

PREACH THE WORD

Ralph Larson

Introduction

In my many years as a Seventh-day Adventist minister preaching the three angels' messages in many places around the world, I have become aware of a great need in the sermons of many of our ministers and lay elders who officiate at the eleven o'clock hour on Sabbath mornings for new ideas and spiritual food for the hungering, thirsting flock.

Real preaching, of course, comes from the hours spent in prayer and earnest study of the Word and the Spirit of Prophecy. Then empowered by God's Holy Spirit, the minister can stand before his congregation with an urgency and a message from God.

Lay elders, many times hard pressed for time by their occupation and their family, have little time for preparation. Then on Sabbath morning at the eleven o'clock hour, they feel forced to read an article or a chapter from a book. Many times pastors of *churches* are lacking ideas on *which* to speak. *This* book of sermon outlines by Dr. Ralph Larson is offered by Hope International as an aid to the layman as well as to the ministry.

We are now standing at the most urgent time and crisis hour in the six-thousand years of the great controversy. To both the paid minister and his lay counterpart we urge the need to study and pray as they have never studied and prayed before-the coming of our Lord is very, very near. Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season to give answer for the great hope we have in Him. God's modern-day prophet penned these words for our time:

"We have no time for dwelling on matters that are of no importance. Our time should be given to proclaiming the last message of mercy to a guilty world. Men are needed who move under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The sermons preached by some of our ministers will have to be much more powerful than they are now, or many backsliders will carry a tame, pointless message, which lulls people to sleep. Every discourse should be given under a sense of the awful judgments soon to fall on the world. The message of truth is to be proclaimed by lips touched with a live coal from the divine altar.

"My heart is filled with anguish when I think of the tame messages borne by some of our ministers, when they have a message of life and death to bear. The ministers are asleep; the lay members are asleep; and a world is perishing in sin. May God help His people to arouse and walk and work as men and women on the borders of the eternal world. Soon an awful surprise is coming upon the inhabitants of the world. Suddenly, with power and great glory, Christ will come. Then there will be no time to prepare to meet Him. Now is the time for us to give the warning message." *Testimonies, vol. 8, 36-37*

"Transgression has almost reached its limit. Confusion fills the world, and a great terror is soon to come upon human beings. The end is very near. We who know the truth should be preparing for what is soon to break upon the world as an overwhelming surprise." *Ibid., 28*

May God bless each one, as he prepares each week to speak for God.

Sincerely,

RON SPEAR-EDITOR, Our Firm Foundation

How to Use This Manual

The material in this manual includes:

1. Twelve methods of preparing sermon outlines
2. Sample outlines prepared by using these methods
3. Suggestions for the preparation and delivery of sermons

It is very important that the twelve methods be studied in the order that they are given. The first three are *universal* methods, that is, they are used in combination with all other methods.

You will not be able to understand the discussion of the later methods unless you first master these three. They are like the carpenter's hammer or the electrician's side-cutting pliers, tools that the workman always carries in his belt or apron because he uses them constantly. Other tools are used and laid aside as the occasion requires.

The outlines themselves can be used in any order or at any time that they meet your need and the needs of your congregation. However, you must resist the temptation to use just the outlines and not to study the methods. Remember the old proverb, "Give a man a loaf of bread and he eats for a day; teach him to make bread and he eats for a lifetime." The use of these methods will make it possible for you to develop good sermons from any page in the Bible.

The suggestions on preparation and delivery of sermons should be studied and reviewed often, to ensure a continual development and improvement in your ministry of the Word.

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Reasoning From General to Specific A Universal Method

This is probably the most often used of all sermon outline methods. We use it first to develop the main points of a sermon outline. We use it again to develop the sub-points which are the supporting material for the main points. We use it in combination with all the other methods. That is why it is called a *universal method*. Here is an illustration:

Jack is a good man.

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This is a *general* statement. It does not give us any specific details as to why he is a good man. To learn these specific details, we ask questions like these: *Why* is he a good man? What is good about him? The answers will be more *specific* statements.

- Jack is a good man (because)
- I. He is honest (and)
 - II. He is kind and courteous (and)
 - III. He is hard working (and)
 - IV. He is very intelligent.

Now we have an outline. If you were planning to give a speech about Jack at a banquet, this would help you organize your thoughts. We made this outline by *reasoning from general to specific*. Here is another illustration:

Mary is a beautiful woman.

This, again, is a general statement. It does not give us any specific details about her beauty. To get more specific information we ask questions: Why do we say that she is beautiful? What is beautiful about her? The answers will be more specific statements.

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- Mary is a beautiful woman (because)
- I. She has glossy black hair (and)
 - II. She has a charming smile (and)
 - III. She has big brown eyes (and)
 - IV. She has a friendly personality.

We have developed an outline about Mary by reasoning from general to specific. Now let's use an example of a general statement found in the Bible.

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8

This is a general statement. It does not tell us any specific details at all. In order to learn these details, we must ask questions, such as: How? When? Where? Why? What? By whom? To whom? etc. If we ask different questions, the answers will provide different details. Let's begin by asking How?

- Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (How?)
- I. In your conduct (and)
 - II. In your speech (and)
 - III. In your appearance (and)
 - IV. In your obedience to My commandments

Now we have an outline with four main points that we developed by reasoning from general to specific. We will now repeat the process, and develop supporting subpoints for each of these main points by reasoning from general to specific again. (Notice that each of these subpoints was specific in relation to the more general original statement, but general in relation to the more specific details that will now be seen. Any statement is likely to be more general than some, and more specific than others.)

- Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (How?)
- I. In your conduct
 - A. By being friendly (and)
 - B. By being fair and honest (and)
 - C. By being helpful to others (and)

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D. By always choosing the right

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II. In your speech

- A. By using no profanity (and)
- B. By using no discouraging words (and)
- C. By doing no gossiping (and)
- D. By speaking of your love for Jesus

III. In your appearance

- A. By being neat and clean (and)
- B. By dressing appropriately (and)
- C. By dressing modestly (and)
- D. By keeping a cheerful countenance

IV. In your obedience to My commandments

- A. By honoring your parents (and)
- B. By respecting the property of others (and)
- C. By purity of life (and)
- D. By keeping My Sabbath

Now we have a well-developed outline, or skeleton of a sermon. Our next step would be to put the flesh on the skeleton by discussing the subpoints. We enlarge on them by one or more of the following methods:

1. By using a Bible verse on that point. For example on point I A, By being friendly, we might use Proverbs 18:24: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."
2. By referring to Bible characters whose experience illustrates that point. For example, the friendship of Jonathan with David, or Ruth with Naomi, etc.
3. By using an illustration from modern life
4. By telling an experience of our own
5. By using a Spirit of Prophecy quotation
6. By using a quotation from an uninspired writer
7. By using poetry
8. Others

In this particular outline, remembering that Jesus is calling for people to be witnesses to Him, we might want to draw most of our material from His own life and experience. This would be staying close to the meaning of our text, and would produce an inspiring Christ-centered sermon.

Naturally we would vary the procedure, not using the same method of discussion for each point on the outline.

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We soon realize that we have more material than we can use, so we just choose the best. This is a surprise to beginners, who think their problem is not having enough material. When we use efficient

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methods, we always have plenty of material. Remember that the more we read the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, the more thoughts will flash into our minds as we study a certain point in the outline.

We will remember that a certain Bible character about whom we have read had an experience which illustrates the point nicely. Or we will think of a Spirit of Prophecy quotation that fits the point well. That is why it is wise to spend some time each day just reading and marking the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. This fills our mental storage -facilities with excellent material that we can draw from when we need it.

Remember that there were other questions that we might have asked, instead of How? If we ask different questions, the answers will provide us with different outlines. In order to demonstrate how many different sermon possibilities there are in a single text, we will continue using the same text but ask different questions.

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (Where?)

- I. In the home (and)
- II. On the job (and)
- III. In the community (and) IV. In foreign lands

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (To whom?)

- I. To men (and)
- II. To the watching universe (and)
- III. To the unfallen worlds we shall visit throughout eternity

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (When?)

- I. When you are young and when you are old (and)
- II. When you are criticized and when you are praised (and)
- III. When you are in joy and when you are in sorrow

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Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (Why?)

- I. Because I am accused of being an unfair God (and)
- II. Because men can best communicate with men (and)
- III. Because your character is strengthened by witnessing

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (By what?)

- I. By personal testimony, not hearsay (and)
- II. By a truthful testimony, not perjury (and)
- III. By a complete testimony, not partial (and)
- IV. By a consistent testimony, not contradictory

Ye shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1:8. (How not?)

- I. As a witness-not a plaintiff (and)
- II. As a witness-not an attorney (and)
- III. As a witness-not a judge

Using the method of reasoning from general to specific, we have developed seven different outlines from a single text just by asking different questions, and this does not exhaust the possibilities of the text. We could add the subpoints to any of these outlines and develop a full skeleton of a sermon by

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repeating the process. We would reason from general to specific with each of the main points in the outline in order to develop the subpoints.

(This syllabus would be too long if we put in all of the subpoints for each outline, so we will just give the main points in most of our examples.)

Here are more examples of main-point outlines developed by the method of reasoning from general to specific:

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Genesis 6:8. (For what?)

- I. To overcome temptations in a wicked generation (and)
- II. To be faithful for 950 years (and)
- III. To stand alone against the crowd (and)
- IV. To believe what God said, regardless of appearances

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I was made a minister. Ephesians 3:7. (How?)

- I. Paul surrendered his will on the Damascus road (and)
- II. Paul surrendered his intellect in the Arabian desert, Galatians 1:12, (and)
- III. Somewhere along the way Paul surrendered his heart to Jesus Christ, Philippians 3:7-8, (and)
- IV. This is how he was made a minister. The same things will work for us.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3. (About what?)

- I. About their relationship with God (and)
- II. About the purpose of their lives (and)
- III. About their concept of right and wrong (and)
- IV. About their responsibility to others

Cast not away therefore your confidence. Hebrews 10:35. (In what?)

- I. In the love and mercy of God (and)
- II. In the future of the remnant church (and)
- III. In your fellow Christians (and)
- IV. In your own personal destiny in Christ

Except ye become as little children. Matthew 18:3. (How?)

- I. In the trust of a child (and)
- II. In the forgiveness of a child (and)
- III. In the obedience of a child

Without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5. (In what?)

- I. In overcoming temptation (and)
- II. In working for souls (and)
- III. In reaching your life goals

That we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. Romans 15:4. (What scriptures?)

- I. Those that tell of God's love, such as Deuteronomy 33:27 and 1 Peter 1:5 (and)
- II. Those that tell of God's providence, such as 1 Samuel 3:1-21 and Romans 8:35-39 (and)

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III. Those that tell of the bright future of God's children, such as 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 and Revelation 7:15-17

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The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. Ephesians 1:18. (To see what?)

- I. To see yourself as you are (and)
- II. To see yourself as you might be (and)
- III. To see Christ, who can make the difference

The vocation wherewith ye are called. Ephesians 4:1. (What?)

- I. A sacrificial vocation (and)
- II. A lifelong vocation (and)
- III. A richly rewarding vocation

Notice that the kind of statement that works well with this method is the short, meaningful statement that says a great deal in a few words. We find many such statements in the writings of the apostle Paul. Notice how loaded with meaning these short statements are.

- There is no respect of persons with God. Romans 2:11
- To be carnally minded is death. Romans 8:6
- If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31
- Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17
- Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:21
- We are labourers together with God. 1 Corinthians 3:9
- The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Corinthians 3:19
- Do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31
- We walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7
- We are ambassadors for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:20

This is only a sampling. There are many more such short, meaningful statements in Paul's writings, as well as in the other Scriptures. By asking questions we can easily form outlines with the method of reasoning from general to specific.

Now let us consider another use of this method. Sometimes we find that the verse we are looking at in the Bible is already quite specific. What do we do in that case? Here are some verses of that type:

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- I keep under my body. 1 Corinthians 9:27
- I will eat no flesh while the world standeth. 1 Corinthians 8:13
- If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Although these verses seem to be quite specific as they stand, there is still room to make them more specific. So we can go ahead and use them according to the principles we have already studied. But if we find this method too confining, we can give ourselves more room to work by doing something else as a first step. That is to reverse the process, and reason from specific back to general. We do this, again, by asking questions. If the verse before us is already quite specific, we ask, What more general principle is being applied here? For example, what more general principle is being applied in this verse?

I keep under my body. 1 Corinthians 9:27

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We could say the principle is temperance. Then we could move forward in the regular way, reasoning from general to specific from the principle of temperance, like this:

- I keep under my body. 1 Corinthians 9:27. (Why?)
- I. This is an expression of the principle of temperance (and)
- II. We should also be temperate in reading and study (and)
- III. We should also be temperate in eating and drinking.

What more general principle is being applied in this verse?

If meat maketh my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth. 1 Corinthians 8:13

Obviously, the principle of charity. Having determined this by taking the backward step, reasoning from specific back to general, we then move forward in the regular way, reasoning from general to specific, with regard to the principle of charity.

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- Charity beareth all things. I Corinthians 13:4, 7. (What things?)
- I. Charity beareth with the brother who has doubts about diet, Romans 14:21, (and)
- II. Charity beareth with the slow to learn, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, (and)
- III. Charity beareth with persecution. Romans 12:19-21

So, if the verse before us is already quite specific, and we feel that it limits us too much, we can enlarge the subject, and give ourselves more room to work, by using a two-step process. First we reason from the specific statement in the verse backward to the more general principle that is being applied. Second, we reason forward, from general to specific, in the regular way, using the larger principle.

You probably have a question at this point. Why not just start with a verse that states the larger and more general principle without using the more specific verse? The answer is that we do not always have freedom to use whatever verses we want. When preparing a Sabbath school lesson for teaching, we have to use the verses that are given to us. Also, when we are asked to speak to a graduating class which has already chosen its motto, we have to work with that motto. It is on such occasions that we might find this second method useful. And we also find it useful in developing regular sermon outlines, as you will see presently.

Here are some verses that are already quite specific. Notice how each one is applying a larger principle:

"God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7. The larger principle being applied is stewardship. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Corinthians 5:17. The larger principle being applied is conversion. "We are not ignorant of his devices." 2 Corinthians 2:11. The larger principle being applied is demonology. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." 2 Corinthians 4:7. The larger principle being applied is human weakness. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." 2 Corinthians 10:17. The larger principle being applied is humility.

With all such verses as these, it is possible to enlarge the subject, and give ourselves more room to work, by using the larger principle instead of the specific application in the verse.

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We have spent some time on this first method, reasoning from general to specific, because it is probably the most often used of all sermon methods. We often use it to develop the main points in our outline, and we very often use it in developing the subpoints which support the main points. We also use it in connection with many other methods. It will be worth the student's time to review this section and

practice using the method on Bible verses until the process becomes easy and natural. That will make the following methods easier to understand.

The Natural Division of Clauses A Universal Method

This is the second of three methods that we call universal methods, because we use them often in combination with other methods. The other two are the method of Reasoning From General to Specific and the method of Implied Truths.

As we look carefully at some verses of Scripture, we observe that there is a basic main-point outline right in the verse itself, in the different parts of the sentences set forth by the Bible writer. For example:

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. Luke 2:52

The various parts of this verse could be arranged in an outline like this:

- I. Jesus increased in wisdom (and)
- II. Jesus increased in stature (and)
- III. Jesus increased in favor with God (and)
- IV. Jesus increased in favor with man.

We observe that these four points are quite specific in nature. We can enlarge them a bit, and give ourselves more room to work, by reasoning from specific back to general, as described in the last part of Section I. We do this by asking, What more general principle is being applied or discussed in each specific statement? We could set them up like this:

- I. Jesus increased in wisdom-Intellectual development.
- II. Jesus increased in stature-Physical development.
- III. Jesus increased in favor with God-Spiritual development.
- IV. Jesus increased in favor with man-Social development.

Now we can develop subpoints to support these main points by reasoning from general to specific in the regular manner. We could have an outline like this:

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- I. The intellectual development of Jesus (How?)
 - A. He was a careful student of God's Word (and)
 - B. He was an observant student of nature (and)
 - C. He exercised His mind by communion with God (and)
 - D. He avoided studying the traditions of men (and)
 - E. The result was great intellectual power.

- II. The physical development of Jesus (How?)
 - A. He carefully followed the Bible rules of health (and)
 - B. He exercised vigorously as a carpenter (and)
 - C. He walked hundreds of miles in His ministry (and)
 - D. The result was an abundance of physical strength.

- III. The spiritual development of Jesus (How?)
 - A. He filled His mind with God's promises (and)
 - B. He memorized portions of Scripture (and)

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- C. He maintained a consistent and regular prayer program (and)
- D. The result was that He could withstand all temptations.

IV. The social development of Jesus (How?)

- A. He avoided fellowship with evil companions (and)
- B. He took an interest in little children (and)
- C. He sympathized with the suffering (and)
- D. He treated friends and enemies just the same (and)
- E. The result was that His social contacts with people had a saving power.

As we look back over this outline, we might feel that it would make a better arrangement of the main topics if the Spiritual Development were placed last and the Social Development were placed in the third place. We often find verses in which such rearrangement is needed. This is all right if it does not in any way change the thought of the verse from the writer's intended meaning. If it does change the meaning of the verse, it should not be done.

Here is another verse that has the main points of an outline right in the sentences or clauses as the writer set them forth:

The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. Acts 22:14-15

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Notice how easily the parts of this verse can be arranged in outline form:

God Hath Chosen Thee (To what?)

- I. To know His will (and)
- II. To see that Just One (and)
- III. To hear the voice of His mouth (and)
- IV. To be His witness unto all men

We observe that all of these points are quite specific in nature, so we enlarge them a bit by first reasoning from specific back to general. We do this by asking, What more general principle is being applied in the specific statement? The answers could be arranged like this:

What God Expects of His Chosen Workers

- I. To study so that they may know His will (and)
- II. To pray so that they may hear the voice of His mouth (and)
- III. To be willing to work for all men (and)
- IV. To receive their reward when they see that Just One

(Note: Paul had a vision and saw Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, but we cannot require this of workers today, or guarantee that it will happen. Most of us will have to see Jesus at the end of our ministry. Therefore we put this point at the end of the outline.)

Note carefully how we are combining two methods in the development of this outline. We got our main points by the method of natural division of clauses. We enlarged them a bit by using the reverse step of reasoning from general to specific, that is, reasoning from specific back to general. Now we will use the method of reasoning from general to specific in the normal way in order to develop the sub-points to support the main points, like this:

What God Expects of His Chosen Workers

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- I. He expects them to study (What?)
 - A. The Holy Scriptures (and)
 - B. The Spirit of Prophecy (and)
 - C. The history that fulfills prophecy (and)
 - D. How to reach human hearts

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- II. He Expects Them to Pray (How?)
 - A. At regular time every day (and)
 - B. In an unhurried manner (and)
 - C. With a sincere heart and purpose
- III. He Expects Them to Work (How?)
 - A. By shepherding the flock (and)
 - B. By seeking to win the unsaved (and)
 - C. By going wherever He calls
- IV. He Expects Them to Receive Their Reward (How?)

By being faithful to the end

We now support these points by Scripture quotations, Scripture illustrations, Spirit of Prophecy quotations, modern illustrations, experiences of our own, etc., until we find that we have more material than we can use for one sermon. We therefore choose the best and present the message.

Here is a verse that is an outline just as it stands:

Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. I Peter 2:17

All we have to do is arrange these in outline form and number them. We might want to rearrange them so that "Fear God" will come at the end, as a climax. We observe, however, that all four of these points are quite specific, so we enlarge them a bit by using the reverse form of method one, reasoning from specific back to general. We do this by asking, What more general principle is being applied in this specific statement?

Our answer could be that the words "Honour all men" indicate our duty to society; the words "Love the brotherhood" indicate a duty to the church; the words "Honour the king" indicate a duty to earthly governments, and the words "Fear God" indicate a duty to God. So we would use these latter principles as the main points in our outline, like this:

- The Christian and Others
- I. We have a duty to society (and)
 - II. We have a duty to the church (and)
 - III. We have a duty to earthly governments (and)
 - IV. We have a duty to God

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By reasoning from general to specific in the normal manner, we could develop the sub-points to support each of these main points in the outline. In order to save space, we will have to leave that for the student to do. Remember that you do it by asking questions, such as How? When? Where? Why? What? etc. We will present a few more outlines of only the main points, since this is what students usually find

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the hardest to do. Here are more examples of verses that have outlines built right into them in the natural division of their sentences or clauses:

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:13-14

This I Do

- I. The past-I forget it.
- II. The future-I dream of it.
- III. The present-I work for the Lord.

Colossians 2:8 is an outline just as it stands:

Beware Lest Any Man Spoil You (How?)

- I. Through philosophy and vain deceit (or)
- II. After the tradition of men (or)
- III. After the rudiments (customs) of the world

1 Thessalonians 4:11 is an outline just as it stands:

And That Ye Study

- I. To be quiet (and)
- II. To do your own business (and)
- III. To work with your own hands

2 Thessalonians 3:5 is an outline just as it stands:

The Lord Direct Your Hearts

- I. Into the love of God (and)
- II. Into patient waiting for Christ

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2 Corinthians 7:10 is an outline just as it stands:

Two Kinds of Sorrow

- I. Godly sorrow that worketh repentance (and)
- II. The sorrow of the world that worketh death

2 Corinthians 5:17 is an outline just as it stands:

If Any Man Be in Christ

- I. He is a new creature (and)
- II. Old things are passed away (and)
- III. All things are become new.

I Thessalonians 1:3 is an outline just as it stands:

Remembering

- I. Your work of faith (and)
- II. Your labor of love (and)
- III. Your patience of hope

Isaiah 33:22 is an outline just as it stands:

Our Wonderful Lord

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- I. The Lord is our judge (and)
- II. The Lord is our lawgiver (and)
- III. The Lord is our king.

Before we leave this section to study method number three, let's review what we have done so far. We have learned two methods of developing sermon outlines. These two methods are called universal methods because we use them in connection with other methods. In fact, we found that we needed method one in combination with method two.

Method one is Reasoning From General to Specific.

Method two is the Natural Division of Clauses.

When we find an outline waiting for us in the structure of a verse, we use the natural division of clauses to establish our main points. Then we use method one, reasoning from general to specific, to develop the sub-points to support those main points. For purposes of review let's do this with the outline we have just looked at in Isaiah 33:22:

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Our Wonderful Lord

- I. The Lord is our judge (How?)
 - A. He overlooks nothing in judgment, Matthew 12:36, (and)
 - B. He considers motives as well as deeds, I Samuel 16:7, (and)
 - C. He combines mercy with judgment. Romans 2:10-16

- II. The Lord is our lawgiver (How?)
 - A. His laws are never unfair, like man's laws (and)
 - B. His laws do not continually change, like man's laws (and)
 - C. His laws are expressions of love.

- III. The Lord is our king (How?)
 - A. Not on an earthly throne (and)
 - B. Not with a sovereignty of force (but)
 - C. With a rulership of love

The final step is to discuss the sub-points and support them with Scripture verses, Scripture illustrations, Spirit of Prophecy quotations, modern illustrations, our own experiences, secular quotations, poetry, etc.

We will now move on to method number three.

Implied Truths A Universal Method

The key word in the use of the method of Implied Truths is the word because. When we look at a verse with this method in mind, we are always asking two questions:

This is true because of what? What else is true because of this?

For example, consider this statement: "I am the man of this house."

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A man cannot say that of just any house. If he is the man of a certain house, there has to be a reason. He is the man of the house because of something. He might be the man of the house because he built it, or because it was given to him, or because he is renting it. So we see that the statement

"I am the man of this house"

is true only because certain other things are true. We call these implied truths. They are not stated, but they are clearly implied, and it is proper for us to take them into our thinking. They are the truths that we hope to ascertain by our first question:

This is true because of what?

Likewise, when we look at the statement: "I am the man of this house"

we recognize that certain other things are true because this is true. Those are the truths that we hope to ascertain by asking our second question.

What else is true because this is true?

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The answer to this question may include many things. We might say:

- Because he is the man of the house, he should pay the bills, (or)
- Because he is the man of the house, he should discipline his children, (or)
- Because he is the man of the house, he should lead in decision making, etc.

Those again are called implied truths. They are not stated, but they are clearly implied, and it is proper for us to take them into our thinking as we prepare outlines. Remember:

The key word in using this method is the word because.

When we look at a verse, having this method in mind, we are always asking two questions:

- This is true because of what?
- What else is true because this is true?

Now let's use this method in a Bible verse:

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Revelation 3:19

As we look at this verse, we ask our first question: This is true because of what?

Obviously, because it contributes to our spiritual growth and development. God would not chasten us for no purpose. See Hebrews 12:10. The very word chasten means punishment for the purpose of reform. Now let's ask our second question.

What else is true because of this?

There are many answers. The following truths are all implied:

1. We have value in God's sight. He would not waste effort on worthless material.
2. What we call trials may be God's chastening, since He does not chasten us with a stick, or a whip, but with the experiences of life.

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3. Trials therefore do not prove that God does not love us, but that the opposite is true.
4. All of God's people can expect trials, since He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."
5. The purpose of these trials is to lead to zeal and repentance.

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6. We observe that it does not always work that way. Trials sometimes produce bitterness and rebellion.

We now have plenty of material for a very practical sermon on the trials people experience in this life. We will develop an outline using both stated and implied truths. You will observe that we are using the method of Implied Truths in combination with method one, *Reasoning From General to Specific*.

How People Cope With Trials

Introduction: It is easy to see that all human beings experience trials in this life. Christians escape many trials, but they do not escape them all. We notice that people handle trials in different ways.

I. Some with the bitterness of despair (saying that)

- A. God is cruel (or)
- B. God is unfair (or)
- C. God just likes to see me suffer.

II. Some with stolid indifference (saying)

- A. Like Job who said "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," Job 13:15, (and)
- B. Like Paul who said "All things work together for good to them that love God," Romans 8:28, (and)
- C. Like Jesus who said "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11
- D. These are the ones for whom trials fulfill their purpose as stated in Revelation 3:19.
- E. These are the ones who have the greatest peace of mind in the trials of life.

Let's look at another verse, using the method of implied truths:

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Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55:6

Our first question is,

This is true because of what?

it is obvious that God has made Himself available to us. If He had not, we would seek Him in vain. See Job 11:7. This is our first implied truth. The second implied truth is that God will not disappoint them who seek Him. See Jeremiah 29:13

Our second question is,

What else is true because of this? These truths are implied:

- 1. The simplicity of the gospel (He may be found)
- 2. The availability of the gospel (He is near)
- 3. The urgency of the gospel. The word while implies that He will not always be near, will not always be found.

We again form the main points of our outline by the method of implied truths, and develop the subpoints by reasoning from general to specific, like this:

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55:6

I. The simplicity of the gospel (in that)

- A. He may be found by young people (and)
- B. He may be found by old people (and)
- C. He may be found by the wise (and)

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D. He may be found by the simple.

II. The availability of the gospel (in that)

- A. No pilgrimage is required (and)
- B. No penance is required (and)
- C. A simple act of faith is enough. Romans 10:6-10

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III. The urgency of the gospel (in that)

- A. The gospel is simple and available (but)
- B. There is a time limit on God's mercy for each individual (and)
- C. There is a time limit on God's mercy for all mankind. Revelation 22:11-12

Remember that by asking a different question, we can provide ourselves with a different outline. For example:

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Isaiah 55:6 (Why?)

1. There is a close of probation for all (in that)

- A. Amos predicted a close of probation, Amos 8:11-12, (and)
- B. John predicted a close of probation. Revelation 22:11-12

II. There is a close of probation for each individual (in that)

- A. Individual probation is closed by death (and)
- B. Individual probation is closed by the unpardonable sin (and)
- C. No one can predict the time of either.

III. There is a gradual hardening of the heart (in that)

- A. Hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (and)
- B. Human records show that
 - 1. At age 16, 14 of 100 will accept Christ (and)
 - 2. At age 26, 2 of 100 will accept Christ (and)
 - 3. At age 40, 1 in 1000 will accept Christ (and)
 - 4. At age 65, 1 in 15,000 will accept Christ.

IV. It is therefore unwise to delay. Seek while He may be found, call while He is near.

When we have taught ourselves to see the implied truths as well as the stated truths in the Bible, we find this method useful as we look at the Bible stories. For example, consider the familiar story of the apostle Peter's downfall. What was his problem? Is there any similarity between his experience and our problems today? By looking at the implied truths as well as the stated truths, we could form an outline like this:

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Peter's Problems

- I. He was refusing to believe what he could not understand, Matthew 16:21-22, (and)
- II. He was putting too much confidence in self, Matthew 26:33, (and)
- III. He was giving the physical priority over the spiritual, Matthew 26:40, (and)
- IV. He was trying to fight spiritual battles with physical weapons. Matthew 26:51

It would be very easy to point out how modern people have these very same temptations. We should learn from Peter's experience, and not repeat his mistakes.

The entire twenty-seventh chapter of Acts is the fascinating story of Paul's shipwreck on the voyage to Rome. Paul's life was saved, but the owner lost his ship. Why? The answers are quite clearly implied in the story. Since life is often compared to the voyage of a ship, we could develop an interesting outline for a youth sermon like this:

Seven Reasons for Shipwreck

- I. Verse 7—It took him too long to get started—like young people who can't decide what they want to do.
- II. Verse 11—He made a poor choice of counselors. There was an inspired counselor on board, but he rejected him, as young people today reject the Spirit of Prophecy.
- III. Verse 13—He was deceived by the soft south wind, which says to young people, Take it easy—Have fun—There is lots of time.
- IV. Verses 16-17—He was not prepared for trouble (He was pulling the small boat. In a storm, a wave might dash it against the side of the ship and sink them both.) Many young people have no preparation for trouble. Training and education are the best preparations for trouble.
- V. Verse 30—He had made a poor choice of friends—like many young people today.
- VI. Verses 38-39—He had tried to carry too much with him, like young people who have to have clothes, cars, and other luxuries.
- VII. Verse 41—He lost control and lost his ship in the area of turbulence where two seas met. There is a current that moves toward heaven, and a current that moves toward hell. Those who stay in the middle of the heavenly current seldom have shipwrecks. Those who stay close to the borderline often lose control and sink. Stay away from the area of turbulence, the borderline.

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We have now studied the three sermon outline methods that are called universal methods because they are so often used in connection with other methods, or with each other. They are

Method one: Reasoning From General to Specific

Method two: The Natural Division of Clauses

Method three: The Method of Implied Truths

It will pay the student to review these methods often, and practice them on Bible texts. Their use should become natural and instinctive. They will then be of great value in the study of the other methods.

The Use of Comparison and Contrast

Many good sermon outlines can be developed by comparing and contrasting the experiences of people in the Bible. We use the term compare when we are noting similarities, things that are alike. We use the term contrast when we are noting dissimilarities, things that are not alike. We can compare the experiences of different people in regard to the same command of God. We can compare the experiences of the same man before and after his conversion. We can compare different members of the same family. The possibilities for this type of outline are many, and they are effective means of teaching truth, because we are discussing real people who had real experiences, not unlike ours. This method is also useful in developing illustrations of the principles being discussed in other types of outlines. Here are some examples of outlines formed by this method, the use of Comparison and Contrast:

They Had the Same Name

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- I. Ananias, the high priest. Acts 23:1-5; 24:1
 - A. He loved authority (and)
 - B. He was blind to the right he should have done (and)
 - C. He brought disgrace upon himself and his nation.

- II. Ananias, the husband of Sapphira. Acts 5:1-5
 - A. He loved money (and)
 - B. He was blind to the wrong that he was doing (and)
 - C. He suffered a tragic death.

- III. Ananias of Damascus. Acts 9:10-17; 22:12
 - A. He loved the Lord (and)
 - B. He was blind to personal danger (and)
 - C. God used him to get Paul started on his work for the Gentiles.

It will be necessary for the student to read each story as it is given in the scripture references. The student should then read the discussion of the experience given in the Spirit of Prophecy. This reading will provide a wealth of material that can be presented in an interesting manner.

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Here is an outline built on the similarities and the differences between the ocean voyage taken by Jonah and the ocean voyage taken by Paul. Read the book of Jonah to get his experience in mind, and read Acts chapter 27 for the experience of Paul.

They Both Went to Sea

- I. Two of God's messengers went to sea (and)
 - A. One went from Joppa (and)
 - B. One went from Caesarea (and)
 - C. The two ports are not far apart (but)
 - D. There the similarities end.
- II. They went for different reasons (in that)
 - A. One was a prisoner of Rome (and)
 - B. One was a prisoner of his own fears.
- III. They both got caught in a storm (and)
 - A. One was able to say "The angel of the Lord stood by me" (but)
 - B. The other had to say "Throw me into the ocean."
- IV. They both had an influence on their fellow travelers (in that)
 - A. One was responsible for the safety of all on board (but)
 - B. The other caused peril to come to all on board.
- V. They both had been told to preach to the Gentiles (but)
 - A. One gladly accepted his commission (and)
 - B. The other rejected his commission (so that)
 - C. One was traveling for God (and) D. The other was running from God.
- VI. Our last picture of each is very different (in that)

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- A. The last we hear from Paul is his grand statement of faith in II Timothy 4:6-8.
- B. The last we hear from Jonah is his bitter complaint in Jonah 4:9.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Those who gladly accept God's assignments have wonderful experiences (but)
- B. Those who don't are always miserable.

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Here is an outline comparing the experience of Adam in the Garden of Eden with the experience of Christ in Gethsemane.

Two Gardens

I. The Garden of Eden (in which)

- A. The flowers and plants were in beautiful perfection (and)
- B. The man had the strength of perfect manhood (and)
- C. The devil was only a beginner (but)
- D. The man was a failure (because of)
- E. A tragic lack of trust in his Creator.

II. The Garden of Gethsemane (in which)

- A. The land was rough and rocky (and)
- B. The man was weakened by four thousand years of the decline of the human race (and)
- C. The devil was wiser because of four thousand years of experience (yet)
- D. The man won a great victory (because of)
- E. His perfect and complete trust in God.

Here is an outline based on the prison experiences of Samson, Peter and Paul.

All Three Were In Prison

I. Samson was in prison. Judges 16:21 (and)

- A. His mission was a failure (and)
- B. His lifework was ruined.

II. Peter was in prison. Acts 12:4 (and)

- A. His mission was interrupted (and)
- B. His lifework was just beginning.

III. Paul was in prison. 2 Timothy 4:6 (and)

- A. His mission was accomplished (and)
- B. His lifework was done.

IV. Conclusion: All three made some serious mistakes. Peter and Paul learned their lessons, and went on to win great victories for God. Samson couldn't learn.

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Here is an outline based on the experience of Peter during and after the trial of Jesus.

Divine Alchemy

(Note: The word alchemy means the fusion of metals in great heat, especially the attempts made in ancient times to fuse metals to produce gold.)

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I. Peter before the fire. Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:66-71

- A. He was deeply concerned (but)
- B. He was not totally committed.

II. Peter in the fire. Mark 14:67-72

- A. He was terribly discouraged (but)
- B. He was not in despair (because)
- C. God was watching the fire (that is, the affliction he was going through)

III. Peter on fire. Acts 2:14-41; 5:29

- A. He was deeply concerned (and)
- B. He was totally committed (and)
- C. He was making great conquests for the Lord.

IV. Conclusion

- A. God let him go through the fire of affliction to purify him (and)
- B. The dross had been burned away, and the gold remained.

Here is an outline based on the experiences of Samson and Samuel.

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Samson and Samuel Judges 13 and I Samuel 1

- I. They both were children of promise (in that)
 - A. Manoah's wife had no child (until)
 - B. The angel of the Lord brought a promise (and)
 - C. Elkanah's wife had no child (until)
 - D. She was blessed at the sanctuary by Eli.

- II. They both were dedicated to the Lord (in that)

- A. The Spirit of the Lord was with Samson at times. Judges 13:25 (and)
- B. The spirit of the Lord was with Samuel at all times.

- III. Conclusion: In spite of many advantages, Samson's life accomplished little and ended in tragedy because of his off-and-on religious experience.

Here is an outline based on the character changes that the Lord produced in various people.

The Builder of Men

His name shall be called Wonderful. Isaiah 9:6

Why is His name called wonderful? There are many reasons, but we will study only one: He can build the characters of men.

- I. He built the characters of the tribe of Levi (in that)

- A. Levi committed a great crime, Genesis 34, (and)
- B. He was cursed by Jacob, Genesis 49:5-7, (but)
- C. The tribe of Levi were loyal to Moses at the time of the great apostasy at Sinai, Exodus 32:26, (and)
- D. The curse, "No inheritance in Israel," became a badge of honor, and they became the priests of the nation.

- II. He built the character of Abraham (in that)

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- A. Abraham was called to be the father of the faithful (but)
- B. He told lies about Sarah (yet)
- C. Before Christ was through with him, he passed the greatest of all tests when ordered to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mt. Moriah.

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III. He built the character of Judah (in that)

- A. Judah suggested selling Joseph into slavery, Genesis 37:26-27, (but)
- B. Before Christ was through with him, he offered himself to be a slave so that little Benjamin could go free. Genesis 44:33

IV. Conclusion: If Christ could so build their characters, He can do the same thing for us. Jude 24-25

Here is an outline based on a comparison of the tests that different people were given in Bible history:

How Is Character Tested?

Introduction: Compare with tests in our time for I.Q., aptitudes, skills, etc. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 549, "By the simplest means. . . ."

I. The character test of Gideon's soldiers-Judges 7

- A. The test was two ways of drinking water (and)
- B. The issue was commitment and self-sacrifice.

II. The character test of Daniel and his friends-Daniel 1

- A. The test was eating certain foods (and) B. The issue was self-discipline.

III. The character test of Nadab and Abihu-Leviticus 10

- A. The test was offering fire on the altar (and)
- B. The issue was reverence and respect.

IV. The character test of Eve-Genesis 3

- A. The test was eating certain fruit (and)
- B. The issue was faith and trust in God.

V. Our character test in the last days-Revelation 13

- A. The test will be keeping a day holy (and)
- B. The issue will be our loyalty to God.

VI. Conclusion: Character can be tested by very simple means. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 60-61, 549

Here is an outline based on a comparison of the experiences of Jacob and Balaam, who were probably related:

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They Both Liked Nice Things

Introduction: Balaam prophesied in the land that Jacob came from. They were probably related, and both had a problem of coveting. Balaam's story is in Numbers 22 to 25.

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I. We know that Balaam liked nice things (because)

- A. He knew that he could not curse Israel, yet he wanted to get the gifts that were offered him, and so he inquired of God anyway (and)
- B. He did the same thing a second time (so that)
- C. It seems that the gifts confused him.

II. We know that the confusion grew worse (because)

- A. The Bible says he died with the Midianites, Numbers 31:8, (and)
- B. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us what happened. Patriarchs and Prophets, 458
 - 1. On his way home Balaam had an idea (and)
 - 2. He quickly returned to Midian (and)
 - 3. He suggested that the women of Moab be sent to seduce the men of Israel. Numbers 25, ibid., 451

III. We see that covetousness grew into worse sins (and)

- A. Balaam lost all sense of right doing (and)
- B. He caused many men of Israel to die (and)
- C. He died with the enemies of God.

IV. We know that Jacob liked nice things (because)

- A. He deceived Isaac for the birthright, Genesis 27, (and)
- B. He deceived Laban for his flocks, Genesis 31, (but)
- C. He overcame his covetousness (and)
- D. He died as Israel, the Overcomer.

IV. Conclusion:

- A. Small sins not overcome lead to greater sins (and)
- B. Even though we inherit a family trait or weakness, it can be overcome.

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So we see that the possibilities in the Bible for using the method of Comparison and Contrast are endless. This is a good sermon method, because it makes use of Bible stories, while offering new insights into their spiritual lessons. It is worth the student's time to develop quite a few of these outlines as entire sermons. As we will see later, this method can also be used on a smaller scale to provide Bible illustrations in support of points in outlines that have been developed by other methods, such as Reasoning From General to Specific, etc.

The Use of Cognate Terms

Cognate terms are words that are not identical but are in some way related to each other, as when they are grouped around a single subject in a text. Since they tend to be strong action words, they often make the basis for the main points in an outline. The supporting points are then developed by the use of method one, Reasoning From General to Specific, or in some cases by method four, The Use of Comparison and Contrast. In our first example of this method, observe that the sub-points under the first main point are developed by the use of comparison and contrast. The others are developed by reasoning from general to specific. Reading the story of Achan and his confession in Joshua 7:21 we

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notice the series of words describing his temptation and fall. They are I saw, I coveted, I took, and I hid. These cognate terms make the main points in an outline entitled:

The Psychology of Sin

When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and behold they are hid in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. Joshua 7:21

I. The temptation appears. I saw (as)

- A. David saw Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 11, (and)
- B. Ananias saw the honor given liberal members, Acts 5, (and)
- C. Simon saw the Holy Spirit's power. Acts 8
- D. Sin begins with a long, lingering look.

II. The temptation is accepted in the imagination. I coveted.

- A. We imagine ourselves doing the thing (and)
- B. This is the same as action in that part of the brain (and)
- C. This is letting the devil into our minds.

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III. The imagination is followed by action. I took.

- A. Now temptation has become sin, James 4:1, (and)
- B. Now the devil has gained his object (and)
- C. Now the devil leaves us with our problem.

IV. Confusion, perplexity and despair now follow. I hid.

- A. Now that he has the garment he cannot wear it (and) B. Now that he has the gold he cannot spend it (and) C. The telling of one lie requires the telling of another.

V. The horrible punishment cannot be escaped (because)

- A. Men escape from man's justice, but not from God's (and)
- B. What we lose is far greater than what we gain.

VI. Conclusion: It is best to avoid that first look.

As we read about the preaching of Paul to the Bereans in Acts 17, we notice some cognate terms in the description of these people. The words are: they received, they searched, they believed. We note that these statements are quite specific, so we employ the backward movement of method one, and reason from specific back to general to see what larger principle is being applied in the specific statement. We conclude that the words they received indicate open minds; the words they searched indicate careful minds; and the words they believed indicate willing minds. We will therefore use these principles as the main points in our outline. We will develop our subpoints by using both methods one and four, Reasoning From General to Specific and The Use of Comparison and Contrast.

These Were More Noble

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed.

I. They had open minds (in that)

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- A. They were not bound in tradition like the Pharisees, Matthew 15:3-4; 23:4; Mark 7:2-4, (and)
- B. They were not bound by social pressures like the Sadducees (and)
- C. They were not bound in sin like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Genesis 19:14

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- II. They had careful minds (in that)
 - A. They were not like the men of Athens, Acts 17:21, (and)
 - B. They were willing to analyze the evidence (and)
 - C. They tested the message by Scripture.

- III. They had willing minds (in that)
 - A. They followed evidence where it led (and)
 - B. They yielded to the Spirit's convicting power (and)
 - C. They were not like those who claim to be searching for truth but never find any.

IV. Conclusion: Are we as noble as they were?

As we read the two letters of Paul to Timothy, we notice many strong action words in his counsels to the young minister. Some of them we would describe as cognate terms, because they are associated with a single subject, even though they are sometimes several verses apart. Let us see what we can do with some of these cognate terms. In 1 Timothy 6:20, 12, 11, we notice the words keep, fight, and follow. So we will develop an outline on

Advice to a Young Minister

Keep that which is committed to thy trust. Verse 20

Fight the good fight of faith. Verse 12

Follow after righteousness. Verse 11

I. Keep that which is committed to thy trust (such as)

- A. The truth in its purity
 - 1. Preach the word, 2 Timothy 4:2, (and)
 - 2. Avoid useless arguments. 1 Timothy 6:5
- B. The members whom you pastor
 - 1. Be gentle and patient, 2 Timothy 2:24, (and)
 - 2. Instruct in meekness, 2 Timothy 2:25, (and)
 - 3. Reprove, rebuke, exhort. 2 Timothy 4:2

II. Fight the good fight of faith, 1 Timothy 6:12,

- A. As those listed in Hebrews 11 (and)
- B. As you have seen me do. 2 Timothy 4:7

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III. Follow after righteousness, 1 Timothy 6:11,

- A. Flee youthful lusts, 2 Timothy 2:22, (and)
- B. Gain the crown of righteousness. 2 Timothy 4:8

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul tells some things about his own experience. Again we notice some strong action words that are related to the same subject, so we call them cognate terms. We may change the tense of the words, and we may put them in a different order than he did, but this is all right as long as we do not change the meaning in any way. In 1 Timothy 1:12-13 we notice the words in which

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Paul speaks of himself like this: who was enabled (to be a minister) who was before a blasphemer who obtained mercy

These give us the main points for an outline. We will arrange them in a progressive order, being faithful to the meaning, in an outline about

The Made-Over Man

I. Who was before a blasphemer (in that)

- A. He took part in the stoning of Stephen, Acts 7, (and)
- B. He persecuted the saints in Jerusalem, Acts 8, (and)
- C. He tried to persecute the saints in Damascus. Acts 9

II. Who obtained mercy (in that)

- A. He was not slain on the Damascus road (and)
- B. He was accepted by the Christians he had persecuted (and)
- C. He was taught by Christ in Arabia. Galatians 1:17, Acts of the Apostles, 125-126
- D. He was commissioned to go to the Gentiles.

III. Who was enabled to be a minister (in that)

- A. He preached with power (and) B. He wrote with power (and)
- C. He traveled in spite of dangers (and)
- D. He survived many trials, 2 Corinthians 11, (and)
- E. His influence has extended to millions of people all over the world.

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Another closely related group of words are found in I Timothy 4:13, 15, and 2 Timothy 4:2. Although they are several verses apart, they are all on the same subject. They are the words read, meditate, and preach. We could use them for an outline like this:

More Advice to a Young Minister

I. Give attendance to reading (such as)

- A. The Old Testament Scriptures (and)
- B. Any available portions of the gospels (and)
- C. Paul's own epistles (but)
- D. Not genealogies and fables. I Timothy 1:4

II. Meditate upon these things (because)

- A. Meditation is a lost art (and)
- B. Meditation is often impure (but)
- C. We should meditate about the life of Christ.

III. Preach the word (Why?)

- A. It brings salvation, 2 Timothy 3:15, (and)
- B. The people need its assurances of God's love (and)
- C. The people need its promises and encouragements (and)
- D. The people need its warnings.

In 2 Timothy 2:1-8 we notice some more of these strong action words. They are:

Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Consider what I say.

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Remember that Jesus Christ ... was raised from the dead.

With these we can make an outline like this:

The Soldier of the Cross

- I. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (because)
 - A. We face powerful earthly enemies, Ephesians 7, (and)
 - B. The devil himself is against us (and)
 - C. Our human strength is not enough without the grace of Christ. Philippians 4:13

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II. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (such as)

- A. Traveling from place to place (and)
- B. Opposition of ungodly men (and)
- C. Loneliness and separation from loved ones.

III. Consider what I say (because)

- A. You have seen all of these in my experience (and)
- B. They will come to you as well.

IV. Remember that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead (because)

- A. He is alive (and)
- B. He is all powerful (and)
- C. This is our assurance of victory in the end.

In I Timothy 2:7 we find a group of words associated with the calling of the apostle Paul. He writes:

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. I Timothy 2:7

Let's use these for an outline like this:

My Calling

- I. I am appointed to be a preacher (because)
 - A. This is God's way of saving men, 1 Corinthians 1:21, (and)
 - B. Because men seldom hear without a preacher, Romans 10:14, (and)
 - C. God has commanded that His word be preached. 2 Timothy 4:2

II. I am appointed to be an apostle (because)

- A. Honest hearts are everywhere, Romans 2:9-12, (and)
- B. Jesus wants them all to hear the gospel, Matthew 28:19, (and)
- C. Christ cannot return until it is done. Matthew 24:14

III. I am appointed to be a teacher (because)

- A. Jesus said to teach them all things, Matthew 28:20, (and)
- B. Precept must be upon precept, Isaiah 28:9-10, (and)
- C. If they are well taught, they also will become teachers and preachers and apostles.

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It is a good plan to keep a pencil or pen in hand while reading the Bible, and when you see a strong action word, just circle it. Then when you have marked them all, it is easy to see their relationship with

one another, and how they are arranged in groups of cognate terms about one subject. Then you can use them for outlines according to this method, The Use of Cognate Terms. Strong action words of the type that are useful for this method are easily found in the sayings of Jesus, the Psalms and Proverbs, and the epistles of the New Testament.

Remember that we use these cognate terms to form the main points in an outline. Then we develop the subpoints by reasoning from general to specific, or by using the method of Comparison and Contrast. That gives us the skeleton for our sermon. We then put the flesh on the skeleton by using the various methods of discussion such as Bible quotations, Bible examples, Spirit of Prophecy quotations, modern illustrations, our own experiences and observations, secular quotations, poetry, etc.

Now we will proceed to our next method.

The Use of Key Words or Phrases

As we read certain chapters or books in the Bible, we sometimes notice a repetition of certain words or phrases. It pays to look closely at such passages when we find them, because they often reveal an association or progression of ideas that can be used for a sermon outline. We call these repetitions Key words or phrases. For example, notice the repeated use of the word "wherein" in the book of Malachi, the repetition of the word "consider" in Haggai, the repetition of the phrase "I have" in Amos, the various uses of the phrase "the day of the Lord" in Joel, the repetition of the words "much more" in Romans chapter five, the uses of the word "walk" in Ephesians chapter five, the uses of the phrase "let us therefore" in Hebrews chapters four and six, the uses of the words "by faith" in Hebrews eleven, and so on.

We can extend our use of this method by using a concordance, and noticing different verses that use an identical word in different ways. For example, in Paul's writings we notice a frequent use of the word "called." By comparing some of them, we find an interesting association of ideas that could be put together in a sermon outline like this:

The Called Ones

Introduction: Our English word "church" is translated from the Greek word "ekklesia." This word is made up of two Greek words: "Ek," which means out, and "klesia," which is derived from the verb "kaleo," which means to call. A literal translation of the combined form, ekklesia, then, would be "the ones having been called," or more simply, "the called ones." To Paul this was a very meaningful term. He says we are:

- I. Called to be saints. Romans 1:7
- II. Called to peace. 1 Corinthians 7:15
- III. Called to liberty. Galatians 5:13
- IV. Called to holiness. I Thessalonians 4:7
- V. Called to endure. 1 Peter 2:21
- VI. He appeals to us to be worthy of our calling, 1 Thessalonians 1:11, (because)
 - A. It is a high calling, Philippians 3:14, (and)
 - B. It is a holy calling. 2 Timothy 1:9

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By reasoning from general to specific with each one of these points, we could easily develop the subpoints for an effective outline.

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As we continue looking for key words in the writings of Paul, we notice three uses of the words "captivity," or "captive." 2 Timothy 2:26 refers to those who are taken captive by the devil at his will. Romans 7:23 mentions the captivity to the law of sin in our members, which we could more simply call "the flesh." And 2 Corinthians 10:5 encourages us to bring our every thought into captivity to Christ. So we are considering three kinds of captivity:

I. The captivity of the flesh

II. The captivity of the devil

III. The captivity of the Lord

By reasoning from general to specific with each one of these main points, we could develop an outline like this:

Choose Your Master

Introduction: Is anyone actually totally free and independent in this world? Or are we not serving certain masters, whether we recognize it or not?

I. The captivity of the flesh. Romans 7:23

A. Paul calls it a law, not a coincidence.

B. Those who experience this captivity are always asking certain questions:

1. What's wrong with it? (and)
2. Aren't there lots of worse things than this? (and)
3. Will just a little hurt us? (and)
4. Isn't everybody doing it? (and)
5. Isn't it legalism to be too strict about it? (and)
6. Since we can't win anyway, why should we struggle?

C. Many never escape from this captivity. Romans 7:24

D. Many go from this captivity to a worse captivity.

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II. The Captivity of the devil. 2 Timothy 2:26

A. Paul says it is "at his will."

1. His intellect is far greater than ours (and)
2. He has enormous power (and)
3. He has had six thousand years of experience.

B. He has many methods of making us captive.

1. Through indulgences of the flesh (and)
2. Through the love of money (and)
3. Through worldly pleasures, Matthew 7:13, (and)
4. Through deception. No one plans to be a drunkard or a dope addict. He deceives his victim.

C. He destroys some of his captives.

1. Through suicide (and)
2. Through wars, etc.

D. He uses some of his victims for decoys.

1. Who would choose to drink after looking at a drunkard in a gutter? (and)
2. Who would choose to steal after visiting a penitentiary? (and)
3. Who would choose to be a murderer after watching an execution?

III. The captivity of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 10:5

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- A. It is a captivity that gives freedom, John 8:36, (and)
- B. It is a captivity that gives victory, Romans 8:1-4, (and)
- C. It is a captivity that gives life, John 10:10, (and)
- D. It is a captivity that gives joy. Philippians 4:4

Let us now consider the possibilities in some of the key words and phrases that were listed on the first page of this section.

The Willfully Ignorant

"There are none so blind as those who do not wish to see."

- I. Wherein hast thou loved us? Malachi 1:2
- II. Wherein have we despised thy name? 1:6
- III. Wherein have we polluted thee? 1:7
- IV. Wherein have we wearied him? 2:17
- V. Wherein shall we return? 3:7
- VI. Wherein have we robbed thee? 3:8
- VII. In what (wherein) have we spoken against thee? 3:13

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To fill out this sobering outline, we would reason from general to specific on each point. By looking carefully at the context of each question, we find material for the subpoints.

Think It Over

- I. Consider your ways, their poor results. Haggai 1:5-6
- II. Consider your ways, and the reason. 1:7-11
- III. Consider from this day-what can be. 2:15
- IV. Consider the results of My blessing. 2:18-19

Yet Ye Have Not Returned

- I. I have appealed through hunger. Amos 4:6
- II. I have appealed through sunshine and rain. 4:7-8
- III. I have appealed through crop failures. 4:9
- IV. I have appealed through disease and pestilence. 4:10
- V. I have appealed through deliverances. 4:11
- VI. There is no more that I can do; therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

The Day of the Lord

- I. The Description:
 - A. A day of destruction, Joel 1:15
 - B. A day of darkness, 2:2
- II. The Question: Who can abide it? 2:11
- III. The Answer: The truly repentant, 2:12-13

Much More

- I. The much more of God's love, Romans 5:9-10
- II. The much more of God's gift, 5:15
- III. The much more of God's righteousness, 5:17
- IV. The much more of God's grace, 5:20

Therefore

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- I. Let us therefore fear. Hebrews 4:1
- II. Let us therefore labor. 4:11
- III. Let us therefore hold fast. 4:14
- IV. Let us therefore come boldly. 4:16
- V. Let us therefore go on unto perfection. 6:1

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Joy

- I. The joy of prayer, Philippians 1:4
- II. The joy of faith, 1:25
- III. The joy of love, 2:2
- IV. The joy of sacrifice, 2:17

Lest I Should Run in Vain

- I. Vain gifts, Isaiah 1:13
- II. Vain prayer, Matthew 6:7
- III. Vain worship, Matthew 15:9
- IV. Vain belief, I Corinthians 15:2
- V. Vain religion, James 1:26

Far Away

- I. The prodigal afar off, Luke 15:13
- II. The rich man afar off, Luke 16:23
- III. Peter afar off, Matthew 26:58
- IV. The publican afar off, Luke 18:13

Three Ways to Die

- I. Dead in sin, Ephesians 2:1
- II. Dead for sin, 1 Corinthians 15:3
- III. Dead to sin, Romans 6:2

Four Things That Are Short

- I. The earth's time, 1 Corinthians 7:29
- II. A man's life, Psalm 39:5
- III. A sinner's joy, Job 20:5
- IV. A saint's affliction, 2 Corinthians 4:17

Vessels

- I. Of wrath, Romans 9:22
- II. Of mercy, Romans 9:23
- III. Unto honor, 2 Timothy 2:21

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Fools

- I. The unbelieving fool, Psalm 14:1
- II. The world-loving fool, Luke 12:20
- III. The self-confident fool, Proverbs 28:26
- IV. The fool for Christ's sake, 1 Corinthians 4:10

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"Fear Not"

- I. To a new convert, Luke 5:10
- II. To an anxious father, Luke 8:50
- III. To an earnest servant, Acts 27:24
- IV. To an exiled disciple, Revelation 1:17

He Is Able

- I. To deliver us, Daniel 3:17
- II. To help us, Hebrews 2:18
- III. To make us stand, Romans 14:4
- IV. To save to the uttermost, Hebrews 7:25
- V. To present us faultless before the throne, Jude 24

This Man

- I. Never man spake like this man. John 7:46
- II. This man receiveth sinners. Luke 15:2
- III. This man hath done nothing amiss. Luke 23:41
- IV. This man was the Son of God. Mark 15:39
- V. Through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins. Acts 13:38

Come

- I. Come and see. John 1:46
- II. Come and drink. John 7:37
- III. Come and rest. Matthew 11:28

Persuaded

- I. Almost thou persuadest me. Acts 26:28
- II. Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Luke 16:31
- III. I am persuaded... Romans 8:38-39

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Sub-points for these main-point outlines can be developed by reasoning from general to specific, the use of comparison and contrast, etc., as has been done in previous examples. Remember that we do this by asking questions: Who? When? Where? Why? What? How? etc.

The Use of "IF" Clauses

It is interesting to notice that one of the most meaningful words in the Bible is also one of the shortest (in English). It is a word with only two letters, IF. Yet, because that word involves choices, decisions and their consequences, it is a word loaded with meaning. The "if" clauses in the Bible fall generally into three groups. Some recommend a choice and then describe the certain result of that choice:

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. Isaiah 1:19

Some are expressions of a firm commitment or inflexible purpose:

I will go in unto the king ... and if I perish, I perish. Esther 4:16

Some are strong appeals or commands:

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Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Psalm 95:7-8
If the Lord be God, follow him. 1 Kings 18:21

The element of choice and decision is always present. That is what makes these texts useful for sermon outlines. Choices and decisions are very much a part of the Christian religion. Therefore discussions of choices are appropriate material for sermons. We are called upon to make the same choices and decisions that others before us have made. The experiences that came to them as a result of those choices are likely to also come to us.

One of the most loved of the "if" clause verses among Seventh-day Adventists is Isaiah 58:13-14. As we look at this passage, we see that it could easily be developed into an outline by using the method of Natural Division of Clauses. So by combining two methods we could produce a basic outline like this:

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If-Then

- I. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,
 - A. From doing thy pleasure on my holy day (and)
 - B. Call the sabbath a delight,
 - 1. The holy of the Lord,
 - 2. Honourable;
 - C. And shalt honour him,
 - 1. Not doing thine own ways, (nor)
 - 2. Finding thine own pleasure, (nor)
 - 3. Speaking thine own words:

- II. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; (and)
 - A. I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, (and)
 - B. (I will) feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: (for)
 - C. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

This gives us both the main points and the subpoints of an outline, which we developed by combining the "If" Clause method with the method of Natural Division of Clauses. To develop the outline further we would use the method of *Reasoning From General to Specific*, a third method. This illustrates how the various methods work together.

Three of the most dramatic moments in the Bible, as well as most inspiring, are seen by combining three verses that have "if" clauses:

They Were Totally Committed

I. She was true to her people.

"I will go in unto the king, and if I perish, I perish." Esther 4:16

II. He was true to his calling.

"If thou wilt, forgive their sin-and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." Exodus 32:32

III. They were true to their God.

"Our God ... is able to deliver ... but if not-we will not worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Daniel 3:17

IV. Conclusion: All three put loyalty above life itself. Are we so totally committed?

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The response of Jacob to the heavenly vision that was given to him on his first night away from home can be used as an outline by combining the "If" Clause method with the method of Natural Division of Clauses:

Decision

Genesis 28:20-22

I. If God will be with me, (and)

A. Will keep me in this way that I go, (and)

B. Will give me bread to eat, (and)

C. Will give me raiment to put on (so that)

D. I come again unto my father's house in peace;

II. Then shall the Lord be my God: (and)

A. This stone which I have set for a pillar, will be God's house; (and)

B. Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

III. Jacob's response was immediate (in that)

A. He heard the promise (and)

B. He did not wait to test and prove it (but)

C. He began immediately to act as if the promise were true.

IV. Is our response immediate?

A. We also hear the promise (and)

B. We sometimes wait to test and prove it.

C. Jacob's way is the better way.

Some other "if" clauses outlines:

It's Up To You

I. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. Isaiah 1:19

II. If ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword. Isaiah 1:20

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III. To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart. Psalm 95:7-8

Three Choices-Three Results 2 Timothy 2:11-12

I. If we be dead with him, we shall live with him.

II. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.

III. If we deny him, he also will deny us.

In Jeremiah 12:5 we find a combination of the "If" method with the method of types and symbols. The footmen and the horses in this verse are symbolic of small trials and large trials:

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?"

I. The footmen that we run with are

A. Nitty-gritty affairs of the day (and)

B. Petty annoyances (and)

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- C. Irritations with those about us (and)
- D. Problems of finance, family discipline, and so on.

- II. The horses that we must contend with are
 - A. The coming Sunday law (and)
 - B. The persecution of the governments (and)
 - C. The final death decree.

- III. If the footmen get us down, can we contend with the horsemen?

Here are some meaningful verses with "if" clauses. Each can be developed into a sermon outline by using the method of reasoning from general to specific, asking the questions, How? When? Where? Why? What? etc.:

- If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. Genesis 4:7
- If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me. Exodus 19:5
- IF ye will not be reformed by me, . . . I will punish you yet even times for your sins. Leviticus 26:23-24
- If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land. Numbers 14:8
- If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him. Deuteronomy 4:29
- If ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 2 Chronicles 15:2
- If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? Psalm 11:3
- If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. Psalm 66:18
- My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Proverbs 1:10
- By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35
- Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Romans 6:8
- If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Colossians 3:1
- If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Hebrews 10:38
- If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. Hebrews 12:7
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. I John 1:9
- And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 1 John 2:3
- If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15

The Use of

Bible Similes and Metaphors

The words simile and metaphor are used to describe two different kinds of comparisons. Similes are stated comparisons, and often contain the words like or as. For example, here are some Bible similes using the word as:

- A man shall be as . . . the shadow of a great rock. Isaiah 32:2
 - All flesh is as grass. I Peter 1:24
 - The words of the wise are as goads. Ecclesiastes 12:11
- Here are some Bible similes using the word like:

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He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea. James 1:6

Is not my word like as a fire? Jeremiah 23:29

He shall be like a tree. Psalm 1:3

Spreading himself like a green bay tree. Psalm 37:35

Many of the parables that Jesus told are given in the form of similes, or stated comparisons, using the words as or like. He often introduced a parable by saying, The kingdom of heaven is like . . . Notice how frequently this form of introduction of a parable appears:

"The kingdom of heaven is *likened* unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." Matthew 13:24

The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed. Matthew 13:31

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field. Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man. Matthew 13:45

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net. Matthew 13:47

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder. Matthew 13:52

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins. Matthew 25:1

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Occasionally the word *as* is used in these introductions of parables:

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country. Matthew 25:14

So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground. Mark 4:26

Similes, as we stated at the beginning of this section, are stated comparisons, often using the words like and as. Metaphors are implied comparisons, often using the words is, am, are, etc. The writer does not state that he is making a comparison, but just expects you to understand that, and not make the mistake of taking his words literally. Here are some examples of Bible metaphors:

Ye are the salt of the earth. Matthew 5:13

Ye are the light of the world. Matthew 5:14

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet. Psalm 119:105

This is my body, which is broken for you. 1 Corinthians 11:24

This cup is the new testament in my blood. 1 Corinthians 11:25

The word of God is ... sharper than any two-edged sword. Hebrews 4:12

Sometimes the words *is*, *am* and *are* do not appear, but the construction of the verse implies them or suggests them in various ways:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Peter 1:23

Here the construction of the sentence implies that the Word of God is the incorruptible seed. Other such constructions are

The cords of his sins. Proverbs 5:22

A fountain ... for sin and for uncleanness. Zechariah 13:1

The greatest metaphors in the Bible are the "I am" statements of Jesus recorded by John:

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I am the bread of life. John 6:3)

I am the light of the world. John 8:12

I am the door. John 10:7

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I am the good shepherd. John 10:14
I am the resurrection, and the life. John 11:25
I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6
I am the true vine. John 15:1

It is apparent that some of the richest material in the Bible is contained in these similes and metaphors. So how do we use them for sermon outlines?

There are two basic methods of developing sermon outlines from similes and metaphors. One is the reverse form of method one, or reasoning from specific back to general. " We look at the verse, noting that it is already quite specific (as most similes and metaphors are). So we ask the question, what more general principle is being applied in this verse? For example:

For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower grass. 1 Peter 1:24

As we look at this verse in its context we quickly recognize that the principle being expressed is the shortness of human life. This principle then becomes our topic, and we reason from general to specific (method one) in the regular way to develop the main points and subpoints for an outline. Remember that we do this by asking questions, such as Why? What? When? Where? etc.

The Shortness of Human Life

- I. Human life is like the life of grass (because)
 - A. God did not want immortal sinners, Genesis 3:22, (because)
 - B. They would influence many for evil (and)
 - C. They would do injury to many (and)
 - D. After their characters have become fixed and unchangeable, nothing is gained by giving them more life (and)
 - E. We observe that by the age of 70 or 80 most characters are fixed and unchangeable.

- II. God acted to shorten human life (by)
 - A. Cutting men off from the tree of life (and)
 - B. Giving them flesh to eat (so that)
 - C. By David's time 70 was the average lifetime, and 80 was unusual. Psalm 90:10

- III. God has now given us a health message (because)
 - A. Poor living habits have cut down the life span in many places to far less than 70 (and)
 - B. Those who follow the health message show a marked increase in their life span, from six to ten years (and)
 - C. They are much healthier and happier while they live.

- IV. Conclusion: We should thank God for the health message and follow it carefully.

The other basic method of developing an outline from a simile or metaphor is to study all the possible implications in the verse itself. Let's do this with the same verse, so that we may easily compare the two methods.

For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. 1 Peter 1:24

We first ask, What are all of the things that we know about grass that can be compared to the life of man? Then we arrange them into an outline, like this:

All Flesh is as Grass

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Grass has a short life as compared to other things.

- A. Plants and vines often live 3 to 5 years (and)
- B. Bushes and shrubs often live 15 to 20 years (and)
- C. Trees may live hundreds of years (but)
- D. Grass lives a shorter time, on the average.
- E. God reminds us that we are as grass, so that we will not waste our precious days of probation.

II. Grass is more fragile than other plants.

- A. Vines, bushes and trees are all much stronger and harder to destroy than grass (but)
- B. Jesus assures us that a bruised reed He will not break.

III. Grass cannot do what other plants can do.

- A. Some vines can hold great weights (and)
- B. Bamboo can be used for scaffolding (and)
- C. Trees can be used for construction (but) D. Grasses cannot do very much.
- E. God assures us that He will remember our weakness and not expect too much of us.

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IV. Grass is very easily destroyed by fire.

- A. Grass burns very quickly (and)
- B. Grass burns completely.
- C. God warns sinners that if they do not repent they will burn as grass. Malachi 4:1-3

It will pay the student to closely compare these two methods of working with the same Scripture passage. Both are good and useful methods, but the results from the first are likely to be very different from the results of the second. All similes and metaphors can be developed into outlines using either of these two methods.

Sometimes we find the simile or metaphor to be larger than a single line or two, expressing more than one thought, but still in the language of the metaphor. An example of this type would be John 10:9:

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Jesus had made it clear in verse seven of the same chapter that he was comparing Himself to the door of a sheepfold, the small fenced area where shepherds kept their flocks at night. After stating that He is the door, He makes three applications of His meaning, saying that if any man enters in by the door,

1. He shall be saved.
2. He shall go in and out.
3. He shall find pasture.

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The language here is still metaphorical, that is, it cannot be taken literally. We cannot conceive of a man literally finding pasture. So in order to develop an outline by means of our first basic method, we have to reason backward from specific to general on each of the three points. The sheep that goes into the sheepfold is saved from danger, that is, he finds protection. He goes in and out under the guidance and leadership of the shepherd, so we could call this guidance or providence. He finds pasture, which of course is food or provision. Now we have three larger principles that we can use for the main points of an outline. We will develop sub-points by reasoning from general to specific in the normal manner.

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I Am the Door

I. If any man enter in, he shall find protection

- A. From physical dangers (and)
- B. From spiritual dangers (and)
- C. From the wrath of God against sinners.

II. If any man enter in, he shall find providence

- A. In the choice of his life work (and)
- B. In the choice of his life companion (and)
- C. In the many choices of his daily life.

III. If any man enter in, he shall find provision

- A. As promised by Jesus in Matthew 6:30-34
- B. As promised through Isaiah in Isaiah 58:11-14
- C. As promised through David in the Psalms

Now, for purposes of comparison, let's look at the same verse in the light of method two, whereby we think of all the characteristics of a door that could be compared to the experience of people. We recognize that a door, when open, provides entry or access. When a door is locked it denies entry or access. We could use these points for an outline like this:

I Am the Door

I. Christ as an open door provides access

- A. To the Father (and) B. To eternal life (and)
- C. To other worlds (and)
- D. To happiness on this earth

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II. Christ as a closed door provides security

- A. From temptations of the devil (and)
- B. From false doctrines and deceptions (and)
- C. From disasters of every kind.

III. Christ as a locked door will deny access

- A. To those who wait until the close of probation (and)
- B. To those who attack the Holy City after the millennium.

Excellent help in understanding and applying these similes and metaphors in the teachings of Jesus can be found in the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, by Ellen White, and also in her famous *The Desire of Ages*. We should give these similes and metaphors careful attention and work them into our preaching programs, because the material we find in them is rich and powerful, some of the best in the entire Bible. They are not the easiest of all sermons to prepare, but they are worth the extra effort.

The Method of Types and Symbols

In the last chapter we studied the use of similes and metaphors, and noted that:

A simile is a stated comparison, using like or as; a metaphor is an implied comparison, using is, am or are.

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The two sides of the comparison are given to us with both similes and metaphors. That is, grass is compared with people, salt is compared with people, Jesus compares Himself with a door, etc.

With the method of Types and Symbols, only one side of the comparison is given, and we make the other side of the comparison to suit ourselves. We quickly recognize that there is a danger in this method. If we let our imaginations go too far, and produce comparisons that don't appear to be sound and sensible, the sermons will not be well received by our people.

Yet we should remember that the parables Jesus told were a skillful use of types and symbols. They were so practical and sensible that they appealed strongly to the people's imagination, and they quickly recognized the truth that He was illustrating. When He told them they were the salt of the earth and the light of the world, certain facts about the use and value of salt and light gave them the message immediately.

When I was a college student, I heard a week of prayer speaker give an entire series of talks on doors. His text was John 10:9, "I am the door." He used the text according to the method of Types and Symbols. He knew that we, as students, were familiar with long hallways that had many doors opening into different rooms, which contained different things and activities, so that if you went in one door you might learn French, and if you went in another door you might learn home economics, and so on.

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He visualized life as a hallway, with many doors. Each day he talked to us about a different door. Each door was a symbol of a certain life decision. Thus choosing to go through a certain door was making an important life decision. He talked about :

- The door of surrender to Christ
- The door of service
- The door of selflessness
- The door of honesty
- The door of worldly ambition, etc.

This approach was very effective, because the symbolism was practical and sensible, and we were constantly reminded of it as we walked in the school hallways. The series has lingered in my mind for many years.

To state it simply, this method uses something physical to teach a spiritual lesson. It can be done with something physical not mentioned in the Bible. I once heard a minister make very good use of the symbolism of a common street sign:

No Parking Between Signs

He talked about the signs of Christ's coming in Matthew 24, and pointed out that we are living between certain of those signs, and that we should not be parking but going to all the world with the gospel message. I often think of his message when I see that familiar sign.

It is usually better, however, to use something physical that is mentioned in the Bible. This gives the people more confidence in our message. We could use a verse that refers to birds (Jeremiah 8:7), and compare the guidance systems by which they find their way in migration to God's guidance system for us, the Spirit of Prophecy. We could use a verse about the simple, natural beauty of flowers (Matthew 6:28-29), and contrast it with worldly self-adornment. We can look at various verses which mention rivers, valleys, mountains, ways, trees, vines, fruits, etc., and use the physical to teach a spiritual lesson. We will now present a few outlines that are developed by this method.

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Six Ways to Sodom

Texts: Ezekiel 16:49, Luke 17:28-29

- I. The way of pride
- II. The way of wealth
- III. The way of idleness
- IV. The way of appetite
- V. The way of materialism
- VI. The way of sensuality

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Appeal: Take the straight and narrow way. Matthew 7:13-14

Don't take any of the ways to Sodom.
Remember the destruction of Sodom.

Abraham's Altars

Introduction: Abraham built many altars as he moved from place to place. If we notice the particular experience he was having at each place, we can let the altar symbolize that experience, like this:

- I. The altar of faith and obedience
Genesis 12:6-8-He answers God's call
- II. The altar of patience
Genesis 12:6-8-The Canaanites still have the land
- III. The altar of repentance
Genesis 13:4-He returns from Egypt in embarrassment having been expelled by Pharaoh who caught him lying about Sarah
- IV. The altar of endurance
Genesis 22:9-The command to offer Isaac

Three Valleys

- I. The valley of Achor. Joshua 7:25-26
 - A. It is a valley of death (and)
 - B. It is a symbol of rejection by God (and)
 - C. It is a symbol of the destruction of the wicked (and)
 - D. Achan went into this valley without God.
- II. The valley of the psalmist. Psalm 23:4
 - A. It is also a valley of death (but)
 - B. It is a symbol of union with God (and)
 - C. It is a symbol of the salvation of the righteous (and)
 - D. The believer who enters it says, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."
- III. Between these valleys there lies another.
 - A. It is the valley of decision, Joel 3:14, (and)
 - B. What we do in this valley decides which of the other two we will enter.

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IV. Conclusion: Make the right choice in the valley of decision, so that we can walk through the valley of the psalmist, and not the valley of Achor.

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Open Ye the Gates
Isaiah 26:2

I. The gate of service to God

- A. It is opened by consecration (and)
- B. It is opened by commitment (and)
- C. It is opened by Christian education.

II. The gate to personal happiness

- A. It is opened by peace with God (and)
- B. It is opened by peace with self (and)
- C. It is opened by peace with our fellow men.

III. The gate to victory

- A. It is opened by self-surrender (and)
- B. It is opened by self-discipline (and)
- C. It is opened by self-denial.

IV. The gate to eternal reward

- A. It is opened by total trust (and)
- B. It is opened by faithful obedience (and)
- C. It is opened by enduring to the end.

Down by the Riverside

They met by the rivers of Babylon. Psalm 137

- A. The trees were willows (and)
- B. The harps were unplayed (and)
- C. The songs were sad and mournful (because)
- D. Disobedience had brought disaster.

II. They will meet by the river of life. Revelation 21-22 A. The tree will be the tree of life (and)

- B. Its leaves will heal the nations (and)
- C. The harps will be played beautifully (and)
- D. The song will be of Moses and the Lamb (because)
- E. Obedience has brought victory.

III. They will worship throughout eternity by the river.

- A. They will eat of the tree of life (and)
- B. They will drink of the heavenly fountains. Revelation 7 (and)
- C. They will gather where the river flows from the throne of God, on every Sabbath. Isaiah 66

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I Am the Way John 14:6

- I. Some take the roadway of worldly pleasure. Matthew 7:13
- II. Some take the perverse way of disobedience. Numbers 22:32
- III. Some take the directed way of God's providence. Isaiah 45:13
- IV. They find the provided way of escape from temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13
- V. It becomes the way of life for them. Matthew 7:14

One of the most often used symbols among Adventist Christians is that of the harvest. We often speak of a harvest of souls. This is using a physical activity to symbolize a spiritual activity. Since this symbolism is so common and well understood, let's use it for a sermon outline:

The Law of the Harvest

Introduction: Like a rope that has three strands, the law of the harvest is made up of three principles, which we find in three scriptures.

I. The principle of faith in seed sowing

Seedtime and harvest shall not cease. Genesis 8:22

- A. It took faith for Noah to sow his few seeds. If they didn't grow, he and his family would perish.
- B. It still takes faith to sow seeds.
- C. No seed is ever planted in knowledge that it will grow.
- D. What if the farmers lost faith in seed sowing? What if they said, "We won't sow seed until you prove to us that it will grow?" You can't prove that a seed will grow. You have to plant it in faith.
- E. When the pastor asks us to sow spiritual seed, do we say, "First you must prove to us that the seed will grow"?

II. The principle of inconvenience

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Psalm 126:5-6

- A. The tears symbolize inconvenience.
- B. There is no convenient time or place or way to sow a seed.
- C. Seed sowing on the farm is always inconvenient.
 1. Radishes, carrots, lettuce require tedious work.
 2. Beans, corn, squash require more work.
 3. Potatoes and rice are harder still.
 4. Tomatoes are hardest of all.
- D. When the pastor asks us to sow some spiritual seed, shall we say, "First you must find an easy way"? There is no easy way.

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III. The principle of apparent waste

He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; he that soweth abundantly shall reap abundantly. 2 Corinthians 9:6

- A. All nature testifies to this principle.
 1. Count the seeds in a papaya, times the papayas on a tree.
 2. Count the seeds in a watermelon, times the melons on a vine.
 3. Count the seeds in an apple, times the apples on a tree.
 4. Count the acorns on an oak tree, that are produced every year.
- B. The same principle applies to sowing spiritual seed. Ecclesiastes 11:6

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IV. Conclusion: If we want a harvest

- A. We must accept the principle of faith.
- B. We must accept the principle of inconvenience.
- C. We must accept the principle of apparent waste.

See also Christ's Object Lessons, 38-39, and Ministry of Healing, 135

Years ago a Presbyterian minister named Clarence Edward McCartney used the method of Types and Symbols to prepare a sermon based on the appeal of Paul to Timothy, recorded in 2 Timothy 4:21, to

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Come Before Winter

The idea had so much appeal that countless other ministers have picked it up and prepared sermons of their own, based on

this text. Some were similar to McCartney's; others were quite different. Probably the only similarity between my sermon and his is the text itself, yet, I gladly give him credit for the idea. This is my own outline on

Come Before Winter

Introduction: It was probably autumn when Paul wrote to Timothy. As an experienced traveler, he knew how hard it would be for Timothy to come to him in Rome after the roads were drifted with snow and the ships were safely anchored in secure harbors. But we wish to apply Paul's urgent appeal to the spiritual realm, and a different kind of winter.

I. Come before the winter of physical strength.

- A. There is a springtime of growing strength.
- B. There is a summertime of maturing strength.
- C. There is a winter of failing strength that continues until strength is gone.
- D. In the words of Solomon: (Ecclesiastes 12)
 - 1. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.
 - 2. Come-before the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, "I have no pleasure in them."
 - 3. Come-before they that look out of the windows be darkened.
 - 4. Come-before the grinders cease because they are few.
 - 5. Come-before the grasshopper is a burden.
 - 6. Come-before the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken.

Come before winter, the winter of your physical strength.

II. Come before the winter of mental ability.

- A. There is a spring and summer of the mind.
 - 1. It learns easily and remembers well.
 - 2. It questions, ventures, challenges, probes, and dreams.
 - 3. It makes decisions and solves problems easily.
- B. Then winter comes to the mind.
 - 1. It retreats to the security of the old and familiar.
 - 2. It finds decision making difficult.
 - 3. It ventures little and dreams not at all.

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4. It forgets the recent and remembers the long past.
 5. It is hardly capable of making a decision for Christ.
- So-come before the winter of your mind.

III. Come before the winter of the soul

- A. Come before the heart is hardened as the winter ice hardens the brook of summer.
- B. Come-before you can sit unmoved by the most earnest appeals.
- C. Come-while you can still, hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- D. Come before your life is over and your probation ended and nothing remains except the judgment.

IV. Conclusion: With some things, it is before winter or never.

So come before the winter of the body, the winter of the mind, the winter of the soul. Come before winter. Come.

(This message, of course, would have most appeal to those whose experience it would fit because they live where winters are severe.)

The Method of Complementary and Supplementary Truths

This is the familiar method of the Bible study, the Sabbath school lesson, and the evangelistic sermon. Bible verses that teach different aspects of a central truth are gathered together and arranged in a clear and logical order. This method does not require as much creative thinking as the other sermon methods do, but it does require careful organization of the texts so that the message will be simple and clear.

Since there are so many models of this type of sermon that are readily available, we will not present any outlines here. The old book, Bible Readings for the Home Circle, is a treasury of outlines using the method of Complementary and Supplementary Truths. Such outlines may be seen in the Bible studies that are available everywhere, in the Voice of Prophecy and other correspondence school lessons, in the Bible doctrine books used in church schools, in evangelistic sermons and in the weekly Sabbath school lessons. The pattern is a logical progression of ideas, supported by Bible texts, to which are added illustrations as needed. They are not often used for Sabbath sermons, because they sometimes are simply a review of matters the people already know well. They have their greatest value in messages prepared for nonmembers of the church.

The Method of Parallel Movements

We mention this method as a caution as well as a recommendation. It is the procedure by which a detailed study of something God's people did in the past is used to point out lessons for God's people today. Thus the exodus of Israel from Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land may be compared with the spiritual journey of the modern church toward the Promised Land. World conditions before the first coming of Christ may be compared with world conditions before the second coming of Christ. Ancient apostasies may be compared with modern apostasies, and so on.

There are two very real dangers associated with this method. The first is the making of a too detailed comparison, by which we attempt to show that even the details of an ancient situation are the same as in the modern situation. This is not necessarily true. The second, and closely related danger, is that of

using the ancient experience as a basis for predicting the future. If this is done, we should be careful to stay very close to the Scriptures. Thus when Jesus speaks of social conditions that will also be present in the last days, we may teach this with confidence. But we must be cautious about drawing our own conclusions in such matters. We have no reason to believe, for example, that men who are on the earth in the last days will live for hundreds of years like those who were on the earth before the flood.

If we compare ancient history with modern history, so that in both cases we are dealing with experiences that are already past, our conclusions are more likely to be correct than if we use the ancient history as a basis for predicting modern experiences which have not yet happened. Inspired writers can do this accurately; the rest of us are guessing, and we may guess wrongly.

In general, this method requires much careful study, and a frequent checking of conclusions by comparison with the inspired writings, the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. It probably should not be attempted by those who have a limited time for study.

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Scripture Narrative and Biography

We come now to the study of our last, and in my opinion, our best method of developing sermon outlines, the use of Scripture Narrative and Biography. We have reserved this method to the last because in using it we often draw upon our knowledge of the methods previously studied. We keep all of those methods in mind as we look at the life experiences of Bible characters.

When we draw lessons from these Bible stories, we make the Bible a more interesting book to our members. They come to think of the people of the Bible as real persons like themselves, from whose experiences they can learn the reasons for success or failure in the Christian life. And they remember the spiritual lessons drawn from someone's life experience better than simple abstract teachings. The purity of Joseph, indicated by his actual choices and decisions, is more meaningful to our members than abstract lessons about purity might be.

In preparing outlines with the method of Scripture Narrative and Biography, we make effective use of the special insights provided for us in the Spirit of Prophecy, which help us understand why the people of the Bible made certain choices and decisions, why they sometimes made mistakes, and why they were at other times successful.

The first four volumes of the Conflict of the Ages series are especially helpful. They are

Patriarchs and Prophets
Prophets and Kings
The Desire of Ages
The Acts of the Apostles

Finally for the inexperienced preacher, this type of outline goes far toward solving the critical problem of finding illustrations. The various elements of the Bible experience are themselves illustrations, and help to keep the sermon from becoming overloaded with abstract reasoning.

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We will present a number of different outlines using the method of Scripture Narrative and Biography. Three basic teaching styles will appear:

1. Telling the entire story first, then pointing out the spiritual lessons.

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2. Telling a portion of the story, pointing out the spiritual lessons, then moving on to the next portion of the story to repeat the process.
3. Various combinations of these two arrangements.

Let's look at the story of Achan in Joshua, chapter seven. We will use some implied truths, some comparison and contrast, and much reasoning from general to specific.

Spiritual Vision

Text: Mark 8:18. "Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?"

I. How could a man be unimpressed by the falling walls of Jericho?

- A. Israel was impressed and encouraged (and)
- B. The other nations were impressed and terrified (but)
- C. One man, Achan, was not impressed.
- D. Was he just dull and stupid? No, certain things did impress him (such as)
 1. A goodly Babylonish garment (and)
 2. Two hundred shekels of silver (and)
 3. Fifty shekels of gold.
 4. These impressed him, but the great acts of God did not. See Patriarchs and Prophets, 496

II. What made him so spiritually blind?

- A. He had cherished greed of gain until it became a habit. Patriarchs and Prophets, 496 (and)
- B. This caused him to lose his spiritual vision, and he failed to see the hand of God in events around him.
 1. Compare the experience of Korah (and)
 2. Compare the Jewish leaders of Christ's time (and)
 3. Contrast Daniel, Joseph, and John the Baptist.

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III. Could this spiritual blindness come to us?

- A. Yes. Jesus warned about it in Luke 21:34 (because)
 1. It can come through surfeiting and drunkenness (and)
 2. It can come through the cares of this life.
- B. Paul warned against it in Romans 8:5-6 (in that)
 1. He called this spiritual blindness "the carnal mind" (and)
 2. He warned that to be carnally minded is death.
- C. We see an example of this spiritual blindness in Matthew 16:1-4.
- D. We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that even when the latter rain falls, some will not recognize it. See Testimonies to Ministers, 507

IV. How can we avoid this spiritual blindness?

- A. By training ourselves to recognize the acts of God (such as)
 1. The blessings of every day life (and)
 2. The answers to prayers (and)
 3. The fulfillment of prophecy.
- B. By not cherishing wrong attitudes (such as)
 1. Greed of gain (and)
 2. Criticism and faultfinding (and)

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3. Bitterness and hatred.

- C. By much reading of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.
- D. By a consistent prayer program.

V. Appeal: Let's be like Joseph and Daniel, not like Achan.

The Man Who Went Back

Text: Genesis 13:1-4 "And Abraham went up out of Egypt . . . unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first."

- I. Progress: He was doing all right for a while (in that)
 - A. He heard the call of God, and obeyed. Genesis 12 (and)
 - B. He left for Canaan on command (and)
 - C. He won some souls along the way (and)
 - D. He built altars and worshiped wherever he went.

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II. Prosperity: He became quite rich. Genesis 23:5-6

- III. Peril: He got in trouble. Genesis 12:11-20 (in that)
 - A. He met with a problem he couldn't see through (and)
 - B. It looked like doing what was right would ruin him (so)
 - C. He tried to take a detour by doing something that was only half right (and)
 - D. Then things really went wrong, because God couldn't bless him.
 - E. He was expelled from Egypt in shame. Genesis 12:19 (Note-The Hebrew verb form used in "go thy way" is called the intensive form, which means that Pharaoh said it with very strong feeling.)

- IV. Reflection: He got to thinking about the past (and)
 - A. He remembered Bethel, where he had made his first camp in Canaan (and)
 - B. He remembered the altar where he used to pray.
 - C. He remembered his past experience when his faith was strong.
 - D. He decided to go back.

Note-Look at a Bible map. He could have stopped in many other places.

V. Return: He returned to the place of prayer and regained his lost experience.

- A. This is not always physically possible (in that)
 - 1. The place of prayer is not always nearby (but)
 - 2. The privileges of prayer never change.
 - 3. We are encouraged by such words as these:

"Look to the place where you last saw the light." Ministry of Healing, 250

VI. Redemption: His faith became strong again (in that)

- A. He won great victories for God, Genesis 14, (and)
- B. He passed the test of faith when told to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.
- C. He earned the title, father of the faithful.

VII. If your experience is not what it used to be, go back to the place of prayer.

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A Different Spirit

Text: Numbers 14:24. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, . . . him will I bring into the land."

What was this spirit?

I. It was a spirit of courage (because)

A. He accepted the dangerous job of spying out the land, although he was forty years old.

Numbers 13

B. He spent forty days on the perilous mission.

C. He came back unafraid.

II. It was a spirit of independence (in that)

A. He heard the report of the ten frightened spies (but)

B. He still gave an optimistic report.

III. It was a spirit of realism (in that)

A. He did not deny the mighty cities and warriors (but)

B. He took into account the power of God.

IV. It was a spirit of confidence (in that)

A. He remembered God's past blessings (and)

B. He remembered God's promises.

V. It was a spirit of submission (in that)

A. Though he was not at fault, he could not enter the promised land at that time (but)

B. He returned to the wilderness with the guilty ones.

VI. It was a spirit of patience (in that)

A. He endured the forty years without complaint (and)

B. He strengthened his faith by meditation. Patriarchs and Prophets, 512

VII. It was a spirit of adventure for God (in that)

A. When Joshua divided the land, Caleb was eighty five years old.

B. He asked for Hebron, where the giants lived.

VIII. It was a spirit of contagious faith which spread to his son-in-law, Othniel. Judges 1:13

IX. It was a spirit of total commitment. Numbers 14:24 "Because . . . he hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land."

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The Power of the Tongue

Text: Proverbs 18:21 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." (Read Numbers 13 and 14 for background material.)

I. The twelve spies return to Israel (and)

A. The people have been waiting forty days (and)

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B. They had not been recounting God's blessings as they should have been.

II. Caleb and Joshua gave a good report (that)

A. The land is rich and fruitful (and)

B. We are well able to possess it.

III. The other ten spies gave a bad report (and)

A. The people did not reason (and)

B. The people did not remember God's promises (and)

C. They did not think of God's past deliverances (but)

D. They gave themselves up to unreasoning despair.

IV. Caleb almost saved the situation by his strong words of faith (but)

A. The cowardly words prevailed (and)

B. Emotion eliminated reason in the people's minds.

V. Their wild despair brought insane actions (in that)

A. They accused Moses (and)

B. They accused God (and)

C. They chose a captain to lead them back to Egypt (and)

D. They started to stone Caleb and Joshua.

VI. Results of the power of the tongue were then seen (in that)

The ten cowardly spies were slain (and)

The others were sent back to the wilderness for forty years (and)

603,548 of the men died in the wilderness. Numbers 1:46; 14:30

VII. there is death in the power of the tongue (but)

VIII. There is also life in the power of the tongue.

A. Compare with 2 Chronicles 32:8.

B. Nothing more quickly inspires faith than the exercise of faith. Ministry of Healing, 252

C. See also Testimonies, vol. 1, 168, 199; vol. 5, 302; vol. 6, 462; vol. 7, 212-213 ; Christ's Object Lessons, 147, Christian Service, 234

Sodomite Christians

(Based on the story of Lot, beginning with Genesis 19)

I. A case study:

A. Lot's hospitality (compared with)

B. Lot's betrayal of his daughters.

II. A comparison with a similar incident, Judges 19:26-28, (which)

A. Was different in time (but)

B. Probably not different in its results.

III. So what kind of a man was Lot?

A. A fool? No (or)

B. A pervert? No (or)

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- C. A monster? No. He was probably a church elder (but)
- D. He was a Sodomite Christian-a confused Christian (and)
- E. His daughters were as confused as he was. Genesis 19:30-32

IV. This leads us to a question: How confused can Christians get when they let the world influence their thinking?

- A. In the social customs of the Sodomites (or)
- B. In the morals of the Sodomites (or)
- C. In the dress fashions of the Sodomites (or)
- D. In the music of the Sodomites (or)
- E. In the race prejudice of the Sodomites. Etc.

V. The evidence indicates that there isn't any limit (therefore)

- A. We must not let the world influence us like the Sodomites influenced Lot.
- B. We must remember John's appeal in 1 John 2:15-19.
- C. We must remember the warning of Paul in Romans 12:1-3 (Phillips translation): "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold."

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The Kindly Killer

(Based on the experience of Aaron, the brother of Moses
in Exodus 32 and Numbers 20:23-29)

Introduction: Imagine a TV camera focused on the camp of Israel in Moses' time, showing the sanctuary surrounded by the tents of the twelve tribes. It is early in the morning.

- I. As we watch, we see three men leaving the camp and going toward Mt. Hor.
 - A. One is young and strong-He goes ahead (but)
 - B. Two are old and slow (and)
 - C. We wonder who they are (and)
 - D. The answer is Moses and Aaron. See description in Patriarchs and Prophets, 425

II. Where are they going, and why don't they hurry?

- A. They have an unwelcome appointment on Mt. Hor (in that)
- B. Three are going, but only two will return (because)
- C. For Aaron it is a one-way trip. Numbers 20:26

III. Aaron is an example of Christ's saving power (in that)

- A. He had serious human weaknesses (and)
- B. His worst problem was wanting to be popular.

IV. The crisis at Sinai revealed his weakness (in that)

- A. Moses was gone and the people grew impatient (and)
- B. They wanted to return to Egypt (and)
- C. They wanted a golden calf.

V. A strong leader was needed (but)

- A. Aaron was wavering and timid (and)
- B. He called for gold, hoping it would not be given (and)

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C. The people were delighted.

Testimonies, vol. 3, 293 "The people were charmed with Aaron's lovely spirit and were disgusted with the rashness of Moses."

D. This made Aaron think he was right. Testimonies, vol. 3, 298

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VI. But Aaron had not told the truth about God (and)

A. God demanded that the camp be purified (and)

B. Three thousand lost their lives.

VII. Are there still leaders like Aaron among us?

Patriarchs and Prophets, 317 "There are still pliant Aarons, who, while holding positions of authority in the church, will yield to the desires of the unconsecrated, and encourage them to sin."

What Made Him a Rebel?

(Based on the experience of Ishmael. Genesis 21)

I. Did God foreordain or predestine Ishmael to be a rebel? Was it God's fault? A. God has knowledge of the future (but) B. He does not take away anyone's free choice. Joshua 24:15

II. Was it the fault of Abraham, Sarah, or Hagar?

A. They did make mistakes (but)

B. So have all other fathers and mothers.

C. If it was their fault, we would all be rebels.

III. It was his own attitude that made him a rebel (in that)

A. He would not share Abraham's inheritance with Isaac. He wanted all or nothing, like Lucifer (and)

B. He would not accept counsel (and)

C. He would not accept correction, Genesis 16:12, (but)

D. He indulged in self-pity, one of the worst of all human emotions. Ministry of Healing, 476

IV. In our relations with others, we should remember (that)

A. They are certain to make mistakes, as we are (and)

B. We are certain to need counsel (and)

C. We are certain to need correction (so)

D. We should not let this produce bitter thoughts, that will be damaging to ourselves and to others.

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How to Challenge Christ

(Based on the story of the crucifixion)

Text Matthew 27:40 "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."

I. The challenge of the rulers was rejected, Matthew 27:40, (because)

A. He had a job to do on the cross (in that)

1. He had a demonstration to complete (and)

2. He had a ransom to pay.

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B. To come down from the cross would have been

1. To come down from duty (and) 2. To come down from mercy (and) 3. To come down from integrity (and)

4. To come down from Godlikeness to manlikeness.

C. This challenge really means: Do what I tell you to do, so that I will know you are God. 1. Don't let me lose this job (and) 2. Don't let me suffer this loss (and) 3. Don't let me face this disappointment.

4. If you obey my orders, I will know that you are God.

II. The challenge of the first thief was rejected. Luke 23:39

A. He said, "Save yourself, and save us," (but)

B. He was only talking about earthly and physical salvation (and)

C. He was defining salvation in man's terms (in that)

D. He wanted to be saved from the penalty of sin but not the power of sin.

E. He was also saying, Obey my orders and I will know that you are God.

III. The challenge of the second thief was accepted, Luke 23:42 (because)

A. He did not give any orders to Christ (but)

B. He simply said, If you are Christ, be Christ to me. 1. Do Your thing with me, whatever it is (and) 2. Do it in Your own way, (and) 3. Do it in Your own time. C. He did not define the terms (and) D. He did not confine the choices (but) E. He simply said, Be Christ to me.

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IV. The rulers were very wide of the mark (in that)

A. They were asking Christ to do an ungodlike thing to prove that he is God (and)

B. They were saying, Obey our orders and we will know that you are God.

V. The first thief was closer (in that)

A. He did not ask Christ to do an ungodlike thing, (but)

B. He was still saying, Obey my orders and I will know that you are God.

VI. The second thief was on the mark (in that)

A. He did not ask Christ to do an ungodlike thing, (and)

B. He did not ask Christ to submit to His will (but) C. He said, If you are Christ, be Christ to me.

Crumbs for Dogs

(Based on the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman
in Matthew 15:21-28)

I. The Place-Syro-Phoenicia (was)

A. On the seacoast (and)

B. About 50 miles from Capernaum (and)

C. A hard walk over mountains.

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II. The Purpose

- A. The disciples were all Jews (and)
- B. They shared the Jewish prejudice against Gentiles (and)
- C. They had to be taught to work for Gentiles.

III. The Plan

- A. Jesus knew the woman's problem (and)
- B. He knew her frustration with paganism (and)
- C. He deliberately put himself in her path.

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IV. The Puzzle

- A. She appeals to Jesus (but)
- B. His first answer was silence.
- C. His first answer to us is often silence (and) D. We wonder if it means (that)
 - 1. He doesn't hear (or)
 - 2. He doesn't care (or)
 - 3. His answer is No.
- E. It doesn't mean any of these things.

V. What does His silence mean?

- A. It means that He wants to give us something better than what we are asking for (and)
- B. Spiritual gifts cannot be given until the mind is ready to receive them. The Desire of Ages, 200 (See also Counsels on Health, 380)

VI. His second answer seems worse than silence (in that)

- A. He suggests that she is not worthy (but)
- B. She quickly admits this (and)
- C. Presses her claim on the basis of His character, not hers.

VII. His third answer is "Great is thy faith" (in that)

- A. It had great persistence (and)
- B. It had great submission.
- C. These two make great faith.

VIII. Since we, like her, are not Jewish, we are interested in the crumbs (such as)

- A. Isaiah 1:18
- B. Matthew 11:28, 29
- C. Hebrews 7:25 etc.

The Born Loser

(Based on the story of the woman at the well. John 4)

Introduction: Jesus did not always give the same answer to what was essentially the same question. Notice the ways in which he responded to three questions about His identity.

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I. The indifferent question-Who are you?

- A. It was asked by Pilate, Matthew 27:11, (but)

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- B. It was just for the record (and)
- C. Pilate didn't really care (and)
- D. Jesus answered in the same way, a short answer followed by silence.

II. The curious question-Who are you?

- A. It was asked by Herod, king of the Jews. Luke 23:6-9
 - 1. He had some knowledge of the Scriptures (and)
 - 2. He was the murderer of John the Baptist (and)
- B. Jesus wouldn't speak a single word to him.

III. The appealing question-Who are you?

- A. It was asked by the woman at the well, John 4:25, (and)
- B. It was tactfully indirect (but)
- C. His answer shows that He understood it. John 4:26
- D. He talked to her for a long time.

IV. What appealed to Him about her? Her need (in that)

- A. She was a born loser (in that)
 - 1. She had had five husbands (and)
 - 2. Was not married to number six (because)
 - 3. She had no children (probably)(Note: In that culture, being childless was probably the only reason that five different men would marry her and then divorce her.)
- 4. She was not a prostitute. They don't marry their customers.
- B. She had suffered greatly (in that)
 - 1. Five times her affections had been drawn out and then repulsed (and)
 - 2. Five times men had professed to love her and had then rejected her.
 - 3. Five times her confidence had been won and then betrayed.
 - 4. Five times she had been established as the queen of a home and then had been driven away from that home.
 - 5. Her self-respect was gone. She was breaking the rules, but the rules are for people. She couldn't think of herself as a person. She was just a useless, worthless thing, a bit of human garbage cast out on the garbage dump of humanity.

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V. Christ took time for her.

- A. He had little time for Pilate.
- B. He had no time at all for Herod.
- C. He had plenty of time for this born loser.
- D. The Desire of Ages, 184: "The King of heaven came to this outcast soul."

VI. Christ had been continually talking to her.

- A. This is the meaning of the Greek in verse 26.
- B. Her life changed when she began to listen.

The Panic Button (Based on the story of Jonah in the book of Jonah)

- 1. Who was Jonah?

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- A. He lived in Gath-Hepher-west of Galilee (and)
- B. He had a reputation as a prophet, II Kings 14:25, (and)
- C. He lived about B.C. 790 (and)
- D. He was a bit unstable emotionally. Application to our time:
 - 1. Every body has limits to stress and strain (and)
 - 2. Some have higher limits than others (and)
 - 3. When the limit is reached, they hit the panic button.

II. Jonah hit the panic button when God told him to go to Nineveh (in that)

- A. He tried to run from God (and)
- B. He tried to escape in a boat (that's pretty stupid). Application:
 - 1. People in panic often do strange things (such as)
 - a. Forgetting names, even their own, (or)
 - b. Running out of a house without clothing (or)
 - c. Saving worthless things from a fire. (Etc.)

III. The Lord couldn't bless him in that condition (for)

- A. A storm arose (and)
 - B. His prayer availed nothing.
- Application:
- 1. The Lord can't bless us in that condition either (so)
 - 2. He sometimes uses a counterirritant.

IV. Jonah hit the panic button again when he was questioned by the sailors (for)

- A. He said, Throw me out, (because)
 - B. He was in the final stage of panic, the death wish.
- Application:
- 1. People in panic often go through four stages (such as)
 - a. The overreaction (and)
 - b. The irrational behavior (and)
 - c. Despondency and despair (and)
 - d. The death wish.

V. The Lord sent a counterirritant in the form of a whale because you can't reason with people who are in panic. Application: The Lord sometimes sends a counterirritant to us for the same reason.

VI. Then Jonah prayed in a different spirit and was heard. Application: When we pray in the right spirit we will be heard.

VII. Jonah recovered and did a great work for God. Application: God does not reject us because we panic.

VIII. Conclusion:

- A. We should try to avoid hitting the panic button (but)
- B. If we do, we should not be surprised if God uses a counterirritant (and)
- C. We should remember that God still loves us (and)
- D. We can still do a great work for God.

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These rather full outlines have been provided to give the student an idea of the sermon possibilities in scripture narrative and biography. The following are shorter main-point outlines with which the student can work by reasoning from general to specific, using natural divisions of clauses, comparison and contrast. etc.

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Whose Fault Is It? (Based on the story of Cain)

- I. It is God's fault.
- II. It is Abel's fault.
- III. It is everyone's (society's) fault.
- IV. No, it is Cain's fault.
- V. It doesn't have to be that way.

Our Leader Is Alive (Based on the story in Luke 24:13-34)

- I. They walked from Jerusalem in sorrow (but)
- II. They walked back to Jerusalem in joy (because)
- III. They thought they had lost their leader
 - A. Who had power over the elements, Mark 4:36-39, (and)
 - B. Who had power over devils, Mark 5:15, (and)
 - C. Who had power to change lives, John 1:12, (and)
 - D. Who had power over the grave, John 11:43-44, (but)
- IV. Now they know their leader is alive.

What Does Abel Say? (Hebrews 11:4 He being dead yet speaketh)

Introduction: We do not believe that he speaks through a spirit visiting us, so it must be by his example and influence. What does he say by them?

- I. It is better to obey than to substitute.
- II. It is better to submit than to rebel.
- III. It is better to die than to sin.
- IV. Feel sorry for Cain, not for me.

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The Great Transgression (Based on the story of the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-10)

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- I. I understand the temptation of appetite (and)
- II. I understand the temptation about the kingdoms of this world (but)
- III. What does jumping off a high place have to do with me? I have never been tempted to jump off a high place in my life. I hate high places.
- IV. The answer is in Psalm 19:13 and The Desire of Ages, 125, Presumption (such as) A. I'm going to marry him anyway (or) B. I'm going to use the tithe anyway (or) C. I'm going to work on Sabbath anyway.
- V. Presumptuous sin is the great transgression.

Two Decisions

(Based on the story of Rebekah, who married Isaac.)

- I. The easy decision (in that)
 - A. She knew God's will about marrying heathen (and)
 - B. She recognized God's providence (and)
 - C. She could easily agree with both (because)
 - 1. Isaac was a great man (and)
 - 2. Isaac was obviously rich (and)
 - 3. She wanted to get married (so)
 - D. She made the right choice and gained much happiness.
- II. The hard decision (in that)
 - A. She knew God's will about deception (and)
 - B. She knew God's will about Esau and Jacob (but)
 - C. Isaac's delay filled her with anxiety (so)
 - D. She made a wrong choice, and gained much sorrow (she never saw Jacob again).

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A Story for Those Who Fish for Souls
(Based on the story in Luke 5:4-10)

- I. The surprised fisherman
- II. The tired and skeptical fisherman
- III. The submissive and obedient fisherman
- IV. The rewarded fisherman

General Suggestions Regarding Preparation and Delivery of Sermons

Probably the question I am asked most often by my students is, Where can I get a book that will tell me how to develop sermon outlines? They are always disappointed when I tell them there is none on the market that I know of, so it is better to spend their money on other books. This is not to say that there are no books on preaching. There are many. I own quite a few myself. But they are not simple and clear about methods of developing sermon outlines. Some are dreadfully complicated and mysterious. Most tell you how to organize your ideas after you get them, but they don't tell you in a simple and clear

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manner how to get your ideas. Most are quite inspirational, and possibly are worth reading for that reason.

When my students have asked me why I did not write a book on developing sermon ideas, my answer has been that I was not sure it could be presented clearly in a book. This syllabus is an attempt to find the answer to that question. If this syllabus is successful, I will enlarge it into a book.

Meanwhile we will have to do the best we can with the materials that are available. First of course is the Bible, and the more free reading of the Bible that we do, the more Bible illustrations, comparisons and contrasts will flash into our minds as we work on a specific outline.

Second in importance is the Spirit of Prophecy. This source is of enormous value in sermon preparation. Direct quotations from the Spirit of Prophecy should, of course, be used in moderation, like other quotations, and not made a substitute for study. On the other hand, we should not take the position that Spirit of Prophecy quotations should never be used in pastoral sermons. That would be going to the other extreme.

Those books in which Ellen White comments on the text of Scripture are most valuable in sermon preparation. These are Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, The Desire of Ages, Acts of the Apostles, and last but not least, Christ's Object Lessons. If The Desire of Ages is Ellen White's position paper on Christology, Christ's Object Lessons is just as clearly her position paper on the doctrine of Righteousness by Faith, although many have overlooked this fact.

The minister will do well to read these books carefully and take notice of each occasion in which Ellen White stops telling the Bible story and points out a spiritual lesson. These lessons should be marked in a manner different from other markings. This practice will make them easy to find in future study. A personal index in the fly leaves of the book is also helpful. In many cases the minister can in this way find not only a sermon theme or idea, but will also find it associated with a passage of Scripture that can provide his sermon text and/or Bible illustrations.

And do not overlook the value of the Spirit of Prophecy in protecting us from theological error. I personally doubt that any minister who had a good working knowledge of the Spirit of Prophecy would have been unsettled by any of the recent gales of false doctrine that have blown through the church.

The next most helpful tool after the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy is a large unabridged concordance, such as Strong's or Young's. Of the two I prefer Strong's. But both are good, and both can be ordered through your Bible House. Both contain Hebrew and Greek dictionaries of Bible words, arranged in such a way that they can be understood by those who have not studied these languages.

Next in usefulness, for those who can afford it, is the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, including the Bible Dictionary and the Encyclopedia. These are very high-quality reference tools.

Beyond these basic tools it is hard to know what to recommend. Almost any book will have some value; few if any will have great value. When it comes to the preparation and delivery of sermons, I would give first place to The Principles and Practice of Preaching, by Ilion T. Jones, published by Abingdon Press, Nashville 2, Tennessee (order through your Bible House). I must here give this writer credit for some of the ideas that will follow.

A place to keep these books and use them is important. The time for study is even more important. Sermons should be prepared at the time of day when your mind is most clear, fresh and creative. For some this may be early morning; for others the best time may be late at night. Find your own best time and use it systematically. If you get your sermon idea early in the week, you can think about it and improve it all week long. If you do your preparation on Friday night, the best results cannot be obtained.

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A few simple rules for study may be helpful.

1. As stated above, study when your mind is most fresh and clear.
2. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in prayer.
3. Remember that ideas will begin to come to your mind probably between the fifth and the tenth consecutive readings of the same passage. Do not expect sermon ideas to come from casual reading.
4. Determine as quickly as possible whether you are seeking a sermon subject or a sermon object. The sermon object is the need, goal, or target of the sermon. If it is a funeral sermon, the object is to comfort the mourners. If it is a sermon on missionary work, the object is to persuade members to become active missionaries. In some cases the object might be to clear up some theological question in the people's minds. A convenient way to get this object clearly in mind is to ask the question, "What do I want the people to do because I preached this sermon?" The answer should be very clear in your own mind. If you do not know what your target is, you are not likely to hit it. If your goal is simply to give them a more clear understanding of some Bible truth, that is all right, provided it is clear in your own mind what you expect the sermon to accomplish. This is your sermon object.

The sermon subject is the scriptural passage that you use as a means of attaining your object. For example: my object is to give the people a deeper appreciation of God's love. The subject that I choose as a means of attaining that object could be the story of the woman at the well in John chapter four. (See Chapter Twelve), or it could be any one of many other passages. The point to keep in mind is that you must know what you are looking for as you study. If you have to meet a certain need, or attain a certain specific goal, you will look at Scripture passages which suit that purpose. If you do not have to meet a particular need, you can feel free to study any passage that interests you, and let the object appear as the result of your study.

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In either case, you eventually settle on a passage of Scripture. You read it slowly and carefully five to ten times, until ideas begin to form in your mind. You select one of these ideas as your central idea, or theme. You then develop this idea by reasoning from general to specific, or one of the other methods that you have now learned. For background information and supporting material you consult the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible commentaries. Do not overlook the scriptural index in the first few pages of the first volume of the Spirit of Prophecy Index. Here you can find the location of several Spirit of Prophecy comments on the text you are studying.

OUTLINING

Outlines are made in different ways. The only type I would recommend to you here is the functional outline. As its name implies, the form is dictated by the use or purpose. The points in such an outline may be sentences, clauses, questions, or even single words. However, they ought not to be mixed. Too often I see student outlines that look like this:

- I. The Love of God
- II. Who loves God?
- III. False love
- IV. We should love God more than we love others.

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If we remember that an outline is used for the purpose of producing clarity of thought, we recognize that this outline has fallen short of its purpose. The first point is a clause, the second is a question, the third is a title, and the fourth is a statement. Clarity of thought is best achieved by setting all points in the same style, that is, four clauses, or four questions, or four titles or four statements. The student has also noticed that in the outlines presented in this syllabus, connectives are used in parentheses at the end of the statements. They are "in that," "such as," "so," "and," "because," etc. These also are for the purpose of increasing clarity. If you find that connectives just don't work for you, probably you need to change your statement until they do. With a little practice you will find the style that works best for you.

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INTRODUCTIONS

The purpose of the introduction in a sermon is to

- I. Avoid abruptness, which creates ill-will
- II. Gain goodwill and establish rapport
- III. Acquaint the congregation with our subject
- IV. Arouse interest in our subject

The most common types of introductions are

- I. The textual introduction (such as)
 - A. "My text this morning is . . ." (or)
 - B. "May I invite you to turn with me to . . ." (or)
 - C. "Jesus said, as we read in . . ." (or)
 - D. "The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in . . ." (or)
 - E. Something similar to any of these.

This type of introduction is safe because it is traditional, it is fast, direct and Scripture centered. The excuse for its seeming abruptness is that in a worship service the pastor already has the attention of the congregation, and (hopefully) their goodwill. I would say it is good for frequent use.

- II. The topical introduction (such as)
 - A. "My subject this morning is . . ." (or)
 - B. "I shall speak to you this morning on the subject of..." (or)
 - C. "In view of _____, I would like to study with you the subject of..." (or)
 - D. Etc.

This again is a safe, though not very interesting, type of introduction, and it is fast and direct. It is not always Scripture centered, and, like the textual introduction, is a bit abrupt. I would call it good for occasional use.

- III. The illustration as an introduction (such as)
 - A. "This old man was walking down the street . . ." (or)
 - B. "This week I overheard a man say..." (or)
 - C. "McCartney tells us about a man who . . ." (or)
 - D. "When Andrew Jackson was President of the U.S.A...." (or)
 - E. Etc.

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This type of introduction is more interesting than the other two we have listed, and I would call it good for infrequent use, for the sake of variety. I have known some preachers, however, who used it in almost

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every sermon, so that it became a sort of trademark with them. This type, I think, requires excellent illustrations and a skillful telling of them. (These three, the textual, the topical and the illustration introductions are probably the most often used in our time.) Others, which are less frequently used, might be

IV. The news-item introduction:

- A. "This week the British Navy set out for the Falkland Islands . . ." (or)
- B. "This week the United Nations voted to . . ." (or)
- C. "Yesterday the leader of our country said . . ." (or)
- D. Etc.

This is strong on interest but will be faulted by some for its secular nature. I would use it rarely.

V. The seasonal introduction:

- A. "This is Mother's Day . . ." (or)
- B. "Tomorrow will be Christmas ..." (or)
- C. "This is back-to-school week ..." (or)
- D. Etc.

I would rate this as good for infrequent or seasonal use.

VI. Miscellaneous introductions (such as)

- A. Poems (or)
- B. Quotations (or)
- C. Clippings (or)
- D. Questions addressed to the congregation (or)
- E. Etc.

I would rate this as acceptable for very infrequent use.

VII. The nonapparent introduction (such as)

- A. A narrative (or)
- B. A long passage of Scripture (or)
- C. An illustration (or)
- D. Etc.

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This type of introduction does not reveal the subject of the sermon for several minutes. It is used mostly in those situations in which the speaker anticipates that the congregation will not be enthusiastic about his subject, so he uses something with strong appeal to "soften" them a bit before revealing his topic. For example, I have sometimes used this type of introduction when preaching a sermon on missionary work, or on ingathering. I would rate it as acceptable for infrequent use.

General observations about introductions:

- I. Introductions in our time are usually
 - A. Short, averaging not more than 2 or 3 minutes (and)
 - B. Nonapologetic (and)
 - C. Unassuming, (and)
 - D. Not heavy or serious in nature.

Introductions are usually easiest to develop after the sermon has been completed. I would not worry about them at the beginning of my study. A variety of styles, with most frequent use of the most traditional, is probably the best. Remember that there is a difference between an introduction and a

greeting. In a sermon introduction the speaker introduces his topic, in a greeting he introduces himself. Greetings are always tailored to the specific situation, and need not be discussed here.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The purposes of illustrations, as listed by Jones, are to make the sermon

- I. Concrete instead of abstract (and)
- II. Interesting (and)
- III. Impressive to the memory (and)
- IV. Persuasive in their power of suggestion (and)
- V. Practical in their real life situations (and)
- VI. Clear.

Finding illustrations is not easy for the beginner. That is one reason why I highly recommend the Scripture narrative and biography type of sermon, which has much illustrative material built right into it. The method of Comparison and Contrast also provides a convenient way to introduce Bible illustrations into a sermon. As stated before, the more free reading we do in the Bible, the more illustrations will flash into our minds when we are studying a particular subject.

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Your own experiences in soul winning or in making pastoral calls are good sources of illustrations, but be very careful never to reveal a confidence. Sermons by other preachers, books on nature, and biographies of Christian people yield good illustrations. Imaginative illustrations in which you ask your congregation to suppose that such and such a thing would happen are effective if simple and clear. I would suggest the following things to avoid in illustrations:

- I. Casting yourself as the wise person who always says and does the right thing (and)
- II. Talking about things persons have told you in confidence. Do not suppose that you can disguise them by simply withholding names. Your members are very skillful at guessing (and)
- III. Too much illustration, which weakens the sermon (and)
- IV. Illustrations that do not clearly enforce the sermon, but are simply told for their story value (and)
- V. Illustrations in which the point is not clear (and)
- VI. A repetitious arrangement of text and illustration, etc.
- VII. Using too many illustrations about women (and)
- VIII. Incredible illustrations, which the people find hard to believe (and)
- IX. Illustrations taken from sermon illustration books. Remember that others before you have read those books and told those stories. The members know some of them by heart.
- X. Last but not least-illustrations from your own unsanctified past. Use these with great care. They often do more harm than good.

THE BODY OF THE SERMON

I would recommend variety in the use of outlines, which means that you do not always have the same number of points, and that you do not give all of the points equal time. Some may be dealt with quickly, and others given more emphasis, according to their importance in view of your particular situation.

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Variety in the use of supporting materials is also desirable. In one section you may use a Bible illustration, in another a modern illustration, in another a Spirit of Prophecy quotation, etc. Heavy material should be alternated with light material, in view of the fact that the attention span of the mind is short. People can concentrate on heavy abstract reasoning for only a few minutes at a time, so we must use illustrations and lighter material to give them occasional relief. In general, we find it wise to use our heaviest material near the beginning of the sermon, when the people's minds are unwearied, and the lighter material with more illustrations toward the end.

WORDING

It is written of Jesus that the common people heard him gladly. Mark 12:37. We are sure that this would not have been true if He had used words that were strange and puzzling to them. The entire Bible is an example of sublime truth told in simple language. We find counsels on this point in the Spirit of Prophecy:

Never search for words that will give the impression that you are learned. The greater your simplicity, the better will your words be understood. Gospel Workers, 89

So simply did He [Jesus] present the words of life that a child could understand them. Gospel Workers, 115

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible, simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in Him, the exalted truths. No one needed to consult the learned doctors as to His meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in His instruction. Gospel Workers, 49-50

Consider carefully this equation:

Profound thinking plus simple telling is good; simple thinking plus simple telling is bad; simple thinking plus profound telling is horrible.

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CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of a sermon conclusion is to apply the truth, arouse the conscience, and motivate to action. Conclusions therefore should not introduce any new ideas but should reinforce what has already been said. They must be crystal clear, especially if an invitation is given. The question, What do I want the people to do because I preached this sermon? should be in the speaker's mind as he closes his message.

Conclusions may make use of the opening text, restated with emphasis; they may consist of an illustration, a quotation, or a poem, but they should always leave in the people's minds a clear impression of what they should therefore do.

Accordingly, as I conclude this syllabus, I invite the student to highly resolve that he will strive to reach, by God's enabling power, new levels of proficiency and saving power in that greatest of all callings, the ministry of the Word.

AMEN