

# BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMILETICAL COURSES

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As I understand it, my assignment is to present what we here at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary consider to be essential in students and curriculum for equipping and training students for preaching the Word in the worship services of a Christian congregation. The purpose will be to stimulate discussion to determine what is applicable in the worker training program of our world mission fields, what is not applicable, and what needs to be added to meet the needs of a specific field.

It is then the worship service of a Christian congregation which we have in mind. The contrast would be preaching to a group which is purely or essentially mission material. Before such a group—if indeed opportunities to speak to a non-Christian group do present themselves—one might not find the exposition and application of a single biblical text appropriate since the people addressed have not as yet come to the conviction that the Bible is God's Word. In his sermon on Mars Hill, which involved a non-Christian group, Paul did not use a biblical text or even biblical quotations. Rather, progressing from the known to the unknown he led up to his proclamation of Christ. Under similar circumstances we might begin by referring to some familiar phenomenon and go on to presenting biblical truth without quoting the source, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to work repentance and faith through the truth which we set forth. Paul in his sermon, for example, certainly presented the essence of the First Commandment without quoting it.

Even if there should be an opportunity for addressing a non-Christian group, individual instruction will have to follow in the case of those whose interest has been won. Perhaps in most cases one on one conversation is the pathway to conversion. When there are a number of converts in a given locality, there are the beginnings of a church, a Christian congregation. For these Christians corporate life, activity, and worship are a Spirit-worked logical consequence. Since the Lord teaches them that they are a body, they know that they belong together. For Jewish converts, assembly for worship was nothing new—they came from a background of synagogue services. Since most, if not all, congregations in the apostolic age started among the Jews, the Gentile converts went along with them in continuing the good habit of regular meetings for worship.

So Sunday worship services quickly became a Christian tradition. Evidences of the practice of gathering for worship regularly abound in Scripture. 1 Corinthians 14 has much to say about good order in such services. What Paul has to say about the celebration of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 takes group activity for granted. In 1 Timothy 2 he shows that the leadership role in such services is restricted to men. Hebrews 10:24-25 shows the importance of such assemblies and laments the bad habit of those who neglected to participate in them. So we may take it for granted that the cohesive power of the gospel will draw Christians together to worship and work as one body.

Just how formal the presentation of the Word in such worship services was we cannot determine. The apostles speak of the matter, but not of the manner. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Ac 6:4). Paul speaks of elders "who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tm 5:17). Bishops are required to be "apt to teach" (1 Tm 3:2), and that implies not only a knowledge of the truth but also the ability to communicate it in a manner that makes it possible for hearers to comprehend what is being presented. So when we train converts to assemble for worship services in which the preaching of the Word plays a prominent part, we are not trying to impose our custom upon people of a different culture, but are following a pattern to which our Lord directs us in His Word. Training men to preach the Word in worship services, training men in homiletics, thus will have to be an essential feature of our mission program. How are we to go about this training? This leads us to our topic:

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMILETICAL COURSES.

I intend to discuss seven points:

- I. The student.
- II. The text.
- III. Text study.
- IV. The outline.
- V. The written sermon.
- VI. Memorization.
- VII. Delivery.

### I.

A. For what are we to look in the students to whom we shall give homiletical training? When Dr. Edwin Palmer, who heads the NIV translation project, visited our Seminary, one fact which impressed him was that our students are men in whom we can take faith in Christ and dedication to His cause for granted. He commented that in many of the seminaries with which he is acquainted there can be no such presupposition, but that in many cases the attempt must first be made to bring students to faith in Christ. It took this observation on the part of an outsider to make us aware of a blessing which we simply took for granted. I am sure that in our mission fields too no man is admitted into a seminary training program in whose case it cannot be assumed that he has come to know his Savior. This is a spiritual prerequisite.

B. While faith in Christ is the prime requisite, we shall also look for a degree of academic proficiency. There must be a good command of the language in which the man intends to preach. If the teaching in the seminary is carried on in a different language, it is self-evident that the student will also have to have a good command of this medium, both in order to receive the instruction given and in order to show the instructor that he has comprehended what has been presented.

There will also have to be some knowledge of the principles of composition. In ordinary conversation a man may be able to ramble, back up, and violate other rules of composition and still get his point across. But in a formal setting such as that in our worship services, there need to be neatness and order in the way in which thoughts are presented so that the church may be edified and not confused.

And that indicates that the student must also be equipped with some knowledge of logic. He must at least be able to make people realize at what he is driving. Since my knowledge of other cultures is extremely limited, I am somewhat timid about stressing the need for logic. Matthew's orderly grouping and Paul's clear line of thought win our approval. We are harder put with John's spiral development of thought. Still when I consider the sense for order which our God has evidenced in His creation and preservation of the world (Gn 8:22; Is 40:26), I am sure that He has endowed man, who is to rule over creation (Gn 1:28), with a reflection of His own sense of order, and that's what logic is in the area of thought and expression.

C. A final requisite to which I want to refer is some exegetical skill. Yesterday's presentations and discussions centered about this area and I do not intend to belabor the point. But if a man is to preach the Word, he needs to be able to determine what the Word has to say.

These, then, are the basic requirements in those who take a homiletics course. We proceed to consider what is basic in the course itself and what needs to be acquired by those who take it. Since it is impossible to preach the entire Word in one sermon, we are led quite naturally next to comment about picking that portion of the Word which is to be presented in a single sermon, the text.

### II.

A. The use of a text in preparing a sermon is not absolutely essential. It has been correctly observed that it would be possible to preach an edifying sermon without the use of a text. A purely topical sermon on the way of salvation, drawing in the highlights of what the Lord has revealed about the matter, could edify a congregation. On the other hand, a man could use a text, but expound it in such a manner that his presentation would distort the truth and present error instead, to the harm of a group of believers. Nevertheless the use of a text has its great advantages. For one, a man who uses, expounds, and applies a text will be less apt to stray into the byways of error than one who rambles along. Furthermore, if a man works with texts, expounding and applying each one correctly, he is more apt in the course of time to present the whole counsel of God, providing insights into many more facets of what the Lord has revealed than would be the case if he were to present only broad topics. Furthermore, if he places major emphasis upon those thoughts which are unique to each text, he will be sure to have abundant variety as he preaches to the same group year after year.

B. What texts should a man use? The preacher is offered a choice between pericopes and free texts. Pericopes are not perfect. The criticism has justly been raised that some of the choicest texts do not appear in the old pericopes and that the epistle pericopes are heavy on sanctification. The other pericopic systems are not completely original in the sense that they present only texts which do not appear in any other system. Beginners will find in the pericopes some texts which may just be too hard for them to handle properly. So we cannot demand a slavish use of pericopes.

But they do have their strengths. For one thing, their use prevents a preacher from riding his hobbies and presenting only some aspects of what the Word reveals. By and large the pericopes for the festival half of the church year focus upon the objective truths of salvation. In the pericopes for the Trinity season there is usually a more or less logical progression from the beginnings of the Christian life to its mature manifestation to its consummation at Christ's return.

C. Free texts also have their pros and cons. As has been mentioned, if a man uses free texts, he is exposed to the danger of riding his hobbies and avoiding texts which to him seem to be less interesting, or more difficult. Hobbies could be eschatology or social concerns or polemics, for example. This pitfall could be avoided if free texts were chosen to parallel at least to a degree the emphases of the pericopes. Certainly there is a wide range of free texts for Christmas or Easter, for example. Free texts ought to be a unit of thought, either a larger unit or a smaller unit within a larger unit. They ought to contain preaching values and not be of such a nature that in order to preach an edifying sermon the preacher must import the major portion of his message from outside the text because the text which he chose is limited in thought content. At our Seminary I suppose the majority of texts which we assign to our students are free texts, both because we can choose texts for them which are suited to the capacity of the individual student and because we can prevent this that students as guest preachers on the third Sunday after Trinity treat a text which the pastor had treated as the pericope for the first Sunday after Trinity.

A basic requirement in homiletics courses will be to acquaint students with the principles involved in the judicious choice of texts.

### III.

A. How does a text grow into a sermon? One fact which we try to stress is that the work of preparing a sermon ought to begin with a prayer for help. We hope that students will approach the work of writing a sermon with a feeling of awe because of the privilege and responsibility which are theirs, and with a deep sense of humility because they are aware of their inadequacy and know that only the Lord can make them adequate. But the need for prayer when writing a sermon is not limited to beginners—we all have it.

B. And then at the text: We suggest that the student jot down the thoughts that come to him at each stage to which we shall refer. Ideas are hard to come by and can easily escape one unless he puts them down. The first stage is to read the text and meditate upon it. We have to emphasize this matter of meditation with our students because their previous academic training has emphasized the importance of research. The result is that they are often inclined to make doing as much research as possible the first stage of their sermon work.

Research has its place, as we hope to point out, but at the proper time. I believe that the first question which the student ought to ask is, "What is my Lord telling me in this particular portion of His Word for my faith and my life as a believer?" As he tells himself, "Here my Lord is reminding me that Jesus died for me. Here my Lord is warning me against the danger of having a weak faith. Here my Lord is comforting me by assuring me of His concern for my physical needs. Here my Lord is showing me how I can help my fellow believer," he is experiencing the power of the Word upon his own heart. As he gratefully rejoices over what he finds for his own spiritual life in the Word, he will be stirred to share what he has found for himself with those who will be hearing his sermon.

And that becomes the second direction of his meditation, seeking the answer to the question, "What is the Lord revealing in this portion of His Word that I can bring to my hearers?" I purposely put this into second place because there is always the danger of becoming professional in our preaching, of thinking only of what we are going to tell people. Then the tone of our preaching can easily become didactic, pontificating, condescending. 2 Timothy 2:6 is applicable: "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits." Still, when meditating upon a text the student ought to be trained to think of what it has to say to the people to whom he will be preaching. If the text speaks about the sinfulness and futility of worrying and the student knows that people in his area are uneasy because of the prospects of a poor crop, he will certainly want to jot down the idea that this text has something to say about coping with anxiety. Discovering what a text has to say to our members who are out in the world becomes a little difficult for our students because they have been living in the isolation of an academic community.

C. What we have been discussing up to this point is the meditating which follows the initial reading of the text in the vernacular. Random ideas will have been jotted down. But now a closer study of the text ought to follow. This will lead to jotting down more ideas. The ideal for closer study of the text is study of the text in the original. I don't want to repeat what was discussed yesterday. Closer study of the text may reveal that some of the initial reactions when it was read in the vernacular were not warranted. It will hopefully also open vistas which were missed in the cursory reading of the text. The outcome of a more intensive study of the text should be that the text is clearly understood. If there are exegetical problems, the student will have to weigh the pros and cons of the various interpretations and decide upon the interpretation which he will present, for the listening congregation is not to be involved in the wrestling in which the exegete must engage.

Intensive text study implies the use of commentaries. But independent text study ought to precede so that the student can say, "This is how I understand my text." If he reaches for commentaries too soon, he loses his independence and only parrots what his favorite commentator has to say. But once he has made up his mind, he will benefit from the use of commentaries. He may find that a commentary disagrees with his interpretation. If the arguments of the commentator are more cogent than his own, he may have to revise his interpretation; if not, he will dismiss the commentator. The commentary may also often lead him to see something in his text which he had not noticed previously.

The text undoubtedly will present doctrine, either directly or by inference. For his better understanding of the text the student may want to review what dogmatics has to say about the doctrine so that he may be precise in stating the doctrine in his sermon. For example, it is not easy to distinguish between synergism in conversion and synergism subsequent to conversion. A review of dogmatics on this point will guard against an incorrect formulation of thought.

A basic requirement for homiletics courses is that they train students to meditate in order to discover preaching values in a text.

By this time the student will have a collection of thoughts suggested as he meditated upon a text and studied it. In what he has jotted down there is no order. Now the ordering of thoughts is called for, and that leads us to speak of the outline.

#### IV.

A. The starting-point in preparing an outline of a sermon is to arrive at a basic outline, theme and parts. The theme will indicate the direction in which the sermon will move, the parts, what steps will be taken to attain the goal set in the theme.

One method of arriving at a basic outline is to assign a letter or number to each new thought in the text. The next step is to determine the relative importance of the thoughts. Some will be coordinate, each introducing a new idea. Others will be subordinate, expanding, proving, presenting the negative of a main thought. The coordinate thoughts will suggest the main divisions of the text. Looking at only the coordinate thoughts the student should be able to compile a summarizing sentence or propositional statement. For example, reviewing the coordinate thoughts in his study of Romans 8:31-39 he may come up with this sentence: Christians are safe because they will not be condemned and because there is nothing that can separate them from God's love. Looking at this propositional statement he will notice that the text speaks about the Christian's complete security. He will also notice that the text establishes the fact of this security with two arguments. So his first rough form of a basic outline might be: Christians Are Safe. I. Safe in the judgment. II. Safe in God's love.

The other method of arriving at the basic outline would be for the student to look over all of the random thoughts which came to him as he meditated upon his text and studied commentaries or reviewed some point of doctrine. He will ask himself, "Can these thoughts be grouped together in any way?" He will notice that some of his jottings revolve about the thought that by giving His Son God showed that He is for us. Others speak about the fact that we cannot be condemned. Still others, about the fact that no matter what happens God's love will not let go of us. He may come up with a propositional statement similar to the one above. Or he may summarize the thoughts which he has put down in this way: God is for us because He gave His Son for us, because he won't condemn us, and because He will let nothing separate us from His love. This may suggest the basic outline: God Is for Us. I. He gave His Son for us. II. He has justified us. III. His love keeps us secure.

B. The next stage in the development of the outline which is to precede the writing of the sermon would be the preparation of what we call the preliminary expanded outline. This means determining which thoughts of the text are to be discussed under each part of the basic outline. Each major part ought to be of such a nature that it can be divided into sub-divisions. But the sub-divisions ought to be of such a nature that they utilize one of the thoughts of the text. Looking at the basic outline which was suggested above, the first major part is: He gave His Son for us. Looking at the text it is evident that verses 31-32 support this statement. They present the fact, the deduction from this fact that He will also give us every lesser good thing, and the conclusion to which it leads: God is indeed for us and therefore nothing can effectively be against us. Some of these parallel thoughts are capable of further division, for example, the fact that he gave His Son for us suggests first looking at who we are and then at what He did for us. Sometimes this further subdividing can wait until the next stage has been reached. The main purpose of the preliminary expanded outline is to make sure that every thought of the text will be treated in its logical place.

C. The very use of the term preliminary expanded outline suggests that it will be followed by a more expanded outline. The student has arrived at a point where he has a perspective of his text as a unit and knows where its component parts will be discussed. Now what is he going to say about each subdivision, always keeping his theme in mind? His theme is: God Is for Us. Part I is: He gave His Son for us. "A" under that is: The fact. We may have come so far as to subdivide: 1. Our need. 2. God's help. Here is where the ability to reflect, to use the imagination, comes into play to be able to see the ramifications in a simple statement. "Our need." Why did God have to give up His Son? The text does not say so in so many words. But it clearly implies that we need this supreme gift. Why? Because we are sinners. How do I know? God gave us His law and we have not kept it. So what? We are under the curse. By this time some particular illustration of our failure to keep God's law comes to mind. This thought will be jotted down under its head as briefly as possible. Or one might think of what happens to a child when it disobeys. This thought is jotted down. Or a Scripture passage may come to mind which speaks about the universal sinfulness of man. This is put down. Or a passage in which is revealed the curse which sinners call down upon themselves. Now there is no longer the bare statement: "Our need." There are a number of pertinent remarks elaborating upon that statement. This is the expansion which we

have in mind. By the time this kind of expansion has been carried out all the way along the line, the result is a fully expanded outline.

The process may be somewhat different if the entire text is not application, as is the case with many epistle texts, but is rather historical in nature. Then the outline will have to allow for as much explanation as is necessary for the hearers to know what the situation was before they can appreciate applications to themselves. But always the student will be involved in organizing and expanding the material in the text.

D. There are several other details about the expanded outline which ought to be mentioned. One is transitions. When he has outlined his first part, the student will have to ask himself, "How am I going to lead over into the next part?" If he keeps the goal in mind which has been set by his theme, his problem ought not to be too great. But he needs to be shown how to introduce transitions.

E. We feel that it is desirable, if not absolutely necessary, after the reading of the text to lead into the sermon by means of an introduction. Ideas for an introduction may come at any time and ought to be jotted down when they do come. But if none has come by the time the major part of the sermon has been outlined, concentrated meditation is called for. How am I going to interest my hearers in what I have to say? Imagination may have to range far and wide before the answer comes, but when training students we like to have them go through the effort. If a pastor cannot find an introduction rather quickly, he may not have the time for lengthy searching, but may simply introduce his theme.

F. The conclusion may not present as much of a problem. Sometimes the last paragraph of the sermon proper is so forceful that to append a conclusion would be an anticlimax. Often a good conclusion comes to mind when the sermon is being written. Therefore we don't lay as much stress upon including a conclusion in the fully expanded outline.

The basic requirements for the preparation of an outline on the part of the student are a sense of order, the ability to expand thoughts, and above all concern for the hearer. Homiletics courses need to present the theory of outlining and train students to apply it.

G. Still on the subject of the outline we would like to comment that there are two basic types of outlines, the analytic and the synthetic. The analytic outline we consider to be the basic type. We operated with this type in the foregoing, analyzing the text, determining what the main groupings of thought were, and letting these groupings determine a theme which summarizes them and permits divisions which together equal the substance of the theme. The analytical outline is considered the easiest to develop and the easiest to preach since it moves from thought to thought as the thoughts follow in the text. Beginners in sermonizing are encouraged to start with analytical outlines.

But not all texts can be easily covered by an analytical outline. Sometimes a later verse repeats or develops a thought which had already occurred in an earlier verse. To follow along verse for verse in preaching could easily lead to repetition of thoughts which had already been presented. In 1 John 1:7b-10 the main thoughts are: 1. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. 2. To deny sin is self-deception. 3. Confession leads to forgiveness. 4. To deny sin amounts to calling God a liar. For clearness of presentation and avoiding repetition it might prove to be desirable to group what is said about impenitence and then what is said about forgiveness for the penitent. Rearranging the order of thoughts is the simplest form of synthetic outlining.

Strict analytical outlining presents the thought of the text according to its original intention. Thus Romans 8: 31-39 was written by Paul to remind believers of their triumphant security. As soon as the thought of the text is presented for a purpose which was not the original purpose, we are moving into the area of synthetic outlining. I recall an outline for a Christmas sermon which was suggested to us by the sainted Prof. Wm. Henkel. Using Romans 8:31-32 as his text he outlined: What Has God Given Us for Christmas? I. His love. II. His Son. III. Everything. Now the apostle did not write the text specifically to produce Christmas joy. But there is no violation of the sense of the text if it is used to promote Christmas joy. The same truths are presented.

Dean Fritz suggests that the analytical outline presents what the text says, the synthetic, what the text implies. As an example of this type of synthetic outlining he outlines Luke 18:31-34 thus: Why Are there so Many False Religions in the World? I. Not because the Lord has not spoken clearly; but II. Because men refuse to take Him at His word. You will notice that there is a considerable drift away from the original purpose of the

text. When that happens, there is always more danger of letting the imagination run wild, of using the text instead of preaching it. This type of synthetic outline will have to be used with caution. We want to be sure that we present what the Lord actually said in a given portion of His Word. We want to preach a text, not just use it. The basic requirement at this juncture is sanctified imagination which enables the student to see the various angles from which the text may be approached.

H. We have had quite a bit to say about the importance of logic in an outline. I was wondering whether logic is as important in all cultures as it is in ours. I think I found my answer in two quotations from "Feed My Sheep," Missionary E. Wendland's treatment of homiletics in the TEE course.

Sometimes we have asked ourselves whether or not the traditional method of preaching with formal theme and parts is the best way on the African scene. Don't the people here use different modes of expression? Don't they use more of a story-telling approach and let others make their own application? Don't they rely much more on repetition? Doesn't their concept of logical progression tend to be different from European and American ideas?

Perhaps in the future the Africans themselves will develop patterns of sermonizing which better fit their own situation. For the present we know no better way than to present the basics of what has been followed for many years, simplify this as much as possible, and ask the Holy Spirit to use this way to communicate His truth, which alone can bring people to say that Jesus is Lord (page 2).

Some people say that this way of using theme and parts in a sermon is perhaps good in Europe and America, but it is not good in Africa because the African people do not think the same way. We have not found that this argument is true. People all over the world will listen to a man who speaks to them in a clear way. They will not listen to a man whose thoughts are all mixed up. It will take more work to preach with a theme and parts. But this work will bring rich fruit. It will bring in a clear way God's message of salvation to sinners (page 51).

Be that as it may, even for us logic is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. A sermon may be a masterpiece of logic and still leave the hearer untouched, while another may not present thoughts in a strictly logical order and still, because it presents divine truths with warmth and conviction, stir the hearer mightily. In general, while we want to present a text in such a manner that the hearer is not confused and led to wonder at what we are driving, we need to bear in mind that it is not our skill but the power of the Word which produces results.

But we have strayed a bit from our line of thought. A good outline is the basis for the written sermon, which now comes into focus.

## V.

We require our students to write their sermons, proceeding from a first draft to the polished manuscript. We do so for the sake of the student. While his outline consisted of key thoughts with perhaps a complete sentence here and there, he now needs to put down in sentence and paragraph form what he had in mind when he worked out his outline. As he does so, he may discover that there are places where he thought that he would have quite a bit to say and still after writing one sentence has covered the thought. Then he may wonder whether that thought could not better be incorporated in the preceding or following part of his outline instead of being granted independent status. On the other hand, there may be some point which as he writes expands into several clearly defined subdivisions. Or as he writes, something comes to mind which he had not included in his outline but would help to make his line of thought more clear. Thus writing leads to an evaluation of the outline.

We require writing because it leads to precision. The outline may have contained the comment: "Good works." As he writes, the student may initially put down: "Good works are those which conform to the

standards laid down in God's law." But then it strikes him that something is lacking. He may find it necessary to consult a dogmatics textbook before he comes up with the solution that proper motivation must be included in his definition. So writing trains in precision.

Then there is the more superficial advantage of training in the use of correct grammar and composition and vocabulary. What word am I looking for to express this thought? Is it "between him and I" or "between him and me?"

The other reason for requiring a written sermon from our students is to enable the instructor properly to evaluate the sermon. We have ample occasion to point out imprecise doctrinal statements, incorrect grammar, too judgmental preaching of the law (accusing all hearers of being guilty of illicit sex or profanity), making the gospel conditional. We aim not only at correcting a single sermon, but above all at training for the future as we discuss with the students the notations which we have made in their manuscripts.

B. We have a long range purpose in asking for sermons written on the basis of an outline. We want the student to outline in such a manner that it clearly suggests his line of thought so that he can write out his thoughts quite rapidly. Our hope is that he will reach the day when he can state doctrinal truth so precisely and express his thoughts so sharply and smoothly that he will be able to preach on the basis of an outline without having to continue writing his sermons. We still repeat the suggestion, however, that this should not be attempted until a man has been in the ministry for ten years.

A basic requirement for homiletical courses is to train students to write sermons which express thoughts clearly and scriptural truths precisely. The resulting sermon is to be preached as written, and that leads us to discuss memorization.

## VI.

A. No doubt the safest way to insure that the student will present exactly what he has written in his sermon would be to have him read it to his hearers. I don't think that we can press out of terms like *euaggelizesthai* or *keryssein* the exclusive meaning of transmitting a message from memory, extemporaneously, or *ex corde*. Nevertheless we are convinced that speaking without the use of a manuscript is the best way of presenting a sermon, and, as Lenski says, when it comes to choosing between two options in matters of worship, we ought always to opt for the best. My imagination is not strong enough to be able to have Jesus reading the Sermon on the Mount from a manuscript or Paul doing the same on Mars Hill. If there are to be free gestures, appropriate body movement, and constant eye contact the preacher's eyes dare not be glued to a manuscript nor can his motions be restricted to having his head bob up and down like that of a woodpecker drilling a hole into a tree trunk.

B. When we speak of memorization, we do not have in mind memorizing by rote. Some people are endowed with such a retentive memory that they could indeed memorize and reproduce a sermon with ease and still give attention to such matters as modulation, pauses, gestures. But for those whose memories are less retentive, mechanical memorizing can become a ball and chain. The last word in each sentence must become the cue for the first word in the next, the last word in a paragraph, the cue for the first word in the next paragraph. Let the preacher miss one cue and he is stuck. What is equally sad is that he has nowhere to go. If he depends upon verbatim memorizing, he will have to continue to do so until his dying day.

C. Our suggested mode of memorization aims at a free reproduction of the line of thought. Our ultimate goal is that the preacher will be able to preach from an expanded outline without having to continue to write out his sermon in full. Both greater freedom of delivery and saving of time are the advantages which we have in mind. But for the student and the preacher in the early years of his ministry we urge writing out the sermon in full for the reasons previously mentioned. And it is the reproduction of what has been written which we look for at this stage. How can this be accomplished without memorization by rote?

The man who memorizes by rote will have to memorize paragraph by paragraph and when he goes on to a new paragraph pay special attention to the last words of the previous paragraph because they are the cue for what follows. We encourage memorizing the sermon as a unit. One way to do this is to read the sermon over a



number of times to impress the line of thought upon the mind. (In the case of students the sermon undoubtedly will have grown “cold” since often weeks elapse between writing and preaching. For the man who preaches a sermon in the same week in which it is written his line of thought will still be fresh in his mind.) The next step would be to recite the sermon with manuscript in hand, but referring to it only when recall fails. As soon as the end has been reached, the sermon ought to be read carefully. The spots which had caused trouble will stand out. If it is possible, we advise reproducing the sermon out loud since the use of the additional sense of hearing is enlisted. By the time the student is able to reproduce his sermon without having to refer to his manuscript at all, he will for the main be reproducing the words of the manuscript because of his having read them so frequently. But he will not be a slave to words or the order of words.

The only variation in our second suggested method is that the manuscript is to be laid aside completely while the student attempts to reproduce his sermon after having read it several times to refresh his memory on the line of thought. The first attempt to reproduce the sermon sans manuscript can be mild torture. Caemmerer suggests that it could take as long as an hour. If the man gets stuck, he has to recall his outline until he remembers where he is and what follows next. After he has labored through to the Amen and then reads his manuscript, he need not be a detective to find the spots where he had difficulty, they will leap out at him and he will read them most carefully. Underlining them or marking them in the margin may help for successive readings. If there is time enough before the preaching date, we suggest that the man stop for the day. The next day he is to reproduce the sermon without first having read it, and then after reproducing it read it carefully. The thought behind stretching out the memorization process over a series of days at the outset is that what is known well on one day may not be nearly as well known on the next. And there won't be a recent reading of the manuscript as a prop for the memory. By the time the student is sure of his sermon he will also be reproducing his manuscript almost verbatim.

A basic requirement on the part of the student at this stage is the ability to memorize, coupled with a good sense of logic. A basic requirement in homiletics courses is to train students to memorize their sermons.

Now comes the climax, the delivery.

## VII.

A. One would think that after a man has spent years training to be a preacher, he would be overjoyed when he at last is ready to start preaching. Deep down in his heart he will be if he has the Christian conviction of which we spoke at the outset. But most men discover how human they are when the time comes for them to preach their first sermon. Some sleep restlessly the night before, others experience various other forms of physical discomfort. When they do preach, their knees may shake, their mouths become dry, they become rigid, or they may in other ways display tension. It will help little to tell them to relax. The best I can do is to tell them that I don't care how miserable they feel, that they don't count, that what is important is for them to remember that they have people before them who came to hear the Word of God, that they have found precious truths in the portion of the Word which is their text, and that they should be eager to share this treasure with those who are listening to them.

B. Of course there are certain techniques which the preacher needs to master. He needs to speak loudly enough so that everyone in his audience can hear him. He must speak distinctly so that they can understand him. A particular caution needs to be given against allowing the last syllable, especially in the last word in a sentence, to trail off. We know that preaching requires intense concentration and that when a man is speaking one sentence, he is already thinking ahead to the next. Since he is sure of the sentence which he is speaking, he may neglect to finish it carefully because his mind is already occupied with the next sentence.

Then there is the need to avoid monotony, to emphasize the words which need to be emphasized to make the thought clear. Modulation is to be sought, raising the voice or the volume when the thought is especially important, moving along calmly in narrative. There needs to be the judicious use of pauses to give the hearer time to let certain thoughts sink in.

Eye contact is necessary for maximum effectiveness and must be directed toward all parts of the audience. The facial expression should correspond to content, reflecting earnestness or grief when the law is preached, joy when the Gospel is proclaimed. A measure of bodily movement is desirable, both as the preacher turns to various parts of his audience and as he leans forward to manifest deep concern. Since most people gesture quite naturally when they speak, although not all to the same degree, the preacher ought to use gestures when he preaches. In general, he ought to let his entire pulpit manner be such that he talks to people rather than preaching at them. By this we do not mean to ignore the fact that some men have a histrionic element in their endowment which makes them naturals for pulpit oratory. They may have to guard against extremes. But we do not advocate affecting an oratorical style if it does not come naturally.

For students the basic requirement in this area is the ability to speak effectively. A basic requirement for homiletics courses is training for proper preaching.

C. Since we at our Seminary are training men to preach in our congregations, we endeavor to acquaint them with what among us is the accepted pulpit routine. Since customs may vary from culture to culture, we shall not go into detail in regard to this matter but only mention that some reference to it ought to be a requirement in homiletics courses also in our world mission seminaries.

In conclusion we shall want to remind ourselves that homiletical skills are not an end in themselves, but rather an important means to the glorious end of proclaiming the Word of God. A man may master every homiletical skill and still use it to present chaff instead of wheat. On the other hand, a man may be quite deficient in homiletical skills and still be an effective preacher because of his fervent manner in presenting the condemnation of the law, the good news of the Gospel, the comforting promises of our Lord for every situation in this life, and in keeping alive the believer's hope of heaven. But we are convinced that if the end result of the mastery of homiletical principles is to make a man both free and clear as he preaches the Word, sound homiletical training is more than justified.