

TH
L 513

THE ELEMENTS OF POWER IN THE PREACHING
OF
ROBERT WILLIAM DALE

By
John Philip Lee
A. B., Wheaton College
1940

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

May 1943

BIBLICAL SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY LIBRARY
HATFIELD, PA.

18982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
A. The Subject Stated and the Present Study Justified.....	2
B. The Subject Delimited.....	3
C. Procedure and Sources.....	3
II. CONTRIBUTING INFLUENCES IN THE PREACHING OF ROBERT WILLIAM DALE.....	6
A. Dale's Ancestry and Early Education.....	6
1. Ancestry of Dale.....	6
2. Early Education of Dale.....	8
B. Influences in Dale's Later Education.....	11
1. Dale's Spiritual Awakening.....	11
2. College Days.....	14
3. At Carr's Lane.....	17
C. Summary of the Contributing Influences in the Preaching of Robert William Dale.....	22
III. AN ANALYSIS OF DALE'S DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL SERMONS WITH REFERENCE TO SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF POWER.....	26
A. A Study of Dale's Doctrinal Sermons.....	26
1. A Typical Doctrinal Sermon.....	27
a. Theme.....	27
b. Text.....	28
c. Proposition.....	28
d. Introduction.....	28
e. Working Out of Theme.....	28
f. Conclusion.....	30
2. Elements of Power.....	30
a. Dale's Use of Scripture.....	30
b. Centrality of Christ.....	34
c. Emphasis Upon Christian Experience.....	38

JAN. 20, 1944

23624

<u>Chapter</u>	Page
d. Range of His Preaching.....	41
e. Evangelistic Emphasis.....	43
B. A Study of Dale's Ethical Sermons.....	43
1. A Typical Ethical Sermon.....	44
a. Theme.....	44
b. Text.....	44
c. Working Out of Theme.....	44
d. Conclusion.....	46
2. Elements of Power.....	46
a. Dale's Use of Scripture.....	46
b. Emphasis Upon Practical Application.....	48
c. Range of His Ethical Preaching	50
d. His Insight Into Man.....	51
C. Summary.....	53
IV. THE FORM OF DALE'S PREACHING.....	59
A. Literary Character of Dale's Preaching.....	59
1. Types of Sermons.....	59
2. Length of Sermons.....	60
3. Dale's Style.....	61
a. Treatment of Theme.....	61
b. Length of Sentences.....	63
c. Singleness of Emphasis.....	64
d. Repetition.....	64
e. Language.....	66
4. Repetition of Sermons.....	68
5. Dale's Source Materials.....	69
6. Dale's Choice of Topics.....	71
B. Oral Character of Dale's Preaching....	73
1. Dale's Method of Delivery.....	73
2. Dale's Physical Energy.....	76
C. Summary.....	77
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	80
A. Summary.....	80
B. Conclusion.....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	91
A. Primary Sources.....	91
B. Secondary Sources.....	91
C. General Sources.....	92



CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

THE ELEMENTS OF POWER IN
THE PREACHING OF
ROBERT WILLIAM DALE

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Stated and the Present Study
Justified

By general consent Dr. Robert William Dale was one of the most influential preachers in the Congregational Church. He is known throughout England as Dr. Dale of Birmingham. Matthew Arnold has said of him:

"He has his arena down at Birmingham, where he does his practice with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jess Collings and the rest of the band; and then from time to time he comes up to the Metropolis, to London, and gives a public exhibition of his skill. And a very powerful exhibition it often is."¹

He is known more as a doctrinal preacher, perhaps, than any other preacher in the nineteenth century. The fact that his writings last, and his popularity and genius lives on, and that authorities yet consider him as one of the 'Princes of the Pulpit', is sufficient reason for a study of the elements of power in the preaching of Robert William Dale.

.....

1. Rev. John Edwards: Nineteenth Century Preachers
p. 32

B. Subject Delimited

It is not within the scope of this study to give a complete account of the life and the works of R. W. Dale, for this can be found in separate volumes. Neither is it the purpose of this investigation to go into a lengthy discussion concerning the times in which Dale lived, nor is it believed that this is pertinent to the present subject. But it is the desire of the author of this thesis to cull out the factors in his life which contributed to or influenced his preaching which can be classified as contributing influences in his life, and to come into a first hand study of some of his sermons to determine the elements of power in his preaching.

In considering his sermons, it will not be possible nor wise to study or even classify all of them. Since, however, he is noted especially as a doctrinal preacher and ethical preacher, these two phases will be dealt with at length.

C. Procedure and Sources

After a study of the contributing influences in the life of R. W. Dale that made him what he was, a study will be made of the elements of power in his doctrinal sermons, and another study from his ethical sermons. Finally, the form of Dale's preaching will be considered

and the subject concluded with a study of the influences of Dale upon other preachers in Birmingham and upon the world in general.

The primary sources which will form the basis for this thesis are:

1. A. W. W. Dale: The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham
2. R. W. Dale: A Series of Discourses on Christian Doctrine
3. R. W. Dale: Laws of Christ for Common Life
4. R. W. Dale: Nine Lectures on Preaching

CHAPTER II
CONTRIBUTING INFLUENCES IN THE PREACHING
OF
ROBERT WILLIAM DALE

CHAPTER II

CONTRIBUTING INFLUENCES IN THE PREACHING OF ROBERT WILLIAM DALE

A. Dale's Ancestry and Early Education

In order that we may better understand Dale's preaching, it is desirable that we begin by directing attention to the earliest contributing influences in his life; namely, his Christian parents and his early education.

Dale was born in the heart of London on December 1, 1829. "His father, Robert Dale, was a native of Bocking, a village about a mile from Braintree in Essex."¹ The ancestry is hard to trace, but it is quite certain the Dales had a strain of foreign blood in them. It has been advanced that the Dales were among those who settled in Braintree after being driven from the Conti-²nent by religious persecution.

Dale's father, Robert Dale, was a dealer in hat trimmings until the fashion was superseded and his trade was turned into other courses. At twenty-two Robert

.....

1. Dale, A. W. W.: The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham, p. 1
2. Cf. Ibid.

Dale married Elizabeth Young, the daughter of a tradesman.

"Neither Robert Dale nor his wife had much schooling, even for their times; but they were intelligent and understood the value of education."¹

Both were members of the Tabernacle Church, Moorfields, which had been founded by George Whitefield.

However, there was, on the wife's side, one member of distinction, Elizabeth Young's uncle. His "Indian Church History" yet remains to attest his literary industry and interest. It can be said that usually the presence of even one man of letters in a family rarely goes without its effect upon the relatives; and so it was in this family.

Out of six children born to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dale, only two survived - Robert and Thomas - "and even they, as might be expected during childhood, were far from robust."² Thomas came to the home when Robert was ten years old and thus, for ten years, Robert was the only child. The mother's memories of those she had lost made her all the more tender and loving to her only son. "Her one desire for her boy 'Bobby', as he was then called, was that he should grow up to be a minister of the Gospel."³ To be sure, young Dale early in life was placed on the

.....

1. Ibid, p. 3
2. Ibid
3. Ibid., p. 4

altar of God and watched over and prayed for daily that he might become a minister of the Gospel. Reverend James Key says:

"One impression remains with me to this day, the passionately earnest desire of his mother that he should be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this she seemed to live; for this she prayed incessantly, for this she laboured; for this she would make any sacrifice. From his birth she gave him to God, and she watched over him with earnest prayer."¹

2. Early Education of Dale

The boy did not lead an adventurous life in his early childhood and hardly any incidents have been recorded. However, one friend has said that he was never seen with the other boys playing about in the street and would set off for home from school at the time fixed by his mother. He was not one to participate in the rougher sports, and did not excel in either speed or strength, and was not considered an athlete; he always cared more for books than for play. Yet he was not unsociable, but was always ready and willing to aid his schoolfellows in their lessons. It was in his third school that he came in contact with sons of both professional men and tradesmen, and he learned as much from these classmates as he did from his teachers. Because of his attainments in studies, he was far in

.....

1. Ibid., p.4

advance of most of his classmates, and through his aiding of others he was brought into intimate association with two brothers, George and John Offord. But his first school did not pass from his memory entirely, for, his first teacher, Mr. Wilby, left a lasting impression on young Dale. Fifty years later, his son tells us,

"Dale expressed his indebtedness to the training that he had received there, though he did not explain whether its merits were due to special methods of instruction or to its effect in stimulating the mind."¹

These two brothers, George and John Offord, had a great influence upon his life also; for fifty years later he refers to them and what they had done for him. It was to Mr. Offord, the father of George and John, that he owed his earliest impulse towards literature. For when Mr. Offord died, Dale wrote a letter to his daughter recalling his own debt:-

"Your father had so great a place in all my memories of my early days that with his death a piece of my own life seems to have gone. He was very kind to me.....I should find it hard to say for how much of my own preaching he was responsible; his conversations with me about his two great preachers, Mr. Binney and Alfred Morris, made impressions on me which must have done a great deal to shape my whole way of thinking about the preacher's work."²

It was probably through such encouragement that at the age of twelve he made his first appearance in print, which

.....

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p.8

was an article of only three lines - thirty words all told.

It was for the Christian Witness that he wrote his next article. At the reference to the Christian Witness there comes to mind the name of one whose influence greatly shaped the boy's character, namely, Dr. John Cambell, minister of the Tabernacle Church. His preaching had a part in stirring the religious interests and in helping to shape the religious convictions of the lad who listened to him Sunday after Sunday, sitting by his father and mother who were then members of the Tabernacle Church. Along with Dr. Campbell, Mr. William Stroud greatly influenced Dale's life while a member in his catechetical class. His teachings unconsciously were molding the young boy's thinking.

The exact range of Dale's studies is uncertain, but it is known that after leaving Mr. Wilby, who followed the Pestalozzian system, he was sent to a school at Rayleigh in Essex, where he came in contact with the sons of tradesmen and professional men, and from there he was placed in the school kept by Mr. John Tyson Willey. And it was with Mr. Willey, in the summer of 1843, that Dale's school days came to an end at the early age of thirteen years. It is postulated "that he must have learned Latin, French, a little Greek and a fair amount of mathematics,

in addition to the English subjects which were carefully taught in Mr. Willey's school.¹"

As one looks back over Dale's early childhood and schooling, there stand out above all others those men that had a share in influencing young Dale's thinking. These included Mr. Wilby, Mr. Offord, John and George Offord, Mr. William Stroud and Dr. John Campbell. It is best to hear directly from Dale's son on the influence that Dr. John Campbell had on his later life and work.

"Some points of resemblance between the two men are worth noting. Untiring industry, the energy with which literary activity and the work of the pulpit were combined, the habit of expounding whole passages, and even books of Scripture rather than separate and isolated texts, a readiness to attack great subjects, and a militant loyalty to Congregational principles, were characteristics that Dale shared with his first pastor. How far the similarity was accidental, and how far due to the unconscious influence of example, it is impossible to say. But there need be no hesitation in tracing to this source the first exuberance of his literary style and the dogmatic temper of his youth and early manhood."²

Not only did Dale become a lasting debtor to Dr. John Campbell, but also to his church, the Tabernacle Church.

B. Influences in Dale's later Education

1. Spiritual Awakening

Dale had not been without earnest religious

.....

1. Ibid., p. 13
2. Ibid., p. 11

striving. A child of such prayer as was Dale could not go long without having a deep concern about his own spiritual condition. That he lived a clean life is seen from the fact that he was not one to associate a great deal with the boys on the street but he confined his spare time to reading of books. However, there had yet to take place in his life that experience which would definitely place him in fellowship with Christ.

It was at Andover while discharging his duties as a schoolmaster, at which it seemed he could never make a success, that Dale saw a momentous crises in his spiritual history. In order that the entire feeling of Dale might be conveyed, it is best that his experience be given in his own words.

"A sermon by the Rev. J. Sherman, which I heard when about thirteen, suggested thoughts about God, and my relation to Him, which were new as being practical, and awakened anxieties which lasted for many months."¹

This was the beginning of Dale's concern about his own relation to God, and caused him to inquire more into it, which he did by reading a great influential book of that century, John Angell Jame's "Anxious Enquirer". Of this he says:

"I read it on my knees, and in keen distress about my personal salvation. Night after night I waited with eager impatience for the

.....

1. Ibid., p. 16; Taken from "Ordination Services of the Rev. R. W. Dale," pp. 31, 32.

house to become still, that in undisturbed solitude I might agonize over the book which had taught so many to trust in God."1

"I continued to suppose that I was to be saved by believing the history of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great Evangelical doctrines concerning His nature and death. Conscious that I had not attained the rest and strength which ought to follow 'saving faith,' I began to think that perhaps my belief was powerless because it was the mere result of education, and not of independent inquiry. Under this impression I turned in my boyish simplicity to Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," hoping that when I had verified for myself the historical foundations of Christian truth, my belief would rest on a right basis and exert greater power."2

But even yet the peace desired did not come; the quest was not over.

"I thought that, perhaps, if I believed in Christ at all, I did not believe in the right way; but then, how was I to discover the right way? This set me off on metaphysical adventures, which yielded no discoveries of the kind I wanted. At last - how, I cannot tell - all came clear; I ceased thinking of myself and of my faith, and thought only of Christ; and then I wondered that I should have been perplexed for even a single hour."3

Thus it was that, at the young age of fourteen and a half years, Dale was received into the Congregational Church meeting in East Street, Andover, and at once began an active part in the life and work of the church. With this, Dale's zeal began to grow until in the spring of 1845, a year after his conversion, he delivered his first sermon in a room at Providence Cottage, Lower Clatford.

-
1. Ibid. Taken from "Life of John Angell James", pp. 288, 289
 2. Ibid., p. 17
 3. Ibid.

And, as will be seen in his later sermons, he began early to center his preaching around the person and work of Christ.

"His preaching attracted a good deal of attention. He was not timid in attacking great subjects. He had read and thought much for a lad of his age. His self-possession was remarkable, and he was never at a loss for words Yet, already it was clear that he was made for the pulpit, and that only as a preacher of the Gospel would he find the work for which he was best fitted."¹

At the age of sixteen he began to become known among the Non-conformist families of Leamington. At the suggestion of Mr. Pope, his pastor at Spencer Street Congregational Church, who also had encouraged him to enter the ministry, Dale wrote to the Reverend T. R. Barker, the resident tutor of Spring Hill College, Birmingham, applying for admission. Being without sufficient funds, he was about to close his eyes on his hopes of ever entering college when his friends, together with a Mrs. Cash, guaranteed the amount needed each year.

2. College Days

At college he came in close contact with the three professors, Mr. Barker, Mr. Watts, and Mr. Henry Rogers. Of the three, it was Mr. Henry Rogers who swayed Dale's thought life the most; in fact, with Dale

.....

1. Ibid., pp. 18, 19

1

his influence was paramount.

"From him Dale caught that delight in literary excellence which he carried with him through life - the strenuous resolve to aim at perfection exhibited in his own work, the dignity and simplicity of his own style, to attain which he spared himself no pains. It was through Mr. Rogers also that he first came to admire the genius of Burke.....This admiration for Burke, which began at college, lasted on into his latest years."²

Later in life, during his ministry, Dale often would lay awake at night for hours, and so on his shelves above his bed or upon the chair at the side of his bed there always stood a pile of books. Year after year one could always find there a volume or two of Burke; while the others came and went, Burke remained. It is true that one of the most enduring benefits that a student can enjoy is the close contact with an intellect of such originality as was Mr. Henry Rogers'.

It was not an easy task for Dale to get into the harness again after discontinuing school at the age of thirteen. And since he was self taught, having studied when and what he liked, it was difficult for him to tie himself down now to hard, systematic studies.

It was not Mr. James, pastor of Carr's Lane, who attracted his attention as a preacher while Dale was

.....

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 42
2. Ibid., p. 44

in Birmingham, but rather George Dawson, who had broken with the Baptists. Mr. Dawson was the preacher of his choice, and Dale would hear him nearly every Sunday evening. Dawson seemed to have just what James lacked, originality, which Dale considered, to quote his own words,

"was the pearl of great price; we were willing to sell all that we had to buy it."¹

"To what extent Dale's preaching was affected by Dawson's influence it would be difficult to determine; but in one or two directions the results are conspicuous. The stress that he laid upon ethics must in a measure be attributed to this cause.....The fascination was strong, but it was not supreme; Dale was not mastered by it.....yet he expresses a regret that Dawson 'has not more of the old Evangelical doctrine'".²

It was during Dale's second year that his intimacy with his fellow-student, Edward Glanville, became a dominant element in his life. With him Dale would be seen continually and together they would discuss their problems. Also, during this second year, Dale was greatly startled by a sudden summons to occupy the pulpit at Carr's Lane. This was the beginning of a friendship, which developed into the greatest in Dale's life, with Mr. John Angell James, then pastor of Carr's Lane.

With his third year came his entrance into the

.....

1. Dale, R. W., Lectures on Preaching, p. 296
2. Dale, A. W. W., Op cit., p. 52

Theological Class and a growing enthusiasm for his future calling. His power as a preacher was now becoming known, and many sought his services.

"He was often the first choice of those who applied to the college for help."¹

This friendship with Mr. James developed into a very warm one. Often Dale would be invited to spend Saturday dinner with him, and there they would discuss many subjects including the work at Carr's Lane and Mr. James' desire to be relieved of some of the work there. This friendship was not without effect, for in the autumn of 1852 at the age of twenty-three Dale was invited to preach regularly at Carr's Lane on the first Sunday morning in every month. This was to relieve Mr. James, who was well along in years, having served the church since his call there in 1805. Mr. James, for some time, had had his eye on Dale and begged him to listen to "no hint or solicitation about settling with a congregation without first consulting him."²

3. At Carr's Lane

Dale had first been asked to preach in Carr's Lane pulpit in order that Mr. James, whose health had

.....

1. Ibid., p. 61
2. Ibid., p. 76

not been good, might be relieved. This was during Dale's second year at college. Little did Dale realize when he first came to Birmingham that someday he would be asked to assist at Carr's Lane, for he had mentioned in one of his conversations that "the church will go to pieces as soon as Mr. James goes to heaven. God bless his successor."¹

He entered his work at Carr's Lane with the understanding that when he had finished his college work there would be open to him the prospect of becoming assistant pastor. Dale was, however, very reluctant in ever looking ahead to that time, for he believed it too great a task for himself, knowing that whoever would become assistant would, in the near future at the death of Mr. James, carry the burden of the entire pastorate.

Reference cannot be made to Carr's Lane without giving consideration to the personality of its pastor, Mr. James, and to his influence upon the life and thinking of Dale. In Dale's early college days the sermons at Carr's Lane were not to his liking, in fact, he was repelled by them. To him Mr. James lacked originality which meant everything to Dale. Yet, it cannot be overlooked that however Dale thought at first about Mr. James' preaching, he came to find real help and strength in his Saturday evening visits at Mr. James' home.

.....

1. Ibid., pp. 77

Mr. James was one of the most famous preachers of his time. His books were well known, especially "The Anxious Enquirer" to which Dale went to find the answers¹ to his problem during his spiritual awakening. In addition to his preaching and his work as an author,

"Mr. James also gave much time and strength to organized effort in association with others. He was enthusiastic in his support of foreign missions, especially as represented by the London Missionary Society. He took a leading part in the foundation of the Evangelical Alliance.....By his labours in behalf of Spring Hill College he had rendered important service to the cause of ministerial education."²

His reputation and influence were not confined to his own denominational circles but went far beyond those limits. As to the secret of his success, a fragment from Mr. James' autobiography is related by A. W. W. Dale:

"He frankly avows that he lacked learning and originality; that he was neither philosopher nor critic. His own intellect was not adventurous, and he could 'start no mind upon a new track of investigation and career of discovery.' No glimpses of undiscovered truths, he tells us, have flashed upon his soul. He describes himself as 'a mere plodding, working husbandman, using old implements with some industry, and following old methods with a kind of dogged perseverance and considerable success.' He was keenly alive to the glory and the responsibility of his vocation, and his motto throughout his ministry had always been, 'They watch for souls as they that shall give account.'"³

.....

1. Ante p., 11
2. Dale, op. cit., p. 73
3. Ibid., p. 74

But with all these acknowledgements, A. W. W. Dale gives his own answer for Mr. James' success:

"He had the voice, the presence, the instinct of the orator.....He was distinguished by sagacity and shrewdness in an exceptional degree. He understood men, and knew how to deal with them both in the mass and as individualsThe weaknesses of human nature, and the remedies of weakness, were familiar to him. If there was no originality in his method of treatment, no enterprise in his science, he had the skill of an experienced spiritual physican. And all these qualities were crowned by a simplicity, absolutely devoid of affection or pretension, and incapable of any meanness or smallness."¹

This was the character, the personality with which Dale was to be associated for at least six years and with whom he would labour together in the vineyard of his Master.

It was with the concern of a father that Mr. James watched over Dale. On August 6, 1854, Dale preached for the first time as the co-pastor of Carr's Lane. It was not, however, until late in November, because of Mr. James' recent illness, that the ordination service was held. It was at this time that Mr. James shared with others his personal feeling toward Dale as he finished his address with these words:

"Long after my memorial shall be added to those which are inscribed on yonder marble, may you occupy the pulpit that overshadows my tomb, and send forth over my sleeping

.....

1. Ibid.

dust the words of life and immortality. A long, a holy, and a useful career by yours in this place. As it was in my case, so may it be in yours, and this church be your first, your last, and your only love. Even longer, more happy, and more useful may you be here than I have been. Rich in years, in honours, and in usefulness may you come at some far distant day to your end: and then, after labouring in the same pulpit, come and lie down with me in the same grave, at the foot of it: so shall we resemble warriors resting on the field where they fought and conquered."¹

Truly this wish was realized in the spirit if not in the letter.

It was not long before the man's characteristics were to show themselves, and Dale's doctrinal and expository methods were manifested very early in his ministry. In fact, shortly after taking the co-pastorate, he delivered a series of sermons on the Epistle to the Romans which caused a great stir. Many of the congregation and friends at Spring Hill College were greatly concerned at Dale's line of reasoning, since he had advanced some ideas that contradicted some of the strong points of Calvinism. However, it was Mr. James who stepped in to say,

"Now you leave the young man alone, he has the root of the matter in him...The young man must have his fling."²

It was with this introduction that Dale began

.....

1. Ibid., p. 97. Quoted from "The Ordination Service of the Reverend R. W. Dale, pp. 35, 36
2. Ibid., p. 115

his rich ministry at the Carr's Lane pulpit. He was to see many valleys as well as mountain tops, and true to the words and wish of Mr. James, this church was his first and last and only love, for Dr. Dale began and ended his ministry in the same pulpit.

C. Summary of the Contributing Influences
in
Robert William Dale's Preaching

This chapter has considered the contributing influences that affected Dale's preaching under the headings of: his family background and early education, his spiritual awakening, his college days, and his beginning at the Carr's Lane Pulpit. It has been shown that he was born into a devout christian home, where from earliest childhood he was brought into contact with the Bible, that there were difficult days in the early home life of Dale, and that through the prayers of his saintly mother, Dale was led in the paths of religion. It has further been seen how Dale was not too robust as a young lad, but enjoyed his books more than his athletics, and that because of his interest in books he was able to help many other fellow students in difficult subjects. Those who were influential in young Dale's thinking as a student were Mr. Wilby, Mr. Offord, John and George Offord, Mr. William Stroud and Dr. John

Campbell. Dale's early ability for writing and his zeal was becoming more evident in his early teens. Mr. James' book "Anxious Enquirer" played an important part in the religious experience of Dale, and it was further seen that at the age of fourteen years Dale accepted the work of Christ for himself and was received into the church, which time marks the beginning of his active life and work in the church.

Then Dale was seen in his college role being influenced greatly by Mr. Barker, Mr. Watts, and Mr. Henry Rogers. In literary influence, Mr. Burke stands above the rest as the one man whose works were never absent from Dale's little night table, upon which was always found his favorite books. These he read in the middle of the night when sleep failed him. Of the preachers, Mr. George Dawson was shown to be Dale's favorite, and Dawson's influence is very evident in the latter life of Dale.

Then in the closing part of the chapter Mr. James, pastor of Carr's Lane Church, had become ill, and a number of times Dale was invited over to fill the pulpit. Soon this association became even greater and Dale was invited to be first, assistant pastor, and then co-pastor with Mr. James at the Carr's Lane pulpit. It was here that Dale's preaching success was born, blossomed into full bloom, and then was to live on after Dale himself departed from this life.

All the individuals mentioned in this chapter contributed greatly to the preaching of Robert William Dale.

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF DALE'S DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL
SERMONS WITH REFERENCE TO
SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF POWER

CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF DALE'S DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL SERMONS WITH REFERENCE TO SPECIAL ELEMENTS OF POWER

A. A Study of Dale's Doctrinal Sermons

That Dr. Dale was predominately a doctrinal preacher is an accepted fact that need not be argued. Shortly after coming to Carr's Lane pulpit in Birmingham, he was met on the street by a Welshman who was a powerful Non-conformist preacher. Dr. Dale in relating the account says:

"He had reached middle age (the Welshman) and I was still a young man, and he talked to me in a friendly way about my ministry. He said, 'I hear that you are preaching doctrinal sermons to the congregation at Carr's Lane; they will not stand it.' I answered, 'They will have to stand it.'"¹

And so it was that while yet young Dale determined to preach the whole counsel of God to his people. In light of this, it is important to consider in his doctrinal preaching certain elements of power.

A doctrinal sermon is a sermon which follows a line of Biblical reasoning, gathering together many or all the passages which bear upon a certain teaching, such

.....

1. Dale, R. W.: Preface to Christian Doctrine, p. v

as God, man, sin, Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the atone-
ment.¹ Thus doctrinal preaching is primarily didactic
and Scriptural. This does not, however, ignore the
inculcation of morality.

A very fine tribute has been given to Dr. Dale
as a doctrinal preacher by H. C. Howard:

"He was preeminently a preacher of doctrine.
But it was the way he did it that counted.
Christian doctrine was not to him merely an
intellectual system. If Christianity con-
sists in part of a substantial body of truth,
then, of course, the truth can be systema-
tized. But to Dale the system was a means
and not an end. He preached doctrine, not
as an intellectual system, but as a means of
conveying God's saving truth and grace to
man through Christ. Doctrine in this sense
was inseparable from man's salvation; not
that he was saved by the doctrine, but that
he was saved by truth as well as by grace.
God's grace itself is a truth, one of the
greatest of all truths."²

And in another place Howard continues:

"Doctrinal preaching, then, in his hands was
not remote or abstract but personal and ex-
perimental. What he preached he found veri-
fied in the experience of those to whom he
preached."³

1. A Typical Doctrinal Sermon

The Theme: "The Trinity"

.....

1. Cf. Pattison, H. T.: The Making of a Sermon, p. 127
2. Howard, H. C.: Princes of the Christian Pulpit
and Pastorate, p. 298
3. Ibid., p. 299

The Text: "Through Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." Ephesians 2:8

Proposition: In the incarnation of our Lord, and in the coming of the Spirit and His permanent activity in the church and in the world, there is a revelation of the inner and eternal life of God.

Introduction:

In the introduction Dale constantly alludes to the unfathomable mystery of the Trinity in expressions such as "The mystery of that life remains imprenetrable" and "infinitely mysterious." His sermon is developed in five divisions, which divisions may be Dale's own or may have been put there by the publisher.

Working Out of Theme:

First: The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that Father, Son and Spirit are one God.

Second: Dale clarifies the statement and answers the question, "Does the revelation of God really reveal God?"

Third: He shows why he does not readily accept the philosophical attempts to demonstrate the necessity of the Trinity nor the attempts to alleviate the difficulties surrounding the doctrine by a familiar analogy to the mystery. He says of this:

"It is not by any process of philosophical speculation on the nature of God that the

church finally reached the doctrine of the Trinity, but by the path of faith and Christian experience."¹

Fourth:

"The revelation of the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit fulfills - and it alone fulfills - the profoundest, the richest, the noblest conception of the divine life."²

This step is developed as he answers the question "For whom does the word 'God' stand?"; which is another way of bringing out the truth of this point. Dale shows that God is not only a 'far off' God but also One who is nigh at hand. For Christ not only reveals the Infinite, but he also accepts human limitations and reveals divine perfection. It is with the aid of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to see God in Christ. He refers to this aid as follows:

"The grace which draws men to Christ may be resisted and defeated; but apart from it no man believes in Him, follows Him, and receives eternal salvation."³

Five: Dale's concluding point deals with the practical side of the sermon, for he shows the relation of these mysteries of life (trinity) to the true and original genius of the Christian Gospel.

"The sermon on the mount derives its unique power from the profoundest faith of Christian men in all ages that it comes from the

.....

1. Dale, R. W.: Christian Doctrine, p. 156
2. Ibid., p. 154
3. Ibid., p. 162

lips of One who is infinitely greater than man."¹

Thus we can conclude that the inner and eternal life of God is manifest in Jesus Christ, and through the enablement of the Holy Spirit man is able to see God in Christ. This truly answers the proposition that Dale set out to make clear: that in the incarnation of our Lord and in the coming of the Spirit and His permanent activity in the church and in the world there is a revelation of the inner and eternal life of God the Father.

2. Elements of Power

From this sermon as well as from the other doctrinal sermons preached by Robert William Dale and printed in his volume "Christian Doctrine," it is possible to bring to light many powerful elements in his doctrinal preaching.

a. His Use of Scripture

In the introduction to this chapter, a doctrinal sermon was defined as "a sermon which follows a line of Biblical reasoning, gathering together many of

.....

1. Ibid., p. 167

or all the passages which bear upon a certain teaching."¹
Not only is the high quality of Biblical reasoning present in Dale's doctrinal preaching, but also there is present an exceptional use and mastery of scripture. Dale used Biblical material in development of his themes in various way. He has assimilated much of the content and spirit of the Bible, or perhaps, even more strongly stated, he has, in a unique way, mastered especially the New Testament. Because of this there is a strong Biblical cast to his opinions as well as in his figures of speech and in his choice of words. Then, also, there is another way in which he uses Scripture in the development of his sermons, which is more direct than the previous one. It is his way of appropriating statements of Scripture so that they become his medium of expression without the formality of quotation. One example is found in his sermon on "Man" where he is speaking of the Lord breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life and man thus becomes a living soul. He says:

"In the second chapter he receives the same title, 'a living soul,' or 'a living creature,' that is given to 'every beast of the field and every fowl of the air'."²

And another illustration of this is found in

.....

1. Ante, p. 26
2. Dale, Op cit., pp. 230-231

his sermon on "The Atonement."

"If you heartily receive the great words of Christ that his blood was 'shed unto the remission of sins'; if with the apostles you believe that your sins were a burden which He carried up to the cross; that He died for you, died for your sins, suffered for your sins; if you trust in Him as the Propitiation for your sins; if you believe that 'through His blood' you have forgiveness of sins; that 'by His blood' you are released from the divine condemnation for your sins and are 'justified' then.....you receive the great and awful and glorious Fact....."¹

And then the way in which Dale uses Scripture in the development of his argument by direct quotation cannot be overlooked. He quotes Scripture profusely to prove his point but seldom refers to its position in the context.

In his sermon "On the Trinity," Dale quotes ten passages of Scripture. One quotation is seven verses long; that found in Matthew 5:21-28.² In his sermon on "The Existence of God," he refers to twenty-six passages of Scripture. But in his discourse on "The Humanity of Our Lord," Dale goes the limit in referring to or directly quoting sixty passages of Scripture.

Dale frequently uses illustrations from the Bible to enforce a point under consideration. But in his doctrinal sermons these illustrations often are more

.....

1. Ibid., p. 230
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 166

citations from Scripture than dramatic illustrative material. For instance, in his sermon on "The Humanity of our Lord," when speaking of the human affections and emotions of Christ, Dale says:

"On the Sabbath day, after the Pharisees and Scribes had begun to excite popular hostility against Him by charging Him with Sabbath-breaking He went into a synagogue where he found a man who had a 'withered' hand; and they watched our Lord 'whether He would heal the man on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him.' Our Lord asked them whether it was lawful on the Sabbath 'to do good, or to do harm, to save life or to kill.'"¹

Another splendid illustration of this is found in Dale's sermon on "The Divinity of Our Lord" (II), where he speaks of Christ's freedom from the consciousness of sin.

"There is not the faintest trace in the four Gospels of His ever having been troubled by moral or spiritual failure.....He is always equal to the duty of the hour; He does it naturally, and, except in the supreme agony of Gethsemane, with ease and spontaneity. He says frankly - speaking of the Father - 'I do always the things that are pleasing to Him.'"²

That Dale had a grasp of the total scope of Scripture is evident from his wide use of Scripture in his many sermons, and also from his choice of texts. His texts are found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament with slightly more emphasis upon the latter.

.....

1. Ibid., p. 64
2. Ibid., p. 105

It is evident from his great emphasis upon the whole range of Christian truth, from the holiness of God to the sinfulness of man and the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ that Dale had a wide understanding of Scripture. This view of the whole of the Christian revelation comes from a full acquaintance with the source-book of that revelation. And yet, there is another important indication that Dale was steeped in the Word of God, and this is found in his possession of the spirit of the Word as well as the letter of it. In the close of his sermon on "The Trinity", Dale illustrates his knowing the spirit of the law as well as the letter.

"But a clear knowledge of eternal things - so far as they can be clearly known - has also its value in relation to life and practice. And will giving heed to the warning of the saintly mystic we should also follow the example of the great apostle, who said, 'I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.'"¹

Dale was interested in the great doctrines of the church but not apart from their working out in the lives of the Christians. Often he would refer to the fact that creeds were of no use unless they helped one live better and meet the practical things of this life.

b. The Centrality of Christ

.....

1. Ibid., p. 169

It is difficult to say which of these two elements stand first in one's preaching and consequently, the order in considering the elements of power do not necessarily place one above the other but are arbitrary. One professor well has said that Christ should have a central place in every sermon that we preach. This certainly is true of the doctrinal sermons of Dr. Dale, for in each Christ is brought forward as the Son of God and the son of man who 'gave his life a ransom for many.' Of course, in those sermons dealing directly with God's existence there is less reference to His son. But Dale does not have to be preaching on the humanity or divinity of Christ in order to present Him centrally; this is illustrated in his sermon on "Sin." He has given a splendid argument on sin, its nature, origin and result, and then he forcefully brings in the redemption that is in Christ for the sinful race by saying in his conclusion:

"There is an evil power in the life of the race - a great and awful power, which if unresisted will destroy us; but the grace of God in Christ is infinitely mightier to redeem and to save. We are born to that redemption - to that salvation; it lies with each one of us to determine whether we will receive or reject it. If we are finally lost it will not be because we belong to a sinful race but because we have rejected the infinite mercy of God which has achieved the redemption of the race in Christ!"

.....

1. Ibid., p. 217

In his sermons on "The Atonement" there is no other center but Christ, and from this hub there flows out the full effect of the atonement. Three of these sermons are printed in his "Christian Doctrine," and then there is entirely another volume on "The Atonement" which is written with its central emphasis that "Christ died for our sins."

It was not the desire of Dr. Dale to consider subjects that were beyond the reach of the people. However, he wanted them firmly grounded in their Christian faith. For this reason, it was his practice to deal with those subjects that provoked thought and caused one to 'sit up and take notice.' His volume on "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels" has, as its core, "Why those that believe in Him, continue to believe."¹ It is not the Bible he is so much defending as the Christ of the Bible. A belief in Christ is fundamental, foremost and essential to a belief in the Bible. Stated briefly, his contention in the "Living Christ and the Four Gospels" is that,

"Faith in Christ is trust in a Person, not belief in a Book; that we believe in Christ, not because we believe the Bible to be supernaturally inspired, but we believe in the inspiration of Scripture because we believe in Him."²

.....

1. Dale, "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels," p. 10
2. Howard, "Princes of the Pulpit," p. 291

It is 'in Christ' that we see God and are made conscious of God, and it is 'in Christ' we have the inheritance as children of God. But this Christ of Dale is not just a great teacher, nor the world's fine example, nor the expounder of a philosophy of life and a program for society. True, He is all this, but He is more. Dale's Christ is the Eternal Son of God who became truly man that He might take man's sin upon Him and give 'His life a ransom for many'. Christ, to Dale, is what Christ was to Paul, and Dale's teaching concerning Him is comprehended by Paul when he said,

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again, the third day according to the scriptures....." 1

In his volume on "The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church" in which Dale gives an excellent exposition on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ is pictured as better, satisfying, and complete, giving himself 'once for all.' If there was one element that was uppermost in Dr. Dale's mind it was truly the centrality of Christ in the Christian life as well as in the Scriptures themselves.

.....

1. I Corinthians 15:3

C. Emphasis Upon Christian Experience

It is not the contention of Dale that his sermons should be based upon great philosophical reasoning but upon the teachings of the Scripture. Consequently, he does not resort to any process of philosophical speculation in proving any of the great doctrines of Scripture but resorts to the path of faith and Christian experience. In his sermon on "The Existence of God," Dale is aware of the many scientific and philosophical proofs that have been advanced. But these are hurriedly expressed, and then the full weight of his argument is given to the evidence from experience. In speaking of a man who, one day, suddenly realized there was a God, after more fully discovering nature around him, Dale says:

"This experience has been the experience of multitudes of men. Within and behind all visible and transitory things they have discovered - they have felt - the power of an unseen and eternal presence. They can give no account of how they became conscious that the august Presence was there; but they knew it."¹

He makes his point clear in the conclusion of his sermon on "The Existence of God" that we know God exists not by reasoning, but by experience.

"The main point on which I have insisted this morning is that God's existence is made certain to us - not by reasoning, but by experience."²

.....

1. Dale: Christian Doctrine, p. 13
2. Ibid, p. 22

It is remarkable, as the various doctrinal sermons are considered, to note the great emphasis Dale places upon Christian experience and the testimony of those who have had an experience. Our belief of the humanity of our Lord rests more upon the experience of the early Christians and the experience of Christ himself than upon anything else.

"The faith of the Church in our Lord's humanity rests primarily on experience - the experience of those who knew Him during His earthly life."¹

And it is upon our own experience of the power of the Son of God and Saviour of men that our faith in Christ rests. These words taken from Dale's sermon on the "Divinity of Our Lord" are typical of his constant emphasis upon Christian experience.

"Experience, not mere authority - experience, not mere theological demonstration - is the surest ground of our belief that He is the Son of the Eternal."²

At the close of his first discourse on "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels," Dale very vividly illustrates for us his true emphasis upon Christian experience to help prove many a difficult critical problem.

He says:

"As for those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ for ourselves, and who know that He is the living Lord and Saviour of men, the Way to the Father, the Giver of eternal life, our own experience - confirmed by the experience of Christian men of all Churches

.....

1. Ibid., p. 54
2. Ibid., p. 77

and all ages - prevents us from finding anything incredible in the miracles which He is alleged to have wrought during His earthly ministry."¹

When answering the question why it is that those who believe in Christ continue to believe after so many critical approaches had been made to show the accounts of the Four Gospels incredible, Dale says:

"Whatever may have been the original grounds of their faith, their faith has been verified in their own personal experience."²

And so it was, according to Dale, that his belief as well as the belief of the many other Christians rested not upon scientific or philosophical arguments, but upon faith and their own experience. The words of Christ had become a reality in their lives. This is summed up well in the following:

"Their (the Christians) faith in Him rests on foundations which lie far beyond the reach of scientific and historical criticism. They know for themselves that Christ is the Saviour of men; for they have received through Him the remission of their own sins. He has translated them into the Divine kingdom; He has given them strength for righteousness and through Him they have found God."³

In seeking to give an account of Dale's preaching, one constantly comes back to the thought that cannot be forgotten, that is; that Dale preached as he did

.....

1. Dale, Living Christ and the Four Gospels, p. 102
2. Ibid., p. 10
3. Ibid., p. 234

because he was what he was. He appealed to the experience of his hearers, or to the experience of Christians for centuries before because he himself knew that experience together with the Scriptures, which tell of the experiences of Christians, was the greatest proof for Christian doctrine. Dale preached from his heart a message which he felt the people needed .

d. The Range of His Preaching

Dr. Dale was ever on guard to preach the whole counsel of God. He warned others against harping on a single note constantly, and planned his own preaching so that he covered the full teaching of Scripture. It was his custom to touch on all of the great doctrines of Scripture; sometimes within the course of a year's preaching. Perhaps two doctrines would be considered in the same sermon, but as far as possible none would be neglected. The more important truths would receive greater emphasis. Concerning this very subject, Dale writes:

"To avoid the danger of failing to give to any of the great doctrines of the Christian Faith an adequate place in my preaching, I have sometimes drawn up, in December or January a list of some of the subjects on which I resolved to preach during the following twelve months."¹

From this, it is evident that Dale was concerned

.....

1. Dale, Christian Doctrine, Preface, p. vi

deeply with the scope or range of his preaching. That his doctrinal range was expansive is evidenced from his list of topics for one year: The Incarnation, the Divinity of Christ, the Personality of the Spirit, the Trinity, Sin, the Atonement, Faith, Justification, Life in Christ, Regeneration, Sanctification, Judgement to Come.¹

Together with these subjects, Dale enjoyed dealing with whole passages of Scripture and expounding books systematically. He gave a series of sermons on Romans, on Hebrews, and on Ephesians. Although this phase of his preaching is not being considered in this thesis, it is proper to mention it in considering the range of his doctrinal sermons. Dale's genius in Biblical exposition is expressed in the following descriptive comment:

"Dr. Dale dealt with its books in a large way, not in their minutiae. His purpose was to trace the wide outflow of thought and feeling in the writer's mind; to fix the leading landmarks by sailing from point to point across the intervening deeps and not to work around the coast exploring every inlet and river."²

Another point in regard to his range is his use of the early apostolic writings in defense of the teachings of Scripture, especially as found in his book, "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels."

.....

1. Cf. Ibid
2. Cadman, S. Parks: Ambassadors of God, p. 275

e. Evangelistic Emphasis

Although not as prominent as the other characteristics which have been brought especially to the attention in this chapter, yet Dr. Dale's evangelistic emphasis cannot be overlooked. As is evident, Dr. Dale was not an evangelist; he did not have the characteristics which accompany an evangelist; for instance, the lack of persuasive power. Nevertheless, it was his custom early in his ministry to preach evangelistic sermons on Sunday evenings. And says Brastow,

"Nor could Dr. Dale with his Puritan antecedents and culture, and his sympathetic association in the pastorate with me like John Angell James fail to be an evangelistic preacher."¹

When Mr. Moody came to Birmingham in 1870, Dale cooperated enthusiastically with him and even "defended² him against the detractions of the Anglican Clergy." And although his zeal for this type of work was strong, his own limitations were evident. But this note of evangelism can be seen pervading all his doctrinal sermons and especially those dealing with the Atonement.

B. A Study of Dale's Ethical Sermons

To say that Dr. Dale was only a doctrinal

.....

1. Brastow, Louis, The Modern Pulpit, p. 269
2. Ibid.

preacher is to leave much unsaid. "Dr. Dale was also an ethical preacher of the highest order," says Brastow.¹ It was not enough for Dale to lead his congregation to think with him concerning the great doctrines of Scripture; he also desired to bring to them truths from the teachings of Christ that could be lived out in their daily lives. In his volume, "Laws of Christ for Common Life," there is presented the finest cross section of his ethical sermons. Ethical sermons are those sermons which enforce personal and relative duties by claims of religion and morality.²

1. A Typical Ethical Sermon

Theme: Judging Others

Text: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye."
Matthew 7:3

Working Out of Theme:

- 1a. Man's complaints reveal his true character.
 - aa. It is the man who never speaks to anyone who contends that no one ever speaks to him.
 - bb. It is the vain man who is quickest to discern vanity in others.
 - cc. It is the man absorbed in his own pursuits who thinks others are selfish and unsympathetic.

1. Brastow, Modern Pulpit, p. 267
2. Cf. Pattison, op. cit., p. 133-136

2a. The apparent pleasant actions of others towards an ill-tempered individual may be inspired by their desire not to antagonize that person.

aa. An ill-tempered man may cause those who come into contact with him to guard against provoking his temper.

bb. One who constantly condemns another for his coldness may himself be overly forward causing this reaction.

cc. Young people's quick impressions concerning individuals are usually based on small premises.

3a. Correcting other men's faults.

"How wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote of thine eye, and lo! the beam is in thine own eye.? - Text

aa. While trying to help correct another's fault, one is almost certain to inflict irritation and harm.

bb. It is easier to tell a non-Christian than a Christian that he has done wrong.

cc. The gift of removing 'motes from other men's eyes' is as rare as the qualities of the most skilled surgeon.

dd. Anonymous letters always do more harm than good.

Conclusion:

All Christian are members one of another. They should be careful in their endeavor to remove the mote from a brother's eye not to do anything to irritate it or force it in.

From this, as well as other ethical sermons preached by Robert William Dale, and printed in his volume, "Laws of Christ for Common Life," it is possible to list and enlarge upon a number of elements of power in his ethical preaching.

2. Elements of Power

It is not the habit of Dr. Dale to preface his ethical sermons with a text, but he does make an exception in two of his sermons. However, one does not have to go far into his ethical sermons before the Scripture upon which they are based is plainly indicated.

In his sermon on "The Sacredness of Property," hardly two pages are covered before the reader comes to the Scriptural basis for this sermon which is the parable of the Unjust Steward and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus contained in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke.¹

.....

1. Cf. Dale, Laws of Christ for Common Life, p.18

Yet these are not the only scriptural passages in this one sermon; he also refers to the parable of the lost sheep, the lost piece of silver and the prodigal son, to Zaccheus, and the Lord's prayer.

Perhaps, one would think that, since the sermons were on ethical subjects, there would be an omission of scriptural content, but such is not the case. Dale's sermons are literally saturated with scripture - especially from the Sermon on the Mount. He speaks on the authority of the Scriptures and not on human authority.

From his choice of texts, Dale's use of scripture is quite evident. In his sermon on "Judging Others" he uses two texts:

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"¹

And also:

"How wilt thou say to thy brother, 'Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye,' and lo! the beam is in thine own eye?"²

One of his well chosen texts for his sermon, "Courtesy and the Spirit of Service," is,

"Everyone that exaltest himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."³

.....

1. Ibid., p. 73
2. Ibid.,
3. Ibid., p. 112

In his discourse on "Sympathy" his text is,

"Rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep."¹

"Be not anxious for the morrow; for the morrow shall be anxious for itself."²

brings out his text in "Anxiety about the Future." And for "Political and Municipal Duty," Dale takes the words of Paul in Romans, "the powers which be are ordained of God."³

To continue to present illustrations of Dale's use of scripture would make a rather lengthy discourse; however, one can be correct in saying that Dale fortified all his ethical teachings with numerous Biblical references, quotations, examples of Christian lives, and other Biblical illustrative material.

b. Emphasis on Practical Application

To preach an ethical sermon and to leave out the practical application is to eat a meal and not have any desert. It was Dale's contention that if the Gospel was not practical it was not for man. That he believed in its practicability is seen from his great ethical sermons. However, it was not his custom to

.....

1. Ibid., p. 158
2. Ibid., p. 123
3. Ibid., p. 188

wait until the conclusion of the sermon to bring out the application to common life, but his whole sermon would be seasoned with practical applications. He said:

"Far wiser is the preacher who learns how to carry a thread of application through the entire sermon."¹

It is Dr. Dale's belief that there are too many preachers

"who take so much time in getting our guns into position, that we have to finish without firing a shot."²

By this, he meant that so much time is used in getting the essence of the sermon across to the hearers, that when the application is to be made it is time to cease.

Dale's means of applying his truths were many. Sometimes the application was distributed throughout the sermon; sometimes he would suddenly contrast the living authority of the truth with the antagonistic error. When it was his

"object to strengthen the religious affections, the gratitude, the love, the trust, the hope, the joy which the truth inspires,"³

he would often succeed by giving expression to the feeling that was enkindled in his own heart.

.....

1. Dale, Lectures on Preaching, p. 146
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 147

At times, when it was necessary to enforce a duty, he would bring out some vivid historical illustration showing the beauty and nobleness of that particular task. Occasionally, he would appeal to fear or hope which no Christian heart can resist.

But, as Brastow says:

"He turned all his teaching toward practical issues, and he is a notable exemplification of the fact that a fundamental theological thinker, who is profoundly interested and thoroughly versed in his science may be, in his handling of theological questions, one of the most practical of men."¹

c. The Range of His Ethical Preaching

Something must be said briefly of the range of Dr. Dale's ethical sermons. It is apparent that he touched every corner of life in his preaching. The following are some of the subjects considered in his many sermons: everyday business, property, justice, forgiveness, temperance, judging, courtesy, sympathy,² anxiety, family life and political life.

"He was anxious to avoid the danger of omitting to preach with definiteness³ and emphasis on great Christian duties."

.....

1. Brastow, op. cit., p. 267
2. Cf. Dale, Christian Doctrine
3. Ibid., p. vi of preface.

Therefore, he would make a list at the beginning of the year of the moral subjects he desired to speak on for the coming year. One particular list included such subjects as:

"Truth; Justice; Magnanimity; Industry; Temperance; Endurance; Public Spirit; Courage; Contentment."¹

d. His Insight Into Man

The work of the ministry is described by St. Paul as that of an embassy from God to man.² It is very evident, then, that the minister, in order to be effective, must be well acquainted with both God and man. He must be able to understand the will and working of God and the characters and behavior of men. This understanding must be so keen that the minister can reach every room in men's hearts, hurdle every barrier and open every barred door. This preparation is referred to by William Taylor, in his Beecher lectures on preaching, in these words:

"Get such a knowledge, my young brethren, on the one hand, of the book of God, and on the other of the characters and surroundings of men, as will enable you thus to be of service to them, just where they are....."³

.....

1. Ibid.
2. Cf. II Cor. 5
3. Taylor, William: The Ministry of the Word, p. 50

The congregations to which Dr. Dale ministered were made up mostly of the average class of working people in Birmingham. One of his great powers was to serve them just where they were, for it is evident in his ethical sermons that he met a very real need in their lives, and that his sermons were so delivered that all who heard were affected positively. This ability to look into the heart of man; to analyze all the weaknesses with a view to meeting them through the power of Christ, and to interpret them to the man himself so that he is able to see his need and the remedy, is undoubtedly one of the greatest assets a minister can have. The truths must be presented in terms that the hearer can understand them, and then they can be properly and effectively applied. A. S. Hoyt says concerning this:

"We must get beneath the surface of life, behind the conventions of society, back of the maxims and standards of popular thought. We must understand and reveal man, the individual, and man as a part of humanity."¹

Dale knew himself and knew his faults, and therefore, he was better able to know other men. He recognized his failures and shortcomings and in re-

.....

1. Hoyt, A. S.: Vital Elements of Preaching, p. 74-5

cognizing them, he was the better able to understand others. In his sermon on "The Forgiveness of Injuries," he demonstrates this in speaking of one's attitude to another who has wronged him.

"It is not a pleasant thing to be told that we have committed an act of injustice; but when we have committed it, and the man we have wronged comes to remonstrate with us, we ought to receive him courteously. To treat him roughly is to add to the original offence. We ought to have saved him the pain of coming at all; we ought to have made voluntarily all the reparation in our power."¹

Dr. Dale had a keen interest in people, and he delighted in observing them act and react. Although not active when young, he had come to see the need of social intercourse, and this became a delightful custom of his. His ethical sermons are full of evidences that he was not radical on any social question, and that he looked at all the moral problems squarely. This splendid ability to understand the hearts of men, as well as to understand their environment, was one of his great achievements.

Like many other outstanding preachers of the nineteenth century, Dale's powers which are evidenced in one type of sermon are evidenced in his others also.

.....

1. Dale, Laws of Christ for Common Life, p. 69

Especially is this true of Dale's abundant use and exhaustive grasp of the whole scope of Scripture, as well as his central emphasis upon Christ's teachings and His person. In his doctrinal sermons, it is Christ's person that is central, whereas, in the ethical moral sermons, it is the teachings of Christ that receive the greatest emphasis. To further enumerate and expound on the special elements that appear in Dale's ethical preaching would be to repeat much that has been said in the previous portion of this chapter.

However, perhaps the three most noticeable elements of power that appear in his ethical sermons are; his wide range of topics, his emphasis upon the practical application, and lastly, his unusual insight into man. These have been considered and should be noted as the more prominent elements of power in Dale's ethical preaching.

3. Summary

The elements of power that are especially manifested in Dale's doctrinal and ethical sermons have been considered in this chapter. It was shown that Dale is foremost and preeminently a doctrinal preacher, and undoubtedly the outstanding doctrinal preacher of England in the nineteenth century. Aside from the

other elements of power considered in this thesis, this chapter has considered those that especially should be emphasized.

In the beginning a typical doctrinal sermon was outlined giving, to some degree, Dale's method in handling and dealing with the great doctrines of Scripture. Then, his use of Scripture was considered, and it was shown with what skill Dale uses the Bible, not only quoting from it profusely but also bringing in the Spirit of the Word as well as its letter. Many of his illustrations are entirely Biblical taken from both the Old and the New Testament. That Dale had an exceptional grasp of the total scope of Scripture was shown from his wide use of the Word, and also from his unique choice of texts. Next, it was discovered that the person of Christ holds a central place in the doctrinal preaching of Dale. His sermons are saturated with the Living Christ, and He is ever presented as the only true answer for the sins of the world. Dale is strong in his emphasis upon faith in a person, not in a book, and it was brought out that it is by faith in Christ that one can have faith in an infallible book. In the third place, it was brought out that Dale does not use lofty philosophical arguments to prove the humanity or deity of our Lord, but he went directly to the experiences of those who had associated with, or in some way

had known our Lord, and listened to their testimony as it is recorded in Scripture. It was brought out that Dale preached as he did because he was what he was. He appealed to the experience of his hearers, to the experience of the Christians for centuries before because he knew that experience was the greatest proof of Christian doctrine. It was seen that Dale's range touched every phase of doctrine in Scripture. He desired to preach the whole counsel of God, and centered all of his teaching around the great fact of the Atonement for man by Jesus Christ. In the closing part of the discussion on the elements of power in his doctrinal sermons, it was noticed that even though he was not typically an evangelistic preacher, yet his emphasis upon evangelism and upon Christian experience cannot be slighted.

In the second part of the chapter, the elements of power evident in his ethical sermons were considered, and it was found that there was a unique similarity in both his doctrinal and ethical preaching. But, instead of the person of Christ being the dominant chord, the teachings of Christ were stressed in his ethical-moral sermons, and this naturally caused him to refer to and quote passages at length. As in his doctrinal sermons, so also in these ethical sermons

was his range wide, touching nearly every phase and duty of man's life. But above these two aspects, his use of scripture and his range, stand two others that are found especially in Dr. Dale's ethical preaching. They are his emphasis upon the practical application and his unusual insight into man. Throughout his sermons the practical aspect appears. As he considered the various duties of man he was aware of his own lack of obedience and his many failures. Being thus aware of his own shortcomings, he was able to speak understandingly to his congregation, and consequently, he touched them at the very center of their lives. Thus, it has been seen that aside from the many other elements of power that are present in Dr. Dale's preaching, there are some that enforce themselves upon the hearer more than others and are therefore worthy of special consideration.

CHAPTER IV
THE FORM OF DALE'S PREACHING

CHAPTER IV

THE FORM OF DALE'S PREACHING

A. Literary Character of Dale's Preaching

1. Types of Sermons

First and foremost, Robert William Dale is known as a doctrinal preacher, but almost equally as representative of his preaching is his ethical sermons. However, to limit his field to these two types of sermons would be untrue and unfair, for he is a recognized expositor as well as a splendid deliverer of evangelistic sermons. But, in the present thesis, the writer has limited the scope of Dale's preaching to concentrate on a few of the important elements of power.

To be sure he started as a doctrinal preacher, and this approach did not wain with his advance in years. Dale said himself concerning doctrinal preaching:

"Doctrinal preaching is the kind of preaching which I must approve, which is most natural to me, for which I am conscious I have the greatest adaptation."¹

And Brastow has said of Dale that "he became the most

.....

1. Dale, A.W.W.: Life of R. W. Dale, p. 123

accomplished doctrinal and apologetic preacher of his day in the free churches."¹ But, as Brastow further says of Dale:

"Dr. Dale was also an ethical preacher of the highest order."²

And it is with these two main types of sermons Dale's preaching can best be characterized.

2. Length of Sermons

In examining some of Dale's sermons, it has been noticed that the average length of his doctrinal sermons is twenty-five pages consisting of approximately two hundred and seventy words per page, making a total of some six thousand seven hundred and fifty words. In contrast with this, the average sermon by a modern preacher very rarely goes beyond half of the average length of Dale's sermons which would be about three thousand six hundred words.³

Longer sermons were more the order of the day in Dale's time for, in England and Scotland, when the people came to church they expected to hear a sermon and

.....

1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, p. 266
2. Ibid., p. 267
3. Cf. Mather, T. B.: Voices of Living Prophets; Based on estimates made of sermons by representative modern preachers as compiled by Mather.

not a short talk. Dale made a great impression in speaking before the Directors of the London Missionary Society when he preached on the theme "The Living God and the Saviour of All Men." Dean Alford in the Contemporary Review pronounced it to be one of the noblest sermons he had ever heard. For two hours Dale "swept along with unflagging energy," so states Dean Alford.¹ But this was the exceptional length rather than the typical length sermon, for the usual time was perhaps one full hour. That Dale could preach in such a manner was due not only to his own energy, but also to his preparation and skilful choice of words which kept the sermons full of rich meat for his audiences.

3. Dale's Style

a. Treatment of Themes

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of Dale's style is his treatment of great themes. It was his constant desire to make his audience 'work' - and work they did. His themes often would have perplexed a theological student, and yet he preached them to

.....

1. Howard, H. C.: Princes of the Christian Pulpit and Pastorate, p. 284

his own congregation. He was wont to bring before his people such great themes as the doctrine of the Trinity and the Atonement for he believed that an active mind never would grow lazy. Pattison says concerning this:

"He was wont to warn preachers that the flowering shrubs of Mount Carmel would not keep their churches full. The mysteries of sin and love, of death and judgment were never long absent from his thoughts, and therefore they were constantly brought under the consideration of his hearers."¹

That he was successful in dealing with these great themes is evident from his life-time stay at Carr's Lane Pulpit, and his ministry to the very end was full of messages on these great themes. Pattison further says concerning such preaching:

"We may grant that to preach doctrine well is not easy, but the pulpit has always declined under easy preaching as it has always risen in power and importance when it has braced itself to grapple with great subject."²

At one time it was necessary for him to preach in the Town Hall of Birmingham while his church was undergoing repairs. He did not preach on trivial themes but rather on such great subjects as the

.....

1. Pattison, op. cit., p. 109
2. Ibid., p. 129

Incarnation, Christ's Death, the Atonement, Justification by Faith, the Loneliness of the Soul, Individual Responsibility and the Judgment to Come.

"There is no mean measure of the man discoverable in the fact that he handled themes such as these."¹

He believed that preaching great truths were good for the congregation as well as for the preacher. Truly, one of the most distinctive characteristics of Dale's style was his ability to preach great themes successfully.

b. Length of Sentences

Another obvious characteristic of Dale's style is the length of his sentences. One sentence, picked at random from his sermon on "Temperance," has eighty-seven words in it.² Another on "The Existence of God"³ has one hundred and twenty-four words in it. There is no doubt that his ability to make clear such complex sentences was the result of his practice of writing out his entire sermon, often taking the completed manuscript into the pulpit, and also, the resultant influence which Edmund Burke had upon Dale.

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 296
2. Dale, Laws of Christ., p. 80
3. Dale, Christian Doctrine

c. Dale's Singleness of Emphasis

It has been said that Dale's style, perhaps, was influenced more by Edmund Burke than any other writer. Robert Hall recognizes this great characteristic of Burke - that of singleness of emphasis. That Dale's style also had this singleness of emphasis is brought out by his own words in his "Nine Lectures on Breaching" where he says:

"We should all preach more effectively if, instead of tasking our intellectual resources to say a great many things in the same sermon, we tried to say a very few things in a great many ways."¹

This faculty for presenting the one truth or idea, yet having the same dominant recurring theme, is made evident in both his doctrinal and ethical sermons.

d. Repetition

Another technique in Dale's preaching is his use of the law of repetition. By repetition one does not mean singleness of emphasis which was formerly mentioned, but rather the repeating of phrases or similar thoughts in the various sermons. By this,

.....

1. Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 150

one is aware that Dale truly believe certain great truths would never grow old. In the introduction of his sermon on the "Divinity of Our Lord," he repeats the great truth that he had spoken of in his sermon on the "Humanity of Our Lord" as he brings out the place personal experience plays in learning of the great facts in the life of Christ. Notice how he does this:

"In the discourse on the 'Humanity of Our Lord' I reminded you that our belief in our Lord's Humanity rests on experience - chiefly on the experience of His earthly relatives, and of His apostles and friends: the experience of Mary His mother, and of His brothers, James and Jude; the experience of Salome, who, I suppose, was the sister of Mary and our Lord's aunt, and of her sons James and John, who were His cousins; the experience of Peter and Andrew and Thomas; of Mary and Martha and Lazarus of Bethany, and of other men and women who were the disciples of our Lord when He was on earth, the names of some of whom have been preserved, while the names of others have been lost. All these were among the original members of the Christian Church, and the Christian Church, from the very first, believed that our Lord was really man."¹

In regards to his repetition of Scripture, one only need look at the three sermons on "The Atonement" in his volume on "Doctrinal Discourses" to find the same scripture passages referred to time and time again. Such passages that are used to prove

.....

1. Dale, Doctrinal Discourses, pp. 74-5

his points in his sermons are: "Christ died for our sins;" "we have our redemption through His blood;" "the forgiveness of our tresspasses;" "according to the riches of His grace;" "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" "Christ also suffered.....the Righteous for the unrighteous."

Thus, Dr. Dale, aware as he was of some striking passages in Scripture that were found in the life of our Lord, was wont to repeat them rather often because they were rich and illustrious in great eternal truths.

e. Language

That Dale's style is strongly characterized by his language is evident from his ease and facility in stating clearly his thoughts in his sermons. Bras-tow describes Dale, saying:

"The elements of his success as a preacher are not far to seek. The strong quality of the truth presented, its fitness to the religious needs of men, the clear and masterful unfolding of his subject, his grasp of its moral bearings, his intellectual, ethical, and emotional earnestness, his strength of will and sincerity of purpose, his sagacity in applying the truth, his courage tempered by deliberateness, caution, considerateness, and a conservatism

that 'dislikes new ventures,' his robust physical personality.....these are some of the qualities that reveal themselves in this most manly of modern English non-conformist preachers."1

Some have accused Dale of using theological language too much, and, no doubt, rightly so, but yet there are many of his sermons that are filled with simple language understandable by all. However, Dale, at times, rises to all heights of eloquence and grandeur so as to make Dr. Fairbairn say of his words:

"Though written to be spoken, are even more fitted to be read than to be heard; for his books are as firm in texture, as weighty in matter, as vigorous in expression as the concentrated thought of a strong man could make."2

That Dr. Dale's language was vivid and accurate as well as "more fitted to be read than to be heard" was undoubtedly because he labored long over his manuscripts and relied closely to them in the pulpit. He himself says:

"Language is a difficult instrument to master, and even the ablest speakers and those who have had the longest practice cannot always command at the moment the simplest and most transparent expression of their thought."3

.....

1. Brastow, The Modern Pulpit, pp. 269-70
2. Garvie, The Christian Preacher, p. 266
3. Dale, Nine Lectures On Preaching, p. 157

4. Repetition of Sermons

As one goes from Dale's style to other characteristics of his preaching, it must not be overlooked that it was his practice to repeat his sermons time and time again. It was his conviction that the whole counsel of God must be proclaimed and that, over and over again. One of his reasons for writing his sermons out was that on occasion he would have them to use again; sometimes using only the idea or thoughts, other times using the exact same sermon. He says:

"I can see no sufficient reason for not preaching sermons a second or a third time to the same congregation. Indeed, after an interval of seven or eight years though we may be preaching in the same pulpit we are not preaching to the same congregation."¹

And yet that the congregation would change was not his only reason for repeating his sermons. There were times in his life when he was more aware of the work of Christ on the Cross than at any other time, and many ideas and thoughts might have been lost had he not had them in written form.

And yet there were some sermons, that when preached once, he would never use again, but if that

.....

1. Ibid., p. 149

particular subject were treated again, he would make an altogether new sermon. This was especially true of sermons dealing with the future judgment. "Sermons on Future Judgment cost him severe effort," so says his son later in life.¹ He seemed to have felt about the sermons on the Future Judgment that,

"utterance upon a theme so terrible must come fresh from the preacher's heart, forced out of it by an overpowering sense of duty."²

5. Dale's Source Material

Undoubtedly, the greatest source book for Dr. Dale, as it should be for all preachers of the Word, was the Bible. From his use of the Bible one is aware that he had come to a definite step in his mastery of it. But Dale was not limited to the Bible alone for his source material. This is made evident from his advice given in his "Nine Lectures on Preaching" to the Yale students exhorting them to read other sermons.

"But let me advise you to study the sermons of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon, of Lacordaire and Ravignan, of Monod and Bersier; of Latimer and Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, South and Tillotson; of Howe and Owen Watts;

.....

1. Dale, A. W. W., Life of R. W. Dale, p. 149
2. Ibid.

of Chalmers, Edward Irving, and Guthrie; of Robert Hall, and Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, and Charles Spurgeon; of Thomas Binney and James Parsons; of John Henry Newman and Dr. Pusey..... of Frederick Robertson and Canon Liddon."1

He goes on further to advise them as they read these sermons.

"If you read sermons wisely, it will not be with the hope of discovering 'suggestive thoughts, as we are accustomed to call them in England - thoughts which, with a very little cultivation, you may grow into sermons of your own; but you will read with a keen eye for the qualities which have given to the great preachers of our own and of past times the power they exerted over the men that listened to them."2

Dale no doubt received much help in his work from the works of Lord Erskine, Charles James Fox, Blunket, Grattan, Lord Brougham, and Mr. Bright.³ The resources and methods of a preacher differ, but Dale found the speeches of great lawyers, statesmen, and agitators very helpful in preparation of his sermons. He says:

"Reading of this kind will also do something to prevent that want of completeness and symmetry in your intellectual development which is likely to be the result of exclusive devotion to theological studies."4

.....

1. Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching, p. 95
2. Ibid., p. 95-96
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 97
4. Ibid., p. 99

With these he would add the use of history books; the history of other countries as well as the history of one's own country. Other background materials were bibliographies of the lives of men who have exerted a great and critical influence on the fortunes of great nations; books which illustrate the laws of social and national life; books which present the ascertained results of the investigations of modern science, and the like.

Dr. Dale never sat down to use his material without a pencil in hand and paper on his desk. He says:

"Read the Bible, as well as other books, with your notesheet at hand. Whenever you meet with any historical illustration of a vice or a folly to which men are still tempted in our own days, or any noble and pathetic example of virtue, devotion, and zeal; whenever you come across the statement of any truth concerning God, and His ways towards mankind, about which you have omitted to preach, or any moral precept on which you have omitted to insist, or any bright and pleasant region of spiritual thought which is likely to give animation and vigour to a weary and sorrowful heart, make a note of it."¹

6. Dale's Choice of Topics

It can be seen from the sermons studied that

.....

1. Ibid., p. 119

Dr. Dale preferred to choose those topics for sermons which in themselves had a strong moral and religious interest; subjects which touched the great duties, the great hopes and fears and sorrows of human life. Concerning this Dale says:

"For our own sakes, too, we should choose subjects of this kind. We are guilty of the most irrational conceit if we imagine that we shall be able, Sunday after Sunday, to invest with interest subjects which in themselves are uninteresting."¹

As is seen from the many sermons that he re-preached, Dr. Dale was never afraid to say the same thing over and over for the simple reason that he felt driven to it. His topics were part of him and grew out of life's rich experiences.

At different times in his life, during certain months, his thoughts could hardly escape the shadows and glory of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it would be from these experiences that his topics for such sermons would arise. Then again, there were months when the cross did not dominate his thoughts so exclusively, and the truth that the Christ who died on the cross rose from the dead was uppermost in his mind. Consequently, sermons made during this period were filled

.....

1. Ibid., p. 122

with resurrection truths. At other times, the mercy, the love, and the justice of God claimed preeminence. Then he would forget for a time the doctrinal element and would deal, in a large measure, upon the more ethical topics. Thus, only after a topic or text had struck a vibrant chord in his own life would Dale endeavor to impart it to his congregations.

B. The Oral Character of Dale's Preaching

1. Dale's Method of Delivery

It is not necessary to hide the fact that Dale was not an extemporaneous preacher. He believed the man that could speak extemporaneously after having thoroughly prepared his mind was in a more advantageous position than the man who was bound to his manuscript. He says:

"I have very rarely the courage to go into the pulpit without carrying with me the notes of my sermon, and occasionally I read every sentence from the first to the last."¹

Undoubtedly, it was his purpose to sacrifice freedom of mannerism upon the platform for perfection of language, for although he did not show himself to

.....

1. Ibid., p. 151

be very dramatic in his sermons, he, nevertheless, had great facility in stating and expounding religious truth. Dale thoroughly believed that the Holy Spirit could guide a man as much when he was preparing his sermon as when he was delivering it, and never belittled the work of the Holy Spirit in his own life. But, as he said, "If I spoke extemporaneously I should never sit¹ down."

Dale was aware of the advantages as well as the disadvantages of writing and reading his sermons. He was always sure that when he went to church with his sermon in his pocket he was going to have something to say. And this, too, would ease his mind on Friday and Saturday since he was able to rely upon his manuscript rather than upon his memory.

It is evident from Dr. Dale's sermons that he was a master at the use of the English language. Therefore, he was more concerned about saying something correctly and with the proper phrasing than the effect it would have on the audience. Concerning the accuracy in the statement of truth he said:

"It must also be conceded that in sermons in which clearness and precise accuracy in the statement of truth are of special importance, the man who reads is likely to

.....

1. Ibid.

have a great advantage. Language is a difficult instrument to master, and even the ablest speakers and those who have had the longest practice cannot always command at the moment the simplest and most transparent expression of their thought. This is especially true when they are dealing with unfamiliar lines of speculation. The written sermon is also likely to be most successful in the clear and orderly development of an elaborate argument."¹

Thus, Dale reveals his own feeling in regard to the better development of arguments and the better command of one's language when the sermon is written and read. However, he readily recognizes the advantages of those who do not read their sermons, for he says:

"Notwithstanding my own habits - I am compelled to admit that if we can preach without reading we are likely to preach more effectively."²

And he further says regarding this subject:

"It is not true that read sermons are always dry and dull, or that extemporaneous sermons are necessarily vivacious and vigorous. Dr. Chalmers was accustomed to read every syllable, and yet he preached with a fire and a passion which created great excitement and produced the deepest impression. How weak, how dreary an extemporaneous preacher may be, we all know. But there are few of us that have Dr. Chalmers' strong and impetuous nature. Unless there is extraordinary force in the preacher, the manuscript somehow comes between him and the congregation."³

.....

1. Ibid., 157
2. Ibid., 163
3. Ibid.

Some have said of Dale that his delivery was affected by this mode of composition; that it tended to monotony and lack of pathos; but on some occasions, when thoroughly aroused, he could stir an audience to the greatest heights. But Dr. Dale's delivery is outstandingly characterized by his use of the manuscript, and by his splendid way of saying exactly and accurately just what he desired to say although it was not accompanied with dramatic elements.

2. Dale's Physical Energy

At the age of thirty-one years Dr. Dale was still thin and slight being five feet ten inches in stature. But as time passed that stature became a stock frame of a robust individual. Although there were times in his life when his work weighted so heavily upon him that he became ill and had to go away for a vacation, yet on the whole one might say that his energy was more the unusual than the usual. Since his average sermon was of one hour length, it was an unusual occasion that brought a two hour sermon from the lips of Dr. Dale, and yet when this happened before the Directors of the London Missionary Society he "swept along with unflagging energy."¹

.....

1. Howard, op. cit., p. 284

Brastow points out that his strong energy was manifest physically as well as intellectually.

"Dr. R. W. Dale of Birmingham was in his generation perhaps the most robust, forceful, and influential personality connected with the ministry of the non-conforming churches. He was a man of extraordinary intellectual endowments and of eager intellectual activities, with a passion for literary expression early developed and cultivated, which expressed itself in the publication of a book at the age of sixteen."¹

C. Summary

It has been found in this study of the elements of power in the form of Dr. Dale's preaching that he preached more doctrinal and ethical sermons than any other type; these doctrinal sermons usually have a strong Biblical emphasis with the use of much Scripture and not too much philosophical language. His sermons were generally longer than the average sermons preached today, but seldom did they exceed the limit of an hour. Dale's peculiar style was found to consist in rather lengthy sentences, strong doctrinal themes, a singleness of emphasis made more effective through expansion and elaboration, a repetition of phrases and exact thoughts from previous sermons, and a language beautiful and

.....

1. Brastow, op. cit., p. 264

yet explanatory so that all who heard and listened were able to follow his close arguments although they may not have been fully understood. It was discovered also that Dale repeated most of his doctrinal sermons, but the sermons of the "Future Judgement" were discarded after once using them, for he believed that one must speak on such terrible themes only from a heart full of the sense of duty. It was further conceded that Dale read very widely and that he encouraged the reading of other sermons and great speeches. Howard says:

"He pursued a wide range of reading and brought its treasures back to his pulpit. As a corrective against too narrow a range of reading he advocated the use of books of a merely ephemeral popularity, believing that this would not only relieve the preacher of the strain of severe duties, but that it would also keep him in closer touch with his hearers and what interested them."¹

Then it was brought out that when Dale was moved by some great passage of Scripture or by some great topic he was able to move his congregations by preaching on that subject which had first stirred him.

It was seen that Dale was not an extemporaneous preacher, and had to rely to a large extent upon his manuscript. Finally, Dale's physical energy was discussed, and it was found that this was as unflagging as his intellectual energy.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was stated in the first chapter. It was to discover the elements of power which were responsible for the peculiar effectiveness of the preaching of Robert William Dale, and to ascertain to what extent these elements can be utilized in preaching today. It was believed best to consider first, the contributing influences in the early life of Dale; then, to find out what individuals had a share in influencing his life as to affect his preaching; next, to analyze a volume of Dale's doctrinal sermons and a volume of his ethical sermons in order to glean from them his literary and oral forms of preaching. It was decided that through the study of the above the elements of power of Dr. Dale's preaching would become evident, and these in turn would be especially considered. Finally, a summary was to be given tying together all the findings of the subject studied and, in conclusion, the personal discoveries of the writer with their ap-
plications were to be given. of

The second chapter revealed that Robert William Dale was born into a very devout Christian home and that,

from the very beginning of childhood, he was brought into close contact with the written Word. Even though great difficulties and bereavements visited the home, Dale was led in the paths of righteousness through the prayers of his dear and saintly mother. As a boy, Dale did not engage in the active and out-of-door sports, but instead, he buried himself in books and studies. However, it was because he was able to give aid to his classmates in subjects which seemed difficult to them, but comparatively simple for himself, that he made many friends. During his early education many men were influential in molding his thinking, some of them being Mr. Wilby, Mr. Offord, John and George Offord, Mr. William Stroud and Dr. John Campbell. Dale's aptitude for writing became evident in his early teens and grew steadily as he advanced in school.

Regarding his religious experience, it was found that Dale accepted the work of Christ for himself and was received into the church at the age of fourteen years. Mr. James' book, "Anxious Enquirer" was most instrumental in settling many disturbing questions in his mind, and aided him in coming to Christ in faith.

During Dale's college life, the men who were to help formulate his thinking and influence his preaching were Mr. Barker, Mr. Watts and Mr. Henry Rogers.

In the literary field no one had such a pronounced effect upon Dale as did Edmund Burke, whereas in the pulpit Mr. George Dawson was Dale's favorite preacher. Dawson's influence became most evident in the latter life of Dale especially as seen from Dale's emphasis upon ethics. The rest of chapter two considered Dr. Dale's work at Carr's Lane Church where Mr. James was pastor. Because of the illness of Mr. James Dale was asked to preach once a month at Carr's Lane. Later this resulted in an invitation to be assistant pastor and then co-pastor and finally, at Mr. James' death, The Pastor. This was Dr. Dale's first, last and only love, for it was here that he both began and ended his long and fruitful ministry. It was Carr's Lane that received the full force of his strong doctrinal and ethical preaching.

In chapter III the elements of power especially evident in Dr. Dale's doctrinal and ethical sermons were considered. Dale was shown to be essentially a doctrinal preacher and, undoubtedly, the outstanding doctrinal preacher of England in the Nineteenth Century. The third chapter does not deal with all the elements of power in Dale's preaching, but only with the most important and outstanding ones.

After looking at a typical sermon in order to ascertain Dale's method of procedure in handling such

subjects, each element was given special attention. First, his use of Scripture was weighed, and it was discovered from his use of Biblical illustrations, his constantly bringing out into sermons the spirit as well as the letter of the Word, and from his choice of texts that Dale had an exceptional grasp of the total scope of Scripture. Another unique characteristic was his placing of Christ centrally in all his works. His sermons are filled with the Living Christ, and Dale ever presented Him as the Answer to every problem. For Dale, an infallible Christ is above an infallible Book. It is because of one's faith in Christ that he can have faith in the Book says Dale. He always brought in the person of Christ, and it is correct to say that his preaching was, above all things, both Biblical and Christo-centric, a combination that must go hand in hand in order to achieve effective results.

Next was considered the strong emphasis that Dr. Dale placed upon experience. For him, something was not really known until it had been experienced. Philosophical arguments were never used by him to prove the humanity and deity of our Lord. Dale went directly to the words of those individuals who had been with Jesus, and from their experiences he presented the proofs for his arguments. Because Dale believed that

Christian experience was the greatest proof of Christian doctrine he would appeal to the experience of his listeners and to the experience and testimony of the Christians down through the centuries.

Dale centered his teaching and preaching around the central fact of the Atonement. He desired to preach the whole counsel of God and, therefore, made certain that his preaching touched all the great doctrines of Scripture. His range of preaching was seen to be very wide and inclusive. In the closing of the first part of the third chapter it was shown that another great element of power contributed much to his preaching. This was his emphasis upon evangelism. Although he lacked many of the characteristic traits of a successful evangelist, yet his desire for evangelism was made strong in his preaching.

The second division of the third chapter considered briefly those elements of power found in his ethical preaching. His use of Scripture was an outstanding in his ethical sermons as in his doctrinal sermons. In the former the teachings of Christ was the dominant chord, while in his doctrinal sermons the person of Christ became the central emphasis. Passage after passage from the Sermon on the Mount was used by Dale either as text or as content. Thus, it was

found that Dale was strictly a Biblical preacher with a Christ centered message.

His entire approach in these sermons was a practical one. Being aware of his own failures he was better able to be of practical help to those to whom he ministered. Dale did not isolate his truths, but in every instance he made them applicable to every day life. He also had an unusual insight into the hearts of men. He spoke understandingly to his congregation in his sermons, and doing so, touched his hearers at the very center of their lives. His range was wide, his insight into man unique, and his sermons never without application.

The fourth chapter dealt with the form of Dale's preaching. From this study it was seen that Dale's preaching was characterized by lengthy sentences, strong doctrinal themes, singleness of emphasis, repetition of phrases, and a language beautiful and explanitory. It was noted that Dale wrote most of his sermons and often took the whole manuscript with him into the pulpit. Often he would repeat the very same sermon that he had given once before. However, on such subjects as the Future Judgment, his sermons once given were never used again. He felt that such terrible subjects should

be preached only from a heart burning with duty, and therefore, each time they were delivered they should be thought out afresh. Dale's background was rich in literature, history and science, and since his opportunity to hear other sermons was greatly limited, he made it a point to read the sermons of great preachers. Although he was dependent to a large extent upon his manuscript, yet he was able to keep the congregation actively thinking with him most of the time. To his closing years his desire was that he might speak more extemporaneously, but this desire never came to fulfilment. Despite this fact, the many other characteristics or elements of power Dale possessed outshone this one deficiency, and Dale is known today as one of the most outstanding preachers of England in the Nineteenth Century.

In conclusion, it can be said that Dr. Dale's elements of power made him the preacher that he was. All of them were necessary to make him such a great intellectual and spiritual leader and, undoubtedly, the loss of any one element would have told on his great influence as a preacher.

In answering the question to hwat extent these elements may be utilized in our preaching today, the following can be said. One must be aware that no two men are alike and no two men have exactly the same

elements of power. But in recalling to mind those elements that made Dale what he was, parental influence, early education, influence of educational and spiritual leaders, love for study and books, his keen mind, his frankness and thoroughness, mastery of the Word, his experience of Christ, genuine insight into man, eloquence, pulpit power and his practical life, there are especially some that can be utilized in our preaching today. There should be included in the list of elements of power for the modern preacher, aside from the usual family and school environment, a keen awareness of Christ and his power to change the hearts of men. For before one can minister to others, that one must have felt the assurance of sins forgiven even as Dale did at the age of fourteen.

The mastery of the source book, the Bible, cannot be left out, for upon what better authority can one speak today than upon the authority of the Word of God? Man's words wither and die, but the Word of God standeth sure. With these two can be added a third, and that is to fill one's ministry with solid doctrinal truth upon which the hearers can stand amid the storms of life. Had the ministers in the recent past preached more doctrinal sermons the average congregation would not be so spiritually illiterate today. Men must be encouraged to think as well as to listen.

Add to all these the keen mind that Dale had, his knowledge of the practical, and his concern for man, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit such a man will become a great influence in the world for God.

In this study I have been able to see a man grow into his calling; I have seen him meet and overcome difficulties, both physical and spiritual; I have been awakened to the need of a revival of both doctrinal and ethical preaching - doctrinal preaching which will establish the hearers firmly in the faith, and ethical preaching that will enable them to exemplify the life of a Christian citizen - that is, to live at peace with all men. If today we could have a new emphasis upon ethics by those who preach only doctrine, and a greater stress upon Christian doctrine by those whose sermons are entirely ethical, our own country would be more united in the faith that was delivered to us by our fathers.

This study has also acquainted me with one of the finest preachers of England and with some of the most noble doctrinal sermons ever preached. From this study I have derived a new vision of the possibilities in the Christian ministry of using all the many and peculiar abilities which a person may have, and through the help of the Holy Spirit proclaim the tidings of peace

through Christ. It is not the number of abilities with which a person is endowed, but rather the way in which he uses them that spells the difference between success and failure. Dale was gifted, but more than that he was led by the Spirit of God. So too, everyone who is in the ministry must rely fully upon God's help in order to accomplish the greatest results for Him.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

Dale, Robert William: Christian Doctrine. A. C. Armstrong and Son, 51 East 10th Street, New York, 1901

Essays and Addresses. A. C. Armstrong and Son, 51 East 10th Street, New York, 1899

Laws of Christ for Common Life. Hodder and Sloughton, 27 Paternoster Row, London 1887

Nine Lectures on Preaching. A. S. Barnes and Company, New York, 1877

The Atonement. Congregational Union of England and Wales Memorial Hall, Farrington Street, London, 1902

The Living Christ and the Four Gospels. Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row London, 1899

The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church. Gould and Lincoln, 59 Washington Street, Boston, 1881

The Ten Commandments. Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row, London, 1901

B. Secondary Sources

Dale, A. W. W.: The Life of Robert William Dale of Birmingham by His Son. Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row, London, 1905

- Brastow, Lewis: The Modern Pulpit. A Study of Homiletic Sources and Characteristics. MacMillan and Company, New York, 1906
- Broadus, John A: Lectures on the History of Preaching. New Edition, A. C. Armstrong and Son, New York, 1896
- Dargan, Charles Edwin: A History of Preaching, Vol. II. Hodder and Stoughton, New York, 1913
- Davis, Ozora S: Principles of Preaching. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1924
- Edwards, John Rev: Nineteenth Century Preachers. Charles H. Kelly, 26 Paternoster Row, London 1902
- Garvie, A. E: The Christian Preacher, Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, 1931
- Howard, H. C.: Princes of the Christian Pulpit and Pastorate. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1928
- Hoyt, Arthur S: The Work of Preaching. The MacMillan Company, New York, 1905
- Vital Elements of Preaching. The MacMillan Company, New York, 1914
- Mather, Thomas Bradley: Voices of Living Prophets; a Symposium of Present-day Preaching. Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1933
- Pattison, T. Harwood: The Making of the Sermon. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1902
- Reynolds, Henry Robert: Church Problems Considered, Ecclesia. Hodder and Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row, London, 1871
- Schmidt, C: The Social Results of Early Christianity. William Isbister Lt., 56 Ludgate Hill, 1889

Storrs, Vernon F: The Development of English Theology
in the Nineteenth Century. Logmans, Green and
Company, 37 Paternoster Row, London,

Taylor, William M: The Ministry of the Word. Anson D.
F. Randolph and Company, New York, 1876

Tulloch, John: Movements of Religious Thought in
Britain. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York
1901