comment, "without a parable spake He not unto them".⁸ It is, however, not necessary to enumerate all His parables. To list several, pointing out the point of comparison is sufficient. The illustrative material employed

8. ST. Matthew 12:34.

by the Lord makes the point of comparison stand out. Which of the parables is most important or the most outstanding is a matter of choice. The parables selected for this paper are the following. The Great Supper, Luke 14:16-24. This parable presents the truth, as the man prepared the banquet at no cost to the invited, so the heavenly Father prepared the saving gospel for sinners, "without money and without price".⁹ As the host of the banquet asks the guests to come, to eat, and to be filled, so the Lord invites sinners to believe the Gospel and be saved.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins, Matthew 25:1-13. As the foolish virgins could not borrow oil from the wise virgins to fill their lamps, so the unbeliever cannot be "saved by another's faith".¹⁰ "Everyone must believe for himself".¹¹ Faith is non-transferable.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37. Because the lawyer, the priest, and the Levite lacked brotherly love, they failed to observe the Law, "the royal Law",¹² therefore they were not in, but far from the kingdom of God.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-24. As a father forgives a wayward son, so the heavenly Father forgives every penitent sinner.

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9. Isaiah 55:1;
10. Dr. Martin Luther, A Short Exposition of Small Catechism, p. 72.
11. Ibid.
12. St. James 2:8.

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Matthew 18:23-36.

In this parable, the Saviour gives the point of comparison by the words, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredest me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses". 13

Picturesque words employed by several of the prophets, Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel.

Genesis	4:7	Sin <u>lieth</u> at thy door.
Genesis	5:24	Enoch <u>walked</u> with God.
Genesis	19:24	The Lord <u>rained</u> upon Sodom and Gomorrah <u>brimstone</u> and fire from the Lord out of heaven.
Exodus	10:21	<u>Darkness</u> , which may be felt.
Deut.	28:29	Thou shalt <u>grope</u> at noonday.
Isaiah	24:4	The earth <u>mourneth</u> and <u>fadeth</u> the world <u>languisheth</u> and <u>fadeth</u> away.
Isaiah	24:20	The earth shall <u>reel</u> to and <u>fro</u> like a drunkard.
Jer.	5:8	Everyone <u>peighed</u> after his neighbour's wife.
Ezekiel	16:4	Thou wast not <u>salted</u> .
Ezekiel	36:26	I will take away the <u>stony</u> heart.
Daniel	12:3	They that be wise shall <u>shine</u> as the brightness of the firmament.

Similes selected from the Book of Psalms and of

Proverbs.

Psalms	102:6	I am <u>like a pelican</u> , like an owl, as a sparrow.
Psalms	109:23	I am gone <u>like a shadow</u> , I am tossed up and down <u>as the locust</u> .

Psalm 114:6 Ye mountains, that skipped like rams, and ye little hills like lambs.

Psalm 124:6 Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as prey to their teeth.

Psalm 125:2 As the mountains are around about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people.

Psalm 144:12 That our sons may be full as plants grown in their youth: that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of the palace.

Proverbs 5:19 Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe.

Proverbs 7:22 As an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as the fool to the correction of the stocks.

Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that sent him.

Proverbs 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples in pictures of silver.

Proverbs 25:12 As an earring of gold and as an ornament of fine gold so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.

Metaphors chosen from Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah,

and Amos.

1 Cor. 13:1 I am become as sounding brass, and tinkling cymbal.

Psalm 22:12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me.

1 Thess. 2:7 He is my refuge and my fortress.

Psalm 91:2 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

Ecc. 12:6 The bee that is in the land of Assyria.

Isaiah 7:18 Shall the clay say to him fashioneth it.

Isaiah 45:9 Hear this word, ye king of Bashan.

Amos 4:1 and the second went like a calf, and the third

Picturesque words employed by the Apostles.

Acts	20:28	To <u>feed</u> the church of God.
Romans	7:4	That ye should be <u>married</u> to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.
Romans	12:1	That ye present your bodies a <u>living sacrifice</u> .
1 Cor.	3:6	I have <u>planted</u> , Apollos <u>watered</u> .
Gal.	2:9	James, Cephas and John who seemed to be <u>pillars</u> .
Gal.	3:1	O foolish Galatians who hath <u>bewitched</u> you.
Gal.	4:19	My little children of whom I <u>travail</u> in birth.
Gal.	5:15	If ye <u>bite</u> and <u>devour</u> one another.
Eph.	6:15	And your feet <u>shod</u> with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.
Eph.	6:16	Shall be able to <u>quench</u> all fiery darts of Satan.
Col.	2:2	Their hearts being comforted, being <u>knit</u> together in love.
Col.	4:6	Let your speech be alway with grace, <u>seasoned</u> with salt.
1 Timothy	4:2	Conscience <u>seared</u> with a hot iron.
James	1:26	And <u>bridleth</u> not his tongue.
Rev.	22:13	I am <u>Alpha</u> and <u>Omega</u> .

Similes employed by the Apostles.

Romans	13:13	Let us walk honestly <u>as in the day</u> .
1 Cor.	13:1	I am become <u>as sounding brass</u> and <u>tinkling cymbal</u> .
1 Thess.	5:2	The word cometh <u>as a thief</u> in the night.
1 Thess.	2:7	Even <u>as a nurse</u> cherisheth her children.
1 Thess.	5:3	Destruction cometh upon them <u>as travail</u> a woman with child.
Phil.	3:21	That it may be fashioned <u>like unto his glorious body</u> .
1 Peter	2:5	We also, <u>as lively stones</u> .
1 Peter	4:16	Let none of you suffer <u>as a thief</u> , or <u>as an evil doer</u> , or <u>as a busy body</u> in other mens' business.
Revelation	4:7	And the first beast was <u>like</u> a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third

Other types of illustration

beast had the face as a man and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, even as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings.

and Peter

Rev. 19:6

The Parable of the Olive

This parable presents

of God". 14 It shows that God

Metaphors employed by the Apostles.

Gentile. It teaches the truth

in unbelief that He might be

quoting Heathen Poetry.

Acts 23:3

God shall smite thee, thou whited wall.

1 Cor. 5:6

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

1 Cor. 10:4

That rock was Christ

2 Cor. 3:2

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts.

Eph. 4:14

Every wind of doctrine.

Eph. 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God.

Col. 3:12

Bowels and mercies.

1 Thess. 5:5

Ye are the children of light, the children of the day, we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

Illustrating by way of

1 Cor. 12:13-27
1 Thess. 5:8

Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

1 Peter 2:2

Desire the sincere milk of the word.

2 Peter 2:17

They are wells without water, clouds that are carried with the tempest.

Illustrating from 12 the

Jude 12

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves with fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of the

1 Cor. 9:14-27

Illustrating by quoting

2 Peter 2:17

wind: trees, whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots: raging waves of the seas, foaming out their shame: wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness.

Rev. 22:14

That they may have the right to the tree of life.

Rev. 22:15

Without are dogs.

Other types of illustrations employed by Paul

and Peter. The Parable of the Olive Tree, Romans 11:17-32.

This parable presents "the goodness and severity of God".¹⁴ It shows that God extends His mercy to Jew and Gentile. It teaches the truth, "that God hath concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all".¹⁵

Quoting Heathen Poetry.

Titus 1:12 One of themselves even a prophet of their own said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts and slow bellies'.

Illustrating by way of comparison.

1 Cor. 12:12-27 For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body: so also is Christ. -- Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Illustrating from the athletic games.

1 Cor. 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race---I myself should be a castaway.

Illustrating by quoting a proverb.

2 Peter 2:22 But is happened to them according to the true proverb, 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again: and the sow that was washed to her wallowing'.

14. Romans 12:22;

15. ibid. 12:32.

Besides, selecting examples of illustrations recorded in the Holy Bible, a number of illustrations of other preachers of the Word have also been selected. Accordingly, illustrations employed by Chrysostom, Luther, Spurgeon, McLaren, Walther, Moody, Maier, and Fosdick have been chosen from their sermons and writings. Their illustrations now appear in the order their names have been mentioned.

Illustrations employed by Chrysostom.

As sparks falling upon reeds and hay, changes into its own nature the things so kindled; so also did this man setting upon all make things change over into the truth: like winter torrent, sweeping over all things and overturning every obstacle. And like some champion who wrestles, runs, and boxes too; or some soldier engaged by turns in stroming, fighting on foot, on ship-board; so did he try by turns every form of fight and breathed out fire, and was unapproachable by all; with his single body taking possession of the world, with his single tongue putting all to flight. Not with such force did those many trumpets fall upon the stones of Jericho, and throw them down, as did the sound of this man's voice both dash to earth the stronghold of the devil and bring over to himself those that were against him. And when he had collected a multitude of captives, having armed them, he made them his own army, and by their means conquered. Wonderful was David, who laid Goliath low with a single stone; but if thou wilt examine Paul's achievement, that is child exploit, and great as is the difference between a shepherd and a general, so great the difference thou shalt find here. For this man brought down no Goliath by the hurling of a stone, but by speaking only he scattered the whole array of the devil; as a roaring loin and darting out flame from his tongue so was he found by all irresistible: and bounded everywhere by turns continually: he ran to these, he came to those, he turned about to these, he bounded to others, swifter in attack than the wind; governing the whole world, as though a single house or a single ship; rescuing the

sinking, steadying the dizzied, cheering the sailors, sitting at the tiller, keeping an eye to the prow, tightening the yards, handling an oar, pulling at the mast, watching the sky; being all things in himself, both sailor and pilot, and pilot's mate, and sail and ship; and suffering all things in order to relieve the evil of others. For consider; he endured shipwreck, that he might stay the ship wreck of the world: "a day and a night in the deep", that he might draw it up from the deep of error; he was "in weariness", that he might refresh the weary; he endured smiting that he might heal those that had been smitten of the devil: he passed his time in prison that he might lead forth to light those that were sitting in prison and in darkness; he was "in deaths oft", that he might deliver from grievous deaths; "five times he received forty stripes save one", that he might free those that inflicted them from the scourge of the devil; he was "beaten with rods" that he might bring them under "the rod and staff" of Christ; (psalm 23:4) he was "stoned" that he might deliver them from the senseless stones; he was "in the wilderness", that he might take them out of the wilderness; "in journeying" to stay their wanderings and open the way that leadeth to heaven; he was "in perils of the sea", that he might show the city which is above; "in hunger and thirst" to deliver from a more grievous hunger; "in nakedness" to clothe their unseemliness with the robe of Christ; set upon by the mob to extricate them from the besetment of fiends; he burnt that he might quench the fiery darts of the devil; "thru a window was let down from a wall" to send up from below those that lay prostrate upon the ground. 16

And accordingly, there are many images whereby He brings us into union. Thus if you mark it, He is the "the Head", we are the "body"; can there be any empty interval between the head and the body? He is the "foundation", we a "building"; He is a "Vine" we "branches"; He is Shepherd" we the "sheep"; He is the "way" we, "they that walk therein". 17

16. Chrysostom, Philipp Schaff, D.D., LL.D., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Vol. XII, pp. 396-397.
 17. Ibid. p. 47.

Illustrations employed by Luther.

We must not view the rich man according to his outward conduct; for he is in sheep clothing. His life glitters and shines beautifully, while he tactfully conceals the wolf. 18

For, if I cannot trust him to sustain my body, much less can I trust him to sustain my soul forever. For example, if I cannot trust a person that he will give me a dollar, how can I trust him that he will give me ten? If I cannot expect from a person that he would give me a piece of bread; much less could I have any hope that he would give me a house and yard and the whole would. 19

This, however, the Lord commends, namely, that he did not forget himself, praising nought but his cunning and shrewdness. Just as when a flirt draws the whole world after her and I say: she is a clever flirt, she knows her business. The Lord further concludes that just as the steward is wise and shrewd in his transactions so should we also be wise in obtaining eternal life. 20

Illustrations employed by Spurgeon.

Have you ever heard that pretty fable told by the Persian Saadi moralist? He took up in his hand a piece of scented clay and said to it, "Oh clay, whence hast thou thy perfume"? And the clay said, "I was once a piece of common clay, but they put me for a time in company with a rose, and I drank in its fragrance, and have now become scented clay". Believer, thou too art nothing but a piece of common clay, but if thou liest with the rose of Sharon, if thou hast Jesus in thy company thou wilt be a piece of scented clay and where thou goest, thou wilt smell of him. 21

But although the smiting was a sinful act, the water came forth to show by persecution the church has been made a blessing to the world. The funeral piles of Smithfield have scattered sparks over this land, which have lit up a thousand fires. The smiting of God's gospel rock the

18. Martin Luther, Prof. J.N. Lenker, D.D., Luther's Works, vol. 13, p. 18. 19. Ibid. op. cit., p. 204. 20. Ibid. op. cit., p. 294.
21. C.H. Spurgeon, Spurgeon Memorial Library, pp. 341-342, vol. 2.

church has scattered drops of precious water to lands where else it would never have flowed. It has been by persecution that the seeds of life have been scattered like the seeds which are blown about by the winds from plants which else might have died childless. Persecution takes up the words of God's children, and scatters them abroad, everywhere. Never was there a more significant act performed than when the ashes of Wickliffe were dug up and cast into the river, from whence they were carried to the sea, and then to the shores of every land. So it is with Christ now mystically; He must be scattered abroad, His ashes must be cast to the winds of heaven, that He may give life to distant nations, and that men may hear the truth. 22

I was looking the other day at a glass bee-hive and it was singular to observe the motions of the little creatures inside. Well, now, this world is nothing but a huge bee-hive. God looks down you, and He sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city; you go to your business, your pleasures, your devotions, and your sins; but remember, wherever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade, you can never get away from God's observation. 23

Illustrations employed by Alexander Maclaren.

Like Jonah's gourd, the smallest seed of hate needs but an hour or two of favoring weather to become a great tree, with all obscene and blood seeking birds croaking in its branches. 24

Like intertwining snakes, the loathy heads are separate; but the slimy convulsions are twisted indistinguishably together, and all unbelief has in it the nature of unbelief. 25

Separation is withering. Did you ever see a hawthorne bough that the children bring home from the woods, and stick in the grate; how in a

22. Charles Maddox Spurgeon, op. cit. vol. 2, pp. 323-324;

23. Ibid. vol. 2, p. 392.

24. Alexander Maclaren, D.D., Litt.D., Exposition of Holy Scripture, Gen., Ex., Lev., and Numbers, Book of Genesis, p. 242.

25. Alexander Maclaren, D.D., Litt.D., Exposition of Holy Scripture, St. Mark p. 17.

day or two the little fresh green leaves all shrivel up and the white blossoms become brown and smell foul, and the only thing to be done with it is fling it into the fire and get rid of it? 'And so' says Jesus Christ, 'as long as a man holds on to me and the sap comes into him, he will flourish, and as soon as the connection is broken, all that was so fair will begin to shrivel, and all that was green will grow brown and turn to dust, and all that was blossom will droop, and there will be no more fruit any more forever'.²⁶

Illustrations employed by Walther.

Was lehrt hier der Herr? Er lehrt, ein jeder falscher Prophet, das heisst, ein jeder falscher Lehrer, der Gottes Wort verfaelscht, sei ein fauler Baum, eine Distel, ein Dornstrauch. Wie nun der Dornstrauch keine Trauben, eine Distel keine Feigen, ein fauler Baum nicht gute, sondern arge Fruechte trage, wenn der fauler Baum auserlich auch noch so schoen und schlank gewaschen sei, so sei auch die Frucht oder die Wirksamkeit eines falschen Lehrers immer eine boese, schaedliche und verderbliche, wenn derselbe auch auserlich einen noch so guten Schein habe. Ja, Christus sagt noch mehr, er erklaert sogar alle falschen Propheten, trotz der Schafskleider, die sie tragen, fuer reiszende Woelfe, das heisst, fuer Leute, die, wie die Woelfe den Leib, so die Seele zerreißen und morden.²⁷

Wohl uns, meine Theuren, in den letztverwichenen Wochen haben wir dies auch zu unserer groszen Freude und zu unserem groszen Krost selbst erfahren an den lieben Bruedern und Schwestern, die der Tod aus unserer Mitte gerissen hat. Sind etwa ohne Trost und Hoffnung gewesen? Sind sie in stummer oder lauter Verzweiflung dahingefahren? Haben sie in ihren Todesnoethen entweder in stumpfer Gleichgueltigkeit oder in knechtischer Furcht, Angst und Zweifel dargelegen? O nein! Ewig unvergesslich wird es mir sein unter bleiben: fast alle ohne Ausnahme, selbst schwache Frauen und Kinder sind wie siegende Helden gestorben; fast alle ohne

26. Alexander Maclaren, D.D. Litt.D., Exposition of the of Holy Scripture, St. John XV-XXI, p.16:

27. Dr. C. F. W. Walther, Licht des Lebens, p.480.

ausnahme sind dem Tod und der Ewigkeit wie einer ewigen Hochzeit entgegengegangen, oder ihr Herz war doch so voll himmlischer Hoffnung, voll seliger Ruhe und voll von der Gewisheit: wir gehen zu unserem von Christo versoehnten Vater in den Himmel. 28

Wie is naemlich zur Zeit der Suendfluth eine rettende Arche gab, wie Lot bei dem Untergang Sodoms und Gomorras ein stilles Zoar fand, und die Christen bei der Zerstoerung Jerusalems einen Berg der Zuflucht und ein Pella der Sicherheit fanden, so haben auch wir noch jetzt eine sichere Freistaette, in die wir fliehen und so allem Verderben entfliehen koennen. Diese unsere jetzige Arche, dieses unser Zoar, unser Berg und unser Pella ist Jesus Christus und seine Kirche. Wer dahin flieht, ist verborgen. 29

Illustrations employed by Moody.

A man has been in the habit of stealing money from his employer. Suppose he has taken \$1000 in twelve months; should we tell him to take \$500 the next year, and less the next year, and the next, until in five years the sum taken would be only \$50? That would be upon the same principle as gradual conversion. 30

If He gave us His Son, will He not give us the certainty that He is ours. I have heard this illustration. There was a man who owed \$10,000, and would have been bankrupt, but a friend came forward and paid the sum. It was found afterward that he owed a few dollars more; but he did not for a moment entertain a doubt that as his friend had paid the larger amount, he would also pay the smaller. And we have the high warrant for saying that if God has given us His Son He will with Him freely give us all things; and if we realize our salvation beyond controversy He will not leave us in darkness. 31

There is one nail, fastened in a sure place; and on it hang all the flagons and all the cups. "Oh" says one little cup, "I am so small

28. Dr. C.F.W. Walther, op.cit. p.484;
29. Ibid. pp. 662-663;
30. D.L. Moody, The Way to God and How to Find It, p.55;
31. Ibid. op.cit. p.93.

and so black, suppose I were to drop"! "Oh", says a flagon, "there is no fear of you; but I am so heavy, so very weighty, suppose I were to drop"! And a little cup says, "Oh, if I were only like the gold cup there, I should never fear falling". But the gold cup answers, "It is not because I am a gold cup that I keep up; but because I hang upon the nail". If the nail gives way we all come down, gold cups, china cups, pewter cups, and all; but as long as the nail keeps up, all that hang on it hang safely. 32

Illustrations employed by Maier.

The Bible must come from heaven because only a divine volume could victoriously conquer the unparalleled, vicious opposition it has suffered. Copies of it have been burned, thrown down into the ocean, ground to pieces; yet the Bible is sold in greater numbers to-day than any other book; translated into thousand different languages and widely distributed over the face of the earth. Bob Ingersol once stated in Denver that within fifty years the Bible would not have fifty believers left in the city. A half century has elapsed. Last week I wired the secretary of the American Bible Society in Denver to see whether Ingersol was right that the Scripture was an unknown book in that metropolis of the Rockies. He replied that in the last year almost 38,000 Bibles and Testament parts had been distributed in this city, one for every ten Denver citizens. Recent newspaper reports tell us that in Fascist Spain a shipment of 110,000 Bibles has been confiscated by General Franco's totalitarian government and that they have been ground to pulp. But God's Word cannot be destroyed in this way, nor by persecution and imprisonment of its readers. One nation rejects it, only to have another accept it. From war-torn China come unprecedented demands for Holy Writ. 33

Let a tragedy still more grievous than such refusal to exalt Jesus is the unwillingness to accept Him, though the Spirit of God testifies that He is the atonement and redemption of our souls. Modern Chinese history knows two men who

32. D. L. Moody, op. cit., p. 100;
33. W. A. Maier Ph. D., For Christ and Country, p. 97.

illustrate this truth. Both were well educated. Both had become interested in Christianity. When one was invited to make a decision for Christ, he told the missionary, "I'll see you tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock". Before that same day closed, he was assassinated. This man, apparently only a few hours distant from Christ yet in reality an eternity from Him, was Admiral Chen. The other national leader was urged by his mother-in-law to read the Bible and pray for enlightenment. He followed her advice, and his private early morning devotions brought the Holy Spirit into his heart, made him study the entire Bible, convinced him of the baptismal blessing, and finally led him all the way to the Lord. That man of the hour, a humble Christian who can pray, as visitors testify, even for enemy airmen circling over his city with the avowed purpose of destroying him, that convert to Christ for whom "almost" was not enough is Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, leader of 400,000,000 Chinese. 34

Illustrations employed by Fosdick.

To be sure, the individual often seems helpless, but that is no answer to our proposition. In a new biography of "Hittier," we learn that he was much impressed by a tale narrated by his father, that when an Indian tribe went on a drunken debauch, invariably one Indian was selected to stay sober. So, when a crowd goes mad and crashes thru the moral standards on which a decent society begins, this Indian proposes to stay sober. When fear grows contagious and men say we cannot build a decent economy, or hysteria sweeps the nation and the mob cries for war, this Indian is going to stay sober. Even one Indian can do that and we, as we know, instead of one, there are multitudes of us who can do that with saving effect. 35

After all, we men and women are much like flagstaves. Some flagstaves are very tall and prominent and some are small, but the glory of the flagstaff is not the size, but the colors it flies. A very small flagstaff flying the right colors is far more valuable than a very tall one with the wrong staff. When a man is altogether done with life, I should suppose that the most satisfying thing would be

34 W.A. Maier, Ph.D., *op. cit.*, p. 205:

35. Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Secret of Victorious Living, pp. 26-27.

the ability to say, I am ashamed that I was not a better, taller, straighter flagstaff, but I not ashamed of the colors that I flew. 37

Here ends the list of examples of illustrations. But why so many of them. They are put down "for our learning" 38, which, when studied, are of great value to the preacher.

However, the manifold and successful use of illustrations is not an easy accomplishment but an earnest task, which nears perfection by practice.

Though, there are so many kinds of illustrations, they will never be of any value unless their object is kept in mind. Their object is set forth in part five of this paper.

37. Romans 15:4. 38. Harry Emerson Fosdick, op.cit. p. 225.

illustrations more readily
The object of illustrations is to draw the hearer from a negative and positive viewpoint. From the negative viewpoint, their object is not to entertain, but to draw the hearer to Christ, and to make his "salvation thru faith in Christ Jesus" a reality. Illustrations do not attain this high object if they are not dignified, therefore, in the choice of them they are not humorous, but of a dignified character.

Illustrations should never be used to lengthen a sermon, to make it last the usual twenty or thirty minutes.

It is better to preach a short sermon without illustrations,
than to preach one with them, which serves no other purpose
than to take up time.

5

The Object of Illustrations

Heretofore, in part one of this paper, the need of illustrations was discussed. To conclude it, by considering their object in sermons seems like a repetition. Such is not the case. There is a very close relation between the need of a thing and the object of it. Yet, there is difference between the two concepts. An arctic explorer needs warm clothes for his exploratory in the frigid zone. The object of such warmclothes is to keep him warm. If this fine difference is kept in mind, it will help to set forth the object of illustrations more readily.

The object of illustrations in sermons may be stated from a negative and positive viewpoint. Looked at from the negative viewpoint, their object is not to entertain. Preaching is too serious a business to devote any part of it for the entertainment of the hearers. Its object is to edify, to draw the hearer to Christ, and to make him "wise unto salvation thru faith in Christ Jesus".¹ Entertaining illustrations do not attain this high purpose. Care should be exercised, therefore, in the choice of them, that they are not humorous, but of a dignified character.

¹Illustrations should never be used to lengthen a sermon, to make it last the usual twenty or thirty minutes.

1. St. John 17:17.
2. St. Luke 10:37.

It is better to preach a short sermon without illustrations, than to preach one with them, which serve no other purpose than to take up time.

It is not the object of illustrations to prove divine Truth. The Word of God is Truth, for it is as Jesus says, "Thy Word is Truth".²

From the positive viewpoint, the object of illustrations is to get the hearer's attention. To approach him with a subject that he knows, or of which he has some knowledge. It helps the preacher to reach his hearer, and the hearer to follow the preacher.

It is also the object of an illustration to rest the mind of the hearer. Frequently, he tires. He fatigues not because he is especially disinterested in the sermon, but because his capacity for constant attention is easily strained. The preacher, therefore, ought to know his hearers, and should be aware when to insert his illustration. Care, however should be taken that the illustration is pertinent.

Illustrations too have the object of appealing to the emotions of fear, of joy, of sympathy, and of love. When the emotions are aroused, action follows. After His relation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus directed the lawyer, "go and do thou likewise".³ In this connection Leslie D. Weatherhead writes,

2. St. John 17:17.

3. St. Luke 10:37.

The stories were part of the strategy of Jesus in attacking men's proud and sinful hearts. Nathan without the parable of the one ewe lamb would have been effectively silenced by David before ever he got to the point. The story got under his guard. Again and again proud Pharisees, hypocritical scribes, self-righteous ecclesiastics, the rich and careless and thoughtless, as well as the publicans and sinners, found themselves listening to these lovely stories; and then- before they knew where they were- the barb was in their breast, the citadel of a sleeping conscience was awakened, attacked, assaulted, and frequently startled into action, in counter-attack perhaps, or escape. Sometimes the citadel was captured before its owner knew that its complacent peace was threatened. 4

Illustrations help the hearer to remember. This is a vital point. Only that which the hearer remembers is of profit to him. Preachers do not want their members of their congregation to be hearers only but doers also of what they hear in the sermon.

and above all things illustrations have the great object of helping the hearer to understand. When the hearer understands his heart is being touched, and if touched to believe, he begins "to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ",⁵ for the salvation of his soul for time and eternity.

Finis.

4. Leslie D. Weatherhead, In Quest of a Kingdom,

pp. 59-60.

5. 2 Peter 3:18

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