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This material is taken from his book Designing The Sermon: Order And Movement In Preaching (Abingdon, 1980). In chapter two he discusses the design of the narrative sermon; in chapter three the design of the expository sermon and in four he explains how to design a doctrinal/topical sermon.

Chapter II
DESIGNING THE
NARRATIVE/STORY SERMON

One does not need to read very far in the Bible to discover the story-power that fills its pages, and the preacher who stays open to the narratives and stories reported there will inevitably come away throbbing with eagerness to share what has been seen *and felt* in some illuminating account. Nothing speaks more clearly and engagingly than a folk-level story—and the Bible is filled with them. No preaching succeeds so well as that which treats some biblical story and is true to a story-line in its substance and form. When preaching honors the principle of start, buildup, and resolution, especially as these relate to some person's experience of conflict or stress, it ensures immediacy, generates insight, and provides a means of hope, faith, change, and growth. Nothing stirs the chemistry of the consciousness and prods the self to commitment like good story preaching.

STORY AS A PRIMARY MODE IN SCRIPTURE

The Bible highlights storytelling as a major mode and medium. Gerhard von Rad has called attention in his writings to the way Israel used her historical and prophetic traditions to give fresh meanings to her people in new settings and circumstances, reciting and "retelling" *[Nacherzahlen]* her life with God so as to influence the faith and behavior of the people.[1] Telling and retelling the story about God's dealings with the nation was done again and again for changing audiences and under ever- changing skies, but always with concern to inform, confess, remind, celebrate, witness, and be renewed.

Historical narratives abound in the Bible.[2] The reasons for this are not far to seek. Narratives and stories deal with life and living from a presentational level; they show life in concrete-

ness. What is elemental and enduring is portrayed best in stories, stories that need not always give us exact history so long as they are history-like.[3] The stories grant us depth-learning because they engage us at the gut level of feeling as well as on the mind level of realization. Reality and revelation conjoin in the biblical narratives, and from them we gain a certain understanding of God and a crucial understanding of ourselves.

The biblical narratives combine to show us a confessional story regarding God's saving deeds. The Old Testament gives us a basic unit-story from Abraham down to the times of the early prophets, while the rest of the books from that early period repeat and review elements from within that period. The story calls attention to the determinative acts of God toward the nation's fathers in Israel's pre-history, moves on to tell about Israel's election by God in the Exodus, and then highlights the covenant he established with them as his people.[4] But the story widens in the New Testament to include the church, the "new Israel" redeemed by the saving life and death of Jesus Christ and sent on mission in the world. This part of the longer story is the context of our own personal story as redeemed persons. The whole Bible is confessional, and it provides an unlimited province within which to search, study, and find, and from which to teach and preach.

It is not by chance that stories are the major medium in giving the biblical message. And since this is so, it follows that preaching from the stories—and in story-fashion—is basically at one with the materials themselves. There is a great power in preaching when we design sermons with concern for atmosphere, character, plot, tone, and movement, intent to serve the *kerygma* and the religious needs of those who hear us.[5]

STORY-PREACHING IN THE BLACK CHURCH TRADITION

In writing about the impact and eventfulness of story- preaching, I am recalling how apt that method has been in helping to shape many of my own biblical, doctrinal, and ethical perspectives. Growing up under able black preachers, I heard them gladly because of their contagion in "telling `The Story'." This expression, "telling The Story," gathers up all that is related to the major theme of the Bible, but it focuses with special care upon the life and ministry of Jesus. In our way of speaking, "The Story" immediately recalls the history of his saving deed, the will of God at work in his life, and the effects of that deed when it is accepted in true faith.

James H. Cone has also called attention to story-preaching as a persuasive influence upon his life as a boy and his thought as a theologian. Cone tells us:

> *In black churches, the one who preaches the Word is primarily a storyteller. And thus when the black church community invites a minister as pastor, their chief question is: "Can the Reverend tell the story?" This question refers to the theme of black religion and also to the act of storytelling itself. , creating a black vision of the future.[6]*

Story-telling is not elementary but elemental: elemental for affirmation, argument, witness, meaning, impact, engagement, ethos, and emotion as well.

The power of recited story is unequaled. William Holmes Borders recalls the effects of that

power upon him as he, eight years old at the time, sat in the morning service at Swift Creek Baptist Church in rural territory just outside Macon, Georgia, spellbound as his pastor-father, James Buchanan Borders, preached and "told The Story." Sensing his call from God at that early age, young Borders accepted it and started on the long road he has followed as an honored preacher of the Gospel, "the Lord's handyman."[7] Open to "The Story" as it came to his ears, Borders found his heart gripped by its persuasive charm and claims.

So did James Herman Robinson when he was still a boy, deeply impressed by how Jim Haywood, his Baptist pastor, held forth at Knoxville's Mount Zion Baptist Church. Robinson confessed:

> *I was stuck on the preacher, Jim Haywood, who was a magnificent actor, a challenging speaker, and a "Jim Dandy" dresser.... He was a natural-born storyteller and orator, full of spiritual fervor, hell and damnation language, and picturesque images.... He captivated me completely. I was oblivious to all else, the choir, the crowd, my aunt [with whom he sat]. When he finished I wanted to go right out and do something—anything—right then and there. I found myself thinking his thoughts.[8]*

Story had stirred the chemistry of his consciousness; it had spoken to his whole self.

THE PRESENT TENSE IN STORY-LIFE

1. *Carefully designed story-preaching can give contemporary appeal to the biblical tradition.*
A large space of time and experience stands plotted and exposed in the biblical tradition. Since the whole of the Bible forms a large-scale retelling of the sacred story, the records report divine truth directed to use in the present tense. The patterned events recounted in the sacred pages are to be understood not as mere "ancient story," but as part of the graph of destiny, revealing pointers, clear transcripts of living experience; some distinctly historical, and others history-like, are preserved and related on purpose.[9] They offer a perspective that reveals; they present information that inspires faith and elicits a response.

I referred a few pages back to the engaging impact of story-preaching in the black church tradition. I also cited the personal statements of three well-known black leaders who recalled the way storytelling captured their attention and spoke so clearly to them in their childhood, both engaging and educating at one and the same time. There is more to this than meets the eye on a first look. Given the factors of controlled detail and timing, the preacher in each case had touched the listening youth at just that level of appeal. Young Cone, Borders, and Robinson were not reacting to the storytelling as a mere hypnotoform phenomenon. While it is quite possible that a dramatic telling of a story can appear as a hypnotic-style for some young minds and eyes, there is surely more to the effects of a story than the human touch of a skilled dramatist. There are understood states of mind because of the telling itself, levels of appropriation that match levels of appeal: a child will get caught up in the action in the story—seeing it; an adolescent will identify with the heroes, and perhaps the meaning the story holds; while an adult will catch the meaning and sift the ideas that lead to that meaning. Every hearer relates to any story, biblical or otherwise, in keeping with his or her experiences and needs and perception. Interestingly, no one

contact with any biblical story is ever final in its impact upon us because the same story will speak to us on different levels at different times in our life; its appeal always contemporary with where we are. This can be made to happen when a narrative-story is used in a careful design.

2. A carefully designed story-sermon can guide the imaging our hearers do.
Preaching at its best will provide substance for imaging. Imaging is common to humans, and we need it because it is the way we widen the parameters of our experience and envision new possibilities for ourselves. Imaging is our way of dreaming, our window on the world that stands just beyond where we now live. Jesus used stories as a regular method for preaching. So strong was his preference for storytelling, Mark tells us, that "he did not speak to them without a parable" (4:34a). Jesus so guided the imaging of his hearers that his critics were maddened by his control, while "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37 KJV).

Most humans like to be guided in imaging, in seeing what holds some promise for their lives, or what can give light at some heavy, dark, propositional point of concern. We all like the speaker who knows how and when to use an apt illustration to clarify and clinch some point while speaking. The illustration becomes the key that unlocks the door for many hearers, the window through which needed light falls to aid sight and grant insight. W. M. Taylor, in his Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale many years ago, mentioned the art of Dr. Andrew Thomson (1779-1831) in this regard. Thomson would sometimes preach for at least two hours, we are told, and yet without losing his audience. Someone once asked Thomson what was the secret of holding his hearers over such a long stretch of time, and the preacher answered: "Whenever I see them get dull I throw in a story. I consider a story has an effect for twenty minutes."[10] Some stories have an effect for a lifetime. The biblical stories are of such character and forcefulness. They are worthy guides for the imaging we need to do about our lives.

The alert student of Scripture will be challenged by the persistent wisdom seen therein as the writers usually blend propositional statement and pictorial language. Again and again some doctrine is given by means of a picture, some truth stated by means of a story, some affirmation made, then given a visionary impact by means of narration.

The statement in Genesis 1:1 about the beginning of creation is one such instance, illustrating how propositional statement and pictorial language are wedded with visionary effect. The well-known verse reads, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; then follows the lengthy pictorial section about the process of creation. The propositional teaching is thus sharpened by the vision made possible through guided imaging.[11] The fact is that a way of thinking leads to a certain way of seeing and acting. Stories are powerful idea agencies; they bring matters and meanings quite vividly before the mind's eye.

Worthy preaching will honor the human capacity to imagine, and it will seek to direct that imaging with integrity. To this end, story-sermons are a practical modality for our task.

3. A carefully planned story-sermon helps hearers to identify with the meanings about which stories speak.
A story can harness a hearer to some truth. When that truth has insinuated itself into the

hearer's consciousness, made its "shock" at a place of intense awareness, and has gripped the imagination in lively fashion, the hearer feels prodded and pulled. The character of the truth makes its claim. The hearer sees his or her personal history and opportunity in the light of an earlier history. The one plot unearths another; one episode "judges" another; one life yields a lesson to another person. The story meaning "locates" the hearer because it prods a near-instant identification.

The biblical stories continue to point beyond themselves, and through them believers can rehearse meanings by which faith is sustained. The stories represent those meanings so that the believer can appropriate them in new situations and be renewed. That is what happens when the story has a fixed, confessional base and meaning.

Rabban Gamaliel II, grandson of that famed leader cited in Acts (5:34; 22:3), was so impressed by the recital of the Exodus story that he urged: "In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt, for it is written, And thou *shalt tell thy son in that day saying,* when *I came forth out of Egypt* [Ex. 13:8]. Therefore are we bound ... to bless him who wrought all these wonders for our fathers and for us."[12]

The vitality of the story tradition shows itself again and again in the preaching of the cross. Katherine Hankey's "I Love to Tell the Story" is more than a song of sentiment; it is a reflection of the power of story that is still important in understanding and even actualizing the faith. Story helps us bridge the gap of history and participate in the meaning of an original, confessional, determinative event.

The case of narrative or story preaching need not be labored further. Such preaching releases to the hearer the testimonial power of scripture, creating impact and insight for the hearer's life and needs. Narrative is the biblical way of speaking. Each story carries more than a message and moral; it partakes of that genuine "spokenness" *[Gesprochenheit],* to use Martin Buber's choice word.[13]

"STORY" IN THE PREACHING OF JESUS

In any discussion of Jesus' preaching, we are face to face with preaching at its best. Jesus was alert to communicative design and he wedded substance and style, form and focus. The language and style embedded in the gospel tradition do indeed reveal the characteristics of' his very voice *(ipsissima vox)*. This is especially evident in the parabolic teaching and preaching attributed to him.[14]

The parables of Jesus are themselves sermons. Each one brings an insight to bear upon the hearer's consciousness by means of a living scene narrated. The hearer's attention is raised through dramatic confrontation with a sensed truth about God's relation to the human condition. True to sermon focus, each parable conveys a single message and demands a single response, and the parable's artful design gives the occasion of hearing unmistakable depth. The procedure in the parable is linked with the power of the story. Reality comes to focus in the telling, just as it must come to focus in any story sermon. The parable is actually a form of implied argument through its pictured life and plot; yet it does its work—and wins—because of the artful design to engage one and extract a feeling and response to the basic message.

The parables of Jesus show great variety on his part as a preacher. Some tell of God's gracious action (as in the parable of the lost sheep, the waiting father); some tell of God's unrelenting demand (as in the parable of the good Samaritan, the talents); and still others blend the prophetic, *kerygmatic*, pastoral, and didactic elements. The affective levels in narrative are great indeed.

It is instructive to observe the way Jesus sought to involve his hearers right from the start. Consider Luke's setting for the good Samaritan story (Luke 10:29-30), which he reports Jesus told in answer to a question put to him. Interestingly, the parable as we have it does not give a categorical answer to the one who questioned him, but the answer is within the province of the story itself, clearly sensed in the characteristic spirit and actions of the pictured "neighbor." The neighbor is not defined by Jesus, but by the audience *after* the story had disclosed its point. Stories are helpful as answering devices. They stir us at the suggestion level and pull upon our spirits in still more concrete fashion. Interestingly, Jesus did not leave that story at the suggestion level, but in a pastoral and prophetic spirit issued a call to all who heard it to fulfill its claim. Appealing to the self-consciousness of all his audience, Jesus directly addressed them with the word, "Go and do likewise" (Luke *10:3b).*

READYING THE NARRATIVE SERMON

1. ***Choose a narrative or story with a basic thrust to help the hearer understand and rightly handle the realities of life.*** A story is important because of its meaning and import, not because of its drama.

The testimonial and teaching power of biblical narratives are supremely relevant to this end. These stories blend biography, autobiography, sociology, and theology, allowing us to rehearse the faith, fate, or fortunes of other people. They let us see how decisions were made for good or ill, how someone acted in wisdom or folly, what was gained or lost because of the deed, and God's assessment. The biblical stories show us praiseworthy souls and fools. The stories let us see the way God ridiculed futile attempts of men to conceal their sins, as in the case of Achan and David, giving perspective on the need to "come clean" in confession and repentance. We learn through the stories that pride and high-handedness are always defeated in the end, that the arrogant use of power—as in the hands of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar—is doomed right from the start. The stories in scripture let us lament with those who fail—like Esau, David, and Peter; wait with persons tested by time and circumstances whose view is on the future—like Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and Hannah.

The stories can help us learn from those who doubted, like Thomas; those who drifted, like Jacob and Demas; those who chose the low way, like Judas. The stories pull back the curtain and show us the intimate dealings of God with honest souls: Isaiah, renewed after that temple theophany; Samson, blind, shackled, but penitent after his sortie into unheeding lust; Peter, surprised by forgiveness as he is recommissioned by the risen Lord after a headlong plunge into a world of lies to save his skin; Saul of Tarsus, a chosen vessel after that Damascus Road encounter with the Lord of the church. Hearers can locate themselves in the light of strategic stories and the points of reference they provide. The stories can be used to help the hearer escape the routine, go beyond what is inept, tighten what is loose, see what

cannot be fully explained, and gain what need never be lost. The biblical narratives are supremely important to the preacher in any attempt to help hearers feel what Ralph Waldo Emerson once referred to as the "sharp peaks and edges of truth."

2. ***Immerse yourself in the story until its basic issue is understood and its living thrust is felt.*** The story must become a word-event for the preacher before it can live in the retelling. The story must be felt at the animated level of its reported happening. There is action taking place in the story, and that action has a reason. Persons are involved in acting and responding, and there is an issue in it all. The stories offer us no titles, so one must study the narratives with care until the true focus is understood and the import makes its suggestive impact. The need to immerse oneself deeply in a narrative to gain its truth can be fulfilled only by a firsthand and unhurried mastery of the biblical account. Late planning leads one into temptation—the temptation to gather someone else's work, and in quick fashion, using it all without depth of treatment and personal involvement. Any preacher takes a big risk in preaching what has been gathered or thought about in haste. Late planning can lead to gross errors in detail, stress, and thoughtful application of the insight in a passage. Narrative preaching demands a firsthand acquaintance with the materials and what those materials mean.

Miss Marian Anderson tells of a time in her early girlhood school days when she overheard the singing class through the wall of the adjoining room in which she and her classmates were studying. Stirred by her love for music, young Marian lost track of what her own teacher up in the front of the room was saying. The day came when it was her turn to go to singing class next door, and when the music started young Marian lit into the melody with great gusto and full volume of voice. Having listened through the wall to the other singing class across the days, she felt confident about the music. But the music teacher soon approached her, tapped her on the shoulder and asked, "Marian, what are you singing?" Marian proudly answered, "Sleep, Polly, sleep"! The teacher chided her for not looking at the words on the page before her. Marian looked—and the words she should have been singing were "Peacefully sleep"! She had been singing at secondhand, echoing what had come muffled through the wall.[15]

Preaching without firsthand acquaintance with a text or narrative can also lead to embarrassment. Repeating some traditional account, and embellishing it with fervor and at full voice, only to discover later that many details did not ring true to the original account, can cause deep embarrassment and chagrin, not to mention the sad fact that as a trumpet, the sermon gave "an uncertain sound" (I Cor. 14:8 KJV).

Preaching on scriptural narratives calls for close and careful study. The preacher must be fully acquainted with the story and be prepared to deal with its seven components: the characters, action, setting, form, language, style, and meaning.[16] Only in this way can a proper overview and inside-feel essential for shaping a narrative sermon occur.

3. ***Locate the vertical point of divine action on the horizontal line of the story. The functional import of the narrative usually emerges there.*** It is with that import that the relevant narrative sermon should seek to deal.

Once the import of the narrative has been sensed, then the functional use of it in a sermon can begin. But not in a simple recounting of the story verbatim. The story is to be preached, not just repeated.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., has recently suggested:

> *Nothing can be more discouraging and disheartening for contemporary believers gathered to hear the Word of God than to listen to the simple recounting and bare description of an Old Testament or Gospel narrative as an excuse for expository preaching. This kind of preaching is nothing more than narrating a "ac. story" or "first century A.D. homily" which merely engages in stringing verses or events together, rather than attempting to come to terms with the truth taught by the writer in that narrative.[17]*

That is the concern of narrative preaching: to come to terms with the truth carried by the narrative. Kaiser suggests that this is best done by "principalizing a biblical passage," by which he means discovering the "enduring ethical, spiritual, doctrinal, and moral truths or principles which the writer himself set forth by the way in which he selected his details and arranged the contextual setting of his narrative." This process is the same as that of locating the point of intersection between the human story and God's signal relation to the action in it. When this is done, the preacher has bridged the distance between the original setting of the story and the present situation of those who will hear the sermon.

4. *Stay in the background as the storyteller: maintain sufficient detachment* **to** *let the storyline make its point, lest your own point of view dull the intended impact of the narrative.*

Enhance interest in the storyline by beginning at a point where the action can be interrupted without loss of focus. The sermon "The Rock That Moved," by Peter Marshall, is an excellent illustration of this kind of beginning, and from an understood "detached reporter" stance.[18] But there is more than report; there is appeal and a distinct call within the treatment. As the sermon ends, the hearing person has heard a word of hope and possibility for change: "Christ changed Simon into Peter, the sinner into the saint. He can change your life, if you are willing!" Marshall moved the hearer from being a spectator into the stance of someone who also needs the understanding, changing touch of Christ. The main thrust of his message was carried in his storyline and deepened by a calculated distance as the storyteller. Peter Marshall excelled as a narrative preacher.[19] Although detached, he made the *story-experience* live.

5. *Watch the narrator's way of working, and take cues for your sermon approach and design from his treatment.*

The conditions in the story are important to the sermon line. The consequences from the action must be given their due regard. Billy Graham's sermon "The Prodigal Son" follows the logical sequences of the parable Jesus gave and makes the same point of highlighting the receptive love of a longing Father-God for his erring, lost children.[20]

(My story sermon in chapter 7, "Anatomy of a Failure," took its cues from the narrator's adversative use of "but". See II Sam. 11:1, 9, 13, 27—the pivotal text and 12:12.)

6. *Experiment with many narrative styles until you discover and shape your most fruitful approach for handling a story-sermon.*

There are many such styles: preaching in the first-person role, sermonizing a short story, delivering a letter sermon, or doing a modern parable. An illuminating example of first-person preaching is seen in David O. Woodyard's "A Certain Dumb Man," an I-narrative form based on Luke 11:14-28, the account of an exorcism.[21] The best examples of the short-story sermon approach are found in Robert E. Luccock's *Lost Gospel: And Other Sermons Based on Short Stories.*[22] Martin Luther King, Jr., left a powerful witness and a model letter sermon form in his "Paul's Letter to American Christians," one of the seventeen sermons in his book *Strength to Love.*[23] Additional examples of the story style are seen in the work of Frank W. Boreham (1871-1959), who was one of the world's most honored and respected masters of narrative preaching.[24]

A STUBBORN FACT AND FAITH

We live our days under the impact of stories, some factual, some fictional, and others "factional," to use Alex Haley's new description of fictional fact. A day would not be normal without some story coming to our attention, even if it only takes shape as fancy in our own imagination.[25] The stories we hear about contemporary happenings and the interpretations offered about their expected effects, all tone our working days and challenge our waking hours. There are the presentiments of television, the blared news-notes of the radio, and the bold headlines of the daily press; and the concern is always the same: to give us the stories.

Our Christian faith presents The Story. That faith is a confessional report about the determinative deed of God in Christ to come and save us from our sins and relate us fully to himself as our Father and God. Preaching serves the interests of that faith.

Many years ago Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) called attention to the importance of this story as he addressed seminarians and preachers gathered to hear the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale. Brooks declared, "I am sure that the more fully you come to count your preaching the telling of a message, the more valuable and real the church will become to you, the more true will seem to you your brotherhood with all messengers of that same message in all strange dresses and in all strange tongues."[26]

Chapter III
DESIGNING THE
TEXTUAL/EXPOSITORY SERMON

A word is in order about the chapter title, which implies a relation between textual and expository preaching. That word is in order because homiletical theorists have long distinguished between those sermon types, classifying them on the basis of the amount of scripture used as foundational message. The chapter title above suggests that the distinction is an arbitrary one and should be disregarded when exploration of the biblical message is the essential concern. Dwight E. Stevenson has put it well: "The distinction between textual and expository preaching, based on length alone, is artificial and should be abandoned. All biblical preaching is at one and the same time textual and expository; it is based upon a text which it expounds."[27]

Exposition is both a method and a result, a process and a production. The result or production is occupied mainly with showing the message and import of a unit of scripture, while the process followed in doing so is that of "mining" the unit and explaining it in order to bring out to the hearers what is there for them. Rightly understood and done, the point of it all is not to explain a scripture unit merely, thus increasing the hearer's knowledge of the Bible, but to afford the hearers guidance and insight for change, growth, and a responsible life of faith.

The expository sermon should be focused, interesting, and life-oriented. Henry Sloane Coffin (1877-1954), in his Warrack lectures of 1926, told the Scottish seminarians and divines he was addressing to give increased attention to expository preaching, not just to teach the Bible "but to interpret life by the Bible."[28] In this way, the ancient but timely Word escapes the cold confinement of print, loses its "back-thereness," and becomes an encountering voice in the hearer's life. Expository sermons, rightly planned and rightly oriented, should always have this as their reason, while using scripture as their resource.

Would-be expositors will find themselves in a noble and select tradition of workers. The historical study of the expository method will introduce one to an ancient concern and a wide range of leaders and methods. There are insights to be gained from those who preached to the church in the apostolic period, as Richard N. Longenecker has shown, calling attention to their Christocentric perspective on using their Bible (Old Testament).[29] The homilies and commentaries of the Church Fathers are grand proof of their concern and expository toil, and how they made their preaching apply to problems and needs then current.

Origen (184-254) has been credited with the expositional method most widely used today. Athanasius (297-373) and Bishop Augustine (354-430) were both informed in his method of sermonizing, but Augustine's background and skills in rhetoric made his the more stylish mode. Book Four of Augustine's classic work *On Christian Doctrine* treats preaching style, offering

that able expositor's methods for handling biblical substance, which he discussed in Books One, Two, and Three.[30] Augustine's way of wedding words and teachings was exemplary, an evident mark of his interest and industry as well as "genius."

The tradition is found in a long line of worthy preachers. The standard histories treat them, but Yngve Brilioth's (1891-1964) brief but jam-packed *Brief History of Preaching* also outlines the connection of these preachers with one another through that preaching method.[31] After surveying Brilioth's historical treatment of the expositors, one would be well advised to turn directly to their sermons. That study should finally extend, of course, to recent and contemporary masters of the expository method. A list of them should include Charles Reynolds Brown (1862-1950), G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), F. B. Meyer (1847-1929), Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960), Sandy F. Ray (1898-1979), George Arthur Buttrick (1892-1980), Paul S. Rees, Harold John Ockenga, James S. Stewart, Samuel G. Hines, and James M. Boice, among others.

SOME GUIDELINES AND EXAMPLES

*1. **Study your given text or passage at firsthand until its setting, form, and insight are clear to you.***
There are passages that you can probe on your own and quite readily understand them, and there are other passages that will demand the help of professional exegetes and commentators to make your study fruitful. Think and pray your way into the passage, going as far as you can go without others helping you; then, as you see the barriers posed by questions you cannot answer, seek the help of the experts. However long this process of personal investigation must take, the time spent is always worth it when the purpose is to bless someone's life through what you find.

Behind every text is its setting. Within every text is a form. The purpose of the text is insight or message. That message must be understood before it can be abstracted for use in a sermon. A text is "abstracted" when a truth or theme is drawn from it.[32] The sermon must develop out of the preacher's thought about some feature or features seen in the text, and this selective interest always makes the sermon a narrower product than the text itself is. The text is given; the sermon is created. The sermons we create are always less than the texts we use. This is what separates our *words* from his *Word,* but it is also what helps that Word to speak its voice in ever-new accents to oncoming, ongoing generations. It is this that constitutes the great mystery of preaching.

The fuller message of the text breaks through increasingly when the sermon matches its mood and spirit as well as serves its meaning. This is one reason that many expositors insist on keeping even their rhetoric allied with the textual wording. Their concern is to be commended, but a preacher does have the freedom to take the "message-germ" and work it in a fresh way, applying its insight in words and ways the intended hearers will readily perceive. A good expository sermon is not a quotation of the text or passage; it is an exposition of its meaning and import.

A close, firsthand study of any text will make its demands upon us, but the rewards are greater. That higher word grants a message that makes a difference, first in the preacher, then in those who hear what the preacher reports.

Expository sermons are not the mere result of ingenuity in manipulating a text. Good exposition

demands being mastered by that text. The "exposition" should rightly be about what the textual passage) has spoken to the preacher. And the biblical texts do speak. The text is language in use, a formally structured statement by which some author has sought to declare, discuss, or depict something having to do with man's life in the light of God. As the preacher "listens" to what is being spoken, the realization deepens that scripture is not a set of mere document-texts but a collection of voice-texts: thus the rightful definition of scripture as "Word of God."[33]

The text was given to preserve its message beyond the moment—in this sense it is a document; but that text was sometimes sent to carry its message beyond the place of writing, as a stand-in for the messenger in his absence. The writer is always a potent presence in any message, which is why I prefer to speak of scripture as voice-texts. A hearing relationship develops as the preacher studies a biblical passage, and after having been heard, the message is clear for a fresh announcement and application through preaching.

The immediate goal of the firsthand study of any text, then, is to hear its message. The message is the basis for the exposition.

*2. **Whenever possible, let the textual passage determine** your outline and *tone of treatment*.*
This means wrestling with the biblical writer's structured statement, and watching for how he wedded function with form.

Scripture study involves us in observing some formal ways of writing. The basic forms we encounter there are story, statements, expressions, and prescriptives. Some attention has been given in an earlier chapter on "story," so it is not necessary to deal with that category again at this point. But the other three descriptive categories must receive fuller mention now.[34]

    a) **Statements**. These are the sentences biblical writers straightforwardly used in reporting or affirming certain facts.
Genesis 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
Acts 12: 1—"About that time Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church."

    b) **Expressions**. These are forms of writing in which emotion and impulse are purposely active, and for cause.
Romans 11:33—"O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God: How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"
John 20:28—"Thomas answered him, `My Lord and my God!' "

    c) **Prescriptives**. These are directions about something to be done.
Romans 12:13—"Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality."
Ephesians 5:1 1—"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."

The language in Scripture is dynamic. It reports facts to be understood and believed. Statements are used to announce, assert, and affirm those facts. Biblical language is filled with expressions, because feelings erupted as the Christian work was progressing, and as new experiences deepened believers in the faith. Prescriptives also abound in scripture, because the writers knew that grace demands an imperative along with an indicative.[35] Truth emerges in all of the stated forms, but the tone of treating that truth in a sermon is often

suggested by the formal tone of the writer's words.

This means that the would-be expositor must live with the passage long enough to learn its message, on the one hand, and discern its patterned outlay and tone, on the other. As Morgan Phelps Noyes once wrote: "The truth is that the preacher must come at his message by a double process. He must *work* laboriously for it, using all the resources of the spiritual and intellectual life in his search for truth. At the same time, he must *receive* it."[36] That is always the case with an expositor, and that receiving happens when the text is confronted in the spirit of a listener.

3. *Summarize the textual message into a paragraph, then let your preaching concerns dictate how much of its insight(s) to use now, or later.*

If the passage was short and its structure simple, one sermon might carry the weight of the message it speaks. There is an implied principle here: the longer the passage, the more sermons one might need to plan to carry the cargo of its intended contribution. This doubtless explains the long-hallowed homiletical custom of insisting that a sermon should be based upon one text and that the text should he short, "a small enough packet to be carried easily in the memory."[37]

But much depends upon the expositor's methods, skill in designing, and the purpose that dictates how some scripture portion is to be used. Dwight E. Stevenson has long advocated preaching on whole biblical books, sometimes as an overview in beginning a series of sermons on the contents of some respective book, but also because "the biblical books themselves [are] the most natural units of scripture imaginable—and the most neglected in the shaping of sermons."[38] But if one is not that ambitious, there are the dialogues of Scripture, the parables, treasured psalms, all of which allow for singular treatment of natural units.

4. *Sermonize the message, with your eye always upon how it is to apply to human interest and experience.*

There are four basic ways in which sermonic exposition can go askew. One is the slavish restatement of the textual setting at times when it can be assumed, or touched upon lightly. A second is belaboring what is obvious, doing exhaustively what should be done suggestively and with stress upon application. A third way exposition fails is when the preacher uses the same pattern of progression to deal with very different textual genres. The fourth problem to be faced in designing an expository sermon is in assuming that attention to the text(ual passage) is enough by itself to produce an adequate sermon.

There *are* those times when a textual setting can be assumed, allowing time for the preacher to do something *with* it rather than spend unnecessary time *on* it. Billy Graham did that in his sermon "The Prodigal Son." Graham began: "Now tonight, let's turn to the 15th chapter of Luke. I'm not going to read the passage because it's too long, but it is a familiar story that all of us have read and heard since childhood. It's called "The Story of the Prodigal Son."[39]

Then Graham went on to deepen the impression of the story upon the hearers' minds, suggesting that there were more levels to it than the one most familiar to people. After referring to it in the previous sentence as the story of the prodigal son, he teachingly commented: "That's what we

call it. There are many ways we could term this passage from Luke's Gospel. It could be called `The Story of the Loving Father.' It could be called `The Story of the Church Member without Christ,' because that is exactly what the elder brother was."

The rest of the sermon is an expositional account of facts of the parable, with intermittent application and evangelistic appeal. Despite his free-speech style, Graham did not belabor the obvious, but spent the time pressing home the message on several levels at once.

No one sermon design will fit every textual genre with similar success. Every textual style demands and deserves its own mode of treatment in keeping with its mood. It is necessary to say this, the much-honored works of Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910) and Frederick William Robertson (1816-1853) notwithstanding. Robertson's two-point contrast method in treating a text or passage was used for most of his sermonic work. The principle of balancing aspects of a text was not original with him, but Robertson lifted it to new heights. Influenced by Rector Archibald Boyd, with whom he served at Christchurch in Cheltenham, England, for a time, Robertson "adapted this method, developed it, made it characteristically his own, and by his example finally spread it to the ends of the English-speaking world," biographer James R. Blackwood explains.[40] While the conciseness of this design allowed one to deal with the message substance, and in fuller measure, there was the problem of always having to find contrasts in every text or passage chosen. Robertson did, but that is a tribute to his sermonic greatness and not to any absoluteness in his characteristic sermon method.[41]

Alexander Maclaren was justly famous for his pulpit work, but he used three points for nearly every sermon, a structure he confessed as a natural reaction in his mind as he studied a text. Writer W. Robertson Nicoll, in an obituary tribute to Maclaren as published in *The British Weekly* when he died in 1910, commented:

> *Everyone knows his method of preaching. His people, as one of his friends said, "were fed with the three-pronged fork." He had an extraordinary gift of analyzing a text. He touched it ... and it immediately broke up into [three] natural and memorable divisions, so comprehensive and so clear that it seemed wonderful that the text should have been handled in any other way.[42]*

But most texts can be handled in more than one way. The would-be expositor must necessarily experiment now and again to find the best expression for a message. But the form and focus of the message in the text will make certain urges on their own as the alert preacher listens to the text and works with it.

I did that in preparing an expository series on the Epistle to the Hebrews for radio use. Fifteen sermons were shaped after long study of the Epistle, and all fell under the general theme "Jesus and Our Human Pilgrimage." One of the sermons, "He Was Faithful," appears in chapter 7 of this book.

Intending to make substantial use of the Epistle itself, I pursued the following process in shaping the design of that sermon.

I. The Hermeneutical Procedure

Section treated: Hebrews 3:1-6

a) Jesus exalted as supreme example of fidelity to trust. The passage is an artful blend of history, theology, and doctrine. The passage interests, instructs, inspires. The writing is closely knit, with two persons contrasted but honored—Moses and Jesus. The reason is given in the text. The issue at hand among the readers was the need for strength to stand up under pressure of persecution, as did Jesus.

b) The passage lends itself to a pastoral purpose: encouragement of persons under great stress and strain because of their faith.

3:1 A conclusive beginning—a call made to "consider *[katanoēsate,* aorist imperative, fix the mind upon in order to discern and decide] Jesus." The reason for doing so follows. The titles applied to Jesus increase the weightedness of his example before them.

3:2 "Faithful being" [Cr. *pistos onta].* Piety is indicated, an attitude of worshipful belonging, total obedience, allegiance. Jesus was fully inclined toward God as the one who appointed him. The present tense of the participle suggests a characteristic stance of Jesus toward God.

"Just as Moses." A comparison is in view, arguing from the lesser to the higher, but with clear indications of their correspondence:

i)   both Moses and Jesus were deliverers,
ii) both were intercessors,
iii) both were prophets,
iv) both had "face-to-face" dealing with God,
v)   Moses gave the law; Jesus, the gospel,
vi) both were suffering servants,
vii) both established covenants,
viii) both had titles by God's appointment. 3:3 "much more glory than Moses."

II. The Homiletical Procedure[43]

Title: taken from text (3:2), "He Was Faithful"

a) represents a summary of the section message
b) offers a propositional and pictorial image
c) allows a biographical treatment for the message

What appears above was taken directly from notes made as the text was being "interrogated" and "mined" for its message, tone, flow of argument, and possible application to experience. The full result of the sermonic process is seen in the sermon itself.

THE LURE OF THE IDEAL

Expository sermons can be done, and should be done. They reflect the best offered in the texts, and it is the text that brings the message. Preaching wedded to a text brings forth spiritual fruit, while talk without a text becomes a pretext that deserves to be questioned.

Paul Hindemith, contemporary musician-composer who was always going forward in his music, both in form and in content, commented that however far he ranged on his harmonic journeys as a musician, he would always have to come back at the end of a piece to a simple

tonic chord. It was his conviction that the listener needed not only flights into other worlds of sound than the normal constructions allowed, but also a return to firm and native ground. Thus these two sentences from one of his writings: "Music, as long as it exists, will always take its departure from the major triad and return to it. The musician cannot escape it any more than the painter his primary colours or the architect his three dimensions."[44]

True preaching takes its departure from the word of God, in the sermon, but must forever return to that Word. Expository preaching, carefully planned and rightly done, keeps preacher and people at home *with* and in the biblical message, always close to the heart of the matter—the great salvation events of which the Bible is record, reminder, and forecast.

Chapter IV.

DESIGNING THE
DOCTRINAL/TOPICAL SERMON

The church began under the contagious ministry of an itinerant teaching preacher. Those who heard him interpret the life of man in the light of God gladly called him rabbi. Jesus of Nazareth knew the serious service of doctrine and he gave himself fully to that service. On one occasion, being interrogated by Pilate, Jesus declared, "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37b). It was the teaching *by* him that gathered the first members of the church. It was teaching *about* him that helped that church deepen its roots and grow.

The church across the ages has always needed and expected a teaching ministry.[45] Henry Sloane Coffin reminded us that Jesus "was usually called Teacher," then added, "and it would be wiser for Christian preachers to strive to be worthy of that title."[46] That is the point of concern in this chapter which explores the preacher's opportunity to teach and develop the people of God through preaching doctrine.

THE NEW TESTAMENT FOCUS ON DOCTRINE

The New Testament writings are filled with teaching. The materials reflect the apostolic stress upon "sound doctrine" and its relation to right living.[47] The leaders in the early church took seriously the need to deal with the awakened, questioning mind and the questing soul; they dealt with that need by a careful handling of truth. Their task was elemental. The Epistles show that the writers took seriously where the believers were in their thought and living, and that they preached and taught in vital relation to that positioned level of need. First Timothy 3:2 categorically states that a pastor must be "an apt teacher," showing that a teaching role was expected because needed. It is not necessary to join the debate over whether a clear distinction should be drawn between preaching and teaching in the early church; it is enough to say that the primary leaders followed the lead Jesus took in pioneering the way before them—they proclaimed as they taught, and they made their teachings preach.[48]

Donald M. Baillie (1887-1954) told of addressing a group of preachers on the subject of how to preach Christian doctrine. While lecturing, Baillie confessed deep regret that his previous Pastoral ministry had not been devoted more heavily to teaching, and he followed this up by saying that if he had to begin again in a pastorate he would give himself more to being a teacher for his people. (He was now a seminary professor.) When he made the same admission to one of his divinity classes, one of the students asked Baillie whether his present work had not made him think that way. Baillie admitted the fairness of the question, but then went on to assure the student that serious thought had been given to the statement, and that he truly felt the need for more emphasis by pastors on doctrine as they preach.[49]

Those preachers who see their work as the sharing of an all-important *message* will increasingly see the meaning of that message in its truths, truths that do not change but into which our interest and inquiry can more deeply extend their roots. That is how Paul viewed his calling: "to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see *[photisai]* what is the plan for the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things" (Eph. 3:8b-9), and he fulfilled his task by sharing truths. Paul preached doctrine, with applied meaning. So did Peter, who was eager to remind those who knew his teachings to remain "established in the truth that you have" (II Pet. 1:12). The early church took doctrine seriously, and the New Testament reflects that fact in grand fashion.

DOCTRINE: FAITH'S GROUND PLAN

P. T. Forsyth (1848-1921) once wrote that preaching "is the Gospel prolonging and declaring itself."[50] Doctrinal preaching is that gospel explaining itself in the interest of a ground plan for the hearer's life and faith.

"Doctrine" has to do with the teaching of truths necessary for faith and salvation. Once taught those truths, the believer needs to understand their relation to life, and thus be able to apply them to personal and social experience.

The Old Testament words for doctrine carry the meaning of what is necessary to be known in order to fit God's norm: there is *leqach,* "what is received (as authoritative and binding);" there is *musar,* meaning "instruction"; and *shemuah,* "what has been heard (from someone with authority to teach and advise)." The New Testament writings build on that same set of understandings, but against a Greek background, with its main words of doctrine being: *didaskalia,* "something being taught (with a sense of purpose)"; *paradosis,* "something being handed down (passed on with a sense of its importance and authority)"; and *logos,* "an authoritative statement."[51]

Doctrinal preaching allows the preacher to fulfill his or her responsibility as a church teacher in mass fashion, as it were, passing on the truths of the faith in a community setting and in the spirit of worship. This is valuable for both preacher and congregation. It enables the church to receive truth, while it helps the preacher develop beyond the limits of being only an exhorter. W. E. Sangster wrote: "Some preachers are only exhorters. It is an honorable office, recognized in the New Testament. Yet happy is that congregation whose preacher is a teacher as well."[52]

The adequate preaching of doctrine is done only after great cost on the preacher's part. There is the cost in time and study and thought and prayer. Working over a period of time, a preacher can gain a fruitful understanding of some doctrine, and also insight into how it relates increasingly to life and faith. The sermon on a doctrine needs to be *biblically based* '(exegetically sound and contextually honest), *authentically Christian* (at the New Testament level of biblical faith), and *experientially oriented* (related to the hearer's life and needs). These kinds of results *demand* prior thought, some consultation, and honest, fervent prayer. These results also demand working through one's own belief-system to expand and refine it— sometimes through the trauma of inward change—together with the willingness to confess that one has come to see and understand a truth as never before. As Richard John Neuhaus has

commented, "A Christian congregation has a right to expect that their preacher and teacher has thought, read, pondered, puzzled, and prayed over the matter at hand and that he is prepared to share the harvest."[53] In doing so, however, the preacher might also have to pay the price at times when his or her convictional sharing meets misunderstanding, disagreement, and opposition in some hearers.

A.W.W. Dale, biographer of his famous preacher-father R. W. Dale (1829-1895), told of that preacher's experiences along this line. Quite early in his ministry Dale sensed the importance of systematic doctrinal instruction to the spiritual understanding and vigor of a church. Busy in the church from his youth, Dale early saw that "in many cases spiritual ardour is enfeebled and depressed through an imperfect apprehension of the primary truths of the gospel."[54] So he covenanted with God to be a doctrinal preacher, and he set about the business of guiding his hearers in "the discussion of the loftier problems of life and faith." And he paid the price in both success and suffering.

Forty or more years later, looking back on how it all began, R. W. Dale related to someone an experience from his first days of tempest and toil in the Birmingham, England, Carr's Lane Church. It happened that Dale met a certain honored preacher along one of Birmingham's streets, and they talked for awhile. The other preacher was older, and he talked with the younger Dale in a friendly way about his ministry. "I hear," he questioned, "that you are preaching doctrinal sermons to the congregation at Carr's Lane." Then he added, summarily, "They will not stand it." To which Dale replied, perhaps with some self-confidence, "They will have to stand it." The years between had shown that they could, that they would, and that they appreciated and grew through it. But not everyone. There were those among his hearers who wanted what they liked, and not what Dale thought they needed. His success in doctrinal preaching was a mingled one of personal stress in preparing and persevering in the face of dissenters.

Doctrinal preaching always costs, but it informs, convicts, inspires, and nurtures the individual believer and the church. When the preaching is planned with a view to their needs; when it is planned sufficiently well ahead to allow time for proper thought and structuring to result; when it has reasonable range as well as reason; and when it is backed by prayer so that it can both inform and inspire, doctrinal preaching becomes an indisputable spiritual resource for those who hear and receive it.

THE DOCTRINAL SERMON
1. In preparing to preach a doctrinal theme, ***choose a teaching that is vital to human experience and hope***. The sermon can be both prophetic and pastoral when its doctrinal core is seen alongside some experience, hope, or need.

The serious service of doctrine is to inform and inspire. Doctrine puts life in scriptural perspective. It provides that point of reference by which hearers can rightly interpret life, all of it. Neuhaus explains, "Such points of reference are doctrines, and the most essential of them are dogmas."[55] It is through sound doctrine that the preacher helps the hearer to see the variousness of life with clear eyes, an informed mind, and an understanding, responsible heart.

2. To buttress that teaching and provide scope for it, ***use a strong text—or a reasonable***

combination of agreeable texts. The concern is not to proof-text the doctrinal point, but to provide a scriptural center for the message. Under right handling, that scriptural center helps the light to shine out of the cluster of the preacher's structured words. A topical concordance or index will be of help in locating relevant texts for chosen topics. Living with a text or two for awhile will finally convince one of its import and possibilities of use. Once the text or passage is chosen, the direct tie-in with the doctrinal theme or topic can be settled and the treatment designed.

3. As you interpret the text, *keep in mind the tradition of its use in the communion to which you belong, and depart from that tradition only when your firsthand study of scripture requires that you do so*.

Doctrinal preaching is best done as one "consults" with the history of the people who hear it. Denominational understandings and emphases must be given their due, and reinforced where
necessary. Most church people have had some teaching given them. There is some formulation of the faith already at work in their minds. A preacher's predecessors in a certain pulpit doubtless laid basic teachings upon the foundation of their faith, and some larger framework of confession was followed in doing so. The historic denominations have their Creeds and compendia of truths they hold as central, so the doctrinal preacher is not essentially alone as he or she works to prepare the teaching sermon for the people. That group history and understanding should be regarded as we do our work.

There are times, however, when one's firsthand study of scripture will lead to fresh accents regarding a given truth, or even to a reformulation of statement about an accepted church teaching.

Paul S. Rees told some years ago of a preacher-friend whose study of scripture led him to review his understanding about baptism.[56] The friend had been in contact with church groups beyond his own denominational context, serving them on occasion, and being challenged by the fruitful fellowship and spiritual interchange. His church background honored the tradition of infant baptism, but the day came when his study of scripture stirred him to believe that "believer's baptism" alone was a clear New Testament demand and that it should be allowed in his group. He shared his concern with the archbishop of the diocese, and asked if his new understanding should bar him from continued membership in that communion. The Archbishop wisely advised him to remain with their church, and then approvingly confessed, "I wish for the day when our communion will recognize both modes of baptism."

All seemed to go along well after that, until that preacher's vicar was succeeded by a man who did not share such a broad view as the archbishop. And the new man let his difference of opinion be known. One day the vicar said to him, "Every time I give you the Holy Communion I feel sick to my stomach." Paul Rees explains, "All because he had learned that the man held Baptist views."

Doctrinal issues keep us reminded of our relation to the rest of the church. Our preaching of doctrine should honor that relation. The truth has been given, much of it well- formulated, and a history has been shaped through its use. Doctrinal preaching helps to pass the truth on, but along with it the history of interpretation to which one gives allegiance. When our insights

into those teachings deepen or our perspectives change, any independent departures from the general group views should be publicized in sermons with great simplicity, sympathetic bearing, scriptural backing, and the awareness of risk.

In an expository-doctrinal series on Romans, R. W. Dale had to deal with 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous." His treatment differed from the standard view of the Carr's Lane people about original sin and natural depravity. "Excitement deepened into alarm, and alarm rose to the height of a panic," Dale's biographer son reports. As the anxiety of the church members expanded to include misgivings from others beyond their circle, one old fellow-student—a man not given to much humor—said to Dale: "I wish that Paul had never written that chapter: it has greatly disturbed your position at Carr's Lane." But Paul had written that chapter, and Dale felt under necessity to think his way into it in order to preach its message with understanding. John Angell James, his older co-pastor there at the time, helped quiet much of the furor as he told those who disagreed with his younger colleague that the theological differences between them did not touch "the substance or core of Evangelical truth." James outrightly told some older, more hostile critics in the church to "leave the young man alone. He has the root of the matter in him," adding that Dale "must have his fling."

Dale did, and he learned much from it. He learned especially to center attention upon the central facts of the gospel and not the theories by which the facts are interpreted. He learned to distinguish forever between substance and expression in his quest to share the truths of the faith. Those who desire to preach doctrinal sermons must keep this ever in mind. They must guard against disruptive expressions as they seek to serve the truth, and refuse to preach doctrine for their own needs.

*4. **Develop the doctrinal statement in thesis or question-and answer form, and work progressively to build a climax of understanding to be harnessed for practical use**.*
Donald M. Baillie's sermon "The Doctrine of the Trinity" is an excellent example of such a design.[57] In his first three sentences Baillie is off and running. Observe sentence number one: a reference to the church year setting of the service, and an announcement of his subject. "On this Trinity Sunday I wish to speak about the doctrine of the Trinity." Sentence number two is an admission that the subject is not a popular one, and is apt to be uninviting to many: "That sounds formidable and uninviting." A disarming word is sounded, but humanely and humbly. Then follows a statement of necessity to probe the subject: "But surely we ought not to shirk the task of understanding it." The introduction—short, terse, well- sequenced, soon ends with a motivational sentence that invites further inquiry: "And I believe we can find the whole Christian Gospel summed up in this mysterious doctrine, of three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in one God." Then, a communal spirit is shown on the preacher's part, as he invitationally requests, "Let us try."

Baillie's outline shows three points, and they follow the flow of the text he used. "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19). But his treatment is not textual mainly; rather it is historical, because he unfolds the text against the background of the history by which it is to be understood. His argument is that God was first experienced, showing himself as singular and sovereign; that Jesus Christ was then experienced, showing God in a fresh way to

men, making them sense that God was in him—as Father; and that the Holy Spirit was then experienced, overwhelming the disciples with sense of the presence and power of God. The explanation culminates with a conclusive statement: "And that is how Christians have come to speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One God.

The sermon has well-calculated sequences and strategically worded transitional sentences. These are easily located, occurring where they should: just before the next point, and planned as a lead-in to that point.

Having given his explanation of how the Christian church came to speak of Father-Son-Spirit, Baillie expected his hearers to see the meaning of the doctrine with sharper vision. The conclusion begins, "Can you see now why I said that the doctrine of the Trinity sums up the whole Christian Gospel?" Then he launched his summary, recapitulating his three points, and moved quickly to apply the doctrine to their lives, declaring that the doctrine of the Trinity "tells you everything." "It tells you of what God is, in His external and infinite love; and of what God did in Jesus Christ for our salvation; and of what God does still today, dwelling with us as truly as He dwelt among men nineteen centuries ago, and the same forevermore."

The rest of the sermon is a call to identify with its meaning and importance, and to celebrate with the rest of the church. "So to those who know the story, the doctrine of the Trinity sums up the whole Gospel. And the Church never tires of singing in gratitude: `Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end."

A close look at how Baillie organized the elements within his message will reveal his use of both thesis (implied) and question-and-answer form. Although he stated his purpose in the third sentence of the sermon—to continue with the task of trying to understand the doctrine of the Trinity—he was most careful to keep the hearers with him in the quest with a warm invitation, "Let us try." The rest of the sermon is filled with collectives to keep the hearing occasion warm and personal; again and again the speaker used "we" and "us," wisely positing a mutual interest in an admittedly difficult endeavor.

The historical progression plan for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity demanded strategic movement through factual propositions. Baillie was persuading, or seeking to do so, without making any claim to prove his underlying thesis. He used a warm and disarming suggestion to plant the notion on which he would be working, as he confessed, "I believe we can find the whole Christian Gospel summed up in this mysterious doctrine, of three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one God." He does not promise to prove it; he rather invites all the hearers to join him in a journey to search for the Gospel in that doctrine: "Let us try. " He mentioned a problem and set about to solve it with their attentive companionship. Baillie knew the path they would all take in the search to find the gospel in that doctrine; the hearers were encouraged to believe that the search would be fruitful. Baillie's "Let us try" was his sequence statement leading into the main body of the message.

G. Earl Guinn's "Resurrection of Jesus," also a doctrinal sermon, develops topically.[58] Guinn's first sentence of the introduction sets the proposition before the hearers: "The

Christian religion stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus," and the last two sentences of that introduction make an early claim upon each hearer to take the doctrine seriously: "Of the resurrection Paul had no doubts, nor should we. Faith here is crucial. "

Guinn's outline is in three parts:

1. The resurrection of Jesus is indisputable history.
2. The resurrection of Jesus provides inspiring philosophy.
3. The resurrection of Jesus gives invincible hope.

The tie-in of the doctrine with the believer's life and destiny is given its strongest treatment in the last three paragraphs of the sermon. The language is celebrative and affirmative: "The Christian must not separate belief in Christ's resurrection from the confession of him as Lord. We are saved by the living Lord whom we confess and not simply by our faith in his resurrection." In so reporting, Guinn at last called upon the support of his chosen text, Romans 10:9-10, on which he had not directly relied before. Perhaps placing it last was with concern to heighten the appeal of his call to cast aside all doubt about the Resurrection fact. He had already cautioned, in his introduction, that faith in it is crucial for being Christian.

Further study of the two sermons just examined will reveal additional features in the creative design those preachers used in the interest of doctrine. In addition to these two approaches, there is still another doctrinal design in John Killinger's "There Is Still God,"[59] and there is a stronger and more overtly evangelical tone in John R. W. Stott's sermon, "I Believe in God."[60]

As one final example of a doctrinal design, you may wish to turn over to chapter 7 and examine my sermon "Death Did Not Win!" As you do so, the following questions will help you make your way into the pattern of the design.

I. Textual-Thematic Concerns.
1. To what use is the text put in the sermon?
2. Is the sermon line influenced by text, by theme, or by both?
3. What crucial aspects of the doctrine of the Resurrection are highlighted through the title?
II. Teaching-Application Concerns
1. What direction for faith and life are given?
2. How is human hope clarified or renewed?
3. What "tone" is evident in the style of wording?
4. What feeling is evoked by the treatment?

BEYOND TEACHING TO ASSURANCE AND ACTION

The preacher is under trust to handle divine meanings as an official, God-sent proclaimer. The meanings come through Christian doctrine, teachings that encompass the range of human concerns and divine resources, teachings that measure life in terms of the eternal. Only such teachings have the power to grant assurance of soul and a guaranteed destiny.

Alexander Whyte (1836-1921) left a report about Bishop Joseph Butler's deathbed request.

Summoning his chaplain, the dying bishop confessed. "Though I have endeavored to avoid sin and to please God to the utmost of my power; yet from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to die."

> "My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Savior."
> "True," said Butler, "but how should I know that he is a Savior for me?"
> The chaplain replied, "My lord, it is written, Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." "True," the bishop reflected, "and I am surprised that though I have read that Scripture a thousand times over, I never felt its virtue till this moment. And now I die happy."[61]

A known teaching came alive and moved its believer into the assurance born of faith. That is the serious service of doctrine: to inform and inspire for living and dying in the will of God. Doctrine is preached with these concerns in view.

Arthur John Gossip (1873-1954), lecturing to some ministers about the place of biblical doctrine in preaching, encouraged them to do more and more to inform their hearers about the whole counsel of God. He forthrightly stated, "Multitudes have found the doctrines, so far from being useless and cumbersome, a first necessity and the very breath of life to them; so far from being tedious and boring, beyond all computation, more thrilling and exciting than anything else in the round world."[62] Such encouragement bids the preacher strive for excellence as a doctrinal preacher, working always to carry hearers beyond teaching to belief, assurance, and right action.

DESIGNING THE FUNERAL SERMON

The preacher is charged with the need to speak a word from the Lord, and never is that necessity so crucial as when death invades the family or church circle and a word must be set beside the experience for all those involved in feeling it. The sermon is an important vehicle of meaning at such a time. It is a strategic way to focus faith and release feeling. It mediates meaning and conveys a sense of presence. But an extra degree of intensity is usually involved in funeral preaching, and the affective tones of the preacher's words are much higher than at any other time. A part of this relates to a deepened human concern to gain something more from the sermon under conditions of felt loss and bereavement.

THE RITUAL CONTEXT OF FUNERALS

There are certain ritual conventions that the preacher is expected to know and honor where funerals are concerned. So much of what is said and done carries a sign-value. The effects of certain colors are subtle and profound. The pace at which the service moves makes its declaration about what is being done, and that pace communicates a mood; some will sense it all as a special time (*kairos*), and others will see it all in connection with ongoing life *(chronos).* But over the whole context of the funeral service hangs a cloud of meaning that waters the experience of death and helps people grow in faith and understanding about God's ways with man.

The rituals associated with the service are part of the long view of life by which meanings are preserved and passed on from one generation to another. Spoken and acted rituals do capture the past, but they do more. They make meanings concrete, giving them a present tense so that we can comprehend those meanings in ever fresh ways. Special times and special places only deepen our awareness of the meanings, and sharing with one another at those times and in those special places generates a sense of community among those who gather in common.

Regarding the funeral sermon, the preacher has four main options as the design is shaped: (1) to treat the meaning of the experience of death; (2) to comfort the bereaved family and friends; or (3) to treat the life and work of the deceased person, delivering a eulogy about the dead loved one. The next option (4) involves a mix of the previous three, since funerals do involve those who need comfort, those who need a fresh word about life and death, and the need to say something about the life of the one whose parting made the occasion necessary. But usually one of the first three options will be given a major place in the sermon design, and the ritual expectations related to the occasion can help the preacher in planning and handling the preaching task.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR THE FUNERAL SERMON DESIGN

1. *Determine the major focus of the sermon in keeping with the editions surrounding the person's death*. The direction one should follow in preaching is often sensed while studying the event of the person's passing.

Death is a part of the rhythm of life, the end result of a combination of factors, and the preacher can wisely highlight the attitude the person had while facing death, or the person's courage in the fight against some disease that worked away at his strength, thus affirming that person's handling of life in a way that helps those who are left behind.

The preacher might well choose to speak about the "rest" into which faithful believers enter at death, or point with confidence and gracious bearing to the goodness and mercy of God extended to all his children.

The focus of the sermon must be determined with care, and the preacher's words must be honest and apt. Funerals make us face the profound dimensions of reality, and every proven resource should be called upon to help us shape our words with care: biblical wisdom, folk culture, and the home circle. It is largely in the preacher's hands to help the living find deeper spiritual meaning when life is upset and invaded by the fact of some loved one's death.

2. *Plan the language in keeping with the sermon focus.* There will be times when the language of lament will be in order, lament that the deceased person will no longer be with us in our work and group life. Those who lament will want to review that person's contribution to the group, and the preacher will be expected to call attention to essential facts and strategic details. The lament will thus have a personal tone and convey a sense of intimacy with the one whose life is being honored.

There are times when the language of praise must be used, praise spoken for a well-spent life of faith and service. But the mix of lament and praise is seldom an easy accomplishment, and the stress will ordinarily be on the one or the other. But again, the conditions of the person's death will help the preacher to see the whole scene and find a proper focus.

This is why funeral sermons are usually entrusted to those who have known the deceased person, or, lacking that acquaintance, who had had considerable experience in handling emotion-ridden occasions. Seldom is a funeral sermon left to someone who is a total stranger to the bereaved family or the community in which the deceased lived. When this happens, so much can go wrong.

Howard Thurman tells of being seven years old when his father died, and he has never forgotten the trauma he experienced when the guest preacher delivered a funeral sermon that did violence to his memory of his father. That guest preacher handling the funeral had not known Saul Thurman. Yet that preacher dared to assess Saul Thurman's nonmembership in the local church the family attended as evidence that he was a nonbeliever, and he forthrightly declared him lost and in hell. That preacher wanted to make the occasion an object lesson for all who were "outside the church."

As young Howard sat on the mourner's seat, he kept saying to his mother beside him, "He didn't

know Pappa? Did he? Did he, Momma?[63] Alice Thurman, Howard's mother, held her calm through the service and gently patted her son's knees to comfort him as the verbal violence ate away at his young mind and spirit. It was the handling of that sermon by that preacher, Thurman tells us, that turned him against the church for awhile during his youth. Lacking intimacy with the family, that preacher would have been wiser and more helpful if he had chosen to comfort the family rather than interpret the life of the deceased.

Having mentioned doing violence to the memory of the deceased, there are several stories about how John Jasper (1812-1901) used to do this. That legendary black pulpit giant "was preeminently a funeral preacher," we are told,[64] and there are several sermons preserved from his ministry on such occasions.

One story about John Jasper concerns a combined funeral occasion for two persons, one William Ellyson and one Mary Barnes. The preacher was rather blunt in treating the memory of Ellyson. He reminded the hearers that the man had not lived as a good man, that he had died without God and without hope, adding, in his heavy dialect, "It's a bad tale to tell on 'im, but he fix de story hissef." Then he warned the hearers that a funeral must be according to the life of the departed.

But the eulogy for Mary Barnes was a noble statement of praise about her life in faith. Jasper declared, "I know'd her."[65] His sermon honoring her life is filled with the language of praise and epitaphs drawn from the Bible he loved to use in all his preaching. His sermon was a verbal compliment, addressed as if to her, an official interpretation of what her life meant to all the faithful ones in the church to which she belonged and in which she had loyally worked across the years. So much comes through in the preacher-pastor's declaration, "I know'd her." It was a thankful pastor's final moment to celebrate a member. Given the right conditions, all attending members expect such a statement from the one who designs and delivers the funeral sermon.
The language ritual in the funeral sermon should be truthful, resourceful, tasteful, intimate, consoling, economical in wording, and emotionally controlled.

*3. **Whenever possible, plan the sermon on the level of the heroic.*** This will enable those who grieve to express their grief with understood pride and social solace.
In speaking about the level of the heroic, I am referring to the way a sermon can be a ritual victory over death. It can speak to the issue of finality by speaking words that put the dead to rest in the mind of the mourners. In the black church tradition in which I was nurtured, this was done as the preacher would "pull the sting out" of death by reciting the resurrection story. John Jasper was doing this when, in that same sermon over Mary Barnes, he bent over slightly, put his hand to his mouth in megaphone fashion, and cried out to challenge death: "Grave! Grave! 0 Grave! Where is your victory?" He was in a ritual recitation against death, celebrating the power of Jesus over death, and was thereby helping the mourners and hearers to reaffirm their faith, hope, and confidence in their own destiny as believers. Great power lies in heroic rhetoric, and that power should be invoked by the preacher whenever the circumstances allow and warrant it.

Dr. Benjamin E. Mays was working at the heroic level in his eulogy honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[66] Mays dealt with a mixture of concerns on that occasion. He treated the meaning of King's life and ministry, the nature of prophetic service, and the tension everybody was feeling because the assassin had not yet been caught. That eulogy also called upon all to

help finish King's unfinished work. The circumstances surrounding the slain leader's death demanded that heroic approach. And Dr. May's intimate friendship with the younger King gave a personal tone to the eulogy that was authentic and appealing. It helped the speaker to shape the experience of hearing into an enduring monument of meaning and honor. A leader was being interpreted by a leader. A great spokesman was honoring a great spokesman. An activist was being credited by an activist. Meaning was being boldly formalized for all, and grief was being lanced so that deep feelings could bleed under controlled conditions.

Writer James Baldwin has told about the funeral of his father in 1943. Although they were blood father and son, the two did not know each other very well. The father had been a kind of recluse, and his son had grown up fearing to be in his presence. That father had also been a bitter man, bitter because of the many boundaries he had known as a black man in hostile white surroundings. Nevertheless, during the funeral, the preacher—a long-time friend of the father, spoke of Baldwin's dad as "thoughtful, patient, and forbearing, a Christian inspiration to all who knew him, and a model for his children."[67] As Baldwin thought back on it all, he reasoned that the preacher was dealing with the issues at a level deeper than questions of fact, so involved was he in his friend's life that this interpretation was the dead man's life and that it must by all means be known by all. So Baldwin added,

> *Every man in the chapel hoped that when his hour came he, too, would be eulogized, which is to say, forgiven, and that all of his lapses, greeds, errors, and strayings from the truth would be invested with coherence and looked upon with charity. This was perhaps the last thing human beings could give each other and it was what they demanded, after all, of the Lord.*

Some time ago I chanced upon a television special on dying. The program was pulled from a two-year study in which three persons facing death shared their reactions as they waited for the end. All three persons struggled to remain calm while waiting on death. Open talk took place to help the marriage partner understand how death would involve him or her. But one of the most moving episodes involved an elderly black man, a minister, who was dying of cancer. Told that no cure was available, he decisively stated: "I'm not gonna die on account of death." He preached a brief personal statement about death and then returned South to be with his family. He wanted to take a last look around at familiar faces and long-loved places. When he died, it was with dignity, with his grandchildren playing beside his bed.

He had not wanted a spectacle. He wanted the drama of the end to be lived in that home setting. This was his way of helping the family deal with raw fact, and to do so in shameless affirmation that death belongs to God even as life belongs to him. He wanted to have a meaningful home-going.

A news writer also saw that special program and published some interesting comments about the black man's death-setting. "Through this black minister," he wrote, "dying is seen as an act of fundamental faith, a tribute to the necessary illusion that gives man a final identity."[68] The writer marveled at the backward leap that minister had taken just because of his forward faith.

It is this that is affirmed through heroic sermons over the dead. It is what Howard Thurman

referred to as "going down to one's grave with *a shout.*"[69]

It is with this in mind that the language of the sermon must be planned. And it is why the language of the church must be used at strategic points in the sermon. There is special import in the mention of such words as "grace," "deliverance," "hope," "faith," "forgiveness," "love," "eternal life," "peace," "assurance." The sermon must be planned with affective meanings in mind for the hearers.

In summary, the funeral sermon should be designed with the major focus well-set: namely, to treat the meaning of death in human experience, or to comfort the bereaved, or to honor the life of the deceased, or to do a bit of each of these where necessary. The best direction to follow is usually sensed as one studies the eventful elements associated with someone's death. The language of the sermon must match the sermon focus, so that lament or praise, or both, can help the hearers to relate well to the occasion as sharers under the preacher's clear guidance. Whenever possible, the sermon should be planned and delivered on the heroic level. It should give the mourners some sense of pride in the midst of their loss and bereavement.

Notes

[1] See Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. I (New York and Evanston: Harper, 1962), p. l2l. Trans. D. M. G. Stalker. See also pp. 105-28 for the fuller discussion.

[2] On this genre of literature, see Jay A. Wilcoxen, "Narrative." In John H. Hayes, ed., *Old Testament Form Criticism* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), esp. pp. 57-98. See also R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (London: Oxford University Press. l 966).

[3] For a suggested distinction between "story" and "history" see James Barr, "Story and History in Biblical Theology," in *The Journal of Religion*, January 1976, esp. pp. 5-11.

[4] See James A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress press, (I972) esp. pp. 15-20. Sanders cites I. Sam. 12:7-9 as the classic summary regarding the saving deeds of God in Israel's life. "In that one verse the essence of what is recorded in far fuller compass in the Books of Genesis through Joshua is recited" (p. l7).

[5] See Wesley Kort, *Narrative Elements and Religious Meanings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Kort distinguishes four narrative elements of importance: atmosphere, character, plot, and tone. His discussion relates to modern novels but the insights are helpful for our examination of scripture narratives.

[6] James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, Crossroads Book, 1975), p. 57. See also pp. 58-60, 102-7.

[7] See James. W. English, *Handyman of the Lord: T he Life and Ministry of the Reverend William Holmes Borders* (New York: Meredith press, 1967), esp. pp. 3-8.

[8] *Road Without Turning: The Story of Reverend James H. Robinson, An Autobiography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1950), pp. 60, 61.

[9] On this distinction, see Hans Frei, *The Eclipse if Biblical Narrative* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), esp. pp. 10-16. See also Leo Braudy, *Narrative Form in History and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1930); Maurice Mandelbaum, "A Note on History as Narrative,' in *History and Theology*, 6 (1967), pp. 413-19, and the responses of W. H. Dray, R. G. Ely, R. Gruner, "Mandelbaum on History as Narrative: A Discussion," in *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 275-94.

[10] *The Scottish Pulpit: From the Reformation to the present Day* (London: Charles Burnet and Co., 1887), p. 174. See also Jean L. Watson, *Life of Andrew Thomson*, p. 82.

[11] The affirmational proposition is there even if the translation is made in terms of an adverbial expression: "When God began to create heaven and earth." See the discussion of the options (against the background of the similar Babylonian *Enuma Elish*) in Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Phoenix Books, 1963), esp. pp. 92 ff. See also (*contra*), Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed publishing Company, 1964), esp. pp. l-14; and Bernhard W. Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos* (New York: Association Press, 1967), esp. pp. 17-42.

[12] Trachte *Pesahim* l0:5. *The Mishnah*, trans. Herbert Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. l5l.

[13] See his *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*, with Franz Rosenzweig (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1936), p. 56.

[14] On this see Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Scribner's, 1963), esp. pp. 113-14; and *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden(Scribner's, 1971),esp. pp. l-37; Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), esp. pp. 156-85.

[15] *My Lord, What a Morning: An Autobiography* (New York: Viking Press, 1956), pp. 9-10.

[16] For one of the helpful treatments for doing this kind of study, see William F. Irmscher, *The Nature of Literature* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975) and Wesley Kort, *Narrative Elements and Religious Meanings* (see note 5, this chapter).

[17] "The Use of Biblical Narrative in Expository Preaching," *The Asbury Seminarian*, July 1979, p. 14.

[18] See Cox, *The Twentieth Century Pulpit*, pp. 141-52.

[19] See the appreciation and critique of Marshall as preacher in Fant and Pinson, *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*, 12:3-10.

[20] See Cox, *The Twentieth Century Pulpit*, pp. 64-74.

[21] See *Best Sermons: 1959-1960 Protestant Edition*, vol. 7, ed. G. Paul Butler (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1959), pp. 228-34.

[22] Robert Luccock. *The Lost Gospel.* (New York: Harper, 1948).

[23] Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love*. (New York: Harper, 1963), pp. 127-34.

[24] See Fant and Pinson, *Twenty Centuries of Creative Preaching*, 8:184-96.

[25] On which, see John Charles Cooper, *Fantasy and the Human Spirit*. (Philadelphia: Pilgrim Press, I975).

[26] *Lectures on Preaching* (New York: Dutton, 1877), p. 19.

[27] Dwight E. Stevenson, *ln the Biblical Preacher's Workshop* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967), p. 146.

[28] *What to Preach* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1976), p. 42.

[29] *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, I 975), esp. pp. 79-112, 158-85, 205-20. See also F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Eerdmans, 1968).

[30] For an excellent translation of *On Christian Doctrine*, see D. W. Robertson, ed., trans. (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1958). On Augustine as preacher, see *The Preaching of Augustine*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Francine Cardman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), esp. pp. vii-xxi.

[31] Yngve Brilioth's, *Brief History of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965). English trans. by Karl E. Mattson.

[32] On the subject of abstraction, as I use it here, see the discussion in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. James Mark Baldwin (New York: Macmillan, 1901), 1:6.

[33] On this matter of document-texts, see Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), esp. pp. 191-275.

[34] On the categorical descriptions of "statements," "expressions," and "prescriptives," see Anders Jeffner, *The Study of Religious Language* (London: SCM Press, 1972), esp. pp. 1l-12, 68-104; and J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson (New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Books, 1965); and John Wilson, Language and the Pursuit of Truth (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 47-74.

[35] The writings of Paul are filled with imperatives. On the relation between the imperative and the indicative, see Rudolf Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel. New York: Scribner's, 1951), esp. pp. 332-33, 338-39. Instances of the imperative in the

Old Testament (in law, exhortation, promise, etc.), see James Muilenburg, *The Way of Israel: Biblical Faith and Ethics* (New York: Harper, 1961), esp. pp. 18-30, 74-98.

[36] *Preaching the Word of God* (New York: Scribner's, 1943), p. 7.

[37] Stevenson, *In the Biblical Preacher's Workshop*, p. 61.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 62. For his studies promoting a sermon on an entire book of the Bible, see his *Preaching on the Books of the New Testament* (New York: Harper, 1956) and *Preaching on the Books of the Old Testament* (Harper, 1961).

[39] Cox, *The Twentieth Century Pulpit*, p. 64.

[40] The Soul of Frederick W. Robertson: The Brighton Preacher (New York: Harper, 1947), p. 50.

[41] For an appreciative critique of Robertson's preaching and ministry, see *The Preaching of F. W. Robertson*, ed. Gilbert E. Doan, Jr., in the Preacher's Paperback Library (Philadelphia: Fortress Pres, 1964), esp. pp. 11-73. See also J. R. Blackwood, *The Soul of Frederick W. Robertson*, chap. 9 ("The Groundwork of the Sermon") and chap. 10 ("The Art of Preaching").

[42] *Princes of the Church* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921), p. 249. Interestingly, Nicoll said that Maclaren never desired to publish, and that it was only after strong urging from him that those now famous *Expositions of Holy Scripture* were done.

[43] An excellent self-evaluation instrument to test the quality of your own expository attempts is found in an article by James W. Cox, "How Good Is Your Expository Preaching?" *The Pulpit Digest*, November-December 1979, pp. 45-48. The self-test involves answering twelve questions, all annotated to assist understanding and use of them. A much larger and detailed volume of help from Cox is his *Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976).

[44] Geoffrey Skelton, *Paul Hindemith: The Man Behind the Music: A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), p. 15.

[45] See Gerald E. Knoff, "The Churches Expect a Teaching Ministry," in *The Minister and Christian Nurture*, ed. Nathaniel F. Forsyth (Nashville: Abingdon, 1957), pp. 9-26. Knoff discusses the teaching ministry against the backgrounds of Judaic rabbinical circles, the Protestant Reformation, and in the later traditions of several major denominations. See also James D. Smart, *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), esp. pp. 13-19; and Robert C. Worley, *Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), esp. pp. 30-86. See also Floyd V. Filson, "The Christian Teacher in the First Century," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1941, pp. 317-28.

[46] *What to Preach*, p. 13.

[47] For example, see Rom. 6:17-18; Phil. 4:8-9; Titus 2:1-8; and II Pet. 1:2-8 especially.

[48] For a discussion of the Sermon on the Mount as a focal instance of how Jesus blended preaching and teaching, proclaiming as he taught, instructing as he invited, see my *Responsible Pulpit*, pp. 93-100.

[49] Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments: and Other papers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), pp. 141-42.

[50] *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1907), p. 5.

[51] For a profitable study of the chief New Testament passages that speak directly of "doctrine," see the list in Robert young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, p. 2671, columns a/b. Although the renderings offered for each word are my own, an examination of the relevant passages (in both the Old and New Testament) will help the reader to see the basis for the renderings. Additional lexical insight appears (for N.T. terms) in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the

New Testament, l0 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76); for O.T. terms, see William L. Holladay, ed., A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (Eerdmans, l97l), and Theological Dictionary of the Old
Testament, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis, Geoffrey Bromiley, David E. Green, successive volumes appearing (Eerdmans. 1974).

[52] *The Craft of Sermon Construction*. p. 45.

[53] *Freedom for Ministry: A Critical Affirmation of the Church and lts Mission* (New York and San Francisco: Harper, 1979), p. 178.

[54] A.W.W. Dale, *The Life of R.W. Dale of Birmingham* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), p. 107.

[55] Neuhaus, *Freedom for Ministry*, p. 174.

[56] Paul S. Rees, editorial, "Uncomfortable Questions," *The Herald Magazine*, October 31, 1962, p. 2.

[57] In Cox, *The Twentieth Century Pulpit*, pp 9-14.

[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-81.

[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 108-14.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 237-41.

[61] See Alexander Whyte, *With Mercy and with Judgment* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), pp 269-70. See also Whyte's *Thirteen Appreciations* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, n.d.), pp. 278, 280.

[62] Arthur John Gossip, "The Whole Counsel of God: The Place of Biblical Doctrine in Preaching," *interpretation*, July 1947, p. 327.

[63] Howard Thurman. *Footprints of a Dream: The Story of the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples* (New York: Harper, 1959), pp. l5-16, l8.

[64] See William F. Hatcher, John Jasper: *The Unmatched Negro Philosopher and Preacher* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), p. 38.

[65] *Ibid*., p. 175. There is a new and revised version of these sermons as prepared by Clyde E. Fant, Jr., and W. M. Pinson, Jr., for their treatment of Jasper's work in their multi-volume study, *Twenty Century of Creative Preaching*. See 4:217. The revised version of the sermon has modernized the dialect-spelling for those who are not familiar with it.

[66] For the text of the eulogy, see Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography by Benjamin E. Mays* (New York: Scribner's, 197 l), pp. 357-60.

[67] James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 105.

[68] See David Dempsey, "The Dying Speak for Themselves on a TV Special," *New York Times*, Sunday, April 25, 1976, Section 2.

[69] *Meditations of The Heart* (New York: Harper, l95l), p. 142. The italics are Thurman's.