

gone!" "No, my lord," answered Whitefield, "he is not quite gone; let us hope that he may yet be saved." Then he went on to preach deliverance from the delusions of blind self-trust through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, we may not possess one-tenth of George Whitefield's dramatic imagination. Nevertheless, the art of illustration is a thing no preacher can afford to neglect. Abstract truth has to be translated into concrete terms, if it is to impinge upon the average mind. The preacher who will not condescend thus to translate his meaning, who disdains the use of illustration, considering it undignified and puerile, is being very foolish. Surely our Lord's example is decisive here. Jesus did not speak of the efficacy of importunate prayer: He showed us a man shamelessly hammering at his neighbour's door at midnight. He did not say that wrong personal relationships were inimical to religious reality: He said it would be wise to leave our gift before the altar, and go and make peace with our brother, and then come back and offer the gift. When a certain jurist, an expert in definitions, demanded "Who is my neighbour?" the answer was "A certain man went down to Jericho," and the story of the Good Samaritan. Truth made concrete will find a way past many a door where abstractions knock in vain.

This is an art, of course, which calls for careful handling. Illustrations dragged in at random and needlessly multiplied betoken a slovenly mind. Any illustration which is only doubtfully relevant to the main theme ought to be rigorously banned. No matter how vivid it may be in itself, if it does not immediately light up the particular truth under discussion, exclude it ruthlessly. Otherwise it will simply distract attention and defeat

your purpose. On the other hand, illustrations sparingly and appropriately used can be a vital source of power and illumination. You are describing, let us say, man's search for God, the soul's age-long quest for spiritual reality, and the thrilling moment of supreme discovery. Have you read *Madame Curie's Life*? Do you remember the moving account of the night of magic when, after years of experimenting, she saw across the darkness of the unlit laboratory the first faint streak of phosphorescent blue, and knew that it was radium? Or suppose you are speaking of the remorse which lashes the guilty soul in the hour of its awakening. There is an unforgettable instance you might adduce—the dramatic moment in *Saint Joan* where the Chaplain, who has stood and watched the end, consenting to the death of the saint, bursts in suddenly upon the Earl of Warwick with the lamentable cry, "I let them do it. If I had known I would have torn her from their hands. O God, take away this sight from me! O Christ, deliver me from this fire that is consuming me! She cried to Thee in the midst of it: Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! She is in Thy bosom; and I am in hell for evermore." Or, once again, your theme may be the companionship of Jesus: you are trying to show the power of that companionship to keep life calm and strong and undefeated through days of stress and storm. You recall how Joseph Conrad, in *The Mirror of the Sea*, quotes from a letter of Sir Robert Stopford, who commanded one of the ships with which Nelson chased to the West Indies an enemy fleet nearly double in number. Describing the desperate hardships of that daring adventure, Stopford wrote: "We are half-starved, and otherwise inconvenienced by being so long out of port. But our reward is—we are with Nelson!" How much deeper and more