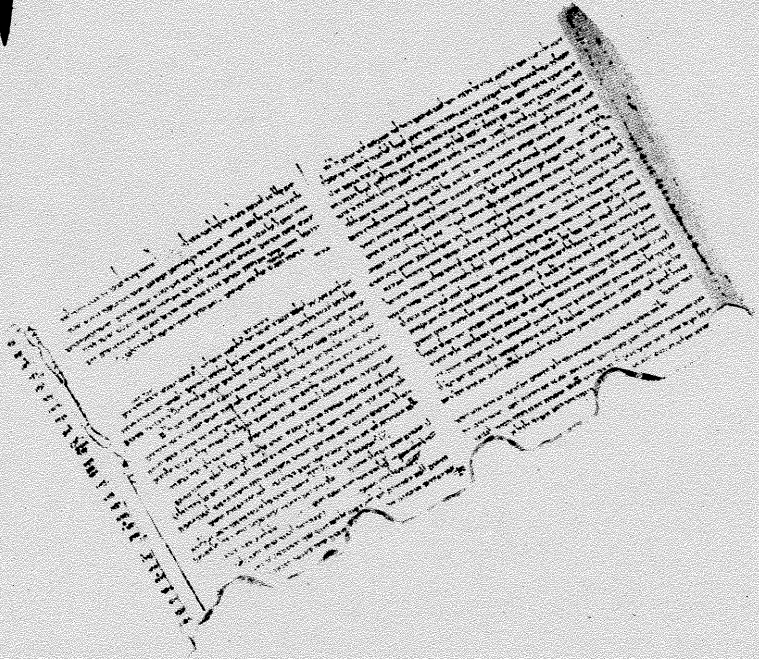




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## F O R E W O R D

The devotion in this issue was delivered by Pastor Paul Madson at the ELS General Pastoral Conference, held at Bethany Lutheran College last October. It is a fitting message as we conclude this anniversary year of Martin Luther's birth.

We continue and conclude the Homiletics Notes by the sainted Prof. Milton Otto, who taught Homiletics at Bethany Lutheran Seminary for twenty-five years. Professor Otto consented to the publishing of these notes before his death and we are pleased to share them with you. Most of our ELS pastors learned their sermonizing skills from him. Also included in this issue, and related to Homiletics, is an article by Pastor John Krueger on The Centrality of the Word in Preaching.

The article by Pastor Hugo Handberg on Clergy Divorces is timely. It was delivered to the Circuit Visitor's Conference last September. The Conference requested that it be printed in the Quarterly and we are happy to do so.

Finally, the paper by Rev. Ed Bryant delivered to a joint pastor-teacher conference, is a helpful reminder of the importance of properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel in teaching and disciplining children.

The next issue of the Quarterly will contain the lectures on Justification by Dr. Gottfried Hoffman, delivered at the annual Reformation lectures at Bethany College.

We also wish our readers a joyful Christmas and a blessed New Year in the Name of our one and only Saviour Jesus Christ.



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## D E V O T I O N

ELS Pastoral Conference - October, 1983

Text: Hebrews 13:7 Remember With Gratitude the  
Church Which Luther Founded

Each of us can say in regard to himself, "I'm a pastor." More than that we can say, "I'm a Lutheran pastor." But still more than that, in the light of our Reformation blessings, we ought to be able to say, "I'm a grateful Lutheran pastor." Yes, we "Remember with Gratitude the Church Which Luther Founded."

At this significant anniversary we remember him who has been maligned as well as honored, both by the secular and religious world. Those who malign Martin Luther really don't know him, and therefore don't understand him. He deserves to be remembered with honor and gratitude, and we say this because we know him. But is it not perhaps a bit arrogant for us to say we know him, while implying that his detractors do not know him? After all, there are some noted scholars among the detractors. Who are we to detract from the detractors? They point out his faults, as if no one else ever had any. Perhaps they never expected such a great man to have any faults. Yes, he indeed was human flesh born of human parents. He therefore was a sinful human being, and it showed some times. He knew it, and regretted it. But he also was a redeemed child of God. He also knew this, and he embraced it. He knew his Redeemer and he loved Him. Talk about a grateful man! Luther's life was virtually one unceasing succession of grateful responses to the great love of God for him in Christ Jesus.

Through his response to the love of God in Christ, Luther founded a church. He did not set out to found a church, but that is how, by God's grace, it turned out. This is the church to which we have been brought and in which we are privileged to serve as pastors and teachers. It bears the name of Luther, and by adhering to the teachings and principles of this extraordinary servant of God, we endeavor to hold up the banner of true Lutheranism, proud of the name insofar as it reflects the faith of its founder.

We hasten to interject at this point that we are grateful first and foremost for the membership to which our holy baptism entitled us, namely that we have been made members of the Holy Christian Church. The Lutheran Church would mean nothing if it were not for the fact that there exists a holy Christian Church, and my membership in the earthly denomination called "Lutheran" would be worthless if I were not a member of the Holy Christian Church. No one would agree more strongly with this than Luther himself, for he expressed concern that his followers be known as "Christians" rather than "Lutherans."

Why, then, are we grateful for the church which Luther founded? For one thing, who knows where we would be today if it were not for this church which was founded on the scriptural principles of the Word alone, Grace alone, Faith alone. We might otherwise be living in the confusion and superstition of Roman Catholicism. We would have to rely on the errant pronouncements of an erring man instead of upon the inerrant word of an unerring God. We would have to live in doubt and uncertainty about our eternal salvation, because we wouldn't know whether we had done enough good things to counterbalance our sins and to appease the anger of a righteous God. We would perhaps have then become

cynical like many in the papal church today and would have resorted to humanistic philosophy or some other useless placebo to soothe our troubled hearts. Or we might become, as others have, religiously indifferent and spiritually impoverished.

But thanks be to God for the church that Luther founded! It was thoroughly and securely founded, for it was built solidly on the divine Word. "It is written," has ever been her guiding motto, from her great founder down to the present day. What a reference for the Word the church of Luther has been taught to have. It might be summed up in his own expression regarding it: "I feel as though one little verse of Scripture could make the world too small for me." And when he stood before the assembly of the world's mighty, who demanded a retraction of his teachings, he was willing to lay his life on the line for it, because he knew it was not his doctrine but God's. We thank God for that Spirit-wrought conviction in the heart of Luther which made it possible for us today to possess and proclaim these teachings, being assured that they are not ours but God's.

Because of its dedication to the Scriptures, the church which Luther founded has also retained the true teaching of the Lord's Supper so that you and I, as we have experienced at this conference, can know by faith that we receive the very body and blood of Christ for the special assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. How fortunate we are that we have not been taught to look for comfort in mere symbols.

The same can be said for the heritage we have been left in the Lutheran (and Scriptural) teaching on Baptism. How fortunate that we have not been left merely a symbol of the new birth, but that it is indeed "the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5),



and that we are truly "born of water and of the Spirit." (John 3:5). Moreover, Luther has taught us not to be troubled by the question, "How can water do such great things?"

Especially and above all we can be eternally grateful that the church of Luther has clung to the Biblical teaching in the great central doctrine of the Christian religion. The doctrine that the sinner is justified by faith in the merits of Christ without his own works of righteousness will be found in its Scriptural purity in the church which Luther founded. It is this teaching in its purity which sets the church of Luther apart from all others. It is yours and my undeserved blessing to have been given also the privilege of proclaiming this message to our fellowmen. Where better could we do this than under the banner of the church that Luther founded?

Because of his right understanding of the Gospel, Luther also understood the matter of Christian liberty, and has passed on this legacy to this church. He knew how to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. He left us a body of doctrine which hews to the Word of God but does not bind our consciences in matters God has left free. Just as we are grateful for Luther's unyielding stance in all matters of doctrine and practice determined in God's Word, so also are we grateful that he was just as unyielding in refusing to be bound in any matters that were not so determined. On the one hand the church which he found has avoided the catastrophe of doctrinal indifference, and on the other hand it has avoided the pitfalls of legalism and fanaticism, which was the sore experience of much of Protestantism.

Many and great are the blessings of our Lutheran Church, and one can hardly begin to enumerate

them all. But in closing let us mention one which is perhaps more important than we give it credit for being. It is the spirit of song in the Lutheran Church. This is really a result and not a cause. The cause is the Gospel in all its glory. The result is the song of the heart in all its devotion. The church which Luther founded virtually began singing in its very birth pains, and it has never stopped singing since. No other church has as much reason to sing as does Luther's.

It's a rather worn-out cliché to say, "Count your blessings." But as members of a confessional Lutheran Church body we ought to think of what the alternatives might have been, if God had not raised up a Martin Luther and had not preserved unto this day a Church worthy of the name of its founder. Then we won't care whether it is a cliché or not -- we will count our blessings. We give thanks to our gracious God for the Lutheran Church and its remarkable founder.

Amen.

-- Rev. Paul Madson  
Pastor, Faith-Ulen Parish

## HOMILETICS\*

by

Prof. M. Otto

### V. The Principal Divisions of the Sermon.

From the theme, the sermon should fall into its natural parts. In itself, the theme has the chief parts within it and also the application section. The next step in our study is the divisions and the reasons for them. We have seen how you work up towards the theme, how you work down from it. The real problem is how to get the text and application in the theme. The divisions work off of this double idea. This dividing is the most important aspect of sermonizing. The sermon will flop if you don't divide the parts properly. The parts must be clean-cut, otherwise you cannot elaborate on the theme. The problem is then, How do you get the parts? Every theme has a line of direction which should be realized in the parts.

Here is where we talk about the Marks of Cleavage, or the fundamentum dividendi. Let's illustrate: Let's say you were going to preach on repentance, and that is all your theme was. It is a topic with no direction to go. If the speaker has several main points, he has to state them. In this case, questions have a direction or point of division. If anything, it narrows the theme down to a manageable discussion. For example: What is Repentance?

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\*Continued from Volume XXIII, No. 3, September 1983.

A. Being sorry      B. Believing in forgiveness.  
This is a logical outline. With this, it is easier to limit yourself. Let's look at John 6:66-69:  
"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said unto the twelve, Will you also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." One theme could be: Why should we follow Christ? or, Will ye also go away?"

A. The line of direction for the division of the theme. The line of direction is indicated by:  
a) the emphatic word, the greatest love; b) the limiting word, the only way to heaven; and c) the logically important word.

1. The emphatic word. For example, in Matthew 12:38-42, which contains Jesus' words about Jonah and the whale, a suitable theme could be: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JONAH'S EXPERIENCE. Here the emphatic word is "significance" -- that is, what is important for Jonah and Jesus. Christ will be buried and rise again. Jonah is used for background to this event. Therefore, Easter should not have been a surprise to the disciples.

Another example is the John 6 passage quoted above. Another theme could be: THE RECEPTION JESUS FOUND AMONG MEN. Here "reception" is the emphatic word.

Or The parable of the Unjust Judge (Importunat Woman) in Luke 18:1-8 and the persistent prayer of Abraham concerning Lot. One theme could be: PERSISTENT PRAYER WILL BE HEARD. Abraham and the woman and the judge show persistence. The main thing to talk about in this text is persistent prayer for all Christian prayers. Persistent prayer drives a person closer to God. The point is that

one must not quit praying for what he wants. Persistent prayer makes you change, for example in Abraham. He never asked for the thing he really wanted and yet he received it anyway, for Lot was saved.

2. The limiting word. For example in Luke 12:16-21, the parable of the rich fool, where God says to him, "Thou fool," a theme is: THE BIGGEST FOOL IN THE WORLD. Here "biggest fool" is the main thing and limits the rest of the sermon. Another example is HOW ISRAEL FINALLY FORFEITED GOD'S LOVING KINDNESS. Here the word "finally" is the important word.

3. The logically important word. This can be seen easily in questions: WHAT or WHEN IS A MAN'S REPENTANCE GENUINE? Or SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

Every theme does not have to be limited to one of these categories. It is possible to have all three of them contained in one theme.

B. Marks of cleavage. The following examples emphasize the above points:

1. THE WAY TO PEACE WITH GOD. The natural division is after "way," and the outline has to follow what the way is. The big concern for people is how to get peace with God.

2. BE HONEST WITH HIM AND BELIEVE HIM. A person cannot believe God unless he is honest about his need for forgiveness. The parts could be: a. Believe Him, and b. Believe in Him. Here he can put in Law and Gospel.

3. COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOR. (Matthew 11:25). Here the mark of cleavage will be under "Come unto me." Then the parts can be: a. Who issues the invitation? and b. Why does He do this?

#### 4. THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND EARTHLY RICHES.

This is not a good theme. It should not have two things within it.

5. THE RELATION OF ONE TO ANOTHER. Rather than let the hearers wonder what their relationship is or what the speaker is talking about, ask a question such as: WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN...?

#### C. THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRINCIPAL PARTS.

1. Subordinate to the theme. The parts must be smaller in scope than the theme. If they are identical to the theme, they are not good parts. The parts should be components of the theme.

2. Coordinate with one another. Each part is important and should carry its own weight. There should be no overlapping, but have a central thought in each part.

3. Parts should be complete. They should exhaust or equal the theme. They should be able to exhaust every theme.

4. Parts should be Climactic. They should be arranged in a natural way of progression. They should reach a peak, the place where you come to answer the theme. Progression is important and we should always ask, where are the parts leading you? The sermon should not just mark time.

5. The parts should be clear. They should be easily recognizable to the hearer. They are the handles to the sermon. They serve as a help in writing the sermon too. Thus preaching is very structured, yet it should be very natural.

#### VI. The Subdivisions.

You should arrive at the subdivisions in the

same way as the parts themselves are done, as discussed above. Thus these smaller parts are equal. Subordinate, and complete to each part in itself. For example, you have a whole apple. If you cut it into four parts so that each piece is equal to the other, then they are also subordinate to the whole apple, and when put back together they form the apple again.

Often the writer may have just a paragraph for each point because the point is already well known. This is where the meat of the sermon is--where the sermon is logical and can work for the hearers. Without subdivisions, one has no idea where one is going. After all this work, the outline must be reexamined for logical thoughts and progression and the outline reworked in parts that are not right.

## VII. The Transitions.

This is the problem of how to tie the parts and subdivisions together. It is easy to get the head and body of the sermon, the real problem is the neck. The bridges need to be constructed so that the hearer goes with you from one point to the next. There are some devices to help:

A. The correct, logical arrangement of the sermon. Each paragraph should be so developed that its closing sentence leads to the topical sentence of the next. Topical sentences are very important in writing the sermon. You need to show the connection of development. When one want to go on a tangent, a device to use is, "to digress for a moment."

B. Transitional sentences or group of sentences.

C. Connective words or phrases. These are used to show the connection.

1. But, then, on the other hand, so then. Do not use the same word all the time. But when you are considering three things, these connective words should all mean the same thing.

2. In the second place, we also consider, our theme for today is. Some of these expressions are trite. We need to look for other words to be different.

D. Use a phrase or word at the end of a paragraph looking to the next one. This is important in places:

1. Between the Introduction and the Body of the sermon.

2. Between the parts.

### VIII. Indispensible Elements In The Development Of A Normal Division.

#### A. Exposition.

One should normally start on this part in the division of the text. The word implies a spreading out or unfolding of what the division is about. This is what was done by Ezra in Nehemiah 8:8, "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Here the scribes read from Moses and gave the sense of what was read -- which is exposition. For example, in the passage from Luke 7:47, "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much": the preacher must straighten it out. Because from the rest of scripture, love was the result of forgiveness. Also in Revelations 20, you must start with the text and the millenium.



The resurrection mentioned there does not mean a resurrection from the dead, for Scripture speaks of only one resurrection. Here it could be the conversion of a sinner, or the death of believers who are in a sense already in heaven, thus showing that they are safe. It is not a resurrection of the dead.

#### B. Statement.

This is the statement of the exposition -- what does it teach or say? "What Jesus says here is this": the preacher is to put it in words which clear up whatever is said. For example, in the Luke 7 passage quoted above: "Jesus says if one is forgiven, he will show it."

#### C. Proof.

This is the evidence from the Bible for what you are talking about. As in the example above from Luke 7, the evidence of faith is what the woman did. Now we must find the proof in other places. One is I John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us." Then we must show where this is said in other places. This is when we can use the Concordance in order to get the same thought. Like Matthew 7:1: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Some people appeal to this as a reason for not judging false teachers or sinners. But God also says in I John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." Therefore it is necessary to judge false teachers by the Scripture.

#### D. Illustration.

These depend upon the sermon. See especially K. Ehler's article in the Concordia Theological Monthly, September, 1944, for hints on this subject. A good illustration helps the sermon, Jesus did not teach without using parables. An illustration is

any fact, incident, or figure to make clear an analogous truth. As such, the illustration is not the proof, but the window. The people must be able to understand what you are talking about.

1. The purpose of an illustration.
  - a. To secure attention and create interest.
  - b. To make a truth life-like and clear.
  - c. To explain a difficult concept.
  - d. To be an aid to one's reasoning power.
  - e. To be an aid to the memory.
  - f. To provide pleasure by arousing pleasing emotions in people.
  - g. To hold the attention of the inattentive.

Illustrations are good for explaining things but they are not tricks, or things to use in order to liven up the sermon, nor are they to be funny.

2. The sources for illustrations.
  - a. The Bible. We should not neglect all the stories in this book.
  - b. The physical world.
  - c. The history of the world.
  - d. The literature of all nations.
  - e. Contemporary events.
  - f. Personal experiences like an anecdote that is timeless.
  - g. A fable or an actual happening.

The Bible is full of illustrations which we can use for our sermons. This is a good source because they are things that are recorded and may be familiar to the people. This means that we must know our Bible in order to use it--especially the Old Testament. Nature holds endless illustrations. Like the way shepherds lead their flocks in Palestine. Personal experiences should always be low-key. If there are too many, you might make people feel that you are a name dropper. DO NOT TALK ABOUT EXPERIENCES FROM FORMER PARISHES OR PEOPLE. But it is

possible that you may know one who was not a member, and you can use your experiences with them. It is also possible to use the third person and avoid the personal touch. If you have watched Billy Graham lately, you will see that he is a name-dropper. This is not good. Another source is books and we should be building up a background in them. Aesop's fables, fairy tales, and other stories are all good illustrations, for human nature does not change through the ages. You must keep your eyes open for good illustrations.

3. The characteristics of good illustrations.
  - a. They must clarify and illustrate the point of discussion.
  - b. They must possess a freshness and not be worn out ideas.
  - c. They must be vivid and picturesque.
  - d. They need to be natural, and
  - e. Spontaneous.
  - f. They must be in harmony with the sermon.
  - g. They should be compact, with the minor details suppressed.
  - h. They must be an integral part of the sermon.
  - i. They should be self-explanatory, and
  - j. They are to be pertinent.
4. Cautions in using illustrations.
  - a. Do not use too many. The main points of the sermon must stick out.
  - b. Do not present fiction as fact or another man's experiences as yours.
  - c. Do not make illustrations so sparkling that the sermon gets lost in it.
  - d. Do not dwell too long on an illustration. Stick to the central issue.
  - e. Do not buy any book of illustrations.

The parables are illustrations, and one may not have to go any further than that. There are other true stories in the Bible.

In the CTM article mentioned above, the author says that the Illustration is not the sermon, but that it serves to set forth the truths of the sermon. All human speech is illustration, but here we are talking about concrete examples which are to make abstract truths more clear. Jesus is a good example of this use of illustration. Do not scratch for an illustration. If it does not come naturally, it will not fit. The Bible is still the best source. Our experiences should be in the third person. And they should be timely.

Concerning the quotation of hymn verses. 1) Not every sermon must end with a hymn verse. 2) Get a verse that fits and then speak it with feeling. Such illustrations may be very simple and everyday for use. See also the 1942 edition of Concordia Pulpit, "The Preacher's Manual."

#### E. Application.

This must be in the sermon. If you are preaching on Matthew 28:20, "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations. . ."; you should make the people feel that it is his assignment to do this. Everyone should be engaged in this work. You may not have an application after every point in the sermon. One might wait until the end to apply it to the hearers.

In your sermon, it is possible to have Exposition, Statement, and Proof in one short paragraph. But these are the elements needed in the whole part. They should be in order but need not be all the time. The application may be in the part or at the end. You may not have it in every part of the sermon, but Exposition, Statement, and Proof have to be there. We do not want to waste time on our

illustrations if they are long, rambling, or no meat.

## IX. The Conclusion.

### A. Its purpose.

The purpose of the conclusion is to gather the appeals, the motives, and to pull all the strands together to produce a final impression on the hearers. It is to tie it all together. If we are doing a sermon on evangelism, then we should end with a "We see what it means to be an evangelist." But you cannot just drop the sermon on the last point of the outline. Do not finish before you conclude.

### B. Its importance.

The conclusion is important because this is where the final impression on the hearer is made in the sermon. It is the final place where you want to encourage the person to do something. This final appeal makes the sermon pointed in a direction. You do not want to leave things to chance. Therefore you should sum it up so that it ends with some force. It should end strong, but not abruptly. But then it cannot coast down hill, nor run out of gas. It should be a deliberate effort.

### C. Its relation to the body of the sermon.

1. It recapitulates the subject matter. This need not require a massive conclusion, for one should be able to summarize it in a few words.

2. It is attached to the last division. That is if it is the climax of the sermon. It brings the sermon to its natural closing. This is not a way of "signing off." You must get a commitment out of the people. That is why the conclusion must be thought out in advance. "Let us" is a weak

conclusion. We shall be able to state the conclusion in such a way that the person wants to do what the Words say.

D. The contents of rhetorical conclusions.

1. Recapitulation. This is a forceful summary. It should tie up with the theme. Use language that you do not use in the sermon. In summarizing, the theme is nailed into their minds. This is the last appeal for action.

2. You will want the people to will and to do what God wants them to do. The will is there, but they often fall short of doing God's will. The mind must be convinced and moved, thus the conclusion is to help them in their life. However, there should be no appeal of sanctification on Christmas Day. The appeal should be to the Saviour who is the main message for that day--not to do something. In a conclusion, the intellect, mind, and emotions are affected.

3. You will want to persuade and challenge. Telling a proper story may be a way to bring out the theme and message. Bible passages, hymns, questions, prayers are all ways in which one can conclude a sermon. Do not use just one, but vary it from Sunday to Sunday. Poetry is not able to do much in a conclusion.

E. Desirable qualities of a conclusion.

1. Unity. The conclusion should have a nicely knit thought and a major thought of the sermon. It must hang together. One problem with Epistle texts is that they contain so many things one can be doing that it is hard to unite them into one thought. Here you must take a few of the main ones and hit them hard.

2. Simplicity. There should be no new questions to ponder, no deep problem, nor any added

or deep discussion. For example, when talking on missions, it is too late to ask the question, "Can we afford it?"

3. Energy. It should end with force. A sermon can get to be run down and tired at the end. We must end on a strong note just as we end on a strong point.

4. Beauty and dignity. It should not be humorous here, nor sensational.

5. Personal to the hearer. The individual is to be involved in the conclusion. You are supposed to be persuading him to do something.

6. Brevity. The conclusion will tell you what kind of sermon you have. If you are hard pressed to make an appeal to the people, then you should rework the sermon. This is not the place for new and additional arguments. In ordinary life, often the last word is "Don't forget."

## X. The Introduction.

A. Purpose. It is the first thing that is said.

1. To interest the hearer in the subject. It is to draw away the people from the thought of their world which they bring with them into church. We must captivate them, therefore the first sentence is important. If you do not say anything, the people will turn you off that Sunday.

2. To prepare the hearer. The introduction helps give an understanding of the text and the theme. Furthermore, in writing the sermon, it helps you to know what you are talking about. This is important for the writer and the hearer.

3. To bring the preacher and hearer into contact. A rapport needs to be established. First impressions are important. They must be favorable

ones and must do something for you. Get the audience involved. The preacher must be alive too.

4. To create the proper atmosphere. It also creates the pace and tone of the sermon.

### B. Requirements.

1. Pertinency. The introduction should not be foreign to the theme. One cannot start too far afield. However, it is not to contain what things the sermon is to talk about. The connection between introduction and sermon must be logical.

2. Unity. One should take one thought and develop it towards the theme. The introduction should not distract people. By leading to the theme, it also leads to the first point in the outline.

3. Brevity. The shorter the introduction, the better it is--if it produces. All that you are doing is just getting the people's attention.

4. Naturalness. One cannot start on a high plane and come down. One must start speaking as a beginning of something.

5. Worthiness. The introduction should be worthy of the hearer's attention. Things that are trite or commonplace are not good. To write compactly requires more time.

### C. Sources.

1. Context. If you are preaching on a part of II Timothy, the context for this is that the letter is St. Paul's last will and testament. Similarly, the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15 sets the pace. Besides, Jesus says what it is in the text.

2. Other passages.

a. When talking about the signs of the last times, the passage "Heaven and earth shall not



pass away," can lead up to the preparation for the end.

b. Parallels to the text. For example, when talking about the children of light and darkness, one can use "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), which shows what can be done by the children of light.

c. Contradiction of passages. For example: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God" (I John 4:1) can be used as a contrast to a text speaking on "Judge not."

### 3. Pertinent facts or truths.

a. Things similar in illustration. When working on the text Matthew 15:21-28 (Healing the Cannanite woman's daughter), one can introduce it with the prayer of Jacob in Genesis 32:26, "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." This shows that Jacob also was persistent in prayer and that this is not a unique event in the Bible. Another example is using the concept of the "scape-goat" to illustrate a sermon on the Atonement of Jesus.

b. Dissimilar facts. For example, one can use the manifestation of God on Mount Sinai in giving the Law as a stark contrast to the birth of Christ.

c. Historical events. One can especially use those from Church history.

4. General experiences of people. The introduction also can be a story of a personal nature. But we should not be a name-dropper or retell things from another parish. These stories should be put in the third person. Always make sure that they help the sermon along and that they do not distract from the sermon.

5. Occasion. Christmas and Easter are occasions--joyous ones. Others are anniversaries, dedications, remodeling, etc. This should come into the introduction. Soon the 1776 birth of our country will be coming up. Churches also should be with the celebration and make the most of it. You do not have to preach a Mother's Day sermon every year. Don't lose those important texts and devote a whole sermon to the topic.

6. The preceding sermon. Epiphany Epistle texts are in Romans 12 three Sundays in a row and can be referred to in successive sermons. Don't use this too much.

7. Myths. Aesops Fables and other stories are good illustrations. (See above)

## XI. The Writing of the Sermon.

### A. Written as a unit.

1. They should be written in full. It is only when you write your sermons out that you will know what to say. In that way, you can also have second thoughts about what you want to say. This means it must be painfully worked out.

2. Written in one sitting. This takes some practice, but it is a goal to strive towards. You must know where you are going. By writing it this way, you preserve the continuity of the sermon. For you are not the same person if you come back to it later. The structure of the sermon should already be in the outline, so what you write is only adding to it and connecting it.

3. One should follow the outline. This means you must keep the theme in mind also. As you go along, you may revise the outline, if it is needed. But the outline is your road map and should not need to be changed too much.

## B. Carefully constructed.

1. Construct the paragraphs correctly and carefully. Paragraphs are units or blocks of ideas and they need to be tied together.

2. Watch the transitions. Transitions are the bridges of the sermon. A sermon will have booby-traps in it if the transitions are not there.

3. Use good, modern, simple English and language. It should be dignified but not stiff. Nor should it be barnyard language. Be careful about technical terms, although some of them cannot be avoided. If terms like "justification" or "sanctification" are used, they can be explained in the sermon. Cliches are to be avoided. Use popular English if needed, but it should not be vulgar. Do you have to do or say the thing which you want to prohibit? No.

4. Oratorical qualities. A sermon is an oral composition and not an essay. While you are writing the sermon, you should be saying or preaching what you write as if you were already in the pulpit.

## C. Revision and Polishing.

1. Read the sermon over. It should be revised. See where it can be corrected. This means one must look at the sermon objectively. One must be ruthless in crossing out the parts that do not fit. This should be done on Thursday so that one has more time to correct the sermon. The more corrections one has, the better preacher you will be and the less work one will need in the future. The faster one moves in writing the sermon, the more unified they will become.

2. Steps towards making a working manuscript used for memorization:

a. The heading on the paper should be I.N.D. (In Nomine Domini).

b. The next line should have the text (John 2:1-11) and the name of the Sunday the sermon is to be preached (2nd Sunday after Epiphany) and the date (2-14-73).

c. If the sermon is preached a number of times, some space should be provided for data as to where and when the sermon has been preached. This is a matter of bookkeeping. In the right-hand corner, one should maintain a consecutive numbering of all the sermons written in one's ministry.

d. Next comes a brief exorde prayer before the sermon which is based upon the text. But it should be written out and prepared.

e. Apostolic Greeting: Grace to you and peace from our Lord and Saviour.

f. Then comes the reading of the text.

g. Followed by the salutation which should be different every Sunday.

h. The introduction of the sermon comes next, and it should not be long.

i. Print the theme in capital letters, easier to read. When this is done, five minutes of the sermon should only have gone by.

j. You might write out the parts of the sermon the way you want to say it. Should you have a question for a theme like Were There Not Ten? what ideas does it suggest? One could say, That raises another question, or leads us to this....

k. The paragraph in writing. It should be a normal development from one to the other. It should be a unit of thought. In presentation, these units should stand out to you also. There should be a topic sentence for each paragraph. These things make the sermon easy to memorize.

l. At the end of the sermon should be SDG (Sola Deo Gloria).

m. Then look up the hymns for Sunday and write them down. The opening prayer should be short. Do not switch the persons of the Godhead around. We are not to talk in a ridiculous way. Don't thank God for sending God's Word.

## P A R T   T W O

### THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

#### I. Preparation For The Delivery

A sermon is not to be read but to be preached. This means one must speak intelligently. That requires memorization of the sermon. If one prepares for a message, it must be written out. The following considerations should be noticed in memorization.

A. A sermon needs to be memorized and impressed upon your mind. But then we do not want a sing-song delivery which memorizing sometimes produces. Only a few people can successfully read their sermons. It is sad that a lot of public speaking is simply reading now. We cannot be lazy. It is different if someone has a handicap. The connection between speaker and hearer gets lost in the reading.

B. Extemporaneous preaching. This requires knowledge of the subject beforehand. Impromptu speeches are those in which there is no preparation. There is no room for that in the pulpit. In extemporaneous preaching, the preacher is able to make a good outline and may even write parts of it. This way can be fresher and more alive. But there are handicaps. The sermons can get shallow in thought. Stereo-type expressions and cliches occur more often.

C. The best way is to take a composite of the two ways. Write out the sermon in full, thus eliminating the bad features like phrases. Then do not remember it word for word but use the outline as a guide and what you have written can be in your mind. It is also easier to remember the sermon when you write it in one sitting. Thus most of the memory

work is done when the sermon is finished. You must be conscious while you are writing of the fact that you will be speaking it. This allows you to not be in a mechanical manner of memorizing. Often the spirit was not in the delivery. But we must be involved with the message for we are trying to get the message across and not just speaking for twenty minutes.

D. Memorization should start as soon as the sermon is finished.

E. Memorize thoughts in paragraphs or units. These are the links in a sermon. Pay attention to those parts which are unclear or not well done. Reviewing the sermon helps make for better sermons later on.

F. As you write the sermon, choose the language deliberately. It too is an aid in memorization.

G. Often the spirit of the words will change in a sermon. And the gestures must be good.

## II. The Delivery Proper.

A. The pulpit sequence.

1. Mount the pulpit solemnly. Try to be natural. Be yourself.

2. Open the Bible to your text.

3. You should have a silent prayer before the sermon. Ask for: That God would help deliver the sermon so that the people will be receptive to the Word. One that would help is Psalm 42, but don't spend five minutes at it.

4. Then comes the Excorde prayer.

5. Next, the Apostolic Greeting. This is very proper. You are speaking to God's people and thus you should announce to them the peace of God.

6. Read the text. It should be read as if it had never been heard before, as if you wanted him to get it at the first hearing. Be familiar with the text. Then say, "Here ends the text." Finally, "This is Thy Word, Heavenly Father, sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." Say 'Heavenly Father' not 'Holy Father.'

7. Salutation. Try and change it for every sermon in reference to the text.

8. The Introduction will not be shouted. It should be at a natural, low pitch which should gradually grow towards the climax of the sermon.

9. Preach with some life and animation. An artificial delivery puts a wall in front of the people. Speak intently, naturally, and with conviction. Do not develop an artificial manner of speaking while in the pulpit. Preach so that you act as though you have an important message.

10. Do not conclude the sermon several times, just conclude it.

11. Have the Gloria after the sermon, then the Lord's Prayer and the General Prayer. (This is for the Norwegian order of service.)

12. There should be a silent prayer when you leave. Do not try to make an impression when leaving the pulpit either.

#### B. Poise.

You should have dignity without being sanctimonious. You should not be stiff nor have a separate set of manners or speaking while in the pulpit. You must always try to be yourself. For the content of the sermon comes out in your bearing. Thus, at a Festival Service, there should be a spring in your step, an exhilaration and excitement about it. In the sermon, the thoughts are reflected in the manner of delivery. When the thoughts are

heavy, be more deliberate in speech. But watch when the message is cheerful that you do not grin artificially. The inflection, change of pitch, tone, pace, gestures, volume, and pauses will all vary by what is being said. As a summary of all this, be deliberate in everything you do. Be intent on what you are saying. Why use words people cannot understand. Technical terms at times must be used, but they must also be explained. Every time you are in the pulpit there should be an exhilaration. One help in this is taking the liturgy so that you are put into such a mood. You must be serious, but with conviction and excitement in you. Be concerned about the message and nothing else. Know this, it saps your energy to preach with conviction.

### C. Gestures.

Do not put notes about gestures into the sermon. They are to be spontaneous. Gestures are the visible word which can say something and add emphasis to what is said.

#### 1. Forms of the hand.

a. Gestures should not be noticed. If they are, it is unnatural. Also, gestures must fit the thought.

#### b. Types of Gestures:

1) A rise of the hand then drop.  
This is an appeal or to affirm something.

2) Use of the index finger. It can be used to emphasize one thing. But as a scolding gesture, it should not be used often. For it can become a gesture of accusation, and that is definitely out.

3) Clenched fist. This is not used much, for there is little need for a gesture of defiance.

#### c. Some 'Don'ts' concerning gestures.

1) Don't pound on the pulpit.  
2) Don't slide your hands up and down the sides of the pulpit.



3) Forget that you have hands when you preach.

4) Don't rock in the pulpit as it is very distracting and then why should you preach at all. You will be nervous and should be, but don't show it by your gestures.

5) Don't be stiff in your gestures nor overactive either.

d. The four directions with gestures.

1) To the front or straight ahead. Used for expressing a number, ask a question, or marking time.

2) To the oblique. Used for moderation and is not extreme.

3) To the lateral. Used for large numbers, great distances in space or thought. This may be the most unnatural one.

4) To the rear. It is not used much. "Keep behind me Satan."

e. The three steps in a gesture.

1) Preparation for gesture. The gesture should start gradually. It should not be a rapid movement, but one well developed. It gets everyone ready. The person sees that you are moving but does not know which direction it will take. The gesture must be in keeping with the message.

2) The gesture itself.

3) Relaxation. One should come out of a gesture in a natural way. It should not be stiff but graceful.

2. Essential requirements of gestures.

a. Aptness. The gesture should be in harmony with the thought. Shakespeare said that one should "suit the action to the word."

b. Accuracy. It should be properly timed. The climax of the gesture should be reached when the word is said. Be loose and free in this.

c. Spontaneous. It should have a naturalness and unaffected nature to it. It should be as

though you are not aware you are doing them. If it is not spontaneous, it will be mechanical, stiff, and disconcerting. This calls for synchronization, otherwise don't gesture.

d. Confidence. The gesture must be liquid with no hesitancy.

e. Life and vitality. It is harder to listen to a preacher when he does not move at all. Yet gestures can be distracting. One gesture that is always a must is the sign of the cross. There is a dignity to it. Must be prepared and fluid gesture.

### P A R T   T H R E E

#### MISCELLANEA

#### I. Contents of the Sermon: Law and Gospel.

St. Paul in II Timothy 2:15, urges his young companion to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." See Walther's comments on this in Fritz's Pastoral Theology. "Law is condemnation and Gospel is salvation." The Law is there not only to condemn us but to prepare us for the Gospel message by bringing us to a knowledge of sin. The Law is to be preached to unbelievers. But then a good sermon must tell the person how to get to heaven. In preaching, sanctification is preaching the Gospel using the Law as a guideline. Whoever uses the Gospel to deprive the Law of its severeness or the Law to deprive the Gospel of its sweetness confuses Law and Gospel. The Law is to reveal and confirm sin, the Gospel is to be used to reveal salvation. There are to be no threats, no clubs; only the pure sweet message.

## II. Five Uses of the Word of God -- II Timothy 3:16

### A. Doctrine.

Here Paul means what things are found in the Bible. Walther said: "A sermon devoid of doctrine is an empty sermon. People must have the facts. They cannot just say "God loves you." We are to preach as God does--seen in I Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Doctrinal sermons ground people in their faith. We are to teach the doctrine so that people will know something about their Bible. Tell what Jesus did and why he had to do it, that is the doctrine of the incarnation. But there is a caution: it should not be a dogmatic lecture. We are to give people something to believe. Nor do we in preaching want to engage in hair-splitting or in unscriptural speculations, i.e., where does the soul come from. Every doctrinal sermon should have practical value.

### B. Refuting false doctrine.

The true doctrine is often sharpened by stating what the false doctrine is. Ezekiel 33:7-8 has much to say on this: "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." Thus false doctrine and sin must be reprov'd. In Matthew 7:15 it says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Anyone teaching contrary to the Gospel is a false prophet. Here we can be a name-dropper in a good sense. Jesus Himself used names in pointing out the scribes and Pharisees. Names are not to be used under another's skin, but to point them out and

instruct the people to be on their guard. Speak up if someone in the neighborhood has said something that is generally accepted or if it is in print. This means we are to preach the word, tell what Scripture taught, and know what you think. Titus 1:9, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exort and to convince the gainsayers."

### C. Correcting faults.

This use of Scripture applies to the personal sins of people. See above the Ezekiel passage. The pastor who does not rebuke sin must on this account go to the devil along with the sinner. In fact, it is a sign of hate towards the sinner if you do not rebuke him in that you want them to go to Hell. II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." But:

1. In denouncing sin, the pastor must never be bitter or sarcastic in his sermons. Don't preach on those sins if you can't avoid that. However, it is often said of people going to church, "They don't know anything." Therefore it is necessary to keep the light on sin so that all will know. But the rebuke must be prompted by a love for the people's salvation. And the Bible tells the people: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). Thus the preacher wants the people to be saved. Rebuking means that the preacher shows he is concerned about them. The Lord wants pastors who are also sinful to rebuke those who sin too. We want to lead them to see their terrible state of rebellion against God.

2. Do not become so specific in rebuking sins that it refers to a group of people or a certain

situation in the congregation. DON'T mention any names. By giving one situations, the Lord may be forcing one to be careful when talking on a sin recently committed. This makes for better sermons. The sermon is no place for using a club. Speak to the things the people did. Nor is it a place for Seminary students to hammer at the law in a certain congregation. Guest preachers should not do the duty of the pastor.

3. If the preacher is convinced that a severe rebuke is necessary for the congregation's well-being, the sermon must be well worked out word for word, praying that the words are spoken lovingly and effectively. For instance, with a text such as I John 2:15-17, "Love not the world...." the temptation is to really let the congregation have it. There is lots of ammunition in this text; but the aim should be to tell the people not to love the world since the world will pass away. Here you are appealing to the people's better judgment. Pastors must make allowances for the sins that Christians do and lead them back to grace. Repentance is an attitude of the people against sin.

#### D. Admonition.

The word "correction" in the King James Version is not the best word. We want doctrine in a sermon, but it must also move the hearers to do something. Admonition and exhortation moves them into action. Just to state the doctrine is not enough. The Old Man must be overcome by spelling out what must be done. Christians are to be persuaded to do good works. But it should be done in a way which encourages and inspires them to do those works. This is the third use of the Law in preaching sanctification which is used as a guide for Christians. The motivation behind all this is the Gospel. Many preachers, unfortunately, try to demand and threaten Christians to get them to do things which can only be done under the influence

of the Gospel. The Gospel is the only effective thing. Christians do have weaknesses. They do not mean to despise God's Word, but they may have not made such effort towards using it in their lives and hearing it. They must be encouraged towards greater efforts with the promise that God will help them. You cannot do this with unbelievers, for there is no motivation. Christian motivation is found in these words of II Corinthians 5:14a: "For the love of Christ constraineth us." A clear and forceful demonstration of this way of admonition is found in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This is the motivation in Ephesians 4:1. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Thus, we have been saved to serve. This is the aim of Christ's death. But admonition should be done in a way that appeals to the new man. We should be angry at sin, but do not sin through the sin of self-righteousness. Our anger must be directed at the thing or sin, not at the person. The admonition in Ephesians 4:1 is not to be preached from above; but, because we are all alive in Christ, we will not want to do these things.

#### E. Comfort.

This last use of Scripture is taken from Romans 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Sermons that are devoid of comfort are not evangelical sermons. There are two types of comfort:

1. Comfort for weeping souls. Such comfort can be found in Isaiah 40:1, 2: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her welfare is

accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Thus for Isaiah, the war was already over. And this was seven hundred years before Christ. This is true with every promise of God. It is as good as fulfilled even centuries before it actually is. People do not always show their spiritual yearnings. They grieve over things that happened to them long ago. Gospel preaching is where we show that any terrible sin people did in the past is forgiven.

2. Comfort for temporal afflictions. This world always brings trouble. Nothing is so dangerous as trouble to draw men away from their Lord. Man needs comfort in this life. The preacher must show how God loves him and what He has done for him. Must show that whatever happens in one's life, it is not done to drive people away but to draw them close to God. Often people won't know why God chastens them. It is best to explain this by the illustrations afforded us from the Bible characters. It is in this area that preachers often learn from their people.

Not all five of these uses of Scripture studied above must be used in every sermon. But the good preacher should use each of these in turn.

### III. Synthetic Sermon Method.

#### A. The analytic and synthetic method.

The distinction between the two is not that one method is more textual than the other. The difference is in the way one handles the text. The Analytic Method analyses the text. But there are advantages to the Synthetic Method:

1. The Synthetic Method assures better unity in the sermon.

2. It helps train the preacher in the logical analysis of the topic.

3. It is more concise and appealing to the people.

4. It gives practical occasions for thoroughly discussing a subject.

B. The thought of the sermon and the methods.  
This concerns the way in which the message is extracted from the text.

1. Analytic Method uses expressed statements from the text in the sermon.

2. Synthetic Method uses deductions or inferences from the text. The preacher still gets his material from the text, for in both methods the text is used.

C. The structure of the sermon and the methods.

1. Analytic Method determines the structure of the sermon by the structure of the text.

2. In the Synthetic Method, the preacher makes his own outline which is determined by the logical divisions of the thoughts. For example, in the text of I John 1:7-10, there is an alternative between a positive thought of walking in the light and the negative of walking in darkness. These can be taken together to form the two parts of the sermon. The Synthetic Method structure depends upon the application one chooses also.

D. Order of theme and parts and the methods.

1. The Analytic Method naturally finds the parts from the thoughts of the text and then finds the theme. Progression from variety to unity.

2. The Synthetic Method first finds the theme and then the parts. The progression is from unity to variety. The theme represents a general thought from the text, which is then divided up to suit your purposes.

The preacher need not stick to one or the other. He is to use both, choosing the one which best helps the sermon. A theme that is analytic while the parts are not fit well together, so the theme is



then divided into logical parts. But we can also have a synthetic theme divided analytically by the text. It is the treatment of the text that is more important than the message, which will be the same in either case.

E. Procedure under the Synthetic Method.

1. Study the text. First in its context and then in the original language. Then find the chief thought of the text and the progression of thoughts. Do not divide the text into units but see how it proceeds. This determines what the theme is.
2. As you study the text, jot down every thought that comes to you. Put down the thoughts that are there and those that are implied by the text. These may be in any order. Put them in a catalogue and compare them and sort them into groups as in a puzzle.
3. Synthesize the units which you discovered from the text to get a relation between the units and then a central thought. This must be thought out. Sometimes this process takes little time and the relationships are apparent, but with other texts it may take a long time. You must create a design for the sermon, which is hard. The longer you think about this the better it will unite together.
4. Determine the principal thoughts of the sermon. Here you proceed from the theme and try to cover the theme in two or three points. Do not pay attention to the text at this point. Some examples of themes are: "Why vast multitudes today do not enjoy the blessings Christ brought"; "Man-made religion preferred to God's"; "Let's not deceive ourselves"; a) Do not make mere externalism count for Christianity, b) True Christianity is a matter of the heart. OR, from the text of Matthew 5:14-16: "Why the world accuses us of being hypocrites in our church: a) Because there are people who are hypocrites, b) Christians often do not live as they should (as salt of the earth) but they are not hypocrites. This sermon will end on a strong Gospel note.

OR, on I Corinthians 15:1-10: "Three important signs to determine our faith: a) Faith is based on God's Word alone, b) Faith is joined with a living experience, c) Faith is based on true living.

#### IV. Application Of The Text.

##### A. Practical application of the Sermon.

The sermon starts at the application which should be from the text. The way you begin and proceed will determine your application. The application should be self-evident and should not come as a surprise. This means you must talk to your audience. Know their means, needs, and experiences. But make sure that you apply such things to yourself first. Apply the sermon to the age we are living in, to the corrosion of the human heart in such an age, and the evils which are done more openly in this age, all of which erodes the conscience of Christian people. The ungodly have always lived ungodly lives. But in some ages it is more apparent than in others. We must not clobber people with the Law. We must preach the Gospel of salvation and about the hope which it brings. We should not think about the wrong in people, but about what we can do to help these people. The application should and will show itself in the theme. Minor application can be made in the smaller division and thoughts of the sermon. However, the application should follow the exposition of the text in the sermon. The application should be from the text, showing how to do what it says and moving people to do it. And finally, the application should call upon the Lord to help us do what He wants us to do.

##### B. Direct and indirect application.

We are talking about all texts, those which require a direct application and those using an indirect application from past to present. The Direct Application is employed in most of the epistle lessons.

It applies a truth of past conditions to the present without any change. For example, the Ten Commandments, John 3:16, and many of the Psalms never change for man. What Paul told the Romans, we still need today. Indirect Application is needed for texts that are hard to apply to today or cannot be applied. Such as Mark 9:17-27, the healing of the demon-possessed boy, or the feeding of the five thousand by Jesus.

### C. Categories of textual applications.

#### 1. Typical Application.

This application mostly deals with Old Testament texts which present a type of New Testament person, institution, or event. There is emphasis on the anti-type.

a. Example: Numbers 21:9--the brazen serpent. The only application one can make of this is one to Jesus. That is what it pointed ahead to. Such a type can be forceful. It is a picture of the crucifixion. And all they had to do is look on the serpent. This was very easy and that is what faith is. See how easy it is?

b. Example: Leviticus 16:10--the Scapegoat. This is another forceful picture. One goat is killed for the sins of the people while the other was sent away into the wilderness. Here the emphasis is on Christ and what He has done.

c. Do not employ this type of application unless it employs a real type. The story and rule of Joseph has similarities to that of Jesus and it is not wrong to show them, but do not make it a typical application. There are not too many types in the Old Testament. Some, like the Passover, refer to the crucifixion; and the Scapegoat is really a New Testament doctrine.

d. Definition: A type is a direct visible prophecy of a New Testament person or event. Thus the blood on the pillars represents the blood of Christ which washes away all sin.

## 2. Tropological Application.

a. Definition: The text that describes something as having happened at one time is seen as an expression of the permanent and consistent nature of God and man. This is the unchanging and consistent tropos. For example, the Centurion at Capernaum who came to the Lord for help is a permanent tropos of faith. The humility and faith are there on his part, and Jesus responds to a prayer of faith now as He did then.

b. This method of application is used with narrative texts such as the one in which Abraham prays for Sodom and when Job was sacrificing while his sons were celebrating, as a prayer for mercy.

c. This is also used for any text dealing with faith. For example, David and his prayer for his dying son. When told about the death, he goes about his work. For as long as there was life, that is the time for prayer. There is no time for it after one is dead.

## 3. Symbolical Application. (spiritual)

a. Definition: An external event used as a picture or image of the spiritual event or experience of the church or individual in the church.

### b. Examples:

1) Luke 13:1-5--the tower of Siloam. Jesus' own application is that "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This is a picture of judgment and a sure judgment if people do not repent.

2) Luke 19:27-28--Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. This text is used twice a year. It shows how Jesus can come into our lives. He enters in a state of meekness. Or the hymn "Oh Blessed State and Nation" (Hymn 173, Hymnary).

3) Matthew 21:19-22--cursing the fig tree. This is a symbol of the nation of Israel also being cursed because it does not bear fruit.

c. Never treat an external event as a symbol unless the Scripture allows one to. Thus the

healing of the deaf mute is not a symbol of Jesus opening him up to hearing the Word of God. Nor is disease to be considered a sin. Miracle texts are not to be allegorized or spiritualized.

4. Allegorical Application. (physical and spiritual)

a. Definition: It exploits all the details of the text and gives them a special meaning. While the Symbolic Application regards the whole event as a symbol, the Allegorical Application uses every detail in the text for a symbol. Such an application cannot be used unless Scripture itself suggests it.

b. Examples:

1) Galatians 4:22-31--Sarah and Hagar. St. Paul says, "Which things are an allegory," and explains how we become God's children through the promise of God.

2) Ecclesiastes 12:1-7. Everything in this text can have an allegorical interpretation. It is a striking picture which one cannot do anything else to it. Such a thing is not an event or it would be symbolical.

3) Psalm 19:5. The Christian is joyful and vigorous. It has a parallel in Jesus' story of the bridegroom and bride in Matthew 9:15.

c. You should try everything else before using the allegorical method.

V. Preaching on the Parables.

A. Principles.

Parables cannot be handled like an ordinary text in narrative or doctrine. There is doctrine in them, but it must be drawn from the parable. There must be a type of identification made in the parable: As....., so.....

1. The preacher must determine the point of comparison. This is the central truth of the parable.

A parable illustrates by an earthly story to convey a heavenly meaning. It is the point at which each of these meets that is important. It is the first impression on the hearer that is the point of comparison. Parables are illustrations, so that every detail can be talked about. However, the preacher should get to the central point. For example:

a. Luke 8:4-8--the parable of the Sower.

The point of that parable is the different ways in which God's Word is heard. The emphasis is not on the preaching but on its receptivity. Some people don't hear at all and are impervious to His Word. For a theme, you could use: "How Do You Hear The Word?" But you could give the impression that wherever the Word is preached, it is heard in all four ways in that place. We can only say that in the world it is heard in one of four ways. Do not say that some of the congregation is hearing the Word as the first picture. It means that we are to ask the pertinent question. (Insignificant items for this parable would be the time of the season, what kind of seed, or what preparation of the soil had been made.) The point is about getting the seed out and how does it sprout.

b. Matthew 13:24--the tares among the wheat. To the question, How did they get there? we talk about the situation in this world. Then we talk about What is the Lord going to do about it?

c. Matthew 13:31--the grain of mustard seed. This parable talks about the growth of the church.

d. Matthew 13:33--the leavened bread. Leaven is the effect of the Word in the individual. It affects the whole man. Through Christians, the Word has a wholesome effect on the rest of society. Aesop's Fables are good imagination and preparation for the Parables in order to see the point of comparison.

2. Take the context into account.

In Luke 15:4--the parable of the lost sheep, the first three verses of the chapter show

that the parable was spoken in answer to the attitude of the Pharisees who complained about Jesus' eating with sinners. The point of the parable is the joy of those who repent, just as in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The context can help a lot in seeing the point of comparison. Luke 18 contains several parables about prayer. In verse one it is stated: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Verse nine also: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." In this parable of the Pharisees and Publican, all we are to be concerned about is the two people and what they did.

3. Parables are not to be made the first source of doctrine. They may only illustrate doctrines already presented. When preaching on the parables, one does not need a lot of other illustrations. The whole text is an illustration and no other is needed. The parables can show us how to preach. At times we can set up analogies from them, but we must be very careful in doing so.

4. Parables are not allegories. Everything in a parable need not have an explicit meaning. Parables are only the scaffolding for the preacher to get the point across.

#### B. The structure of parables.

1. They are simple. The lesson is concentrated in one feature and everything else is background.

a. Luke 16:1-9--the parable of the unjust steward.

b. Luke 15:1-8--the parable of the Lost Sheep.

2. Chain parables.

These are parables of a series of pictures or acts each complete in itself but linked

together. Each link has its own point of comparison.

a. Matthew 18:23-35--the parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

b. Luke 15:11-32--the parable of the Prodigal Son.

### 3. Double parables.

These are two parables of different illustrations but teaching the same lesson. There is one point of comparison for both parables, though each should be treated separately.

Luke 14:28-33--the parables Counting the Cost and the King Going to War.

### 4. Triple parables.

These are three parables put together with the same point of comparison. These have a good means for illustrating the point. There is only one of these types found in Luke 15 with the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son.

However, just because certain parables come one after the other, it does not mean that they all have the same point of comparison.

## VI. Preaching on the Miracles.

The miracles do not present as big a problem as the parables do. Here there can be no room for an allegorical or symbolic treatment of the text. Only the tropological application is to be used, which speaks of the permanent nature of God and man and their relationship. With the Centurion from Capernaum, we see the gracious response to a cry of help and the compassionate nature of Christ. We also see the nature of the believer who knows what God can do and is humble, self-effacing, and trusting before his Lord. We too need to follow in the same way as the Centurion and fit ourselves into his picture. This tropological method of application is used on



narrative texts and miracles, like Abraham's pleasing for Sodom.

All miracles have one central application: That God was in man--Jesus--through which He manifested His glory. With the raising of the dead, only God could do that. It also points out that there is life beyond death and indicates there is a resurrection for all of us also.

With the healing of the blind man of Jericho, we have a problem where it was done. Mark 10:46 and Matthew 20:19 have Jesus healing the blind man as He came out from Jericho, but Luke 18:35 has Jesus coming near Jericho. There may have been three blind men healed there. By healing the blind man to give him sight, so also has He given us sight--this is the wrong application. In this miracle, the faith of the man was the important thing, for it is faith that saves.

## V. Occasional Sermons and Addresses

### A. Church-related occasions.

Occasional sermons differ from the regular address. These are not the Sunday sermon, but sermons for Confirmation, Installation, Dedication, Weddings, Funerals, Conventions, and preparatory for Communion. They may also be festival sermons, for there is something extra there. Every Sunday is a minor Easter. Preachers must be on fire on these days also and cannot go flat. The sermon is prepared in the regular way. You study the text, focus the truths to the needs of the people, and be textual and practical. In the Occasional Sermon, the occasion forms the third element for whatever reason the service is being given. For example, the Confirmation sermon should involve everyone in the congregation. Thus we are to individualize the occasion, speak to the occasion, and be textual.

B. Wedding texts: Ruth 1:16-17, Genesis 24:58, I Timothy 4:8, Psalm 127:1, Joshua 24:15, John 15:5, Song of Solomon. It is hard to reach people during a wedding. The couple is so often distracted that they must be lead to listen. But the address must also be brief.

C. Funeral Sermons.

The text and message will be determined by the character of the funeral:

1. Condition of the deceased.

a. Age

b. The life he lead. Was it exemplary, a reclamation to faith, marginal, or quiet. The hardest funeral is the strong member of the church. Here we must present the grace of God. Another hard one is the older Christian who lived a steady life-- what does one say? Often the sermon may be the same message, but each person is still different. We need to fall back on the comments which the person had made. There should be something in the person's life which makes him distinctive and different. We must not speak of the dead person as if they were not human. Use the examples from the person's life to instruct the living, not to eulogize the dead. Know the person whom you bury and do not try to hide things in that person's life.

c. The kind of death he died. The deceased could have been ailing after living a good life. He could have been killed or died as a youth. It could be a case of an exemplary death or a questionable one.

2. The kind of audience. Think of the relationship of the person in the community or in business. Often many unchurched people will be there. Then the funeral sermon is a mission sermon. It should be self-evident that this is not the place to "sock it to them." You want to win them to the Gospel, to give them comfort, hope, and testify to the faith.

3. Season of the year. We must not ever say that it is too bad to spoil one's Christmas with a funeral. We should show that because there is a Christmas, there is hope for sinners. This is the same for Easter. We cannot separate the message from the festivals. Make the people feel that they need Christmas and thereby make the Gospel brighter. Each sermon will be different if you pay attention to these things.

4. Do's and don'ts.

- a. Funeral sermons should be short. Fifteen minutes is fine. We are to preach to the living and not preach about the dead.
- b. Be careful about the language in the address. Avoid harsh, irritating language, which should be done for all sermons.
- c. The personal element. It must fit that person and not other people.
- d. It is not our duty to eulogize the dead. We are to comfort, exhort, and admonish. The listeners know about the good things.
- e. Do not use much out of their lives to show that they were Christians.
- f. The pastor cannot be sad. He is to inject the warmth of the Gospel hope in their hearts. Preach to them. If we believe in the Bible, we have something to give them. This is the supreme test, for if our faith does not stand up at death, then we must throw it away. We are to show that our faith and hope does stand the test. The conscientious layman Christian can have much comfort in this trying time. If a person does not believe in the hope, he will break down.

5. Ingredients of a Funeral Sermon.

- a. Sin. If it were not for sin, there would be no funeral. This may be mentioned in passing. We should talk about the consequence of sin. But the emphasis is on the forgiveness of sin. In one sermon, the emphasis can be on the doctrine of

sin, while another time one can spend time on the resurrection.

b. Temporal loss. This may be mentioned. We must talk about the providence of God. This should end on the note that we all are to prepare for our end as well.

c. Be careful about your delivery. Be subdued without being artificial. It is as if we are having a heart to heart talk with the family. Address the eyes to the mourners. Many a church has dug its own grave by the funeral sermons preached there. We have something to say and it must come out at funerals. It may pay off.

d. It is not a good practice to read the obituary before the sermon. It is a poor time to remind them once again of their grief before you want them to listen. The obituary could be printed in the bulletin and not read.

e. Viewing the remains of the deceased after the service is out now.

f. Funeral texts: John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:20-22, Psalm 90:1-7, Romans 8:35-39, Philippians 1:21-24, Psalm 116:7, Job 19:25, II Timothy 4:6-8, Ecclesiastes 7:1, Job 1:21. The hymns chosen must be good also. Must preach the Gospel.

#### D. Confessional address.

Here the pastor is speaking to those going to communion. In Europe it was delivered the day before communion was given. Content of address: One can still have a regular sermon and yet be largely confessional. This address gives much attention to the law. Point to weaknesses in church attendance, contributions, etc. We want to make people aware of their laxity. But the address cannot end on a law note. It must be evangelical. We need to open their eyes to sin. Do not label the people as indifferent or malicious, for they may not think some of the things which they do are wrong. The people must have full forgiveness assured them before

they come to the Lord's Supper. Remember that people do not have the patience to sit for a long address.

E. Communion Sermon.

The major attention is on Communion. Think of all the questions which the Catechism presents and speak to them. Maunday Thursday and the first Sunday after Confirmation are good times to preach on this topic. The purpose of the sermon is to invite the people to come to the Lord's Table, not to scare them away. The questions in the Catechism are good and you can go through them one at a time in a sermon.

F. Confirmation address.

It is strange that Confirmation is both praised and degraded. Some say that we make too much of it. It is not just the renewing of the baptismal vow. Do not throw it out. What is the aim? To welcome them to the fellowship of Communion. It marks the end of formal instruction, but not the end of learning. They know enough to examine themselves and we hope they will continue to grow. What about the law in this sermon? They should already have learned it in class. Encourage them in what they have learned. The law then is low-key. For the congregation, it is different. If the parents are concerned about their children there is no problem. But if there are those who have not helped the new confirmand, we must come with the law. The matter of example comes in here so that the parents do not undo the instruction which they have just received. Confirmation is also the reaffirmation of one's loyalty to Christ. It is a good reminder and review for the members of the congregation. Therefore the Confirmation sermon will be a positive one as the Bible says: "Be faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life." Revelations 2:10.

## VII. Hindering the Work of the Holy Spirit.

We do not convert anyone. We can get lazy in our preaching and think that so long as it is the Gospel, the Holy Spirit can work. This will hinder His work.

1. Not studying and supplying the spiritual needs of the people. Our goal and work is to supply the needs of that individual congregation. If you do not, how is the Holy Spirit going to work? You cannot use other sermons for another congregation.

2. By not giving due time and attention for the preparation of sermons. Pastors are on the road for meetings, calls, etc., so they often cut their sermon preparation. Such preparation is not all wasted on Sunday. It will pay dividends for your calls. The study will broaden you. Do not apologize for the time used in studying for sermons.

3. By not clearly presenting the subject matter of the text.

4. Poor delivery. One can become lazy at delivery. If one reads the sermon, it does not sound like it is coming from him.

5. By not practicing what he preaches. "The life of a preacher is more important than all his eloquence." -Augustine. We are all tempted in our lives. If the Devil cannot get us for heresy, he will get you for living an ungodly life. Luther: "What you do speaks so loud, I cannot hear what you say."

## VIII. "Sermones Dormi Secure."

These are sermons which tell the hearers to "sleep well." Do not rely on someone else to write your sermons. Then you won't have confidence in yourself.

## IX. Length of Sermon.

Forty-five-minute sermons are too long. The average person has a short attention span. Most people do not read or talk much and are used to noise in the background. Therefore it is easy for them to turn off their ears or tune you out. Usually the sermon should be about twenty minutes long.

## X. Varia.

### A. The Pulpit sequence:

1. For the regular service, after arriving in the pulpit there is the exorde prayer; the Apostolic Greeting; the reading of the text (do not say "is found," but "is recorded"); then "This is Thy Word, Heavenly Father, lead us into Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (John 17:17); the Salutation--like "Festival worshippers, In Christ's name, Dear fellow-redeemed," but not "Dear Christian friends" -- every speaker greets his audience; the introduction and body; the Gloria is at the end of the sermon.

2. For the festival service, first is the opening prayer; the Apostolic Greeting; the Exhortium; the festival hymn; the text; the salutation; and the sermon.

### B. The printed sermon.

A sermon which sounds good to the ear, often sounds dull when it is read. If one knows the preacher, then one can imagine how he is saying it. Without that knowledge there is something lacking in the sermon. Not all sermons look good when read. Personal communication is needed.

## CLERGY DIVORCES\*

by

Rev. Hugo Handberg

Spending agenda time delving into the matter of ministerial divorce might seem a squandering of our travel costs to get here, or at least unnecessary busy-work. Unlike larger synods, our synod has almost no one on its clergy roster who has been divorced. Thus we could dismiss the matter as irrelevant to ourselves and then, if by chance need required, refer one another to the vast literature on divorce-in-general and let it go at that.

Literature on ministerial divorce is next to non-existent. The chief reason is that, until recently, the phenomenon was rare. Where it did occur, it was handled in hush-hush fashion because of its potential for working harm in congregations and as an admittedly poor example to set in front of young people. But, brethren, all of that is changing! Editors and publishers are bringing the matter out of church board-room closets, the literature is increasing, and the culprits who were once defrocked, as they say, now continue to serve in the congregations where the marriages were dissolved and are winning sometimes complete support from those sympathetic congregations. (We hasten to point out that these trends might be more a commentary on our tolerant times than upon the new openness of ministerial divorce!)

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If you will accept a flexible, wide-ranging use of the word "clergy," then I shall illustrate this phenomenon as it shows forth its new face. Some of the clergy people are women; some of the men have had little or no seminary training; and a couple of my illustrations are not from recent days.

Flagrant examples from years ago were those of Aimee Semple McPherson and her divorce from Leroy Jenkins, and the carefully guarded divorce of the late Kathryn Kuhlman, television faith-healer, from Burroughs Waltrip, who had first divorced his wife and left two children in 1938 to marry Kuhlman. Her marriage to Waltrip wrecked her once-booming Denver Revival Tabernacle.

Asa Alonzo Allen, known as A. A. Allen, was a faith-healer who operated out of Miracle Valley, Arizona, and was found dead in a San Francisco hotel room of acute alcoholism in 1970. In his divorce suit against his wife, Lexie, who had twice filed insanity proceedings against him, he charged her with cruelty and sought an injunction to prevent her from ever again trying to commit him to an institution.

Viewers of the Oral Roberts religious television programs were surprised in 1977 when Patti, half of the featured singing team of Richard and Patti Roberts, no longer appeared in Oral's productions. It was because she could no longer endure the strained relations between herself and the man who was being groomed to succeed his father, her husband, Oral Roberts' son, Richard. Early in 1979 Patti and Richard were divorced.

A familiar page in religious magazines, such as CHRISTIANITY TODAY, used to show malnourished and abandoned children in Korea and Vietnam.

Sponsor of the page was a group known as WORLD VISION, and the energetic administrator of World Vision, who so tellingly appealed on behalf of the group for funds or for adoptive parents, was an evangelist by the name of Bob Pierce. Widely known and respected in the highest Reformed and evangelistic circles, Bob Pierce was close friend of Billy Graham and had received honors from South Korea's President Syngman Rhee and our own President Eisenhower. Yet thirteen years ago this month (Sept. 1970) Bob Pierce took his wife to court and instituted a legal separation. Lorraine Pierce refused to grant this driven man a divorce for eight more years until his death from leukemia in 1978. Part of the destruction left in the wake of this breakup was the suicide of a twenty-seven-year-old daughter.

But divorce is not an occupational hazard today only for those whom television has made well known, or for an occasional member of an evangelistic jet-set who flits from continent to continent conducting crusades. Divorce has made inroads today into the lives of ordinary ministers, men serving ordinary, average-sized Protestant congregations across our land. Considerable evidence indicates that divorce has not spared Lutheran parsonages. It has left its destructive mark upon the marriages and families of a growing number of Lutheran ministers, and consequently upon an increasing number of stunned and divided Lutheran congregations.

I cannot forget a scene that took place in my livingroom already twenty-five years ago. We had joined house guests in watching the evening news at ten o'clock. One of the guests, a woman, was a former member of a Lutheran church in a city several hundred miles away. The newscaster had barely been introduced and begun his report when the woman,

peering at the screen, said, "Why, that's John Doe! He ran off with our minister's wife! And his wife married our minister!"

The 35-year-old assistant pastor of a Lutheran congregation not far from my own was divorced in another state. A member of the congregation he serves now, whose judgment I respect, recently spoke highly of him and praised his work in the congregation. The minister has remarried. His former wife kept their daughter; he and his new wife kept his eleven-year-old son.

Perhaps you know that a married Lutheran minister near one of our Minnesota congregations ran off with another woman. The congregation was so devastated that officials of his synod seriously considered abandoning all work in that parish.

A 51-year-old minister was one of three pastors of a Lutheran congregation. Divorced last Christmas, he was removed from the clergy roster by synodical officials. His wife, granted a dwelling place by the sympathetic congregation, finally moved out of the parsonage just a month-and-a-half ago. Refusing to accept or lay blame, this Lutheran pastor said, in part, in his letter of resignation to his congregation of 1600 souls:

"When I filed for divorce in November, not only did this signal the end of a marriage, but it also meant that there would have to be a resignation from the ministry. It is my contention that the marriage had failed for a number of years, and, placing fault or blame serves no purpose. News of this nature is not supposed to come from those who teach and counsel others."

A Lutheran minister on the West Coast, a man in his thirties serving a congregation of 800 members, spent much time serving as a counselor for professional athletes. His wife left him, he resigned, later married his secretary.

The wife of an LCA couple, married before the husband's graduation from seminary, was the daughter of a minister. She had seen her father's over-attention to his work and, once her husband was out of the seminary and serving a Montana parish, began to see the same emotional abandonment from her husband that her mother had known from her father. She separated from her husband, entered counseling with a Christian psychiatrist, tried reconciliation but unsuccessfully, finally divorced. She later married another man. The former husband became assistant pastor of a large urban congregation, now serves still another congregation, both in the Midwest. He has not remarried.

An ALC minister in his forties, with five children, served a small Minnesota church. His wife, a gifted person, served successfully as a Sunday School teacher, writer, singer, and skilled homemaker. In contrast, his own ministry was unsuccessful. His failures compared to his wife's successes created a situation that was more than he could handle. He had an affair, he and his wife divorced, and he remarried shortly thereafter. The gifted former wife taught school for several years, then married a Lutheran minister, a widower older than herself. Today each is active in his and her own congregation.

A Southern California Lutheran minister in his fifties was divorced by his wife. No third party was involved. He left his congregation, later remarried, today is a hospital administrator who

occasionally does supply preaching. His congregation apparently was unscathed by the episode.

A 35-year-old Lutheran, again in Southern California, serving about 250 people, was "defrocked" following his divorce. He had enjoyed the love and respect of the young people in his congregation. The youth were greatly affected and disillusioned by his divorce and subsequent expulsion. Adults in the congregation refused to have him continue as pastor. He later went into fund raising, today is a stock broker.

A single man in his early thirties, whom I assume to be Lutheran, was serving in his first parish. A young girl, with a husband in the military, came to this bachelor pastor for counseling. The upshot was that she divorced her husband and married the pastor! He had to leave the congregation but later returned to the same area to serve another parish. My information is this: "The members have problems, and the church is not thriving. Some feel he should not have returned to this area."

Then there's the sad case of the Missouri Synod pastor, then in his mid-forties, who was forced off the clergy roster of his synod. Shortly after their marriage, his wife informed him that she thought sexual relations were degrading and unnecessary for a "pure" relationship. They had separate rooms and lived in a brother-sister arrangement for almost 15 years. He served a conservative urban congregation of 300 souls where divorce for any reason was unacceptable. After his forced resignation, he accepted a call to an LCA congregation of 500 souls in another city and has served there for the past 15 years. Within two years of his divorce, he married a member of that congregation, a widow with three children.

Another congregation of 200 members was supportive of its pastor and urged him to remain with them following his divorce. His wife had been frustrated by her inability to "live her own image" of what a pastor's wife should be. She filed for the dissolution of the marriage, then married another man within a month of the final decree. The pastor thought it best that he accept another call and has since remarried.

Let these examples suffice to show you the tip of the iceberg.

A man by the name of Andre Bustanoby nine years ago wrote an article in CHRISTIANITY TODAY called THE PASTOR AND THE OTHER WOMAN. Five years earlier one of his former seminary professors had told him:

"I know personally of twenty-nine alumni whose marriages are on the rocks because of affairs with women in their churches, and California heads the list of trouble spots."

The writer then stated things that you yourself heard in your own seminary days. He said:

"Every pastoral ministry course in seminary includes a lecture on the pastor's relations with women in the church. He is instructed not to touch them, not to visit them at home unless accompanied by his wife or another suitable person, never to counsel a woman privately with his study door closed. But one dimension of the problem has not been adequately considered. It is the pastor's need for what the other woman has to offer." (Aug. 20, '74, 1273)

Then he goes on to describe three types of unstable persons, ministers all, who are susceptible to other-sex misbehavior.

The first is the man with the inflated ego, the man impressed with his own competence and attractiveness and anxious to impress others with the same! He easily gets himself involved in an interpersonal "push-pull" game with the women of his parish. He "pushes" the message "I'm wonderful," and this behavior on his part "pulls" dependence and admiration from others, particularly women. Again, listen to the article:

"Here is a man who needs to be told he is strong, competent, and attractive. In his congregation there are likely to be one or more women who feel dependent. Such women often feel unloved, and they may have weak, unattractive husbands. They find in such a pastor their ideal of a man. And because he is a spiritual man he is even more attractive. It does not take much verbal or nonverbal exchange for two people like this to become locked into a very fulfilling complementary relationship. He receives from her admiration and dependence, and she receives from him loving, protective care through his pastoral ministry - which can easily degenerate into a very personal and intimate interest.

"Meanwhile, back at the parsonage, the pastor's wife is troubled over her husband's response to the admiring women of the congregation. She wonders about his feeling for her. If he were satisfied with her, why would he bask in the attention of other women? Resentment, distrust, and withdrawal follow. He gets the nonverbal message from his wife, 'I don't think you're so great,' which makes him all the more vulnerable to the admiring words and looks of the women in his congregation."

An extreme example of something like this, though it's not a woman-in-the-congregation thing, was told me by a woman whose brother-in-law is a divorced Baptist minister. He had an office in his home and was working there to prepare certain study materials for the printer. The work required secretarial help, and his secretary was an unattached woman, somewhat younger than himself or his wife. He and his wife made the mistake of inviting the secretary to occupy a spare room in their parsonage, which, it was thought, would expedite the work! You can guess the rest. The secretary - competent, available, compliant, always attractively dressed, not given to complaining and anxious to please "the boss" - made the wife come off a poor second in her own home! And, yes, he left her for the secretary.

Another unstable type of minister, vulnerable to involvement with women in his congregation, is a dominant personality but one whom one writer calls "more tender and affiliative."

"He strives to be close to others - to help, counsel, support and sympathize. He wants to be seen as tender with his intimates, reasonable and responsible with his acquaintances." (Leary)

"He holds down anxiety and promotes self-worth by being involved in tender, protective relations with others. This mode of adjustment, being close to our cultural ideal, is especially suitable for the ministry. But used in an extreme way it can be a problem to the minister, his wife, and his congregation."

(Bustanoby)

This pastoral personality tends to pull forms of dependence to himself, the kind offered by the



clinging vine who likes to be taken care of. He becomes a special burden to his wife because he sees himself fulfilling the ideal of the ministry, says Bustanoby. He sees himself as kind, reassuring, tender, soft-hearted, giving freely of self. But he does not see that he goes too far in this so-called "affiliative" behavior. He is often oversympathetic, overprotective, too willing to give to others - especially to his admiring women. But the whole process is a security operation designed to hold down anxiety and promote his feelings of self-worth.

The third type of vulnerable personality is a power-oriented autocrat who pulls behind him a docile following who obey, respect, and flatter him. This fellow has a need to be looked upon as a strong, powerful leader. He thrives on the flattery of both men and women, but his vulnerability is in that which comes from women. The "push-pull" phenomenon is again at work. The weak, dependent woman seeks a strong, powerful man. She thrives on his strength, he thrives on her flattery.

Summarizing, the first example of an unstable pastor needs women to tell him he's attractive. The second needs women to tell him he's warm, tender, and giving. The third needs women to tell him he's strong. The trouble can begin when some women in the congregation are willing to comply.

Where these human weaknesses exist in both ministers and women in the congregation, then there is no need to look for seductresses in the congregations. Instead, look for the "top-dog" minister, the autocrat, who grasps at every opportunity to fortify his faltering ego, to inflate his own self-image.

What lessons can we draw from all of this?

It is quite obvious that undue absence from the home can be devastating to a preacher's marriage and relations with his family. One preacher pointed out that it's easier to be out with people who don't confront him than it is to be engaged regularly in on-going confrontations with a wife and children. Marilee Dunker, daughter of Bob Pierce, said of the Oriental people who occupied her father's interests, "Daddy loved these people; in many ways he felt more at home with them than he did with us." Pierce, who is surely an extreme case, was gone from home an average of ten months of the year for fifteen years! It is possible, in other words, to be driven wrongfully by the directive to "make disciples of all the nations," to be out there saving the world, in such a way that all goes to pieces at home, that the parsonage suffers from what LEADERSHIP calls "family meltdown." Pierce found escape in travel. Ordinary preachers might find escape in not-quite-so-necessary "meetings every night" and similarly be guilty of family abandonment.

A minister has his priorities mixed up when he neglects his obligations toward his own marriage and household in the conviction that his call and ministerial duties supersede. It is most important that he spend quality time with his wife, reassuring her of his interest in her and affection for her. He should not be the kind of minister of whom it was said, "He didn't try hard at home." Too many ministers know of only two answers to household chores: "My wife does them, or we call in the trustees." He should show sincere interest in each of his children, help them with homework occasionally, play with them frequently, go on outings with them deliberately. Also he should spend quality vacation time with his wife and children, not lug his books to the motel or the beach. One man told me he spends

his vacation time setting up his sermon themes for the coming year! I must confess that I myself once went with my family to a lake cabin and, surrounded by my little boys, foolishly made it my purpose to read through the Book of Mormon.

Another minister, looking back on the early years of his marriage with the clear vision of middle-age, spoke of his wife's duties with four young sons, three of them in diapers, plus an adopted daughter. Then he incriminated himself by asking, "What was I doing all this time? Running all over creation. I was totally insensitive to what she was going through day by day."

It's from such thoughtlessness that a minister unwittingly plants the weed-seeds of resentment and discord in his marriage and in the beautiful garden of his family.

The devil works overtime to capture true Christian leaders, those who have the gifts required by the ministry and sincerely intend to use those gifts to preach and teach God's Holy Word!

Then there is such a thing as duplicity on the part of a minister.

When this boil is allowed to fester, it can spread its poison to the tender thing that ought to be the marriage of the minister and his wife. It's one thing to give a present now and then, or to say to one's wife, "I love you." But practicing gentleness and showing true consideration from day to day are something else!

Bob Pierce often wrote home to express his love and affection for his wife and three daughters, yet would be gone from them for six months at a time.

When he came home to them and his wife and girls excitedly made the house ready and smothered him with kisses at the airport, he had a knack of soon turning it all into alienation, harsh words and suffering for everyone. His temper and his walk-outs have been made famous by his daughter's book. The man who loved the unfortunate masses of the Far East and was adored by tens of thousands, all of it in the name of Jesus Christ, couldn't make it at home. He was a driven man, a man of achievement, whose emotional circuitry began to malfunction as soon as he was on his own home turf.

Even worse was a missionary named C. T. Studd. This man wrote loving, effusive letters from Africa to his wife. Yet what were these considering that he didn't see her in all the years from 1916 to 1929 when she finally died, alone, in Spain?

Or consider the duplicity in this little scene. A minister's wife sits in the front pew on Sunday watching her husband preach, smile, and pray, but all the while remembers the Thursday-morning blow-up, the loud words in front of the children, the grabbed coat and the slammed door. Perhaps he was on his way out to a counseling session with a husband and wife! Then when his own wife sees the congregation pour its love and affection in her husband's direction, it only makes her angry.

Here is something thought-provoking for us as visitors. A certain senior pastor has ten associate pastors. From time to time he calls each one into his study for a chat. "What I am most concerned to ask each one when I sit down with him," he says, "is not 'How is your particular program coming?' but 'What about your devotional life? Tell me about your marriage. How much time have you spent with your kids lately?'"

I must confess that I know little or nothing about the health and welfare of the marital lives and family lives of the brother-pastors in my own circuit. Yet it ought to be a legitimate inquiry that any one of us should make if called upon to conduct a visitation. Because our days are increasingly evil, because barriers against divorce of ministers are crumbling, because of the subtly wicked forces that play upon us, our wives and children, and because of distractions that pull us away from wholesome interactions with our wives and children - telephones, television, car trips to neighboring parishes, bookstores, hospitals - because of a multiplicity of late-night meetings, of numerous conferences away from home, of time spent away from study and home in counseling sessions, our own marriages and family lives become exceedingly vulnerable.

Perhaps we should make efforts to understand better, and counsel better, the minister who has his autocratic leanings, who dominates not only his congregation but also his wife and children. Perhaps for the sake of his marriage we should be aware of the high-octane preacher, the one with the great insecurities who's constantly wondering, "Am I accepted by my congregation, by my brother pastors, by my synodical officials?" and who immerses himself in the desire to achieve but at the expense of wife and marriage. There may be a troubled brother out there - most likely with a troubled wife! - who isn't clear on the difference between a self-centered ministry and a Christ-centered ministry. There may be highly emotional pastors in our midst who pour themselves into their duties at the expense of duties toward wife and children. With exquisite discretion and true charity we ought to look for the pastors who are poor listeners, the ones who speak and to whom everyone must give ear, the ones who can't take

advice and with whom one must never disagree. We ought to sharpen our perceptions and look behind these things for a possibly troubled marriage.

As Lutheranism itself becomes ever more troubled and a Christless world closes in upon us and makes its inroads upon marriage, let us, as ministers, counsel together, pray for one another, and keep before ourselves and our people the Scriptural basics of what God has made marriage to be, of what it means to be a husband and a wife.

May God in His mercy help us, our spouses and our children, for the sake of our dear Savior Jesus and His saving Word.

## ARE YOU TEACHING BEHAVIOR MOD OR LAW AND GOSPEL?\*

### PREFACE

All of us want to have well-behaved classes in which learning and teaching can be carried out efficiently. Sometimes this goal is reached merely by a manipulation of the students, without any change in the heart, so that we have what amounts to a group of well-behaved unbelievers. This latter situation is so obviously undesirable that there are those who question whether the Christian classroom should be a model of good behavior, since such behavior would be inconsistent with the freedom that is ours in the Gospel (sic). In this paper I will try to sort out some of these concerns and present a balanced synthesis. For such a proper balancing to occur in our classrooms, however, we must be skilled in the proper distinction, division, and use of Law and Gospel.

#### I. The Basis for Concern.

While the old man, even the old man in the Christian, must ultimately be restrained by the law, we must beware of appealing to the old man rather than to the new man in our dealings with Christians under our authority, as the means for promoting sanctification.

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\*This article by Rev. Ed Bryant was delivered to a joint ELS-WELS Pastor-Teacher Conference last October in Portland, Oregon. Rev. Bryant is principal of Lakewood Lutheran School, Tacoma, Wash.

## II. Behavior Modification

In its essence, behavior modification is a sophisticated appeal to the old man. We partake of this error whenever we depend predominately upon manipulation, force, management techniques, etc., to achieve proper behavior in the classroom instead of relying on motivation by the Gospel.

## III. Good Behavior on Scriptural Terms

As children grow, both as to age and as to Christian maturity, more and more we appeal to their new man to put down their old man, the Gospel all the while predominating. Conversely, structure and the first use of the law (as a curb) will be more appropriate for less mature students, though still the Gospel is to predominate. The Gospel is unconditional and therefore not a superior basis of manipulation.

### I. The Basis for Concern

#### A. Expectations for "Good" Behavior

Much of what we do in church and school involves behavior. In a society which is less and less concerned with God's will in our personal lives, it is refreshing to work with people who have standards of right and wrong and for whom God's will is significant. Indeed, personal discipline and morality is necessary for the survival of any society, much more so for a society of learning. For this pragmatic reason, too, people look to Christian schools to maintain a good atmosphere and to uphold what is good and right.



## B. Good Behavior Enjoined by God

And God Himself enjoins upon us the responsibility for demanding proper behavior on the part of our children. We consider His injunction to "train up" the child in the way he should go. We consider the judgment upon Eli for failure to restrain his sons from wrongdoing. Parents and teachers are not only in the position of fellow Christians in relation to the children, but they are also in a position of authority over them.

It may be worthwhile to stress this point a little. Luther placed great emphasis upon the various offices that we hold as Christians; an understanding of these different offices is necessary if we are to make sense of God's commands. On the one hand, God tells us that we are not to judge one another. On the other hand, we are to judge false prophets. On the one hand we are not to take vengeance, on the other hand government is given the responsibility of being an avenger. We are told to turn the other cheek, and yet we are told "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The only way to make sense out of these passages is to consider the office that we hold.

If we are dealing as Christian to Christian, we are not to judge, but to look on one another as we look on ourselves - covered by the righteousness of Christ. But if circumstances place us in a congregation where our pastor is teaching false doctrine, then we act according to another office, that of a sheep (to use Christ's metaphor) who heeds his master's voice and ignores that of the hireling. If we know of a criminal, we are not to take our gun and shoot the offender down, yet if we are appointed judge or are placed on a jury, we could take action to execute the criminal. As Christians

and as citizens we are not to contribute to strife, but to avoid it; however, if there is no law to protect us, then we may protect our lives and property, the absence of law placing that responsibility and office upon us.

So, too, we are fellow Christians to our children from school. According to that office, we are not actually responsible for their behavior. We can see this at church, at after-school functions, and on other occasions where the children are under their parents' supervision. Sometimes we want to reach over and shake the little urchins because of the way that they are behaving; we don't because we sense that in such circumstances they are in fact not under our authority.

But at other times, we are more than fellow Christians to our school children. We hold an office of authority over them. In such circumstances their behavior is our responsibility. We cannot just shrug it off and say, "I have taught them rightly, what they do is their problem." To do that is to be an Eli and to actually become a partner in their sin.

Some people have a real problem with this distinction, and it is particularly a problem at our high schools and colleges where we see this problem wrestled with all the time. Any administration will do themselves and their teachers a real favor if they will carefully delineate the lines of authority and make these clear to the teachers, the parents, and those under authority.

We are not to forfeit our authority, then, or our responsibility for the behavior of our charges. Ultimately we may have to act according to the first use of the law and curb the wrong behavior while insisting upon the right.

C. The Confusion of Good Behavior and  
Sanctification

While we are rightfully concerned about the behavior of our charges and, indeed, may be responsible for it, achievement of the desired behavior is not in fact our primary goal. Our primary goal is to lead the children to saving faith in Jesus Christ. We have profited them nothing if we only manipulate them into being well-behaved unbelievers. Dr. C. F. Walther put it succinctly in Thesis XVI of "Law and Gospel."

". . . the Word of God is not rightly divided when the preacher tries to make people believe that they are truly converted as soon as they have become rid of certain vices and engage in certain works of piety and virtuous practices."

Simply amending certain vices is not sanctification, much less justification. It differs from sanctification in two ways. 1) Sanctification is a result of justification, while outward good works can be engendered and inspired without faith. 2) Sanctification is fruit of faith and is a response to the love of God (We love Him because He first loved us, I John 4:19), but much outwardly good behavior is done out of fear of punishment or hope of reward.

Put another way, achieving good behavior by means of the law, while necessary for order in society, may be of no spiritual use to anyone. On the other hand, the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, will not only work faith and justification but will also be the impetus for sanctification. The law, then, is not to be the motive for good works in the life of the Christian.

The law is to be used appropriately by Christians. Paul counsels Timothy (1:8ff) "But

we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane . . ." The law is not to be used to govern the new man. The new man is responsive to the will of God and is not subject to condemnation by the law. Romans 8:1,2 states, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

But if the law is not the basis of Christian motivation, what is? Only the Gospel. The Gospel brings a person to faith in Christ, and "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." (II Cor. 5:17) (Cf. also I John 4:19, above.) The sanctification of a person follows upon his justification as the day follows the night, "This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Gal. 5:6)"

If sanctification isn't good behavior, what is it? It is good behavior motivated out of love for God who first loved us.

The difference between "good behavior" and sanctification is apparent in our experience, where people comply with laws simply because they are enforced, rather than out of love for God. At one high school where I taught, for example, we had very complex rules regarding the girls' dress. That was during the miniskirt era and modesty was a concern. The dresses had to come to the middle of the knee, and blouses had to be buttoned up a respectable distance. One sweet young thing appeared with a dress below the knee and a blouse buttoned up to

her chin. The problem was that the dress clung to absolutely every curve and the blouse was of the see-through variety with foundation garments either filmy or non-existent. She adhered to the rules in every point. Quite intelligently, the school changed the whole thrust of their handbook from an emphasis on rules to an emphasis upon the spirit of modesty, to which the new man is responsive under the Gospel.

Following this latter tack, our policy at Lakewood and at many other of our schools is not to list an array of rules, replete with inches and numbers of buttons. Instead we approach someone questionably dressed with a discussion of the effect this is likely to have on others, particularly the boys, and leave it up to the person to exercise her own Christianity. We have not had a problem with modesty that I know of in the last five years. (This, however, may not meet the "due process" requirements of the world's courts.)

Two other things deserve mention here, however. First, continued violation of God's injunctions regarding modesty would result in the law being used in its coercive mode, since evidently the old man needs some putting down. Second, while an example of this type tends to make the issue quite clear, the same principles are involved in all aspects of the class, from sitting still and listening, to courtesy on the playground, to taking bulletins home responsibly. In every case obedience would hopefully come from the power of the new man responding to God's grace and seeking His will.

A word about adiaphora is in order here. There are many rules in the school that are established out of wisdom or arbitrarily, out of necessity. (Much like driving on the right side of the road.)

While it is not per se God's will that we look a little nicer on chapel days, it is God's will that we obey those in authority who make such a requirement of us, and that we consider the message this sets before the watching world.

D. Appendix

Motivation in the Life of the Christian

From God's No and God's Yes: The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, by C. F. W. Walther; Condensed by Walter C. Pieper. Concordia 0-570-03515-5.

- P. 76 The essence of their [the rationalists] religion is to teach men that they become different beings by putting away their vices and leading a virtuous life, while the Word of God teaches us that we must become different men first, and then we shall put away our particular sins and begin to exercise ourselves in good works.
- P. 109 [Regarding the woeful significance of having recourse to the coercion of the law.] However, what did the Lord tell them by the prophet Jeremiah? This, that the legal covenant had not improved their condition, because God had to force them to comply with his will - and forced obedience simply is no obedience.
- P. 110 [Regarding the results when the law predominates. He refers to Rom. 3:20] The Law has no other purpose than to reveal men's sins, not to remove them. Instead of removing them, it rather increases them; for when a person conceives evil lust in his heart, the Law calls

to him: "You shall not covet." That causes man to regard God as cruel in demanding what man cannot accomplish. Thus the law increases sin: it does not kill sin, but rather makes it alive.

P. 111 [Regarding proper motivation for good works and strengthening of the new man.]  
The apostle is saying to you: If you want to revive your future congregations and cause the Spirit of peace, joy, faith, and confidence, the childlike spirit, the Spirit of soul-rest, to take up His abode among the members of your congregation, you must, for God's sake, not employ the Law to bring that about. If you find your congregations in the worst condition imaginable, you must indeed preach the Law to them, but follow it up immediately with the Gospel. You may not present the Law to them today and postpone preaching the Gospel to them until a later time. As soon as the Law has done its work, the Gospel must take its place.

P. 112 [Continuing the same thought.]  
The reason why congregations are corrupt is invariably this, that its ministers have not sufficiently preached the Gospel to the people. ....Rather than act the policeman in his congregation, he ought to change the hearts of his members in order that they may without constraint do what is pleasing to God with a glad and cheerful heart. A person who has a real understanding of the love of God in Christ Jesus is astonished at its fire, which is able to melt anything in heaven and on earth. The moment he believes in this

love he cannot but love God and from gratitude for his salvation do anything from love of God and for His glory.

These quotations from Walther's amanuenses compellingly present an essential Scriptural principle: Good behavior, the sanctified life, the Christian life, whatever you want to call it, is motivated by the love that God has first had for us.

## II. Behavior Modification

### A. As a Technical Term

Behavior modification is based largely on the work of B. F. Skinner and the behaviorist school of psychology. The underlying premise of this school of thought is that all of our behavior is purely in response to stimuli from our environment, those responses being governed by certain needs. The theoretical basis of this approach to manipulating behavior proposes that all behaviors are essentially conditioned reflexes, so that if we want to condition an organism (say, a human) to respond to a stimulus in a certain way, we follow this pattern:

- 1) Provide the stimulus.  
"Sit down, Johnny."
- 2) Continue until the appropriate response occurs, even if by "accident."  
Johnny sits down.
- 3) Gratify one of Johnny's needs.  
Hand out the M & M's - gratify the need for pleasure.

Nearly always a true behaviorist will opt for "positive reinforcement" - gratifying a need,



rather than for "negative reinforcement," since the latter does not gratify a need. Spanking, for example, simply introduces a new need, the need to avoid pain, and this, from the behaviorist view, is difficult to associate in the condition mechanism with the stimulus. After all, continuing with our example, the conditioning process aims to associate the gratification of the pleasure need with the stimulus-response relationship of being seated upon command.

The true-blue behaviorist does not concede that a person might actually choose how to respond to a particular stimulus. They define such notions as "choosing," "considering," "selecting," "knowing," and "guilt" right out of existence. Even though someone may say he chooses, they reason, in fact such a statement is behavior in response to conditioning. The observed behavior is everything. The behaviorists shovel "guilt" on the dustheap since it is unobservable on the one hand, or, on the other, merely an anxiety response conditioned by our society.

#### B. In General

De rigeur behavior mod is such a hideous concept that it is amazing that Christians even consider it. Since the old man is with us always, however, all of us use behavior mod in some way or another whenever we inappropriately use the Law to affect behavior.

[Strictly speaking, we could consider some form of behavior modification, in the generic sense, to be in use whenever we use the Law according to its first use, to outwardly curb sinful behavior.]

In a general way, for the purposes of our discussion here, we improperly use behavior

modification in the following circumstances:

- 1) When we are predominately concerned with the behavior of the person, and not the spiritual condition.
- 2) When we appeal to the flesh rather than to the spirit, to the old man rather than to the new man for obedience.

Our mistakes in using Law and Gospel tend to be comprehended in the above listing. Consider some examples:

a) Miss Jones tells her first-grader, "Jesus doesn't love you when you pick on people, Herman." (1)

b) After being threatened with expulsion, spankings, and restriction, little Iodine finally learns her memory work, grudgingly. But since she is now up with the class and not a problem, Mom, Dad, and Teacher are happy. (2)

c) When the third grade (four out of seven of them) fails to turn in a map assignment, Mr. Otterbein throws a sarcastic tantrum featuring references to his great sacrifice, their ingratitude, and the unlikelihood of their ever going to college and earning lots of money. (2)

d) etc. - We can all add our own.

We could go on and on with examples, and we could further refine the distinction between Law and Gospel that pertains here, but let us summarize to bring this section to a conclusion.

Remember that the first use of the law is the least salutary. It merely coerces. It may not even convict, because references may not even be made to God as the author of the law.

There are a number of means we use to coerce. Which is yours? -

force of personality  
regimentation  
sarcasm and ridicule  
group dynamics

withholding affection  
manipulation with rewards  
an overused rod  
shaming

### III. Good Behavior on Scriptural Terms (Sanctification)

We have already discussed the basis and motive for sanctification - the Gospel, but we should make some practical considerations as well if we are to make effective application of the Gospel.

A. The Gospel is to predominate. When we consider the rules that govern our children's lives at school, we can see that here is a continual stream of commands directing, censuring, and guiding them. How they dress, when and how loud they speak, how they play, where they sit, etc., etc. This is not necessarily bad in and of itself, but we should pay special attention to see that in spite of this, the atmosphere is one pervaded by the Gospel. Devotions particularly should hold forth the grace of God. Religion application should avoid the moralistic and emphasize what God has done for us.

And, too, when we do deal with infractions, those infractions are not tolerated, nor is the Gospel some form of exception that makes things all right again. Rather, the infractions are forgiven, in the very narrow sense.

#### B. The Gospel is Unconditional

One of the common mistakes we commit when we try to use the Gospel for motivation is that

we use it as a superior reward, or as a club. "You have to do this, Hermelinde, because God loves you!" says the teacher. But God's love originates totally in Himself, not in reaction or relation to anything we have done. He was reconciling the world to Himself whether we know it or not, whether we believe it or not, whether we even care or not. Perhaps a close thing to it is the love of a mother for her unborn child, a love of which the child knows nothing. In our classrooms we dare not place any conditions upon God's love, or upon our love for the children. The cute ones, the smart ones, the polite ones, the kind ones, the rich ones, the ones with interests like ours, the ugly ones, the dull ones, the rude ones, the cruel ones, the poor ones, the ones indifferent to anything we say - all have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. God has made each one worth the blood of His own son. We dare not be less concerned, less caring, or less comforting to one than another.

### C. The Approach Varies with Maturity

Since sanctification, though complete upon justification (we do now love God), is still progressive (we grow in love toward Him), our approach will vary according to the sanctified maturity of the people we deal with. Two things go with lack of maturity: 1) There is less strength in the new man we appeal to. 2) There is less training and instruction.

Primary teachers see this particularly. It is in the nature of children to be impulsive. Their attention spans are short. They are short on sanctified self-discipline. We might appeal to their new nature, but they are so weak and so soon forget. Along with this, they are not trained and instructed in the nuances of what is right; they will laugh and

carry on in the hallway totally oblivious to the distraction they are causing other classes.

As a general rule, then, the younger children need more of a restraining use of the law. The discipline of the law applied to their old man will for a while be applied by Mom, Dad, and the teacher; later by themselves.

#### D. Correction vs. Punishment

No discussion of Law and Gospel in the school is complete without a discussion of the nature of correction vs. punishment. Outwardly they may appear the same - perhaps a spanking - but their administration and goals differ.

Chastisement is the law administered for the sake of correction. It is an assist to the child's new man in the task of putting down the old. It is as if to say, "I know you want to do what is right, but you are weak. It may help you to remember that I will be watching you, because I care for you, and that if you cheat (or whatever) again, you will be in the same serious trouble."

Chastisement appeals to the new nature, not to the fear of punishment - that is saved for the old man. If the person is not properly motivated by the Gospel he will look on the threat of discipline to come merely as something to be avoided, rather than as a help in self-discipline. One rarely has trouble convincing a Christian child of the salutary nature of chastisement.

Punishment is another matter. It is carried out not so much for the good of the individual as for the good of society. It is reserved for all those awful people that Paul wrote to Timothy about. Our little societies cannot carry on in the grip of the profane or the drug-users and such like. We may

very well want to pursue such as mission prospects, but it may be that we do so through some other agency of the church.

When we think of it, much of what we do in the way of discipline may unnecessarily partake of the nature of punishment rather than chastisement. This is a danger whenever we have "formula" consequences for certain behaviors; a danger, that is, not a certainty.

E. The Law must not Mitigate the Gospel  
or vice versa.

The final emphasis upon teaching sanctification and motivating the Christian life is that we are not to condition one of these two doctrines with the other. "You did a rotten thing, but that's OK because God forgives you." "I know God forgives you, but you had better straighten up and fly right." - These are statements we hear others (and ourselves) saying time and time again.

If I have done a rotten thing, then it is not OK and there is nothing I can ever do to erase the wrong. Period. Christians, too, must have the law in all its severity, whenever they are secure in themselves.

If I am forgiven, then that is a final and everlasting declaration; Christ cannot undo what He did on the cross so that I can have my sins back. Period. Children whose hearts are full of their own shortcomings and sins must hear the sweetest melody of the Gospel.

Conclusion

Are you modifying the behavior of your students with the law or are you modifying their hearts with the Gospel?

## THE CENTRALITY OF THE WORD IN PREACHING\*

I cannot presume to tell you how to preach the Word of God. I know my own weaknesses too well to believe such an effort on my part would be of any great value to you; and I have heard too much good preaching from my brothers here to believe that you need anyone to tell you what or how to preach. What I say is simply a reminder of what you already know well and practice consistently; and, I hope, an encouragement to my brothers as you continue in that task which is your weekly obligation and your constant joy.

I intend simply to offer a few thoughts on THE CENTRALITY OF THE WORD IN PREACHING: In principle, we are called, as witnesses for God, to preach the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word. In practice, this means that the Word of God governs our preaching from start to finished product.

"Let the one who has My Word speak it faithfully," God says. And it is this work to which we are called, and which we must pursue with all diligence. The Bible calls us preachers in particular "Ambassadors" or "witnesses" for God and for His Son. Summoned to the stand each Sunday especially in His behalf in the course of our duty, where His people wait to hear, we are under solemn obligation

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\*This article was delivered by Pastor John Krueger to the Conference of Minneapolis and Eau Claire area ELS pastors on January 24, 1983. Rev. Krueger is pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

by His commission and by His people's call, to tell the truth -- His Truth.

That means we are to preach His Word. Our Lord said it to His Heavenly Father, "Your Word is truth." And the Apostle lays it on the heart of God's ministers: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season."

And that means we are to preach the Holy Scriptures. They are the Word of God, given by His inspiration -- His Truth, inerrant, infallible, and the only safe Guide in an age of apostasy like ours.

In preaching the Scriptures we are not expounding a dead letter. This Word is, by its own claim and by the experience of all who have truly listened to it, "living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." The Bible is more astute, and more acute, than anything our human minds could devise, in penetrating to the root of human problems and in its answer to those problems. It does not stay on the surface of human need or misery, as we otherwise so regularly do; it does not just treat symptoms. It gets to the core of human need, human sin; it diagnoses that need unerringly, and it prescribes and offers the complete, perfect cure -- Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Savior of the world.

He is the center of the Word, Whom the Scriptures call "the Word"; and so He is central to the center of our preaching. The Word we proclaim must center in Him, Who called us, as He said, to be witnesses for Him. And to be faithful witnesses to Him we must preach Him as God's written Word presents Him. For there is no Christ but that Christ Whom God's written Word introduces to us.



And to add to -- or detract from -- what the Scriptures say of Him, is to put fallible human speculation above the inerrant Word of God; and it is to forfeit our claim to the honor of being His witnesses, as well as to do His people damage. The Christ we preach is, and must always be, the Christ whose person and purpose and works are described for us in the Scriptures: The Son of God, promised and sent by God to be the Savior of this world from the guilt and consequences and power of sin; no less than that, ever.

That is the "Gospel" or good news which as witnesses for Him we are to tell; and that Gospel is, and is called, "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." When therefore we are on the stand testifying in His behalf, we have dynamite in our hands, and we must handle it with care, as the Lord's Apostle describes it: "We do not use deception, nor do we distort the Word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

As witnesses, we are called to preach the whole Word of God. It wasn't mere rhetoric when the Apostle Paul told the pastors at Ephesus, at his farewell, "I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God." He had. And it is no rhetorical flourish, but a practical and essential rule for the preacher's work, that he preach the entire Word of God, not just the parts of it that he may feel like preaching; and for the edifying of the congregation he serves, that they hear and heed the entire Word of God, not just what happens to agree with their own ideas of how things ought to be.

It's easy to leave out what we don't like, both in planning a round of preaching and in preparing and

presenting an individual message. Some things God says are hard to understand, and others are hard to swallow; and preachers and parishioners alike too easily can fall into the rut of taking what we like and leaving what we don't.

Preaching the whole Word of God doesn't mean that we can preach everything God says in every sermon; nor that we will succeed in preaching on every single verse of His Holy Scriptures during our entire life time; of course not! It does mean that we will have our hearts attuned to all that He says, and will be aware of our obligation not to leave out of our testimony any item that will magnify His name and lead our people to stronger faith and a more godly life in Him.

It means, above all, that our preaching will show a vital consciousness of what He has told us to say to the world: to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name, fully and clearly. We will remember and find the heart of human need and distress in the sinful heart and life of man, which must be pointed out and condemned with God's own condemnation. Its power, its guilt and its consequences must be shown in their full and true and horrible dimensions. The forgiveness of sins which Jesus came to bring must be the heart of all our preaching, for without that there is neither hope for life eternal nor motivation to serve God or men here and now. It is here that much of what claims to be Christian preaching utterly fails to live up to its name -- which is one good reason for the reminders of this presentation.

This may sound monotonous to some people, this insistence on thorough, consistent preaching of sin and grace -- just as it sounded like foolishness to the worldly-wise in the days of the Apostles. But today, as then, there is no other answer to this

world's self-destruction, there is no other satisfaction for people's "real need." To leave out or tone down these constant keynotes of the Scriptures, then, is to preach something less than God's whole Word, and it is to leave out from the preaching that part of God's Word which is above all vital to the well-being of the people God has made and redeemed. To preach God's Word whole and entire is to preach the full and true horror of sin, and the full and true value of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the heart of God's Word to us.

Much criticism has been directed at Lutheran preachers for not preaching enough good works. I'm not altogether sure this criticism is fully valid. But the reminder is certainly in place, that we not forget to preach good works as God preaches them in His Word -- the works that God commands, than which no works could be better. God insists on obedience to His commands, and He gives His Law not only to show us our sins but also to guide our lives when we have come to faith in His forgiveness. To preach good works, then, is also part of our calling as His professional witnesses. Good works are the inevitable outcome of real faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as such, good works can and must be preached. It is dangerous to put dynamite into the hands of someone who doesn't know how to handle it -- unless you give him some guidance. The Gospel of our Lord's free grace has been terribly and fatally misused by all too many -- who have taken that great power and set it to use at their whim, without first reading the directions in God's Word. God's witnesses must not allow this to happen. As His spokesmen we are called to tell His whole truth. That's absolutely necessary for His glory and for the well-being of those people He loves so deeply and dearly.

As witnesses for God and for His Son, we are

bound to preach nothing but the Word of God. This, too, is altruism among us; yet the temptation is strong to preach all manner of other things. I believe this temptation comes as a result of listening too much to the repeated -- and monotonous! -- cries for variety that one hears. After all, God's Word is, as God Himself, eternal and unchangeable. And after a while a sinful human being, perhaps even a sinful preacher of the Word, begins to get bored with always saying the same thing. And in the attempt, honestly begun, to find a different way to say it, he sometimes begins to say a different thing; and to give as a reason the excuse heard so often, that the Word of God is not "static," but "dynamic."

On this excuse we have actually been urged by some to stop talking so dogmatically and to listen to the insights of other disciplines besides theology. We are sometimes even told that "God speaks" to us through "the world." It is true that God tries through much of what modern man says and does -- as well as through natural phenomena -- to poke us awake so we will listen to Him; just as He used the burning bush in former days to get Moses to turn aside and listen. But a clear message from God must come from the Holy Scriptures alone.

To cite but one example of the truth and importance of this: In preaching the good works that follow faith in Jesus, we do not and dare not seek our direction for those works in the insights of sociology or psychology or politics. The preaching of good works must be firmly grounded in God's Word alone, not in human reason. Good works, as our Lutheran confessions remind us, "are not those which everyone contrives for himself from a good intention, or which are done according to the traditions of men, but those which God himself has prescribed and commanded in His Word."

If we are not, then, to be a colossal waste of the time, effort and money of the Church of God in training us to be preachers of the Word, we had better take the Sola Scriptura seriously, and preach the Word alone, nothing but the Word. Otherwise, let's stop pretending to be ministers of God's Word and honestly accept another job. So long as we stand in the pulpits of God's churches claiming to be His witnesses and spokesmen, from those pulpits nothing but His Word should be proclaimed and heard.

That we are called as witnesses of God to speak the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word, means that the Holy Scriptures must govern our preaching from beginning to end. If they do not, we are found false witnesses of God.

The Holy Scriptures will be the base from which our preaching takes its impetus and on which it is founded. This suggests a very sound reason for the custom followed now for centuries, that each sermon be based upon a specific section or text of the Scriptures. If we believe that the text of the Scriptures is inspired by God, inerrant and infallible, the preaching of specific texts follows quite logically. Of course, if you accept the asinine argument that it is not the text of our Scriptures that is inerrant, but the truths revealed in them for our salvation, you might dispense with the preaching of specific texts. I don't accept that reasoning, and I am heartily in favor of the custom -- old and hackneyed as it may seem to some -- of preaching specific texts for God's inerrant Word. I am so in favor of this, in fact, that I take it for granted that it is standard procedure among us. (To anyone for whom it isn't, anything further I have to say will have no interest.)

The Holy Scriptures will be the basis of our planning for a year's pulpit work (or a month's, or a decade's) or however long a period you plan for at one time. We will plan our preaching so as to proclaim the whole counsel and will of God, not just that part of it that may happen to appeal to us.

I know no better way to make such a plan than to follow the scheme of the Church Year, using the many pericopal systems that have been devised. It may be urged that these are themselves somewhat arbitrary and that other plans might do just as well, e.g., preaching through a book of the Bible in one series, then another, and so on. That's fine, just so there's a plan by which the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word, is to be proclaimed.

Long-range planning over several years may suggest a system whereby different areas of the Scriptures are expounded. I follow, for instance, a five-year plan: First year, Gospels; second year, Epistles; third year, Gospels; fourth year, Epistles; fifth year, Old Testament. Each year's basic series of texts is normally broken at one point or another by a different type of text; that's a concession, however limited, to this world's passion for variety. Such a scheme makes life interesting for the preacher, and I am sure gives greater range to my preaching at least, than if I would try to get by choosing a text from week to week; because I would either stay with one kind of text too long, or else diversify so completely as to be further beyond the comprehension of my people than I already am. Others will have their own systems, probably better and more balanced than this. Whatever system is used, it should certainly aim to proclaim the whole will of God to God's people.

Special series or special occasions will, of course, require planning of their own. Here the preacher's own imagination and his knowledge of the people and their circumstances will combine with his knowledge of the Word, to suggest texts appropriate to the occasion. Here again, however, the Word of God should do the leading, and not simply the caprice of the preacher.

Why not, for instance, for Lent, preach from John 13 to 17 on the Person and Work of Jesus? -- It might be a novel change from dialogue sermons, filmstrips or chancel drama. Or, why not a summer series from texts that illuminate the various parts of the Liturgy? Or a series of series covering the chief parts of Christian doctrine, Catechism-wise? The possibilities afforded by the Word are almost limitless -- as long as we keep our perspective, and remember: We are called to preach, not our own fancies, but God's Word -- His whole Word, and nothing but His Word.

In the preparation and preaching of each individual sermon, too, the Word governs the preaching from start to finish. If it does not, then the preaching is not the preaching of the Word, however plausible it may seem as oratory or philosophy.

As the preacher prepares and preaches his sermon, let him remember to preach the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word. The task thus set for us indicates that God's Word determines its own meaning. In preparing to preach on a particular text, the preacher will, then, have to do a careful job of exegesis - not eisegesis. Let him be scrupulously honest with himself and with God's people. The Word of God is not a wax nose, to be twisted into any shape the preacher sees fit. The preacher must, as the first of all his people, take the Word

of God as it stands; recognize history as history, allegory as allegory, symbol as symbol and vision as vision. He will not, from a text on creation, preach evolution -- not even theistic evolution. When a miracle of Christ is under consideration, he will not allegorize or symbolize or theorize it away, but accept it first as the historic fact it is said by God to be. When the text is a vision, as in Revelation, the preacher will be careful not to import arbitrary absolutes into each item as the only possible interpretation.

The Word may also suggest its own application to today, and the preacher will first search the text itself for cues as to the proper application to the people. In many instances the text itself will suggest its application to any preacher who really understands the text, and who truly understands God's people with all their problems and possibilities. He should remember that the various people in his audience exhibit various symptoms of sin, just as did the people to whom the Scriptures were immediately addressed; and that people today, as well, need a clear diagnosis of their condition and a direct application of the Gospel of God's love in Christ.

God's Word suggests a variety of applications, and the preacher of it, if he would preach the Word, the whole Word and nothing but the Word, had better not get hung up on one or two favorite items. Not every sermon, for example, can or should deal with the relationship between the races or between the sexes -- though, to hear and read what is said and written, one would surely think there were no other problems or possibilities in this world, or at least not in this country! The Word of God suggests many other, some more personal, always just as vital applications. And the preacher of the Word will do



well to look to the Word itself first, to determine how the Word should be applied and to what kind of situation. To preach the Word whole and unmixed means that the text is not a pre-text for the airing of the preacher's pet gripe or the expounding of his favorite dream; else he is preaching not the Word of God, but his own; he is not preaching Christ Jesus as Lord but himself, and Christ Jesus his servant.

It's humbling, but it may also be healthy, to have those aggravating times in the study, when you look at your text, and say, Now, what in all the world can God possibly be saying in this text that is going to have any bearing on me or on my people? For then at last it may begin to dawn on our beclouded minds, that it isn't really we or our people who determine or say what is meaningful or important for us; it is God, to Whom we would all do well to pay much more attention, instead of insisting that He must say everything in terms that we already know and approve of! And when this fog has lifted from our minds, we can stand in God's pulpit, clear in mind and clear in speech, to let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shine forth upon His people. It is the preacher's function -- and his joy -- to say to God's people what God says; nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

Thus the Word of God itself determines (or, more accurately, is) the substance of the preaching. This suggests immediately that in preparing to preach, the preacher will look to the text in detail for the particular points he will make in his sermon. He will let the text outline itself, as far as that is possible, taking his cues for each particular point from the text itself. And if he lets the text suggest the points to be made, then why not,

in preaching the text, quote the text itself -- point for point -- as the items it suggests come up in the sermon? Each preacher has his own unique way of doing this, and each text has different possibilities and problems in quoting. But certainly, if people are to be edified by God's Word, the preacher had better make the connection between text and sermon clear beyond all doubt. If the Word indeed is central to preaching, then how could the preacher do less than to allow the Word to appear in its central position in the preaching?

To go further into the centrality of the Word in preaching would require at least a short course in homiletics. That's the work of the professors at our seminary, or at least of someone more knowledgeable on the subject than I. But it is well that we have here attempted to remind ourselves who we are and what our work is; this is vital in all our work, and particularly as we preach to God's assembled people, offering them the Word of Life from God Himself, direct and concentrated. "I have put My Words into your mouth," He says to His prophets. And He is faithful to His promise. Let us not by-pass or ignore that tremendous gift and power; for it is the only power we have as preachers, and the only truly lasting gift we have to give God's people. It remains for each of us, by the power of God's Spirit, to "stir up the gift of God that is in us"; to preach His Word honestly, fully, and only. By this God will glorify His name and rejoice the souls of His people.