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# Principled Paraenesis:

## Reading and Preaching the Ethical Material of New Testament Letters<sup>1</sup>

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In Reformed circles recent interest in how to read, understand, and preach the Bible has concentrated on the historical literature of Scripture. Significantly less attention has been given to the applied or ethical materials in the Bible. This article is an attempt to help in redressing that imbalance. As such it is a foray into a neglected area of homiletics (the theory of preaching). But it also provides suggestions that may prove helpful for anyone interested in reading the Bible with more insight.

### **The Issue**

In reaction to a moralistic and practical kind of preaching that seemed detached from

God's great redemptive work in Christ, a group of Reformed ministers in the Netherlands advocated a redemptive-historical method of reading and of proclaiming the Bible's message. This occurred between the two world wars, but was refined in the 1930s. Perhaps the most significant and durable example of this approach is a book by the Rev. S.G. De Graaf. Entitled *Verbondsgeschiedenis (History of the Covenant)* and written originally to provide church education teachers with some theological guidance, it has recently been translated into English.<sup>2</sup>

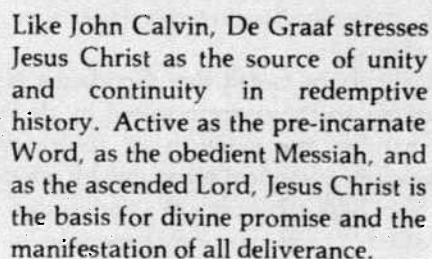
De Graaf limits his treatment to the historical passages of the Bible. His purpose is to demonstrate the gospel of God's saving

work in this material. For him the response of the human characters in the Bible stories is not where the message of Scripture lies. It is to be found rather in the redemptive promises and actions of a covenantally faithful God. Like John Calvin, De Graaf stresses Jesus Christ as the source of unity and continuity in redemptive history. Active as the pre-incarnate Word, as the obedient Messiah, and as the ascended Lord, Jesus Christ is the basis for divine promise and the manifestation of all deliverance.

For De Graaf and his colleagues the only legitimate way to read and to proclaim the historical materials of the Bible, therefore, was as recital of God's salvation in Christ. To moralize on the chastity of Joseph, who resisted the advances of Potiphar's wife, or on the courage of David, who faced a blaspheming giant in order to defend the honor of God's name, was to preach virtue rather than grace, man rather than God. So afraid of moralizing were some of the people representing this position, notably Dr. Klaas Schilder, that they even preached sermons virtually devoid of personal application, challenge, appeal, or reference to their hearers. Other proponents of this approach were less rigorous in avoiding any sort of ethical application by the preacher. But for them also the subjective response was grounded in the objective presentation of God's redemptive purposes in history. In either case the biblical interpreters and the preachers who advocated a redemptive-historical hermeneutics and homiletics studiously avoided a treatment of the characters in biblical history which made of them patterns for Christian response today.

By his analysis of the controversy between redemptive-historical and moralistic exegetes in the Netherlands, Sidney Greidanus has not only placed us all in his debt.<sup>3</sup> He has also provided many solid and constructive suggestions for preaching and for rightly reading the historical passages of the Bible. His advocacy of a redemptive-historical approach avoids such distortions

found in that school of thought as the false tension between the objective and the subjective in preaching. He has also succeeded in focusing Reformed homiletical attention on historical preaching. His book is used with profit in a number of Reformed seminaries, and he has convinced many young preachers to follow a redemptive-historical homiletics as he has begun to define that approach.



Like John Calvin, De Graaf stresses Jesus Christ as the source of unity and continuity in redemptive history. Active as the pre-incarnate Word, as the obedient Messiah, and as the ascended Lord, Jesus Christ is the basis for divine promise and the manifestation of all deliverance.

Others have expressed reservations about the redemptive-historical method. John R. de Witt of Reformed Theological Seminary offered the following evaluation recently.

I have read Sidney Greidanus's *Sola Scriptura* and some of the other books on the subject, but I have yet to find in any of them a way of bringing together the redemptive-historical conception of Scripture and warm, pointed, applicatory preaching. I do not, it should be said, question the validity of the insights of the redemptive-historical method. But to warn off ministers from the exemplary and the moralistic methods of a former time and of other schools is not as yet to have shown them how to be personal and applicatory without doing injustice to the scope and intent of the Word of God.<sup>4</sup>

It would seem that de Witt's reaction is conditioned by his wide knowledge of and his loyalty to the Puritan branch of the Reformed tradition. Puritan preaching is characterized by a warmth of individual piety and by an ability on the part of the accomplished preacher to take complex biblical doctrines and make them immediately, even compellingly, relevant to the experience of his hearers. A most important criterion by which Puritans judged their preaching was whether or not it was "experimental." As is well known from anthologies, Puritan sermons concluded with their carefully worked-out "uses" or applications.

It should be noted that Greidanus is not oblivious to the concern raised by de Witt. He handles the problem of relevance in redemptive-historical preaching by adopting D. Van Dijk's concept of "applicatory explication."<sup>4</sup> The concluding section of his book is devoted to "relevant preaching" which recognizes the discontinuity as well as the continuity between the situation to which the writer addressed the written Word and the situation to which the preacher brings his sermon. Thus Greidanus would say that the application of redemptive-historical material is inherent in its explication. Yet, de Witt correctly senses that Greidanus has not sufficiently clarified how applicatory explication occurs, particularly where there is obvious and significant discontinuity between the original recipients of Scripture and the modern audience.

Another problem demands mention. It is the danger of naively and uncritically applying categories like "moralistic" and "exemplary" to sermons on practical, legal, ethical, and paraenetic materials in the Bible. Some who have forgotten the restricted focus of Greidanus's work have used these adjectives as terms of opprobrium when referring to preaching and teaching on biblical texts and passages that have a definitely applicatory character. What has been overlooked is that many genres of biblical material are meant to be prescriptive

and directive. Not all Scripture is historical or redemptive-historical in nature, although all of it does have a redemptive-historical setting which must be recognized if the material is to be properly understood and presented. To preach on the beatitudes or on Paul's marriage material in Ephesians 5 requires making pointed applications of the text to today's situations. To call such preaching moralistic simply because it is practical is, therefore, misguided.

Despite the lack of homiletical attention given it, the practical, ethical, or paraenetic material in the Bible is as worthy of being preached today as is the redemptive-historical content. Because the latter has been given significant attention in recent theory of preaching, the former may appear, sheerly by theological default, to be less worthy of sermonic consideration. Nothing, however, could be more erroneous. What follows in this article is an attempt to develop a homiletical theory for the ethical material of the New Testament letters. It is offered in the hope that a lively discussion on how to sermonize on paraenesis will generate as much enthusiasm for preaching on this genre of literature as recent discussions on redemptive-historical sections of the Bible have occasioned for preaching on it.

### **Principled Paraenesis**

In technical theological literature, particularly in New Testament studies, the practical and ethical advice often delivered in a hortatory fashion is called "paraenesis." The term is derived from the Greek word *paraeneo*, which means "to advise, urge, recommend" something to someone. Thus, Paul urged (gave the paraenesis to) those with whom he was being shipwrecked to keep up their courage (Acts 27:22). Particularly the applied sections of the New Testament letters are often designated as paraenetic material. They are filled with specific advice on how to live the Christian life. They contain repeated encouragement

to do so. They may be addressed either to the Christian community in a given place, or to individuals within that community.

Homiletical textbooks in English do not concern themselves much, if at all, with how to preach paraenetic material. These sources are notorious for their preoccupation with the steps which the preacher should follow in his study as he prepares a sermon. Emphasis is placed on knowing his congregation and on his own spiritual attitude, on structuring his material, and on illustrating it. One looks in vain for an English-language analysis of paraenetic material as a unique biblical source for sermons. There does not appear to be any concern to develop a homiletical basis for approaching paraenetic passages.<sup>6</sup> Several questions arise from this silence. Is the explication and application of this form of New Testament material self-evident? Is its meaning obvious? Can it be preached or read in isolation from the doctrinal side of these letters or from the entire kerygma of Jesus Christ? If the paraenetic material is regarded as purely practical advice, and is so read and preached, what distinguishes it from the ethical injunctions of Islam or Shinto? Is it comparable to Old Testament wisdom, which was often shared with Israel's neighbors? What distinguishes these materials as canonically Christian? And how does their canonical Christian character demand that they be read and preached as religiously unique? It is in an attempt to do justice to these questions, which are all homiletically significant, that the notion of "principled paraenesis" is developed as a theoretical basis for preaching on the practical content of New Testament letters.

Principled paraenesis may be defined as that interpretation and exposition of paraenetic material which advocates the embodiment of the gospel in the life or existence of God's people.

The gospel is primarily the presentation of the life and work of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of Old Testament anticipations. It is revealed in the public ministry and earthly life of Christ, which culminated in

his resurrection and ascension. These events of redemptive history, and those regarding the church's birth, receive theologically informed presentation in the gospels and Acts. The New Testament letters, by contrast, interpret the significance of Christ's life and work for the emerging church. They do so in the light of actual issues, questions, and problems that arise in the churches. Thus Paul, for example, explains Christ in terms of such principles as the forgiveness of sins, the faith which justifies, and the church's gifts and ministries. The New Testament letters, therefore, give the principles of the gospel in the etymological sense of providing the original, basic, primary, and fundamental interpretation of the life of Jesus Christ.

What are referred to above as the principles of the gospel are usually regarded as the doctrinal side of the letters. Doctrine is then contrasted with the ethical or applied materials in these documents, and a distinction is then maintained between doctrine and ethics, faith and life. Such a distinction often fosters a separation and disjunction between the two. The notion of "principled paraenesis" attempts to avoid that disjunction by affirming that the paraenesis of the letters calls for the embodiment of the principles of the gospel in the life of the church. While there may be a legitimate distinction between principles and paraenesis, there may never be a disjunction or separation of the two. Preaching must always approach paraenetic material as advocating the expression, even the extension, of the principles of who Christ is and what he has done. One could even say that paraenesis expresses how the continuing work of Christ ought to emerge in the life of the church. In this way paraenesis maintains a uniquely Christian and a canonical character.

One homiletician whose work comes close to advocating principled paraenesis is William Heyns, who taught at Calvin Seminary from 1902 to 1926. In his mimeographed notes on homiletics Heyns divided sermons into four categories: 1) sermons on historical texts, 2) sermons on doc-

trinal texts, 3) sermons on parables, and 4) sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism. He included sermons on moral subjects in the second category.

Sermons on moral issues and topics belong in the category of doctrinal sermons, since doctrinal truths refer not only to faith but also to life. The ministry of the Word may no more be the preaching of doctrine as separate from life than it may be the preaching of life as separate from doctrine.<sup>7</sup>

Heyns rejected preaching which detached virtue and morality from Jesus Christ or the work of the Holy Spirit. While such preaching was prevalent in his day, he did not react by banning ethical subjects from the pulpit since the ministries of both Jesus and Paul were filled with practical advice. On the contrary, he felt the times demanded more, not less, practical preaching. But he warned against treating ethical issues in detachment from the Christ "for us and in us" or from the doctrine of salvation.

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While he does not amplify it, Heyns' notion of preaching doctrinal material as including the proclamation of Christ "for us and in us" is seminal. It suggests what has been advocated above as "principled paraenesis." To preach Christ means not

only to proclaim who he was and what he did in the past, it is also to herald his person and work in his body, his people, today. The latter is truly biblical paraenetic preaching.

What follows is an attempt to demonstrate the validity of principled paraenesis by applying it to the various kinds of paraenetic material in the New Testament letters. Helpful in this regard is the summary description of paraenetic material provided by Calvin J. Roetzel, a contemporary American New Testament scholar.<sup>8</sup> Roetzel isolates three types of paraenetic material in Paul's writings:

1. *Clusters of moral maxims.* Cryptic commands given in staccato fashion are the first form of practical advice. Roetzel gives Romans 12:9-13 as an example. Here the range of topics covered is broad, and little except a common form holds the commands together.

2. *Vice and virtue lists.* In a manner consistent with secular writings on morality, Paul sometimes produces or repeats lists of vices and virtues. Thus he contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Comparable lists appear in Romans 1:29-31; 5:19-21; I Corinthians 5:10-11; 6:9-10; and II Corinthians 12:20.

3. *Extended exhortation.* Sometimes the apostle develops a rather long explanation of Christian responsibility. Romans 14:1-14 on dealing with the weaker brother represents this common form of advice.

The value of form critical analysis is apparent from Roetzel's summary. While this method of studying New Testament materials has its limitations, it is useful here for demonstrating the universal applicability of principled paraenesis as a homiletical theory. In what follows, Roetzel's types will also be applied to Hebrews and to James for the sake of illustrating the usefulness of principled paraenesis beyond the Pauline corpus.

### **Paraenesis and Homiletics**

Hebrews 10:19-25 does not conform exactly to Roetzel's *moral maxims* category, in

which the imperatives are unrelated or strung together "like pearls on a string." But the unit does contain three distinct commands in the form of hortatory subjunctives. In abbreviated form these are 1) "Let us draw near" (v. 22), 2) "Let us hold fast" (v. 23), and 3) "Let us consider" (v. 24). These three exhortations rest on two accomplished realities, namely, entering the sanctuary with confidence and having a great high priest. In its entirety the passage reads,

19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.<sup>9</sup>

This passage occurs as the mid-point in the letter, conceptually speaking. The "therefore" with which it begins is similar to the one in Romans 12:1. It marks the transition from what is generally regarded as the doctrinal to what is usually called the ethical part of the letter. The two established realities on which the three commands rest are, as it were, a recapitulation of the entire argument of the writer in the first nine and one-half chapters. In the first half of the book the author has explained Christocentrically such ideas as the new covenant, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, the tabernacle made without hands, the great sacrifice to expiate sins, the believer's

assurance and access to God. The author begins the paraenetic half of the book by drawing together and summarizing all the previous themes in verses 19-21. In the paraenetic section the author brings to their logical conclusion the themes he has been developing: their expression in the daily lives of believers.

Some recent New Testament reflection accents the important role of paraenesis in Hebrews. James W. Thompson says, "The epistle employs a variety of motifs, especially cultic in nature, to serve the needs of paraenesis."<sup>10</sup> In this he follows the two European scholars F.J. Schierse and Otto Michael. Michael contends, "Theological-didactic parts of the epistle do not stand on their own, but rather form the presuppositions for paraenesis."<sup>11</sup> Thompson's article is an analysis of the structure of Hebrews' paraenesis, and it notes that the summons commonly follows an affirmation about the exalted Christ and his work. While this literature recognizes the connection between the "theological-didactic" and the paraenetic, between doctrine and life, it does not explore sufficiently the integrality of that connection.

What the pericope under consideration demonstrates is that the first half and the second half of the letter are inextricably related dimensions of the same gospel. Paraenesis here cannot be either understood or preached without the principles of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Thus when the writer exhorts his readers, "let us draw near with a true heart. . ." (v. 22), he has in mind a principled approach to God. It is only through the high-priestly mediator, slain as the pure sacrifice for sins and established as the tent of meeting not made with human hands, that the approach to God is understood. Similarly, when he commands, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering. . ." (v. 23), the confessed hope is not contentless. Much less is it whimsical. It is the articulated certainty of what God has done in Christ that has been presented in the first half of the letter. Also, "let us

consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (v. 24) is a paraenetic imperative derived from the divine love and righteousness manifested in the new covenant through Jesus Christ. The church's stirring up of one another to love and good works is not humanistic sentimentalism or work righteousness. It is a *considered* activity held in the context of regular worship and encouragement. And the consideration in terms of which the imperative is given is contextually clear. Only by considering God's salvation in Christ can Christians stir up one another to love and righteousness.

Roetzel's second type of paraenesis is the *vice and virtue lists* found frequently in the letters. One of the best known appears in Galatians 5. After exhorting his readers "to walk by the Spirit" and not to "gratify the desires of the flesh," (v. 16) Paul specifies vividly what each involves. He first gives a list of vices. "Now the works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like." (vss. 19-21) These are all works of the flesh which prevent inheritance of the kingdom. By contrast, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. . . ." (vss. 22-23) Those who belong to Christ practice or exhibit these virtues because they live by the Spirit of the Lord and not by the law of the flesh.

Such distinctive Pauline ideas or principles as "flesh," "Spirit," "law," and "crucifixion" appear in the immediate context of this vice and virtue list. A proper exposition of this passage will do full justice to the Pauline content of these ideas. They contextualize the vices and virtues in such a way as to make it impossible to give them Greek, Roman, or any sort of religious associations other than Christian ones. This is true despite the fact that pagan and even Jewish listings of vices and virtues might be formally similar to this list. Sorcery and strife as well as love and peace are radically dif-

ferent for Paul than for the pagan moralist, since Paul presents them in terms of Christ's and the Spirit's victory over sinful flesh.

But are there still other Pauline principles of the gospel presented in Galatians which should condition the exegete's understanding of this Pauline virtue list in particular? The answer is that there obviously are, and they should all be taken seriously in sermonizing on this paraenetic material, for they all constitute the wider context in which the fruit of the Spirit is found. A brief statement on the more prominent emphases will be illustrative.

In Galatians Paul is centrally concerned with righteousness (2:15-3:14). While the forensic dimensions of righteousness as the declared righteousness of God toward believers is prominent in Paul's discussion, the legal cannot be dissociated from the actual manifestation of God's righteousness. What God declares the believer to be and to have, the believer is expected to express. The fruit of the Spirit, along with other paraenetic passages in the epistle, can legitimately be regarded as the manifestation of the new righteousness in Christ.

Similarly, the letter is preoccupied with faith (2:15-3:14). Interpreters of Paul's thought concur that at the stage in his ministry when Galatians was written the apostle regarded faith as a dynamic, heartfelt trust in Jesus Christ as God's messiah. To trust in Jesus included depending on him to the extent of walking by his Spirit.

A third theme in the kerygma presented to the Galatians is adoption into God's family and sharing the inheritance given believers (3:15-18; 4:1-7). The quality of life outlined in the paraenesis, specifically the verses on the fruit of the Spirit, can be legitimately seen as an aspect of the heritage belonging to those in God's family.

When Paul contrasts freedom with bondage to the law (4:21-5:1), he regards it as the power and the opportunity to serve Christ without external constraint. Christians are free to express fully the spiritual principle of life which now governs



them. The fruit of the Spirit articulates some of the dimensions this new freedom will assume.

Throughout the letter Paul uses certain descriptions of the church as God's people. He regards them as "brothers" (1:11), recipients of the Spirit (3:2), "baptized into Christ" (3:27), known by God and knowers of God (4:9), people in whom Christ was being formed (4:20), and the "Israel of God" (6:16). These terms apply to the Galatians as a new people in Christ Jesus. Paraenesis is given as the exhortation to the church to become the people God has made them.

The various forms of epistolary paraenesis, therefore, are capable of being interpreted as appeals to the church to give expression or embodiment to the principles of the gospel. This is as true for the non-Pauline as for the Pauline letters. Not to read or not to preach the applied material of these writings as principled paraenesis would appear to be a distortion.

One must also regard the Spirit so often referred to in this letter as the One poured out on Pentecost. As such He is the Spirit of a new age, just as his fruit is the sure sign that that age has dawned.

Thus a contextual exposition of Galatians 5:22-23 must take into consideration the structure of the Pauline kerygma as that comes to expression throughout the book. So seen, the fruit of the Spirit could legitimately be preached as

the fruit of a new righteousness,  
the fruit of a new faith,  
the fruit of a new inheritance,  
the fruit of a new freedom,  
the fruit of a new people,  
the fruit of a new age.

Approached in this fashion, the virtues in this passage become infinitely more than a

list of "do's" as opposed to a list of "don'ts." They describe the embodiment of the gospel in God's people. As paraenetic commands they call forth the presence of the Lord in his church. They provide a vivid description of what it means to live in Christ and to have Christ living in us.

The third illustration of principled paraenesis is found in the book of James. Particularly in James 3:1-12 the writer's lengthy discussion of a proper use of the tongue constitutes an *extended exhortation*. As in the other two examples, it will become apparent that James' paraenesis provides an understanding of how the gospel must be reflected in the lives of Christians.

A major problem with James lies in determining his central theme or thrust. Martin Dibelius denied that any theological thread stitches the letter into a unified garment. He regarded it as a haphazard collection of paraenetic exhortations, drawn from a variety of sources and lacking any cohesive theme.<sup>12</sup> More recently scholars have proposed ways of unifying the book. Peter H. Davids, for example, discovers its unity in an underlying *Leidenstheologie* (theology of suffering).<sup>13</sup> More compelling are the suggestions that the kerygmatic core of the letter is righteousness which expresses true faith, or faith in action. All the paraenetic problems dealt with in the letter can be correlated with this emphasis: faith in action means patience during hardship; poverty accepted gracefully, wealth humbly; self-controlled, or better yet, Christ-controlled speech; constant prayer; wisdom as the mark of godliness; communal support, especially under compassionate leadership. All these examples indicate the living faith expressed in works which is called for in James 2:14-26.

As he does with a number of other topics, James treats speech at several points in the letter. His five speech parallels, as they might be called, are all demonstrably linked to the underlying theme of a faith expressed in righteous deeds.

1). 1:19-20—*Angry speech in haste.*

Hasty, ill-considered speech produces anger which militates against righteousness. Thus, it does not reflect faith in action.

2). 3:1-12—*Abuse of teaching*. This extended exhortation follows immediately the famous statement, "so faith apart from works is dead" (2:26b). It can be seen as an extended illustration of that verse, therefore. Having compared the unchecked tongue to an unbridled horse, a rudderless ship, a raging fire, and an untamed animal, James concludes with three illustrations suggesting the truth "by their works you shall know them."

3). 4:11-12—*Judgmental speech*. Slandering a brother equals slandering the law and judging the law. This amounts to breaking the law, which is unrighteousness and not faith at work.

4). 4:16—*Boasting*. The writer calls boasting "evil," which is the same as unrighteousness (v. 17) or faithless activity.

5). 5:12—*Swearing or taking an oath*. The verse says condemnation falls on these manifestations of faithless speech.

All five places where James exhorts Christians against the distortions of speech, including the extended exhortation in 3:1-12, give contextual support for regarding false speech as the expression of faithlessness. Proper speech may be—although James does not suggest it always is—evidence of the faith that justifies. The abuse of the tongue reveals the absence of faith and brings condemnation. What we say, even how we say it, is in the letter of James an expression of the faith that is in us. Keeping the paraenesis regarding speech is a demonstration of the principle of a living, working faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

The various forms of epistolary paraenesis, therefore, are capable of being interpreted as appeals to the church to give expression or embodiment to the principles of the gospel. This is as true for the non-Pauline as for the Pauline letters. Not to read

or not to preach the applied material of these writings as principled paraenesis would appear to be a distortion. Not only does such preaching resort to moralisms which isolate ethics from theology, it also tears the seamless fabric of the gospel by separating the Christ of redemptive history from the Lord of the church. Paraenetic appeals are calls to life in, with, and for the risen and ascended Lord.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This article contains the theological substance of three scheduled addresses to the Christian Reformed Ministers Institute, June, 1981. While I regret that ill health prevented my completing the series, I am grateful that the *Pro Rege* editorial board has consented to include the material here in reworked form. The material was presented in October, 1981, to a conference of Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Church in the U.S. ministers.

<sup>2</sup>S.G. De Graaf, *Verbondsgeschiedenis*, 2 vols. (Kampen: J.H. Kok N.V., 1952). The English translation has appeared as *Promise and Deliverance*, 4 vols., trans. by H. Evan and Elisabeth Wichers Runner (St. Catharines, Ontario: Paideia Press, 1977 ff.).

<sup>3</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Kampen: J.H. Kok N.V., 1970).

<sup>4</sup>John R. de Witt, "Contemporary Failure in the Pulpit," *The Banner of Truth*, March 1981, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Greidanus, pp. 157-160.

<sup>6</sup>An essay that advocates analyzing the structure, form, field of concern, etc., of any text selected as the basis for a sermon, is G.D. Buttrick, "Interpretation and Preaching," *Interpretation*, 35 (1981), pp. 46-58. This entire issue of *Interpretation* is devoted to "The Preacher as Interpreter."

<sup>7</sup>William Heyns, *Homiletiek, Theoretisch Deel* (mimeographed; Grand Rapids: Calvin Seminary, 1910), p. 92. Translation mine.

<sup>8</sup>Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), pp. 23-24. On pp. 35-37 Roetzel adds wisdom sayings as a fourth category, though earlier he regards wisdom material as woven into the three primary forms.

<sup>9</sup>Biblical quotations throughout this essay are from the Revised Standard Version.

<sup>10</sup>James W. Thompson, "Outside the Camp: A Study of Hebrews 13:9-14," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 40 (1978), p. 54.

<sup>11</sup>Thompson, n. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Peter H. Davids, "Theological Perspectives on the Epistle of James," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 23 (1980), p. 97.

<sup>13</sup>Davids, p. 98.