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**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE PRINCIPAL SERMON METHODS
IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary**

**in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Bachelor of Divinity

by

Adolph Ralph Meyer

**Concordia Seminary,
April 18, 1937**

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INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF THE MINISTRY. The Christian ministry is the most important profession in the world. View it from whichever angle you will, it is built on a wider foundation, operates with nobler principles, serves more exalted purposes, affects more human beings, deals with more vital issues than does any other profession or activity on earth. The office of the ministry is not a humanly devised profession, but a divine institution. It is true that there are human elements involved in it. The ministers themselves are human beings, burdened even after their calling to the sacred office, with the many limitations of imperfect human nature. The office employs normal human capacities and functions with their inevitable weaknesses and shortcomings. Notwithstanding the human frailties interwoven in the texture of its earthly make-up, the holy ministry is in every sense a divinely appointed function and, therefore, possesses a unique distinction and occupies a level far above all other occupations and professions on earth. (Cf. Mutual Obligations of the Ministry and the Congregation by Karl Kretschmar).

IMPORTANCE OF PREACHING. The minister's work vitally affects time and eternity and his most important work is preaching. Nothing can take its place. It is the divinely instituted method of spreading Christianity. "Preach the Gospel to every creature," Mark 16,15. Teaching school, conducting Bible classes, writing for church papers, etc., are not indispensable as duties of the pastor, for they are not expressly and individually commanded by God; preaching, however, has been

ordained and commanded by God and therefore we may not strike it from the list of pastoral duties. That is the ^{principal} way, specified by God Himself, through which the Holy Spirit converts the unbeliever on the one hand, and edifies and strengthens the believer on the other. "Preaching is designed to conduct to Christian truth one who has not yet believed it, or to explain and apply it to those who admit it," Hoppin.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD PREACHING. The preacher is God's instrument. He speaks as the ambassador of God. In his hands are placed the destinies of blood-bought souls. If the preacher does not faithfully prepare his sermon, then he may be responsible for some lost soul, which ~~may~~ ^{would} have been won had he not been negligent. Good sermons, therefore, are of prime importance. "Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behaelt denn die gute Predigt," Apology, Art. XXIV.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "SERMON"? James M. Hoppin, Professor in Yale College, in his book entitled "Homiletics" (p.11) gives the following definition:

Sermon.--The Latin word "sermo", signifying "discourse," "discouraging or talking" with one, and which also originally implied question and answer, and the fact of an audience whose questions are real or implied, is, indeed, as near an equivalent to the biblical Greek word ὁμιλία, or "homily", as could well be found; yet it somewhat differs from it. It does, in fact, by common usage, mean a more finished address, a more formal treatment of a passage of Scripture, or theme suggested by such a passage, than does "homily," and certainly than does "preaching." It implies not only analysis but synthesis; and it presupposes a set discourse, or sacred oration, complete in its parts, delivered to an assembly of Christian people brought together for the purpose of public worship. It is a deliberate address to a religious assembly. It is the familiar "homily" become or grown up into a regular discourse with plan and method.

HOW CAN WE SECURE GOOD PREACHING? How can we make good sermons?

It goes without saying, of course, that there can be no good preaching without the aid of God's Holy Spirit. At the same time we must admit

that human frailties in the preacher may hinder the work of the Spirit, and it is in the sense of overcoming such human shortcomings that we speak of "securing good preaching" and "making good sermons." "The three requisites for good sermonizing are: a thorough study of the text, a good outline, and good delivery; neglecting any one of these will result in poor preaching," Dean Fritz. In our present discussion we will confine our remarks to the second of these three requisites, namely, good outline.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING AN OUTLINE? The following points are summarized from the discussion of outlines by David J. Burrell in his book "The Sermon, its Construction and Delivery," pp. 54-58.

1. The framing of an outline prior to the construction of the sermon is the most natural procedure.....A child drawing the picture of a house begins, as likely as not, with the smoke issuing from the chimney. The years teach him the normal method; foundation, framework, pillars and girders, masonry, roof and furnishings.

2. An outline is necessary to the pursuance of a coherent, progressive and convincing argument. The outline secures unity. Branching and scattering are fatal homiletic vices. Sermonizing is focalizing.....Its ultimate purpose is not to interest but to persuade; and a connected argument or train of thought is necessary to that end. "Is a crowd an army?" asks Dr. Herrick Johnson. "Is a heap of stones an arch? Is a lot of ideas a sermon? Other things being equal, a discourse is powerful in proportion to the order reigning in it. The place where you put a thought makes a mighty difference in its effectiveness.

3. The outline is necessary for conciseness. Brevity is demanded of the preaching of these days. Say what you have to say and have done with it. But that is impossible unless you have a clear understanding of what you propose to say before you undertake to say it. In a popular lecture on the Tyrolean Alps I have seen a four-hour sunrise presented in a moving picture so that the whole procession of wonders was done for in ninety seconds. In like manner the preacher is expected to present in half an hour the mental processes of many laborious days; and in such a way that his congregation shall, without seeing too clearly the modus operandi, get the full benefit of it.

4. The outline is a help to comprehension.....The outline stimulates the hearer's interest in the advancing train of thought.

The outline makes for permanence of impression. It serves as a mnemonic help. There are many hearers who carry away little or nothing except the points; and this they cannot do unless the preacher is a party to it.

IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SERMON OUTLINE WE SHOULD EMPLOY A SPECIFIC METHOD. "After a preacher has thoroughly studied his text and is ready to make his outline, he should decide upon the sermon method," Dean Fritz. The sermon method is the systematic way in which we construct the sermon outline. If the outline governs the contents, as it should, then the sermon method, as the term itself implies, influences the whole sermon. Why should we employ a specific sermon method when we construct a sermon outline? In an article entitled "The Sermon Methods," which appeared in the Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. II, p. 364 (May 1931), Dean Fritz listed the following reasons for using a specific sermon method:

1. The advantage of using any good method is that it keeps one from doing something in a haphazard way, in a hit-or-miss fashion. That in itself is reason sufficient for adopting and using a good sermon method.

2. Method in sermon work compels the preacher more thoroughly to study his text and enables him better to understand it and better to present it.

3. Method in sermon work puts variety into preaching, the thing so much needed in order to arouse and hold the attention of an audience, especially when a preacher must preach to the same people year in, year out. The same text may be treated in different ways.

4. Method in sermon work will, when once understood and used, make sermon work a greater pleasure to the preacher himself by arousing his interest in the possibilities of preaching and thus of keeping his preaching from becoming stale. It will make of one a better preacher. All this is reason sufficient why due attention ought to be given to sermon methods.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF EVERY SERMON METHOD? Every sermon method should be a way of handling, treating, using the text. A thorough study of the text should form the ground work, the basis,

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for any sermon method. The reading of the text is in itself a promise to the congregation that the preacher will preach that text. "A thorough study of the text is absolutely indispensable for good sermon work; without it the preacher cannot make a good outline," Dean Fritz. ^{The} ~~This~~ simple reason behind this sweeping statement is that a good outline is textual. As another writer has expressed it, "The derivation of the theme and outline from the portion of Scripture chosen is a most important part of the minister's homiletic task." The advantages of having a sermon method that really employs the text in the full sense of the word, are obvious. In his "Divine Art of Preaching" Pierson says,

This conception will give first inspiration to the work as essentially a Divine work; secondly, authority to the utterance as essentially a Divine utterance; thirdly, originality, and that of the highest sort, being the originality, not of invention, but of discovery, that is, an unfolding of the mind of God as discovered by the study of the sacred Scriptures; and fourthly, power, as the channel of the Spirit, and therefore communicating an influence which is essentially Divine.

HOW MANY SERMON METHODS ARE THERE? The number of sermon methods is apparently a very subjective matter, for almost every writer on homiletics suggests a different number. But if we base our classification upon the manner of treating the text, then there can be only two legitimate kinds of sermon methods. There can, of course, be more than two varieties, but all the varieties will come under one of the two species. These two species or kinds of sermon methods are commonly called the analytic and the synthetic. The expository sermon and the artistic homily, for example, are varieties of the analytic sermon and all three employ the analytic method. Every legitimate sermon method will be either analytic or synthetic. In the article on "Sermon

Methods" (quoted above) the author says,

Now, if the text is to be preached, one must preach either the thoughts expressed in the text or the thoughts deduced from the text; anything else would be outside of the text, though not necessarily outside of the Scriptures. Therefore there can be only two sermon methods: that which uses what the text states *expressis verbis* (analytic) or that which uses what is deduced from the text (synthetic).

Kleinert in his "Homiletik" has well remarked, "Niemand wird heut mehr eine homiletische Meisterschaft darin erblicken, wenn J. B. Carpzov der aeltere in seinem Hodegeticum pro collegio concionatorio (1656) die Zahl der Predigtmethoden auf hundert bringt."

WHAT IS THE PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO METHODS?

In the analytic method the preacher uses thoughts stated expressis verbis in the text, in the synthetic he uses thoughts obtained by inference or deduction. "The preacher may use either what the text says in so many words, expressis verbis, although he need not say it in the very words of the text (analytic method), or he may use what the text does not state in so many words, but what is nevertheless implied in the text and at which he arrives by way of a deduction or inference, by way of a porisma (synthetic method)," Dean Fritz. The analytic method is the direct method, the synthetic is the indirect or inferential method. The following is summarized from R. Pieper's "Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik" (pp. 83 and 84),

Worin kommen nun beide Methoden ueberein und wodurch unterscheiden sie sich von einander? Beide erklaren den Text; die analytische unmittelbar, die synthetische um etwas Anderen, naemlich um des gewahlten Themas willen, mittelbar und so weit, also zur Abhandlung des aufgestellten Themas dienlich ist. Beide behandeln ein Thema; die analytische das Thema des Textes, die synthetische das Thema der Predigt. Beide Methoden suchen die in Text enthaltenen Beweise; die analytische, soweit dieselben nach dem Sinne des Heiligen Geistes sich auf das Thema und das Ziel des Textes beziehen; die synthetische, soweit dieselben der Ausfuehrung des gewahlten Themas dienen und angewendet werden koennen.

A good many English and American homileticians* call an analytic sermon a "text-sermon" or "textual sermon," and a synthetic sermon a "subject-sermon" or "topical sermon." But since, on the one hand, also a "text-sermon" should, in the interest of unity, have a subject or theme, and since, on the other hand, also a "subject-sermon" should be textual, we cannot endorse the new terminology as an improvement over the old. As an attempt to show the difference between the two methods the new terminology misses the vital point entirely. In the analytic method the text is split up into its logical divisions or text-units and each is then explained and applied singly and in order; in the synthetic method one main application, the application of a deduction which should flow from the chief thought of the text and which may be expressed already in the theme, rules the divisions not only of the sermon, but of the text as well. Viewing the difference between the two methods from this angle was suggested by the following words, found in "Die Lehre von der Predigt" by Hering (p. 423),

Man nennt nach alterem homiletischen Sprachgebrauch jene Predigt, die nur aus dem Texte schöpft, analytische Predigt; man könnte sie ebenso wohl und vielleicht mit mehr Recht eine exegetisierende nennen, weil sie von der Auslegung des Einzelnen zur Anwendung fortschreitet; diese zweite Gattung der Predigt nennt man wegen der Verknüpfung des Schriftinhalts mit Gesichtspunkten, die nicht unmittelbar aus dem Text entnommen, sondern nach der homiletischen Absicht gewählt sind, synthetisch. Sie darf so auch aus dem Grunde heißen, weil sie in ihrer eigenen Gliederung, sei diese in Dispositionen ausgesprochen oder nicht, eine Synthesis, einen Aufbau zum Ganzen darstellt.

THE EXTENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE SERMON METHOD. It stands to reason that every sermon will contain material gained by both the analytic and the synthetic methods. "Jede Predigt soll beides sein, textual und thematisch. Mag der eine oder andre der beiden Faktoren in der Gestaltung mehr hervortreten; in jedem Fall gilt es, dass der durch Analyse, in erster Linie vom Text aus, gewonnene Inhalt durch Synthese

* This word is not listed in the dictionary.

von Thema aus zum geformten Ganzen werde," Kleinert. In other words, a sermon built on a synthetic outline will contain analytic material; and, vice versa, a sermon built on an analytic outline will contain synthetic material. This shows that the influence of the sermon method is limited; indirectly it may and should exert its influence throughout, but directly it need influence only the theme and parts of the outline. Dean Fritz in his article referred to above says,

The application of the rules laid down for the analytic and the synthetic sermon methods should, in the outline, not extend beyond the theme and the chief divisions; it should* not be extended to the subdivisions, lest we unnecessarily restrict and burden the homiletic conscience and frustrate the very purpose of homiletics, which is not an art for art's sake, but an art which is to serve the very definite purpose of expounding and applying a text of Scripture as the text demands it and the needs of the hearers require it.

We should prepare our sermons according to a recognized method, but we should ever remain master of that method and not become slave to it. The personality of the preacher should not be sacrificed to accommodate the machinery of homiletics, but should manifest itself in the use the preacher makes of that machinery. "Method in preparation imposes no fetters on the mind, but facilitates free action and develops its resources. If homiletical rules and methods ever become hurtful instead of helpful, such rules are either false or not properly understood and used. If the rules at times do seem to put restraint on the preacher, it is to secure the rights of the hearer," Fry. "The escape from the sermon method should be not negative but positive. The true way to get rid of the boniness of the sermon is not to leave out the skeleton,

* "Need" would be more accurate.

but to clothe it with flesh. True liberty in writing comes by law, and the more thoroughly the outlines of your work are laid out the more freely your sermon will flow, like an unwasted stream between its well-built banks," Phillips Brooks.

We will now consider in order the five varieties of sermon methods most frequently employed in the Lutheran Church. These five varieties are: the analytic, the expository, the artistic homily, the topical, and the synthetic.

I. THE ANALYTIC METHOD

THE SIMPLEST AND EARLIEST STAGE OF THE METHOD. In his

"Lehrbuch der Praktischen Theologie" (pp. 234 and 235) E. Chr.

Achelis says,

Welches ist das Wesen der analytischen Predigt? Die analytische Predigt bindet sich auf das engste an den Text. Die Forderung ist also, dass die Predigt textgemaess sei. Indem sie den Text entfaltet, entfaltet sie sich lediglich nach Massgabe des Textes. Wesentlich ist ihr nicht, mit einer zusammenfassenden Lehrausfuehrung oder einem Lehrsatz zu schliessen, wesentlich ist ihr auch weder das Fehlen, noch das Vorhandensein der Proposition. Die einfache Form wird gelegentlich ohne Thema und ohne Teile auskommen, --so die aelteste Form, so die heutige Bibelstunde. Das Beduerfnis der Ordnung wird die analytische Predigt zur Proposition bewegen; aber das Thema wird sich nicht ueber die Art einer Ueberschrift erheben, und die Teile werden als Ueberschriften dem Text entnommen sein und sich der Reihenfolge des Textes anschliessen.....Allein die Nachteile der rein analytischen Predigt liegen auch auf der Hand. Formell bestehen sie darin, dass die Einheitlichkeit der Rede lediglich von der zufaelligen Einheitlichkeit des Textes abhaengig ist; wesentlich ist die Einheitlichkeit der Rede so wenig, dass vollendete Analysis stattfinden kann in einem Konglomerat von heterogenen Gedanken. Die fruchtbarsten Textmomente koennen nur nach Massgabe des Raumes im Text behandelt werden, und die relativ fruchtlosen muessen nach derselben Massgabe behandelt werden. Die Hl. Schrift ist aber ja nicht geschrieben, um uns Texte fuer kirchliche Reden zu geben, die Geschichtserzaehlung wie die Lehrausfuehrung sind nach Massgabe zeitgeschichtlicher und lokaler Verhaeltnisse und Beduerfnisse geschrieben, in jenen tritt ueberdies die zeitgeschichtliche Bedingtheit Christi in den Vordergrund, nicht immer zugunsten seiner bleibenden und ewigen Heilandsuerde. Um diese der Gemeinde nahe zu bringen, ist die analytische Predigt auf die Anwendung gewiesen, wie wir auch in der reformierten Kirche, welche von jeher die analytische Predigt vorzugweise gepflegt hat, die Anwendung als einen besonderen Teil der Predigt, der aber nur in mechanischer Verbindung mit der Analyse steht, auftreten sehen.

This discussion, as Achelis himself says, deals with the analytic method in its simplest and earliest stage. It sounds rather primitive, but it is basic. The later development of the method has its source in the

endeavor to retain the advantages, and at the same time to eliminate the disadvantages, of the method as it was used in its primitive stage. The advantages flow from the intimate and detailed use of the text, the disadvantages from the fact that analytic sermons are apt to be desultory and rambling.

ALSO THE ANALYTIC SERMON SHOULD POSSESS UNITY. Unity is desirable in the sermon for the sake of clear thought, distinct impression, and so effectiveness. Hering in his "Die Lehre von der Predigt" (pp. 421 and 422) says,

Die Predigt strebt wie jede oeffentliche Rede dazu, ein Ganzes zu sein; nicht ein blosses Aggregat religioeser Aussagen, Ausrufungen, Ermahnungen, und noch weniger ein Konglomerat. Jede Gemeinde erhebt mit Strenge logische, dialektische und aesthetische Forderungen in Beziehung auf die Zusammengehorigkeit, den Fortschritt und Aufbau der Gedanken, ohne dass sie einen logischen, dialektischen und aesthetischen Kursus durchgemacht haette. Jene prinzipiellen Forderungen, die jeder oeffentlichen Rede gelten, bedeuten fuer die Predigt, dass zwischen den Gedanken innerer Zusammenhang feierndes Zeugnis, Lehre, Ermahnung dem Zweck entsprechend miteinander verbunden seien, miteinander wechseln, im rechten Verhaeltnisse zueinander und zum Ganzen stehen, vom Einheitlichen des Ganzen beherrscht werden.

Nor is it necessary that the analytic sermon should suffer from lack of unity, movement, and converging force, making the sermon a running comment or a series of disconnected talks rather than a single, harmonious, and effective growth.

EVERY TEXT WHICH IS PROPERLY CHOSEN HAS A UNIFYING THOUGHT.

"Mit Recht sagt Schleiermacher: Wenn der Text auf eine gesunde Weise gewaehlt ist, so bildet er immer eine Reihe von Gedanken, die eine Einheit ausmachen," Kleinert. The idea is to study the text until its unifying thought is discovered. Kleinert expresses it thus in his "Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik" (pp. 82 and 83),

Die analytische Predigtweise besteht also darin, dass der Text der Predigt (bei einigen Evangelien und Episteln, welche aus mehreren nicht zusammen haengenden Theilen bestehen, auch nur ein Theil des Textes, der dann den eigentlichen Predigttext bildet) nach dem Scopus des Schreibers in natuerlicher ordentlicher Weise erkluert und angewendet wird. Bei Entwerfung einer analytischen Predigt ist stets der Scopus aufzufinden und im Thema auszudruecken; die erste Frage muss lauten: Wovon handelt der Text?

The unifying thought of the text is sometimes called the "chief thought of the text" and as a rule it is a specific thought, which distinguishes the text containing it from the other texts in the Bible which treat the same subject.

HOW IS THE UNIFYING THOUGHT FOUND AND HOW IS IT THEN USED?

Each text contains a number of thoughts. Some of these thoughts are more important than others. We study the text to find the main thoughts and then we partition the text accordingly. The verse divisions are ignored. After we have thus divided the text into units, we find the leading thought of each text unit. Next we fuse the leading thoughts of the various units into one thought and this thought then is the unifying thought. This process requires meditation and concentration. Sometimes the unifying thought is discovered quickly, sometimes not. In the latter case it may flash into the mind while one is engaged in an activity which is altogether foreign to the finding of a unifying thought. If it doesn't, then the only alternative is more meditation and concentration! The unifying thought of the text is made the unifying thought of the sermon. It may be still unformulated, but it becomes the chief, specific thought of the message. From this unifying thought we formulate our theme. "The theme is the formulated unity of the text," Rev. To get a practical theme* we fuse together

*A practical theme is not necessarily synthetic, it is synthetic only if it is based on a deduction.

the unifying thought of the text and the needs of the people. After the theme is formulated, we formulate the head of each partition or text-unit in accordance with its chief thought and in accordance with the wording of the theme. Thus the various parts of the sermon are founded upon the various parts of the text. "Wer analytisch predigen will, muss den Text abteilen, und die Teile des Textes sind die Teile der Predigt," Mosheim. These are the words of Lenski, taken from his book entitled "The Sermon, its homiletical construction" (p.93), "There are two vital features which distinguish an analytical outline; the first is, that the unity of the text is made the unity of the sermon.....The second distinguishing feature of an analytical outline is, that the parts of the text which constitute its unity are used in the same way and in the same order to constitute the parts of the sermon under the theme."

BROADUS DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN TWO VARIETIES OF ANALYTIC SERMONS, EACH HAVING ITS OWN VARIETY OF UNITY. The following is summarized from his "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons" (pp. 311-315),

Text-sermons include two distinct varieties, those which present a single subject, and those which discuss several subjects.

(1) A single subject is drawn from the text, and stated, whether formally or informally, and then is discussed under such divisions as the text furnishes. The divisions thus drawn from the text, while not commonly forming a complete analysis of the subject in itself considered, must yet be so related to the subject and to each other, that they together form a structure, a symmetrical whole. Otherwise the discourse is felt to be incomplete and fragmentary. Sometimes the divisions of the text coincide with a complete logical division of the subject itself, but such cases are rare.

(2) In other text-sermons, there is not one definite and comprehensive subject, but several topics presented by the text are successively treated. These, though they do not admit of being combined into one, ought to have such a mutual relation as to give the discourse unity. The unity may be that of subject or of person or of place, provided in the latter cases there be also some internal connection

so that all may blend in the general effect of the discourse. Thus topics apparently so diverse as suicide, ingratitude, avarice, and remorse, might all be treated in a sermon on Judas, because they not only pertain to the one person, but were in his case intimately connected, as will be apparent from stating them in a different order, avarice, ingratitude, remorse, suicide. Such an example shows that it is allowable to go quite far in this direction: but as a rule, we ought to have as close an internal relation among the topics of the discourse as possible.

The distinction, however, is misleading. A sermon either does or does not have unity, Tertium non datur. How can unity of person or of place be any different than unity of subject and still be unity at all? In the example adduced by Broadus the unifying thought is not Judas, but the downward course of life of unchecked sin. If this unifying thought is formulated into a logical proposition which serves as the basis of the theme* and governs the whole discourse, e.g., "One sin which is not checked leads to others which are worse," then the discourse may treat avarice, ingratitude, remorse (merely worldly sorrow), and suicide in order and yet have real unity. If the suggestions regarding the unifying thought are heeded, the disadvantages of the analytic method are eliminated, while its advantages centering around the fact that it makes a detailed use of the text may be retained.

SOME OBJECT THAT ADHERENCE TO THE TEXT CRAMPS THE POWERS OF SPEECH AND LIMITS THE POWERS OF THE MIND. This objection fades into insignificance when we realize that the preacher is God's ambassador. The text is the message, and the messenger is bound to give it as he received it, not adding to or taking from its essential truth.

* The logical proposition which serves as the basis of the theme may be expressed either logically or rhetorically in the theme itself.

Hoppin very aptly remarks,

The preacher is, first of all, an interpreter--he is a pure medium. He is not to bring the human thought, the human philosophy, between the heart and the divine word. His own mind is to work upon the original truth, to mould it into teaching forms, to methodize its matter into abstract principles of thought it may be, but mainly he is to interpret it simply and spiritually to men, to render it pure to the people, that they may feed upon the bread of life, so that to preach primarily from a system of theology instead of primarily from the Word and Spirit of God is, we cannot but think, a partial and one-sided view.

Hoppin's words apply very fittingly also to the liberal preacher of today, who denies the verbal inspiration and who preaches primarily from ever-changing human opinion instead of from the Word of God.

The text of Scripture should limit the subject of the sermon and the preacher. That is why we have texts. This is not a disadvantage, but an advantage. It not only safeguards the rights of the hearer, but it is also a distinct advantage to the preacher himself. Every pulpit which is filled by a man who diligently studies his text testifies to a larger freedom and richer variety than could come from the choice of a single mind. Hoyt in "The Work of Preaching" (pp.125 and 126) sings this psalm of praise to the strict adherence to the text,

The text promotes variety in preaching. Such a result flows from the nature of the Scriptures. A book or books with such a history, slowly gathered through the centuries by so many different minds,--a world-history of religious feelings, motives, conditions, then finally the Gospel of the Son of Man, and the practical application of its truths to manifold conditions,--here truly is heavenly riches. No mind or group of minds could originate or set in such suggestive and subtle combinations the truths of religion.

To this Pattison adds, "Textual preaching is to be commended because he who conscientiously practices it is almost * certain to find in it variety of subject, freshness of treatment, and richness of resource; as a rule*, the closer the preacher keeps to the word and the spirit of

* These statements should be unqualified.

his message, the ampler becomes his treasury of texts and themes," *The Making of the Sermon*, p. 74.

ADHERENCE TO THE TEXT GIVES NOT ONLY GREATER VARIETY, BUT ALSO GREATER AUTHORITY THAN THE PREACHER HIMSELF CAN MUSTER. A Scripture passage honestly followed gives an authority to the simplest speech not gained by mere reason or eloquence or prominence of the preacher regardless of how great these gifts and qualities may be. The proper use of the text makes the sermon Biblical and gives to its sentiments the authority of revealed truth. "Der Wert der analytischen Predigt deckt sich mit dem Wert der Heiligen Schrift fuer die Gemeinde," Achelis. "Die analytische Predigt ist die eindringlichste, weil bei ihr nicht blos der Hauptsatz an den Text sich anschliesst, um nachher nach den in ihm selbst liegenden Teilungsgruenden behandelt zu werden, sondern jeder Gedanke aus dem Bibelworte abgeleitet wird, und die ganze Predigt von dem biblischen Texte durchwachsen ist," Gustav Baur. The analytic method is the most impressive and the most authoritative because its purpose is to present not the preacher's fallible opinions, but God's infallible truths. The sermon has authority over men just in the proportion in which it is not the word of the preacher, but the word of God.

ADHERENCE TO THE TEXT ALSO GIVES THE SERMON A POPULAR APPEAL. People like to hear the Scriptures explained, and "the man mighty in the Scriptures will not lack for a congregation to preach to if he is reasonably well endowed for his work in other ways," Knott. People like to hear familiar texts explained in such a way that truths which are apt to be overlooked in a cursory reading or truths which do not lie on the surface are brought to light. Sermons which adhere to the

text have popular appeal also because they are easily remembered.* All the main points are in the text. If the various heads of the discourse are based on the various parts or divisions of the text, they can be readily retained and the substance of the sermon with them. The text helps the memory to carry away and to keep ready for spiritual use the thoughts of the sermon. Sermons which adhere to the text will draw the people back to hear more and they will also create and stimulate interest among the laity for reading and studying the Scriptures. The people who most regularly hear the Scriptures read, explained, and taught from the pulpit, will be the most diligent students of the Bible in their homes.

THE DANGERS OF THE ANALYTIC METHOD. The dangers of the analytic method come from careless, uncritical dealing with Scripture. A surface view may be given in place of the deeper, spiritual relation. There may be an arbitrary and mechanical cutting up of the text without regard to its real meaning. Another danger of the analytic method is that it is apt to lack unity and coherence, thus making the sermon a running comment or a series of disconnected talks rather than a single, harmonious, and effective whole.

* This fact applies not only to the hearer, but also to the preacher; analytic sermons, when properly worked out, are easy to memorize and they are comparatively easy to construct.

II. THE HOMILY METHOD

EARLY HISTORY OF THE HOMILY. Regarding the origin and early development of the homily Achelis in his "Lehrbuch der Praktischen Theologie" (p.234) says,

Die aelteste Form der Predigt ist die Homilie. Was bezeichnet der Name? Nichts ueber Analysis oder Synthesis sagt er aus, man dachte weder an das eine noch an das andere, aber daran dachte man, zu den Bruedern bruederlich ueber die Μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ zu reden. Das ist der Grundcharakter aller Gemeindepredigt bis heute geblieben; mit der Form der Rede hat das an und fuer sich nichts zu tun.--Seit dem Ende des 2. Jahrhunderts trat die Kirche in eine Entwicklung ein, in welcher sie fuer ihren Bestand das grosste Gewicht auf die apostolische Tradition, die apostolischen Schriften legen musste. Ein Neues Testament trat dem Alten zur Seite, und die Kirche legte Wert auf den Nachweis, dass das Gemeindelieben, die gesunde Lehre usw. als apostolisch und echt aus der literarischen Quelle der Offenbarung Gottes nachgewiesen werde. So nahm die Homilie die bestimmte Textgrundlage an und bewegte sich in analytischer Form und Methode. An und fuer sich und begrifflich hat aber die Analysis mit der Homilie nichts zu tun; als geschichtliches Accidens hat sich die analytische Form mit der Homilie verbunden und diese in die analytische Predigt gewandelt.

That the homily originally had no connection with the analytic sermon method as we know it today will be readily seen when we examine its etymology. The word ὄμιλος in classical Greek signified a crowd or assembly of people; in early Christian usage it came to represent an assembly for worship. The corresponding verb, ὀμιλέω, signifies to converse familiarly, to communicate freely. It is used in this sense in the New Testament; e. g., Luke 24,14: And they talked together of all these things which had happened; of, also Luke 24,15; Acts 20,11; 1 Cor. 15,33. The addresses made to Christian

assemblies were denominated ὁμιλίαι or homilies. "For a long period in the early Church the term homily was applied to ordinary Christian discourses; its derivation from ὁμιλέω, to converse familiarly, indicates the great freedom and plainness used by early Christian preachers in distinction from the arts and ornaments of the rhetoricians," Kidder. Originally the homily was a simple, informal exposition or continuous explanation of a Scripture lesson which had been read in the sacred assembly.*¹ It consisted almost entirely of explanation and had little of the character of a formal oration. The word was transferred to the Latin, becoming homilia, and with scarcely any variation in form it has been adopted in all modern languages which have a Christian literature. The generic term homiletics grow out of the same root. The term homily was used in both the Eastern (ὁμιλία) and in the Western Churches (homilia), where it was associated with the discourses of the fathers, both Greek and Latin. The earliest*² homilies extant today are those of Origen and the "Clementine homilies," the latter being of later date. The homilies of Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Augustine, Athanasius, Gregory the Great, and other fathers, are strictly expositions of Scripture.

THE HOMILY IN THE MIDDLE AGES. In the Middle Ages and during an early period of the Reformation many of the clergy were illiterate, and still more were unable to write suitable sermons for their congregations. To remedy this appalling situation collections of homilies

*¹It is said that the first ecclesiastic who preached from a text was Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, about 1204; not till after the fifteenth century were texts universally in use among preachers.

*²The "Second Epistle of Clement," a homily, probably originated 120-140 A.D.

for the whole church year were widely circulated among the clergy. Such a collection was called a Homiliarium.*¹ The selections were made chiefly from the ancient Church Fathers and were adapted for reading in the public service. Wherever clergymen were too ignorant to make acceptable sermons of their own the homily for the day was read from the book. A well known example of such a collection of homilies is the Homiliarium*² of Charlemagne, which was not merely prepared by the order of that emperor, but was examined by him sheet by sheet as it was prepared by Alcuin and Paulus Diaconus, two leading divines of the day. The full title of this work, as translated from the Latin, reads as follows,

Homilies or Sermons; or, Addresses to the People from the most renowned Doctors of the Church, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Origen, Chrysostom, and Bede; arranged in this order by Alcuin, a priest, by order of the Roman Emperor Charles Magnus, by whom also it was revised.

The "Festivale" or "Liber Festivalis" was also such a collection; it was printed by Caxton in 1482. The "Book of Homilies" published by the authority of the Established Church of England*² during the reigns of Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth is also a familiar example. Even in this strictly ecclesiastical and technical use of the word the idea of the homily remains chiefly that of exposition.

THE ARTISTICALLY CONSTRUCTED HOMILY. Since the Reformation the homily has developed two distinct forms. The one is called the expository sermon, the other the artistic homily or "Kunsthomilie."

*¹ Both Homiliarium and Homiliarum are used.

*² The first part, published in 1547, contained twelve homilies, four of which were by Archbishop Cramer and the second part, published in 1563, contained twenty homilies, nine of which were by Jewel; one more homily was added in 1571 by convocation.

The expository method is used chiefly in British and American pulpits; the "Kunsthomilie," as its name implies, is a German product. The expository method will be treated subsequently in a separate chapter.

Regarding the Kunsthomilie Pieper in his "Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik" (pp. 79 and 80) says,

Die Kunsthomilie haelt sich an einen leitenden Hauptgedanken, sie hat ein "Thema im inneren Sinne," zu dem alles im Texte Gegebene in Beziehung gebracht wird. Selbstverstaendlich muss dieser leitende Hauptgedanke aus dem Texte entnommen sein, der aber nicht, wie bei der analytischen Predigt, der Scopus desselben zu sein braucht, denn an diesen ist die Homilie in ihrer freieren Behandlung nicht gebunden. Diese Art der Homilie unterscheidet sich daher von der analytischen Predigt keineswegs, wie oft irrthuemlich angenommen wird, dadurch, dass diese ein Thema habe, jene aber nicht, sondern vielmehr nur in der Weise, dass in der analytischen Predigt der in ein Thema gefasste Scopus des Textes an die Spitze gestellt, in der Homilie hingegen der leitende Hauptgedanke in kurzen zusammenfassenden Worten am Schluss ausgesprochen wird; dass in der analytischen Predigt das vorangestellte Thema aufgeloeset, zergliedert, und dadurch dem Zuhorer zum Verstaendniss gebracht, in der Homilie aber dieser von dem Prediger Schritt fuer Schritt weiter gefuehrt wird, bis ihm am Schluss der Hauptgedanke in aller Klarheit vor Augen tritt.

Elsewhere (p.86) Pieper says, "Bei der Homilie wird das Thema nicht in bestimmten Worten fixirt und an die Spitze gestellt, sondern tritt, mehr als Ergebniss, an den Schluss." Grotfend,* commenting on the outline of one of his homilies, says,

Wenn nun diese Saetze aus dem Abschnitte abgeleitet und sogleich mit einzelnen Belehrungen, Ermahnungen, Warnungen und Beobachtungen durchflochten werden: so wird die Form freier, und das, was wohl eine Predigt in strengerer Form werden koennte, wird zur Homilie. Die freiere Form der Homilie scheint auch zu fordern, dass die Abtheilungen nicht markirt und hervorgehoben werden, wie in den Predigten wohl geschieht, sondern dass sie unvermerkt an einander gekettet werden, als ob sich die Bemerkungen von selbst angeboten haetten. Aus eben diesem Grunde wird auch der Hauptsatz nicht angekuendigt, sondern er scheint sich nach und nach von selbst zu ergeben.

These quotations indicate quite clearly what the form of the Kunsthomilie should be.

* Quoted by Pieper, p. 81

The homily is not a mere Bible-talk, piecemeal exposition, or running commentary on the text with only scattered applications; it is a unified, expository, practical sermon, a real work of art.* The homily does not have a strict, well-formulated theme, nor does it have definitely-formulated parts. Yet it has unity. The development is not according to a fundamentum dividendi, but according to a gradual progression of thought, which rises higher and higher with every paragraph. The homily should be climactic, so that the nearer to the end, the higher the preacher rises. The best texts for homilies, therefore, are such as permit a series of natural steps, one rising above the other till the top is reached. These are far better than texts which seem to move along only on a horizontal line of thought. The great majority of texts are altogether unsuitable for homilies, and some that may do for a homily do better still for analysis or synthesis. In the conclusion we gather up into a unity the truths discussed; this then forms the climax or goal of the sermon and is called the "final theme." Every part of the homily should build up toward this climax or final theme. Such a final theme is not specifically formulated. In oratorical fashion the yield of the entire discussion is presented to the congregation. The final theme should be the governing thought throughout and should embody a specific, practical objective. The preacher, of course, knows beforehand what conclusion or final theme he will reach, but he keeps the hearers in suspense.

* The homily is not a refuge for the lazy preacher, for it requires much more work than any other type of sermon with the possible exception of the highly developed synthetic sermon.

"The freedom in constructing a homily is not in the theme, save as to its formulation, but in the presentation of the parts, including even their formulation," Lenski.

The structure itself is quite simple. We divide the text into units, grouping the thoughts that belong together. First we give a rapid exposition of a unit and then by a very clear, clever transition swing from the exposition into a longer paragraph of application. Then without a break we go into the exposition of the next unit, etc. The outline is simply exposition, application, exposition, application, etc. The exposition is rapid, while the application is more deliberate. In this way we treat the text-units one after another in their natural order. Homilies all follow this same natural course. Hence we find no synthetical homilies as distinguished from analytical ones. The transitions are especially important in the homily. Good transitions make for coherence and unity. In order to be good, therefore, the homily requires among other things also skillful transitions. It will be readily seen that a homily permits more parts than other sermon types. But this privilege should not be abused; one should not become too minute. It would be a serious mistake to lose oneself in detail. Thus we should not even attempt to elucidate every concept in a text, explain every implication, or follow every application.

"When properly worked out, the homily form has certain distinct advantages over the ordinary analytic sermon: it stimulates to keener intellectual cooperation, presents the several truths in a climax, and thus renders the hearer more ready to accept and apply to himself the conclusion," Reu. Regarding the advantages of the Kunsthomilie Hueffel (quoted by Pieper, p. 81) says,

Die Homilie ist mehr Bibelauslegung und bewirkt eben darum eine groessere Bekanntschaft mit der heiligen Schrift, wenigstens fuehrt sie tiefer in die speciellern Situationen derselben; die Homilie erregt ferner in der Regel durch die Mannigfaltigkeit mehr Interesse fuer die Sache, waehrend die synthetische Predigt in ihrer strengen Einheit nicht selten ermuedet; die Homilie fuehrt den Prediger, wie den Zuhoeerer, mehr in das reine, achte, biblische Christentum und entfernt daher von so vielen massigen Fragen und Dingen der Schule.....; die Homilie wirkt endlich kraeftiger auf das Leben, weil sie specieller die einzelnen Seiten desselben beruehrt; denn da ihre eignenlichen Texte Geschichte und Parabel sind, die sich so leicht in die Geschichte des eigenen Lebens verwandeln lassen, so ist alles naeher gelegt und eben darum wirksemer. Von diesen Seiten moechte also die Homilie den Vorzug vor der synthetischen Predigt verdienen.

The homily offers unusual opportunities to cultivate and use the art of good description, an art which is sadly neglected by many preachers.

Many a Biblical scene can be painted in our sermons, yet how few the preachers that ever do paint them! The homily is not merely descriptive matter to be sure, but good description shot through with significance for the hearer is one of the features that makes the homily very effective. Good description pictures the truths of the text vividly before the mind's eye and stirs the imagination and emotions not only of the preacher, but also of the hearer. The following excerpt from a homily by Julius Mueller on Matt. 14, 24-33 will illustrate some of the characteristic features of the Kunsthomilie. Note especially the exposition with its vivid description, the practical application, the clever transitions, the highly rhetorical and oratorical style.

Auf dem See Genesaret gewahren wir in dunkler Nacht ein Schiff; es traegt eine Gesellschaft, die uns wohl bekannt ist; die Juenger Jesu sind es, denen ihr Meister am Abende vorher befohlen hat, allein ueber den See zu fahren. Und ist es nicht, als waere ihnen Alles zuwider, wenn sie von ihm verlassen sind? Der See ist aufgereggt von einem heftigen Winde, der ihnen entgegenkommt; schon kaempfen sie viele Stunden mit den Wogen, und noch befinden sie sich in der Mitte des Sees, den sie sonst gewiss oft in weniger als einer Stunde durchschnitten haben.

Wer unter uns, gel. Fr., wollte verkennen, dass das sturmisch wogende Meer das treffendste Bild unsrer Zeit ist, das an tiefer und allgemeiner Aufregung kaum irgend ein Zeitalter in der Geschichte des menschlichen Geschlechts gleich kommt? Es handelt sich hier nicht mehr um den Streit einzelner Meinungen und Ansichten, der freilich immer geflammt hat; die höchsten Grundsätze, deren Gegensatz seine Wurzeln bis in die innersten Tiefen des menschlichen Geistes hinabsenkt, sind gegen einander in die Schranken getreten zu einem unversöhnlichen Kampfe, der nun schon seit mehreren Jahrzehnten wüthet. Zwar eine Zeitlang schien es, als wäre der Sturm, wenigstens im bürgerlichen Leben der Völker, beschwichtigt; doch es war nur ein trügerischer Schein, gleich jener ängstlichen Stille, welche auf dem Meere zuweilen das Toben des Sturmes auf Augenblicke unterbricht, als wollten die Elemente Kraft sammeln zu verdoppeltem Ungestüm; während die Oberfläche ruhte, wogte und flutete es in der Tiefe; und die wilden Bewegungen, die leidenschaftlichen Kämpfe, die in unsern Tagen losgebrochen sind, hat nicht die nachstvergangene Zeit sie in ihrem Schosse getragen und genährt? -- Und wenn wir nun um uns schauen, wozu einen Anblick bietet uns die Gegenwart dar! Kämpft nicht fast überall Verwirrung mit Verwirrung, Irrthum mit Irrthum, Selbstsucht mit Selbstsucht? Droht nicht von allen Seiten Unheil und Verderben? Scheinen nicht die Mächte des Abgrundes entfesselt zu sein, um die Menschen in unversöhnlichem Hass und Streit gegen einander zu entzünden? O, m. Fr., verhehlen wir uns nichts: dicke Finsterniss liegt ueber unsrer irdischen Zukunft, so dass kein menschliches Auge sie zu erkennen vermag; das Schiff unsers Lebens, seiner Ruhe und seines Gluecks, es ist jeden Augenblick in Gefahr, von den Wellen verschlungen oder an unbekanntem Klippen zertruemert zu werden.

Doch dort ueber dem See Genesareth beginnt die Finsterniss dem nahenden Lichte zu weichen; die vierte Nachtwache ist da; der Tag graut; die reizenden Hoehenzuege, die gegen Abend den See umkraenzen, treten schon heller hervor, während die schroffen Felsenmassen gegen Morgen desto dunkler erscheinen; bald werden die ersten Strahlen der Morgenroethe ueber den See dahingleiten: da erscheint ploetzlich mit der Daemmerung zugleich Er, der erfahnte Meister, auf dem Meere wandelnd. Wunderbarer Anblick! Die bewegliche Welle traegt seinen Fuss wie festes Land; die empoerten Wogen erkennen staunend ihren maechtigen Gebieter, denselben, der ihnen einst Schweigen gebot, und sie schwiegen. Festen und sichern Schritts wandelt er dahin auf dem fluessigen Element, dem bedraengten Nachen zu; wohl moegen die sich thuermenden Wogen ihm zuweilen auf einen Augenblick den Blicken seiner Juenger entziehen; aber den Pfad zu seinem Ziele koennen sie ihm nicht versperren.

Was damals geschah, das geschieht noch heute, versammelte Christen. Ueber die schaumenden Wogen des geistigen Lebens, die uns bange machen, wandelt er ruhig als ihr Herr und Geb'eter; sie moegen sich gegen ihn empooeren, aber sie koennen ihn nicht ueberwaeltigen; sie moegen ihn zuweilen den Blicken der Seinen entziehen, aber sie koennen seinen Gang nicht hammen; sie muessen ihn zuletzt als ihren

Meister erkennen und seinem Willen dienen. Seht ihr ihn nicht mächtig hindurchschreiten durch ihr Gedränge? Weicht nicht die Finsterniss zurück vor seinem Nahen? Begleitet ihn nicht ein dämmernder Schein, Strahlen der Morgenroethe, die den kommenden Tag verkünden? Sind nicht mitten in dieser stürmischen Zeit tausend und aber tausend Herzen geweckt worden aus tiefem Schlafe, haben ihn erkannt als den Weg zum Vater, als die Wahrheit und das Leben.

III. THE EXPOSITORY METHOD

THE FORM OF THE EXPOSITORY SERMON. Since the Reformation the homily has developed two distinct forms: the expository sermon, which is used chiefly in English and American pulpits; and the artistic homily, or Kunsthomilie, which is a distinctly German product. The artistic homily was treated in the previous chapter; we will now consider the other form, the expository sermon. German homileticians have written very little about the expository method. The use of this method in Germany is very limited. Pieper, showing American influence, recognizes the method in his "Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik," but treats it only briefly. He says, (p.79),

Aber es koennen wieder zwei Arten der Homilie unterschieden werden. Die eine*, welche die laxere oder freiere genannt werden kann, hat weiter keinen leitenden Gedanken, als denjenigen, welcher sich in dem zu erklarenden Text findet, welcher Wort fuer Wort, oder Satz fuer Satz nach seinen Umstaenden und Beziehungen erkluert wird, und die darin enthaltenen Lehren herausgehoben und nach Beduerfniss auf die Zuhoeerer angewendet werden. Diese Art der Homilie ist in ihrer Form einer Katechese aehnlich und pflegt in den sogenannten Bibelstunden angewendet zu werden. Sie hat besonders den Zweck, die Zuhoeerer in die Schrift einzufuehren und mit derselben recht bekannt zu machen.

"An expository discourse may be defined as one which is occupied mainly, or at any rate very largely, with the exposition of Scripture," Broadus. The form of the expository sermon is quite simple. "The expository method consists in the presentation, explanation, and

* Die andere Art der Homilie ist die Kunsthomilie.

application of more or less extended parts of Scripture," Fry.

The expository sermon should be chiefly exposition, but because it should also be a sermon in the true sense of the word, it should blend application in with the exposition. The expository sermon is not highly oratorical, yet it should have enough oratorical arrangement and adaptation to distinguish it from a mere commentary or exegetical essay. It should never descend into a formless discourse without unity, completeness, or logical and rhetorical movement.

The aim of the expository method is to instruct the hearer by unfolding to him the meaning of a connected portion of Scripture. This Scripture selection may deal with doctrine or precept, with history or biography. We may take an epistle, for example, and treat it consecutively in a series of discourses, presenting and applying the leading thoughts of the various chapters or sections. The subject matter in that case would deal mainly with doctrine and precept.

Model examples of this class of expository discourse are Luther on Galatians and Robertson on Corinthians. Seiss on Leviticus is also an excellent example of this class. Or instead of the continuous exposition of such a book of the Bible we may select a prominent series of events and use that as the basis of our discourses; e. g., the history of the antediluvian world, the journey of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, the planting of the Christian Church as given in the book of Acts. We may also build a series of expository sermons around a prominent character of the Bible; e. g., Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Esther, Moses, David, Elijah, Paul, Peter. When the selected Scripture section deals with history or biography, the expository sermon built upon it enjoys the great advantage of being based on a story, which

in itself secures attention and interest from the beginning; and if the sermon is wisely arranged and developed, it will hold the attention and interest of the hearer to the close. Many parts of the Bible are history and biography, and the expository method is, no doubt, the best way to bring out the meaning and lessons of such parts and to impress* them upon the minds and hearts of the congregation in a way that they will not soon be forgotten.

The expository method is especially suitable for evening services, but it should also be used occasionally for the Sunday morning service. Before the Sunday-school and the Bible-class were well-established institutions in the Church, one of the foremost duties of the preacher was the exposition of larger portions of Scripture. Under the present arrangement the ministry is relieved of this particular duty to a considerable extent. Nevertheless the preacher should occasionally deliver also on Sunday mornings an elaborate expository sermon, which not only does the ordinary work of a sermon of instructing, convincing, and moving, but which also serves as a guide and model for the teacher of the Sunday-school and the Bible-class. The pastor can do much in this way toward elevating the standard of Sunday-school and Bible-class instruction in the congregation.

THE PRIME REQUISITE OF AN EFFECTIVE EXPOSITORY SERMON IS UNITY.

Unity in a discourse is necessary to instruction, to conviction, and to persuasion. The expository method is really the analytic method applied to the peculiar features which arise when the text is an

* This method, like the artistic homily method, gives the preacher the opportunity to acquire and cultivate the art of good description.

extended portion of Scripture. The rule that analytic sermons should possess unity holds good also in the case of expository sermons, which are but a kind of analytic sermons. In discussing the analytic method we maintained that every text which is properly chosen has a unifying thought. This should be kept in mind especially when we select the text for an expository sermon. "If a text deals with a number of subjects it is not suitable for the basis of a sermon unless the subjects can be so related as to be brought into an intelligible unity; and as all portions of the Bible 'make sense', few texts there are (if any) in which such unity cannot be found, even though it may mean some study and meditation to discover the principle of synthesis in each case," Garvie. The unifying thought of the passage to be expounded should be the unifying thought of the exposition itself. With this unifying thought should be tied up a specific, practical objective, so that there is also unity of aim amidst the variety of materials.

The expository sermon, moreover, should give an exact representation of the thought as it lies in the verses selected for the exposition. The course of the thought in the text, not the mere words, should be followed and developed. It is desirable that even the order of the main thoughts in the text should be the order of the main thoughts in the exposition. And main thoughts there should be! Accordingly the expository sermon should have not only unity, but structure as well. "It should have a beginning, middle, and end," Shedd. "By structure we mean that the materials which the sermonizer has selected from the passage are to be put together in such a way that the one shall agree with the other, and all proceed together toward

the conclusion," Breed. There should be a definite proposition which gives point to the discussion and the various parts of the sermon should all contribute to the elucidation of that proposition. Kern goes so far as to say that the expository sermon should have not only a distinctly stated proposition, but also distinctly stated divisions; "its sole distinctive feature is that the subject-matter is predominantly exegetical." Without such unity and logical structure the sermon will be merely a collection of disjointed remarks, some upon one expression, some upon another, and instead of the preacher producing one sermon he will find that he has produced a number of little sermons, brought together in a mechanical or artificial way.

Without such unity and logical structure the expository method degenerates into a mere stringing together of short explanations, without recognizing the deeper connections of parts, the law of combination, the hidden root of doctrine, which Achelis calls "der Gedankenserv, die Goldader des Textes, der den Text beherrschende Grundgedanke." Without such unity and logical structure the taste of enlightened hearers will not be satisfied, and even the uncultivated, though they may not know why, will be far less deeply impressed.

THE PROPER HANDLING OF DETAILS IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN UNITY AND LOGICAL STRUCTURE. Some details are indispensable. No part of the text of which any use is made in the sermon should be left in darkness. But there is a good deal of commenting in the pulpit that is homiletically useless. Nothing is good out of its place. Therefore we should introduce into the sermon only such details and only so many as are necessary for the purpose in hand--no others and no more. Very precious is the time in the pulpit; why devote any of it to

that which diverts or wearies the attention instead of promoting the object before us? The details are like a pile of stones dumped down before a mason who is engaged in erecting a wall. He chooses his material stone by stone, selecting it with reference to the place in which he is to put it; then he trims it, fits it, and settles it in position. To secure unity and logical structure the preacher does just what the mason does. He selects the material which is suited to his subject and rejects the rest. In doing so he does not do violence to Scripture. He is not producing a commentary which treats every detail. He is producing a sermon upon a definite subject (which is the main thought of the text); and in order to give a clear and emphatic presentation of this subject, he chooses only that which is related to it. Evidently, then, the preliminary processes in exegesis-- the successive steps by which we have reached our conclusion as to the meaning of the text--are no proper part of the sermon. The pulpit is not the study-table. It is the place not for prosecuting exegetical inquiries, but only for announcing their results. Why refer to the ancient manuscripts or the parallel passages that we may have examined, or to the views of various "authorities"? Why set forth an elaborate array of reasons for the interpretation which we have to offer regarding a minute detail? "Put the well-baked loaf on the table, and give no account of the buying or the baking," Kern. "Common minds like to see good work when it is done, but they dislike the labor of doing it themselves, and the tedium of standing by to see how others do it," Hoppin. Even though all the details in the passage will not be employed, yet all of them should be studied. If the sermonizer does not carefully investigate all the details, how can

he properly select and group them? Whether a term is peculiar or commonplace, whether it is difficult or easy has no bearing whatsoever on its importance or unimportance for the passage under consideration. All the details should be studied, yet no detail should be expounded and elaborated, however important in itself, if it does not enforce and illuminate the central idea. "Unless one has the selective faculty, the genius to perceive the essential elements of a narrative or an argument, together with the courage to reject all material, no matter how attractive, which does not lift the sermon forward, he had better stick to texts of limited area" is the way one writer has expressed it.

Nor should there be too many details. There is great danger of overcrowding the expository sermon with so many different thoughts and points that the hearer can follow only with great difficulty. The preacher may be true to his text and his exposition may be entirely Scriptural although many of the details are left untouched. The very multiplication of details impairs the force and weight of the argument. Guibert de Nogent, an abbot who died in 1124, said, "The preacher should above all things be short; how much better it is that a few things should be heard with pleasure and retained, than that out of a multitude nothing should be carried away!" Another warning well worth following is this: don't raise questions that you cannot answer. Don't make the difficulties of the passage, if there are any, the more obscure. Don't attempt an explanation merely because of a personal interest in the matter; the interest of the people should be the first consideration. But if there are difficulties the discussion of which cannot well be avoided, then offer and explain

only the solution which seems best to you, so that the people do not go away in confusion and doubt. The end of expository preaching is that of any other kind of preaching, viz., practical helpfulness. People cannot be converted and edified by means of unsolved difficulties.

A generous use may be made of parallel passages in an expository sermon. They should be more frequently employed in expository preaching than in other kinds, just because it is expository. The best exposition is the Bible itself. But parallel passages should be carefully selected. They should be well digested, thoroughly assimilated, and then carefully incorporated in the sermon. But the preacher should not at any time depart from the passage with which he is engaged and proceed to preach, as it were, a little sermon upon the parallel passage.

ADVANTAGES OF THE EXPOSITORY METHOD. This method of preaching tends to bring out the whole counsel of God. It affords the opportunity to speak on subjects which otherwise would intentionally or might unintentionally be omitted or neglected. It does more than afford the opportunity to speak on such subjects, it practically compels the preacher to do so. Many preachers have a few favorite doctrines and precepts which they treat regularly in their ever unvarying round of a few subjects of discourse. In such cases the people get only that particular view of the great system of Bible truth which their pastor takes. This situation can be easily remedied if the preacher will but employ the expository method with reasonable frequency. The preacher himself will be surprised to see what a wealth and diversity of topics will come up for discussion when he employs the expository method. "A thousand subtle suggestions

and a thousand minute points of human experience, not large enough for the elaborate discussion of the sermon, and yet like little screws in a watch, indispensable to the right action of the machinery of life, can be touched and turned to advantage in expository preaching," Henry Ward Beecher.

Occasionally the preacher desires to speak on a subject, but hesitates to do so because of its delicate nature. There are many such delicate subjects, which it would be inadvisable to treat topically because of the prejudice of the people or because of the excitement of the times. The expository method enables the preacher to present and to apply the necessary truths pertaining to such subjects, for the expository method gives the preacher license to present in their order, and with their proper applications, all the truths contained in the selected portion of Scripture. The Bible discusses all sides of human life and experience, all sorts of character, and all forms of opinion and therefore the preacher who employs the expository method will, in the course of time, have ample opportunity to treat every kind of evil and error, and he can do so without subjecting himself to the invidious suspicion of aiming his remarks at individuals. The expository method enables the preacher to treat delicate subjects with profit for the people without the danger that his motives will be misrepresented.

The expository method is conducive to a better knowledge of the Scriptures in their connection and a knowledge of the Scriptures in their connection is conducive to a better and more complete understanding of them. "We cannot expect to deliver much of the teachings

of Holy Scripture by picking out verse by verse, and holding these up at random; the process resembles too closely that of showing the house by exhibiting separate bricks," Spurgeon. Surely it is not reasonable to look upon the Bible merely as a casket of gems gathered with little regard to any law of combinations, each gem being perfect in itself so that the preacher should exhibit it without reference to its neighbor. What other literature would be subjected to such mistreatment? If preachers made more frequent use of the expository method, they would be less apt to misuse and misapply individual texts, they would be less apt to take them out of their right relation and to give them a different sense than that intended originally by the sacred writer.

The expository method drives the preacher into a systematic study of the Bible. It makes him "mighty in the Scripture" and the Sword of the Spirit becomes his familiar and effective weapon. The Biblical idea of the preacher is the learner. It is not true that we are unfit to preach just because we have not mastered all the points of doctrine and of Bible knowledge. But we should go on studying for ourselves, adding to our knowledge, mastering detail after detail, period after period, book after book--so that we can, like the wise householder, bring forth things new and old. But how shall we do this? Is it feasible for the young man, with the complex life of today, the multiplying demands of pulpit and parish, to carry on lines of Biblical study independent of the pulpit and with no immediate relation to it? The experience of most young preachers gives the answer. They need so to arrange their work that Bible study helps the pulpit directly, yes, that the plan of preaching demands and promotes systematic Bible study. Courses of expository preaching

will do just that, and such a program will make the preacher an expert in religion, and his message one of increasing weight and power.

IV. THE TOPICAL METHOD

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE "TOPICAL METHOD?" The topical method bases the sermon upon a topic, as the name itself implies; and it draws the materials for the sermon from the entire Word of God. The topic is treated in its entirety, i.e., with reference to its completeness and totality, and is divided logically in accordance with its own nature. It is conceded that homileticians are not agreed in the use of the term "topical" to designate this method. There is little difference between the designation above and that of Broadus, who calls this method the "subject-sermon" method. But German writers refer to this method as the "synthetic" method. So does Jacob Fry, Professor in Mt. Airy Lutheran (U.L.C.) Seminary, Philadelphia, in his book "Elementary Homiletics." In his discussion of the method, however, he says this: "The synthetical method is also called the topical because it deals with the topic or theme of the sermon rather than with the text itself." The synthetic method* will be treated subsequently in a separate chapter. For the present purpose it will suffice to say that the synthetic method is based on a deduction, whereas the genuine topical method ~~is~~^{is} not. Goebel (quoted by Pieper, p.83) tells us why German writers call the topical method the "synthetic" method and he also adds still other designations for the topical method. He says:

* Some in our circles call the synthetic method the topical method, but they have the synthetic method in mind, not the genuine topical method.

Ihre Benennung hat sie (die synthetische Predigt) von der Synthese oder Zusammensetzung, weil sie die Abhandlung einer Sache zusammensetzt, nicht die von einem andern zusammengesetzte zu erkennen sucht, was die Aufgabe der Analyse ist. Sie wird daher mit einem andern Namen benannt die locale oder doctrinale, ferner die dogmatische oder thematische, weil sie mit der Abhandlung irgend eines Locus communis, oder einer christlichen Lehre, oder irgend eines Themas, mag dasselbe dogmatisch oder moralisch sein, beschaeftigt ist.

WHAT USE DOES THE TOPICAL METHOD MAKE OF THE TEXT? Originally the topical method did not use a text. Achelis in his "Lehrbuch der Praktischen Theologie" (p.234) says,

Aber gleichzeitig und parallel laufend mit dieser Entwicklung* trat das Griechentum in die Kirche ein; es macht sich in unserm Gebiet dahin geltend, dass der griechische *Λόγος* ein kirchliches Gewand anlegte, die Prediger waren griechische Rhetoren in der Monachskutte und im Bischofsornat; es galt, nach den Regeln der Rhetorik christliche Reden zu halten,--so wurde die synthetische Predigt geboren. Es ist der Natur der Sache entsprechend, dass bis Augustin der *Λόγος* --Oratio als ein fremdartiges Gewächs empfunden wurde; aber es war eine historische Noetigung, dass Augustin den Sprachgebrauch aenderte, die bisherigen kirchlichen Oraciones mit dem Namen Sermones bezeichnete und ihnen als eine christliche Idee ausfuehrenden Predigten Ebenbuertigkeit neben den Homiliae, den textauslegenden Predigten, errang. Dass auch der Sermo--synthetische Predigt sich der Sitte, einen Text zugrunde zu legen, anbequemte, ist lediglich eine Konzession zur Gewinnung des kirchlichen Gepraeges.

In order to give the impression that also this method was proper in the church, preachers connected the topical sermon with a text. In many cases this connection between sermon and text was very weak and this questionable practice persists to the present day. Hoppin, for example, makes the following statements: "Topical preaching draws from the text a particular theme, or, what is often the case, takes a topic before taking a text, and makes that topic the subject of the sermon.....The topical sermon is something, after all, outside of the text, though it should be in strict accordance with it." Such

* Die Entwicklung der Homilie.

statements are apt to be misunderstood. Achelis goes still farther when he says, (p.235),

Was ist das Wesen der synthetischen Predigt? Das logische Prius derselben ist nicht der Text, sondern das Thema; nicht wird das Thema aus dem Text genommen, sondern der Text wird zu dem Thema gewählt. Obgleich die Forderung zu Recht besteht, dass der Text predigtgemäss, besser: themagemäss sei, so hängt es doch gaenzlich von der intimen Schriftkenntnis des Predigers ab, den dem Thema moeglichst adaequaten Text zu finden, wenn der der Versuchung, den Text zu vergewaltigen, nicht erliegen soll. Wesentlich bei der synthetischen Predigt bleibt ja die logische und rhetorische Durchfuehrung des Themas nicht nach Massgabe des Textes, sondern nach Massgabe des Themas.

When this procedure is followed, the text very often degenerates into a mere pretext, an ostensible, but false pretense. In such cases the preacher does not use the text, he abuses it; he tries to justify a wrong topic in the sight of his hearers, a topic which the text does not teach. A German preacher, for example, used as his text Acts 26,24: Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But his text did not teach the topic on which he spoke. His topic was "The doubtful and perilous character of religious enthusiasms!" It is true: that sometimes the topic will be suggested before the text--and there should be proper freedom here, for the pastor has two books to study, the Bible and his people--yet when the text is once chosen, it should be used honestly and legitimately; it should be treated not merely as a pretext, but as the utterance of God on which the authority of the sermon is based and on which the sermon itself is based. How is this requirement met in the topical method?

THE TOPIC SHOULD BE THE CHIEF THOUGHT OF THE TEXT. Every sermon method, including the topical, should be a legitimate way of

using the text. For this reason there should be more than a weak relation between the topic and the text, there should be a vital connection between the two. The topic should be not merely a minor thought of the text, but the chief thought. Pieper tells us (in the footnote on page 85) that Rambach distinguishes between the topic which is the chief thought and that which is a minor thought. He says, "Ein primäres synthetisches Thema nennt er ein solches, welches aus dem ganzen Text entwickelt ist und mit dem Scopus desselben harmonirt; ein sekundäres, welches nur aus einem Teile des Textes genommen wird und mit dem Scopus nicht harmonirt." We hold that the former is a legitimate use of the text, whereas the latter is not. Many writers on homiletics speak of a relation between the text and the topic but they do not explain what that relation is, or should be. Burrell, for example, says, "A topical sermon is one in which the text merely furnishes the theme, the treatment being more or less independent of it;" but he does not state in what way the text furnishes the theme. It should be the chief thought of the text. Broadus says in his "Preparation and Delivery of Sermons" (p.308),

In subject sermons, then, we draw from the text a certain subject, usually stating it distinctly in the form of a proposition, and then the text, having furnished the thought, has no further part as a formative force in the plan of treatment pursued in the sermon, but the subject is divided and treated according to its own nature, just as it would be if not derived from a text.

Broadus, too, does not state how we should draw the subject from the text. We should find the chief thought and then use that as the subject of the sermon.

THE TOPIC SHOULD BE SPECIFIC. It should be more than a mere word, it should be the logical proposition which is demanded by the

chief thought of the text. If the text is properly chosen, it will have one chief thought and that chief thought, with very few exceptions, will be specific. It is only in rare and exceptional cases that the chief thought of a text will be of a general nature. Broadus admits that "it is greatly better that the subject should be precisely that which the text most naturally presents, and which most thoroughly exhausts its meaning;" yet he insists that "a text which presents a specific aspect of some subject may be lawfully used as suggesting the general subject, or we may draw from a comprehensive text its general subject, and then avowedly confine ourselves to one department of it." Such a topic may be Biblical, but it surely is not textual. It does not teach what the text teaches. If such a topic is really Biblical, the preacher should find a text which teaches that topic; if such a topic is not Biblical, it goes without saying that it should not form the basis of a sermon. If this rule is observed, one of the objections to the topical method will be removed, viz., that when the topical method is used, the text does not perform so important a part in preaching as it should. Let the topic be the chief thought of the text and let it be specific! The natural fear with many preachers is that they will not have enough material to make a sermon, and so a comprehensive subject is selected. Topics like "prayer," "faith," and similar ones, are chosen; three or four heads are treated under this general theme; and as a result the development is commonplace and the sermon shallow. What is on the surface nearly every one knows, what is below most people do not know. This danger of being shallow is avoided when the topic is specific, for then the field is narrowed and the topic has depth rather than breadth.

ADVANTAGES OF THE TOPICAL METHOD. This method better insures unity, which is indispensable to the best effects of discourse. It not only trains the preacher's mind along the lines of logical analysis, but also furnishes opportunity for the use of the stores of knowledge the preacher has acquired and for the exercise of such special gifts and talents as he may have. The topical method, moreover, is more pleasing and more convincing to some minds in the audience, especially among the cultivated, for this method is conducive to sermons that have a more logical character and a more manifest completeness than most sermons written according to the analytic method. Then too, the needs of the congregation will sometimes make it desirable that the preacher present a full view of some topic, not merely a special aspect of it which one text or another may exhibit. The topical method permits, or rather requires, the aggregation of Scripture testimony on the topic under consideration, and this topic can be presented in all its fulness without exceeding the usual limits of a discourse. This method, therefore, leads to increased range and scope of view. The horizon commanded by a single text is comparatively narrow, while the consideration of a topic often leads us to a point from which we command a vaster horizon. Furthermore, the topical method is largely argumentative and the arguments can be readily reproduced in other sermons teaching the same doctrine or duty. Topical material is not recognized as easily as textual and is more readily adapted to a variety of texts. We do not advocate the frequent repetition of sermons, but circumstances will arise which require an unexpected withholding of the sermon prepared, and the substitution of another on

short notice and then the repetition or adaptation of an old topical sermon can be used to advantage. Finally, the topical method is especially usable for occasional sermons, such as, introductory sermons, farewell sermons, wedding sermons, funeral sermons, anniversary sermons, and the like. On such special occasions the message is determined by the occasion as well as by the text and the needs of the people. The topical method lends itself readily to the treatment of such a composite message.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE TOPICAL METHOD. Practically all the disadvantages of this method would be overcome if preachers would use the chief thought of the text as their topic. When this is not done, variety and freshness suffer. The chief thought of the text with very few exceptions is specific and specific topics make for variety. The number of general topics is after all quite limited. After the preacher has preached on a topic, he will not want to return to it for some time. But the preacher who uses only general topics will soon run dry and then he will repeat himself. By making the chief thought of the text the topic, the preacher overcomes the disadvantage that "the inventiveness of no single mind is great enough to meet the variety of human needs." But even when the preacher makes the chief thought of the text the topic, he is apt to become stale by using the same patterns in the logical development of his sermons. Moreover, if one starts with a subject or topic which he proposes to treat instead of the chief thought of the text, he risks either using the text merely as a motto or peg on which to hang the sermon, or accommodating the text to the topic rather than the topic to the text. In the former case the text, after

having been once announced, is forgotten altogether, or if not this, it is not continually referred to and has no vital connection with the sermon. "At best it is the tribute which the preacher pays to custom, and is regarded with no more affection than is any other tax,"

Pattison. In the latter case--that of accommodating the text to the theme rather than the theme to the text--the germ of the sermon is found in the preacher's brain rather than in the mind of God, and the use of Scripture is sometimes so foreign to its original purport and purpose that it becomes a caricature. The preacher approaches the Word with a bias, a preconception of what he wishes to find, a prepossession which, if it does not blind entirely, often at least blurs his judgment. He is in danger of warping Scripture to fit the crook of his dogma. He is in danger of defending a theological position or creed instead of expounding the Word of God. He may become deductive instead of inductive. That is the fundamental difference between the Catholic and the Protestant. The Papacy starts with a self-made hypothesis and adjusts and adapts the testimony of Scripture to her hypothesis; she is perversely Aristotelian, she is deductive. Protestantism, on the other hand, starts with the facts, the statements of Scripture, and infers from these what Scripture teaches; Protestantism is Baconian, or inductive. The danger of such a deductive or accommodating process is that the attention of the hearer may from the outset be diverted from the Scriptures to the preacher, from the facts and truths of God to the theories and opinions of man. Uniformly pursued it has often presented the human side of preaching predominantly, has hid Christ, and thus injured the cause of Christian truth! The neglect of the Bible in the pulpit will

lead to its neglect in the pews. How can the hearer be expected to read and study God's Word for himself when the preacher constantly substitutes his own thoughts for God's thoughts in the sermon! Regarding the disastrous effect of accommodating texts to the dictates of the human mind, Achelis says pointedly (p.236),

Der Text wird zu einem Pflock, an welchen heute dies, morgen jenes beliebige Stück des Hausrats angehängt wird; die Gemeinde muss jede Schriftfreudigkeit verlieren, weil sie der Genialität ihres Synthetikers gegenüber ihr Unvermögen erkennt, die Schrift zu verstehen. Das Bedauern der Privaterbauung wendet von der durch die Kunst des Predigers unverstänzlich gewordenen Hl. Schrift sich ab, es greift nach solchen Besuchern, welche die christlichen Gedanken präpariert ihm darreichen; denn das freudige Selbstvertrauen, sie sich selbst aus der Hl. Schrift präparieren zu können, hat die hohe Kunst des Synthetikers der Gemeinde ausgetrieben.

To sum up, the topical preacher runs the risk of following human reason rather than Scripture, the risk of invention at the expense of Scripture authority. What potential danger is involved can be seen from the fact that following human reason rather than Scripture is the basic error not only in Catholicism, but also in Sectarianism and in Modernism!

V. THE SYNTHETIC METHOD

HOMILETICIANS ARE NOT AGREED AS TO WHAT THE SYNTHETIC

METHOD IS. Also the synthetic* method takes its thoughts from the text, i.e., the thoughts which are implied in the text and derived from the text by way of deduction. "The synthetic method uses the deductions or inferences or periphrases which are derived from the text," Dean Feltz. Homiletics agree that deduction is involved but they do not agree as to how it is involved. Let us first consider what the German writers understand by the synthetic method. Since German writers call the topical method the synthetic method, they have to give the genuine synthetic method another name. They call it the analytic-synthetic method. In speaking of this method Pieper in his "Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik" (p.85) says,

Bei analytisch-synthetischen Predigten wird der Text in allen seinen einzelnen Theilen benutzt. Aus dem Text wird ein bestimmt begrenztes Thema entzickelt und an die Spitze gestellt und oben so werden auch bestimmte, dem Text entnommene, dem Thema untergeordnete, Theile angegeben, so dass also der ganze Text nur im Lichte des Themas betrachtet wird. Aber der Text wird nicht immer Vora fur Vora behandelt, sondern vielmehr nach der naturlichen, logischen Folge der durch das Thema bedingten Gedanken behandelt, wie sie aus den einzelnen Theilen des Textes zusammen zu stellen ist. Wenn die Reihenfolge der Verse und Ausdrucke des Textes mit der naturlichen, logischen Gedankenfolge, wie sie das Thema des Textes befolgt, aber der Gedankenkreise bewegt sich nicht in den weiteren Grenzen des Wortes, sondern in den engeren Grenzen, welche durch das Thema gezogen werden.

* Synthetic is also found, but it is very rare; both analytic and analytic are commonly used.

So wird der ganze Text moeglichst vollstaendig behandelt, aber nicht nach dem Scopus desselben, sondern nach der im Thema befassten Lehre; in ersterem ist sie also analytisch, in letzterem synthetisch.

The first paragraph of the above quotation refers to the genuine synthetic method. The second paragraph speaks of a synthetic theme with analytic parts. When the parts are analytic, we no longer have the pure synthetic method, but a composite method which we shall call the synthetic-analytic method. The third paragraph applies in either case.

In speaking of the synthetic method Rou in his "Homiletics" (p.425) says,

We take the main thought of the text as our theme and divide this thought into the constituent parts without regard to the divisions of the text.....In the synthetic method the text furnishes only the main thought or theme which forms the source for the material of the sermon and from which its divisions are derived according to the rules of logic and rhetoric independently of the text. The text is, indeed, drawn upon again and again in the development of the various divisions, but it does not determine the divisions themselves."

Rou labels this the synthetic or "topical" method, but it is neither one. The synthetic method is not the same as the topical, so that these two designations should not be used synonymously. What Rou ^{treats} really has here is an analytic theme with synthetic parts which we shall call the analytic-synthetic method. Speaking of the synthetic method, Dean Fritz says, "The specific thought derived from the chief thought of the text by a porisma is the theme of the sermon." Following this procedure gives us a synthetic theme but as a general rule we will get analytic parts. It is possible, of course, to put synthetic parts under a synthetic theme which is deduced from the chief thought of the text, but it is not probable that we will do

so in actual practice. It is not necessary that the theme of the synthetic sermon be deduced from the chief thought of the text.

The confusion regarding the synthetic method will disappear if we keep the distinction between the analytic and synthetic methods in mind. The etymology of the terms under consideration will shed light upon their meaning. Analytic comes from ἀναλύω, to unloose, to undo again (as woven threads); and hence when used homiletically it means to take apart. Synthetic comes from σύνθεσις, a putting together (σύν together and τίθημι to put, place); and hence homiletically it means to put together. In the analytic method the structure of the sermon is determined by the structure of the text. The preacher really does not create his outline but discovers it in the text and lifts it from the text. In the synthetic method, however, the structure of the text has nothing to do with the structure of the sermon; the preacher makes his own outline. Nevertheless, also the synthetic outline should be strictly textual. It should grow out of the text and should make use of the materials contained in the text. The difference between the two methods is simply a difference in handling the text. In the analytic method the preacher finds and uses the outline of the sacred writer, while in the synthetic method he builds an entirely new structure out of the text materials.

HOW TO PROCEED WHEN USING THE SYNTHETIC METHOD. Study the text carefully in order to find its chief thought and the progression of thought. This is a safeguard against faulty and wrong deductions later. It is not necessary to partition the text into distinct units

as in the analytic method, for the synthetic method does not use the outline in the text; in the synthetic method the parts are in no way determined by the text units although the material for the parts is taken from the text. After such a preliminary study to ascertain the true meaning of the text, the first step is to take the text apart into all its component parts. Jot down all the thoughts as they come to mind; whether they are major or minor thoughts in the text, whether they are coordinate or subordinate, whether they are thoughts contained in the text or thoughts suggested by the text makes no difference. Put them all down, for good thoughts are often very elusive. The number and the order in which they occur is immaterial. It is advisable to jot the individual thoughts on separate slips of paper, so that they can be arranged more easily afterwards. The second step is to synthesize* the thoughts which we have gathered. Lenski in his book entitled "The Sermon, its Homiletical Construction" (p.104,105) says, "Take the list before you, and let your mind dwell on it as intensely as possible. Pay no attention to the unity of the text, as one must do in striving for an analytical outline. The unity you need for the sermon will take care of itself. Presently, when the intense meditation on the list of thoughts has gone far enough, something that we might call crystallization takes place. The thoughts listed will combine in a new way to form a new pattern with a new unit idea underlying this pattern. Sometimes this crystallization takes place as in a flash.

* Synthetize, synthesise, and synthesise are all correct.

It is like a gift from above. Sometimes it comes slowly, after prolonged effort." Synthesis is just as exact as analysis only in another way. It uses the thoughts of the text, and thus builds as truly on the text as does analysis; but by it the preacher originates an entirely new outline, whereas by analysis he finds the outline of the sacred writer. Real synthesis, just like analysis, operates only with the material in the text, not with anything added to the text from the outside. "It is a false definition of homiletical synthesis to think that it consists in combining the text with something that lies outside of it," Lenski. The topical method makes use of material gathered from the entire Bible, but the synthetic method makes use only of material gathered from the text.

Every sermon should have a practical objective. It was Whately who said, "The man aims at nothing, and hits it." The preacher should not be guilty of this fault in his sermonizing. A sermon is as useless as a lost nail unless it ^{is} directed and driven home. In general, the practical objective of the sermon is the converting or edifying of souls, but each sermon should have its own specific objective. In order to determine this specific practical objective the preacher should study the needs of his people. To apply the Word of God to the needs of the people is ^{his} a God-given duty. It was for this purpose that God instituted the ministry. We have the highest form of synthesis when the needs of the people and the truths of the text are synthesized, the need itself controlling the synthesis. What is in the text and what is in the preacher's heart in the way of vivid apprehension of his people's need begin to fuse and melt together. This is not a different kind of synthesis just because the need is also taken into consideration. It is synthetic

just as when the need is not considered because the text thoughts are rearranged and synthesized. In one instance something in the text itself arrests the preacher's attention, so that the thoughts of the text crystallize about this center. The preacher studies the text thoughts by themselves and then they by themselves fall into this or that pattern. In the other instance some need fuses with the gold in the text and the text thoughts synthesize accordingly. Not all texts can be used in this way. "It would be a grave error to force a text to meet a need, for being forced, it would not really meet the need," Lenski.

MANY COMBINATIONS OF THE ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC METHODS ARE POSSIBLE. As soon as the preacher inverts the order of the text-units in his outline he has taken the first step in synthesis.

When the preacher elevates one of the unit thoughts of the text to the theme and treats the remaining unit thoughts under this theme, he has combined synthesis with analysis. Common combinations are the synthetic-analytic, in which the theme is synthetic and the parts are analytic, and the analytic-synthetic, in which the theme is analytic and the parts are synthetic. Regarding the practical objective we may say that if it is that of the text it is analytic, but if it is that of the preacher it is synthetic. The application of the text is analytic unless it is based on a deduction, then it is synthetic.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE SYNTHETIC METHOD. While the analytic method, adhering closely to the thoughts expressed in the text, will not admit of variety, except in the wording of the theme and the parts, the synthetic method admits of much variety of thought in the presentation

of the thoughts of the text or the thoughts derived from the text. Synthesis vastly increases the variety of sermon patterns and thus enriches the pulpit. "There is really no end to the variety of sermon structure which may be attained by means of synthesis," Lenski.

One of the most desirable features in a pulpit program is variety and the synthetic method is conducive toward this end. Synthetic sermons, being creations of the preacher's own mind, have a tendency to reflect more clearly the preacher's personality. The appeal to individual hearers is greatly heightened when their specific needs play a part in the synthesis.

CONCLUSION

USE OF THE VARIOUS METHODS BY THE PREACHER. Having thus briefly sketched the sermon methods most frequently employed in the Lutheran Church, the question naturally arises: Which methods should the preacher use? While every preacher will naturally give preference to one or the other of these methods, he should cultivate and use them all at different times in order to gain variety. Variety is one of the most desirable features in the pulpit program. Which method is to be followed cannot be determined by general rules. The decision will depend on the nature of the text and on the individuality of the preacher. Each method has its own advantages and disadvantages. The same amount of lead may be cast in a round bullet or in a pointed projectile. One will smash, while the other penetrates. So it is with the sermon. There are different molds in which it may be run. Some texts can be treated better by one method, while other texts can be treated better by another method. The preacher should use that method which is best suited to his purpose and to the circumstances which confront him. Shedd, in his "Homiletics and Pastoral Theology" (pp. 155 and 156) says,

All the species should be employed by every preacher without exception. No matter what the turn or temper of his mind may be, he should build upon each and every one of these patterns. If he is highly oratorical in his bent and spirit, let him by no means neglect the expository sermon. If his mental temperament is phlegmatic, and his mental processes naturally cool and unimpassioned, let him by no means neglect the topical sermon. It is too generally the case, that

the preacher follows his tendency, and preaches uniformly one kind of sermon. A more severe dealing with his own powers, and a wiser regard for the wants of his audience, would lead to more variety in sermonizing. At times, the mind of the congregation needs the more stirring and impressive influence of a topical discourse, to urge it up to action. At others, it requires the instruction and indoctrination of the less rhetorical, and more didactic expositions of Scripture.

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