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# THOMAS BROOKS: MODEL PURITAN PREACHER

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
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# I. INTRODUCTION TO THOMAS BROOKS

Charles Spurgeon, who is acknowledged by most to be the greatest English Baptist preacher of the 19th century, loved Thomas Brooks. Though the two men lived two hundred years apart they are very much alike. Spurgeon studied Brooks' Works and imbibed Brooks' flair for sermon illustrations. Spurgeon liked Brooks so well that he published a book entitled Smooth Stones from Ancient Brooks, being an organized collection of many of Thomas Brooks' illustrations and sayings. The title of Spurgeon's little book is an allusion to the passage in I Samuel, in which David places some smooth stones from a brook into his shepherd's bag in order to do battle with his sling against Goliath, the giant. Spurgeon looked upon preaching as an act of spiritual warfare. The implication in the title is that Brooks' sayings and illustrations are effective weapons in overcoming sinners' hardened hearts and capturing men's minds for Christ.

When Brooks' Works were reprinted in 1866, Spurgeon had this to say:

> The volumes now before us are by that marvellously rich author Thomas Brooks, whose wealth of imagery surpasses all others of his age. The mere marginal notes of Brooks are more valuable than pages of ordinary writers; we take pleasure in the stones of his temples, and the very dust thereof we favour. Of all the Puritans he is the most readable, if we except John Bunyan; and if he cannot display the depth of Owen or the raciness of Adams, he leaves them far behind in excessive sweetness and sparkling beauty of metaphor. There is a clear, silvery, refreshing sound in the name "Brooks", and as is the name such is the man, every reader who can afford the money should purchase this incorrupt, unmutilated, unchanged, well-printed, and perfectly edited copy of Brooks.[1]

Peter Lewis in a delightful and insightful book, The Genius of Puritanism, gives numerous short sketches of various Puritans and their pulpit ministry. Of Brooks, Lewis comments: "If illustrations are the windows of a sermon,

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[1] Thomas Brooks, The Works of Thomas Brooks, comp. and ed. with a Preface and Memoir by Alexander B. Grosart, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1980; reprint ed., Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1861-67), quotation on inside cover of dust jacket.

Thomas Brooks must have been the master-glazier of his period. His works are a veritable Crystal Palace of illuminating anecdotes and figures of speech. . . . There was no more popular preacher in the London of Cromwell and the Interregnum than Thomas Brooks."[2]

## Thomas Brooks' Life History

Very little is known of the personal life of Thomas Brooks. No portrait of him is known to exist. The only information about his personal life must be gleaned from comments he makes about himself in his sermons. Alexander B. Grosart, who wrote a memoir of Brooks, did the most complete search for any records of Thomas Brooks. For all his trouble, Grosart came up virtually empty-handed, except that he found the 'last will and testament' of Brooks.

It is estimated that Brooks was born within the years 1606 to 1608. There is a note in the Emmanuel College register that Brooks became a student there at Cambridge, in July of 1625.[3] Grosart estimates that Brooks must have been licensed or ordained to the ministry no later than 1640.[4]

In some remarks from Brooks' sermons it appears that Brooks had some affiliation with the English military during his life. In a sermon, which Brooks was asked to preach at Colonel Rainsborough's funeral, Brooks says: "As for this thrice-honoured champion now in the dust; for his enjoyment of God, from my own experience, being with him both at sea and land, I have abundance of sweetness and satisfaction in my own spirit, which to

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[2] Peter Lewis, The Genius of Puritanism, 2nd ed. (Haywards Heath, Sussex: Carey Publications, 1979), p. 29.

[3] Brooks, Works, 1:xxv.

[4] Brooks, Works, 1:xxvii.

me exceedingly sweetens so great a loss.' (Italics mine.)[5] Brooks probably served under Colonel Rainsborough as a chaplain. There are other remarks which further confirm the naval experiences of Brooks, such as the following: 'I have been some years at sea, and through grace I can say, that I would not exchange my sea-experiences for England's riches. I am not altogether ignorant of the troubles, trials, temptations, dangers, and deaths that do attend you.'[6] This remark was addressed to 'the Generals of the Fleets of the Commonwealth of England'.[7]

The only other event in Brooks' life, that is known from his writings, is a controversy he had with members of his church over the administration of sacraments. Brooks refused to administer baptism or the Lord's Supper to those parishioners he felt were manifestly unworthy, as evidenced by their lifestyle. Some of these parishioners sought to have Brooks removed from the pulpit. Brooks wrote a tract defending himself entitled Cases Considered and Resolved.[8] This controversy was in 1653. Brooks remained the preacher there until the Great Ejection in 1662 as is evidenced from the title pages of his later publications. After the Great Ejection of 1662 Brooks evidently continued to preach in the same area, though not, of course, from a church pulpit. In 1665, in his work, Privy Key of Heaven, Brooks says, 'That favour, that good acceptance and fair quarter, that my other poor labours have found, not only in this nation but in other countries also, hath put me upon putting pen to paper once more.'[9] So Brooks continued his treatises (which were

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[5]Brooks, Works, 6:333.

[6]Brooks, Works, 2:304.

[7]Brooks, Works, 2:303.

[8]Brooks, Works, 1:xxxviii-lix.

[9]Brooks, Works, 2:163.

basically compilations of sermons) after he was forbidden to preach. On the title page of An Ark for all God's Noahs the author printed his name in this fashion: "By Thomas Brooks, late preacher of the Gospel at Margarets New Fishstreet, and still preacher of the Word in London, and Pastor of a Congregation there." (Italics mine.)[10] These references show that though Brooks had lost his pulpit and been forbidden to preach, yet he still preached secretly, and obeyed God rather than men. Brooks died in 1680 being about seventy-two years old at his death.[11]

Nothing else worthy of mention is known of Brooks' personal life. A biography of Brooks might have been found in that famous book, The History of the Worthies of England, by Thomas Fuller, had Brooks been already dead at the time of its publication. Fuller chose only to publish the biographies of men who had already passed away. Many books and records were destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. Notes on the life of Brooks could have been destroyed at that time. For whatever reason, God saw fit that Brooks' preaching be preserved, though his personal life remains a mystery. This should be no detraction from studying his works. Little is known of the personal lives of Amos, Joel, Nahum and others that God spoke through, yet their words are divinely inspired. Brooks, though not divinely inspired, says much from which present day readers may profit.

## Thomas Brooks' Views on Preaching

As a master-preacher Brooks' sermons deserve careful study. Brooks never wrote a homiletical textbook. One will not find any directions for sermon construction in his writings. Brooks, however, did have some general

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[10]Brooks, Works, 2:2.

[11]Brooks, Works, 1:xxxv.

views which he propounded concerning preaching and preachers. Brooks' recorded statements on preaching are not concerned with literary style per se, yet the qualities Brooks talks about are foundational to preaching and, if neglected, will render the best efforts at preaching spiritually innocuous.

Thomas Brooks insisted that a preacher must have the right spiritual goal in view when he preaches. To preach for the applause of men was wrong. To preach in order to reprove men for sins, or to encourage them in righteousness, was a proper spiritual goal. Brooks says, "He is not the best preacher that tickles the ear, or that works upon the fancy, etc., but he that breaks the heart and awakens the conscience."[12] This Puritan man looked upon that act of preaching, in which the preacher sought merely to entertain his hearers, as wicked preaching. If a preacher was ever to be effective for the Lord he must seek only to preach for God's glory, not his own.

Though the goal of preaching should not be to entertain, this did not mean that a sermon should be drab and boring. A sermon should be enjoyable for the purpose of imparting spiritual truth in a pleasing and desirable form:

> Ministers' words should be divinely delectable and desirable; they should divinely please, and divinely profit; they should divinely tickle, and divinely take both ear and heart. A minister should be a weighty speaker; he should clothe his doctrine in such comely, lovely dress, as that he may by it slide insensibly into his hearers' hearts. Ministers should clothe their matter with decent words. The leaves give some beauty to the tree. Good matter in an unseemly language, is like a bright taper in a sluttish candlestick, or like a fair body in unhandsome clothes, or like a gold ring on a leprous hand. "Truth", saith one, "loves to be plain, but not sluttish." As she loves not to be clad in gay colours, like a wanton strumpet, so not in lousy rags like a nasty creature.[13]

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[12]Brooks, Works, 3:212.

[13]Brooks, Works, 3:219.

Thomas Brooks also believed that a preacher must study diligently to demonstrate the applicability of doctrine to individuals' needs. If a preacher was to have any success, it would not be through making vague generalizations about Scripture, but through showing people what they must know or do in light of certain facts:

> To divide the word aright, is to cut out, saith Calvin and others, to everyone his portion, as a parent cutteth out bread to his children, or a cook meat to his guests. A general doctrine not applied, is as a sword without an edge, not in itself, but to the people, who by reason of their own singular senslesness and weakness, are not able to apply it to their own estates and conditions; or as a whole loaf set before children, that will do them no good. A garment fitted for all bodies, is fit for nobody; and that which is spoken to all is taken as spoken to none. Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow, application is the hitting of the mark.[14]

If a preacher could paint pictures with words, but could not draw specific applications from his text, his preaching would be in vain.

Since Brooks' treatises were compilations of his sermons, it is understandable why he said very little about preaching in them, and nothing about sermon preparation. After all, his sermons were delivered to average citizens, not to preachers or ministerial students. If one is to learn the art of preaching from Brooks, one must learn by example.

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[14] Brooks, Works, 3:218.

## II. THE PREACHING STYLE OF THOMAS BROOKS

Fortunately Brooks' Works, which have recently been reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust of England, remain in the same grammatical form in which he had them published, after he himself revised and corrected them. The same words and sentences remain just as Brooks left them, therefore the works portray Brooks' style and not the style of some later editor.

### 'Style' Defined

In order to analyze some aspects of Brooks' preaching style, it will be necessary to first clarify, as much as possible, what 'style' is. The American Heritage Dictionary gives over a dozen definitions to the word. Two of these definitions give a good sense of 'style' as used in this thesis: "1. The way in which something is said or done, as distinguished from its substance. 2. The combination of distinctive features of literary or artistic expression, execution, or performance characterizing a particular person, people, school, or era."[15] John Broadus, in his homiletical classic, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, says, "A man's style, then, is his characteristic manner of expressing his thoughts, whether in writing or in speech."[16] R. L. Dabney, the famous American Presbyterian theologian, in his work, Lectures on Sacred Rhetoric, says that the word 'style' ". . . denotes the right use of words as vehicles of thought."[17] Jay Adams, in his book Pulpit Speech says, "Style fundamentally is

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[15]The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 1969, s.v. "style".

[16]John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, new and rev. ed. by Jesse Burton Weatherspoon (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 223.

[17]Robert L. Dabney, Sacred Rhetoric or, A Course of Lectures on Preaching (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979; reprint ed., n.p., 1870), p. 271.

language usage, which means the choice and use of words. Good style, therefore, involves the study and practiced use of vocabulary, grammar and syntax. . . . Style concerns words and how they are put together in the attempt to communicate ideas."[18] A speaker's choice of words, arrangement of words, methods of reasoning, number and type of illustrations, his use of figures of speech--all these things, and more, form and characterize the style of a speaker.

Broadus gives some examples of how various speaking and writing styles can be classified.[19] Some of these styles are here summarized in order to better portray the meaning of the term 'style'. The "spacious style" is a style in which the speaker uses a great many long, impressive sounding words to expand his statements and overawe his hearers with his profundity of knowledge. For instance, a preacher could say, "It is wrong to tell lies." A speaker with a spacious style would say, "The inner workings of one's conscience condemn as a hideous turpitude the action of verbalizing prevarications." The "polished style" is that altering of the speech so that all sentences and paragraphs are kept within about the same lengths. This style gives the effect of the perfectly metered epic poem. The "fine style" is the result of words and phrases carefully chosen so as to sound similar, or at least to combine in such a way as to give a pleasing effect upon the ear. The "flowery style" is characterized by abundant synonyms and illustrations, so abundant that the central thought is often lost or obscured amidst the "pretty flowers" of metaphor and hyperbole. What one might term the "lecture style" is that speech in which the speaker is only concerned with facts and reasoning. Such a speech is as appealing as the prospect of marrying a cadaver. The listeners need a vibrant and interesting message, not a cold, lifeless body of closely reasoned arguments. The opposite

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[18]Jay E. Adams, Pulpit Speech (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 111.

[19]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 229.

extreme of the 'lecture style' is the 'conversational style'. Broadus says, 'Preaching must be audience-conscious, person to person; it is something told; but there are levels of conversation, and the pulpit is not a park bench, nor is the subject the weather; moreover, the place is the house of God and the issue is critical.' (Italics mine.)[20] These words of Broadus deserve special attention in America today. Irreverance parades itself in many churches by the excuse that God likes to 'come down to our level', forgetting that God is holy and that he condescends to speak to us and hear our prayers. The 'conversational style' in the pulpit promotes irreverence among the people.

These examples of style are all examples of bad styles. Nevertheless, these examples give an idea of how broad a study of style might become. These examples also show how words can be used in many different ways to bring about various results. Style is important. A good speaking style is necessary if a preacher is to interest and affect his hearers.

Some ministers argue that preachers should not waste time on studying and perfecting a preaching style, but should simply preach the truth. These men fail to recognize that as soon as a speaker opens his mouth he is speaking in some 'style'. Maybe he has a boring style, maybe a wandering or rambling style, maybe a vehement or pompous style, or even a careless or obscure style. If a man does not pay attention to his style, men will not pay attention to his message. A man who has insights and profound thoughts will not receive a large hearing if his words are thrown together to form a bad style. On the other hand, a speaker handling traditional and long accepted truths can couch those truths in striking and appealing terms, making old truths seem fresh, and thereby gain an interested audience. As Ripley says in his Sacred

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[20]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 229.

Rhetoric, "Negligence in respect to style is injustice to one's thoughts; their proper efficacy is denied them."[21] Broadus explains the efficacy of style with the help of a metaphor:

> Style is the glitter and polish of the warrior's sword but is also its keen edge. It can render mediocrity acceptable and even attractive, and power more powerful still. It can make error seductive, while truth may lie unnoticed for want of its aid. Shall religious teachers neglect so powerful a means of usefulness?[22]

## Importance of Good Oral Style

Having determined that style is important, it further needs to be said that an oral style is good in a speaker, and a written style is good in a writer. In order to judge a preacher's style, his sermons must be measured by those qualities inherent in good oral style. The two styles are different. They are both appropriate in their place. Jay Adams explains:

> Oral English proceeds at the speaker's rate, whereas written English moves at the reader's rate. Therefore, more repetition, shorter less complex sentences, and more simple and concrete words are characteristic of good oral English. The listener, unlike the reader, cannot pause and ponder, he cannot reread, he cannot go look up a word in the dictionary. The vocabulary used in effective oral English is smaller, more colorful, less abstract.[23]

Ripley realized that a written style did not make a good sermon, thus he exhorts preachers who write their sermons to write as if they were actually speaking:

> If a preacher habitually writes in a simply didactic style, his delivery will be rather that of a teacher, or a reader, than of a public speaker. Let him break up his habit of composition, and adopt, in suitable paragraphs, a bold, nervous, interrogatory style, or the rapid, familiar, brief style of animated conversation, and would not this transformation of style naturally transform also his delivery?[24]

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[21]Henry J. Ripley, Sacred Rhetoric or, Composition and Delivery of Sermons, 5th ed. (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1879), p. 132.

[22]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 225.

[23]Adams, Pulpit Speech, p. 113.

[24]Ripley, Sacred Rhetoric, p. 133.

If oral style does not make good written style, and vice-versa, then anyone who critiques a preacher's sermons must take this fact into consideration. Just because the sermon does not make the best reading does not mean that it is bad preaching. The reading of a good sermon should reveal extensive repetition of ideas (although not necessarily in the same words each time). Other specific characteristics of good oral style will be dealt with in greater detail later. What is important to realize at this point is that preaching should be judged differently than one would critique an essay. Ripley explains the effect of trying to critique speeches in the same manner as written works:

> Moore, in his Life of Sheridan, observes that "a report verbatim of any effective speech must always appear diffused and ungraceful in the perusal; the very repetitions and redundancy, the accumulation of epithets which gave force and momentum to the career of delivery, but weaken and encumber the march of style when read."
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> "Some of the best essays in our language," says Gresley, in his Treatise on Preaching, "appear in the shape of printed sermons; but if these were to be preached as they are published, they would be unimpressive sermons, precisely because they are good essays."[25]

From what has been said, it is evident that good oral style is different than good written style. A general idea of what comprises style has also been set forth. Having treated these general topics, it would seem expedient to now start analyzing specific characteristics of Thomas Brooks' preaching style. However, one more area should be looked into before going on to critique Brooks' preaching style. The question that now needs to be dealt with is: Who influenced Brooks' preaching style?

## Influences upon Brooks' Style

Brooks studied under the famous Puritan preacher, Thomas Preston,

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[25]Ripley, Sacred Rhetoric, p. 147.

and probably under Richard Sibbes as well during his years at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Grosart, the editor of Brooks' Works, mentions that some of the 'sayings' of Sibbes, which Brooks quotes in his sermons, are not found anywhere else, indicating that Brooks copied them while personally listening to Sibbes' lectures.[26] These teachers influenced Brooks' method of dividing a sermon. The sermons of Sibbes and Brooks almost always follow a three-fold partitioning of a sermon. These men would present a doctrine from Scripture, then they would give logical reasons supporting that doctrine, and finally they would draw practical applications from that doctrine so that the hearers could put the doctrine to use in their own lives.

All of these men, teachers and pupil alike, were greatly influenced by the college curriculum of that day. The Bachelor of Arts degree of that day was established upon Greek and Roman history, the Classical languages, rhetoric, logic, and philosophy. The students were well exposed to the works of Cicero, Seneca, Justinian, Xenophon, Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, and others. Although Sibbes rarely quoted from these classical authors, Brooks quoted them profusely for sermon illustrations.

Since Brooks does quote from the works on rhetoric by Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintillian in his works, he doubtless read those works. These three ancients are still considered masters on the subject of public speaking. John Broadus also considers these men to be good, and quotes from them fairly frequently in his Preparation and Delivery of Sermons. From these facts, it can be assumed that Brooks was trained in speaking with a high regard to good oratorical style, as set forth by men like Quintillian and Cicero.

Of course, the Puritan movement had been going on a good while before Brooks entered college. Perhaps there were older Puritans who

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[26]Brooks, Works, 1:xxvi.

influenced his style; he having heard them preach, or read their works. Brooks quotes from the famous old Puritan, John Dod. John Dod's works remained around a long time after his death in 1645 at ninety-eight years of age. People enjoyed his 'sayings' and anecdotes so much that they could be found pasted on cabin walls, even a century after his death. Laurence Chaderton was still around during Brooks' time. Chaderton was a 'spell-binder'. Once after he had preached for two hours, he suggested that he had gone too long and better stop. His hearers all shouted out for him to continue, even begging him in the name of God.[27]

Brooks was, first and foremost, a Puritan. He wanted to see the purification of the church. The Puritans, in opposition to the Anglican establishment, sought by godly preaching, to make Englishmen knowledgeable, orthodox, and holy. Though various peculiarities of style existed amongst the Puritan preachers; on the whole, they were in agreement on the main characteristics of effective preaching.

One main characteristic of Puritan preaching was clarity of expression. The Puritans wanted their sermons to be clear and understandable. Brooks was certainly instructed on the importance of clarity; and being a godly Puritan, he shared the same convictions as his fellow Puritans.

One Puritan, John Downame, in his massive treatise, The Christian Warfare, demonstrates the importance of clarity in expression by the example of Scripture:

> . . . howsoever the Lord in the profunditie of wisdome could have written in such a loftie stile as would have filled even the most learned with admiration, yet he useth a simple easie stile fit for the capacity of all, because it was for the use of all, and necessarie to salvation to bee understood of all sorts and conditions.[28]

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[27]William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Coumbia University Press, 1938; reprint ed., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), pp. 54, 55.

[28]William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism, p. 130.

Because the Puritans sought to be thoroughly Biblical, they endeavored to employ this same clarity of style in their sermons. Puritans referred to their rhetoric as the 'plain style'. The Puritans avoided the artificiality and daintiness of erudition. They abhorred the style which merely showed off one's ability to do pretty tricks with words. After all, they were to give account for every idle word spoken, in the day of Judgment. Therefore they strove not to impress their auditory, but rather to impart understanding, to the saving of men's souls. Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), in his famous work, The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax, chiselled out a memorable note about clarity and truth in reference to preaching. He said that ministers:

> . . . should take heed likewise that they hide not their meaning in dark speeches, speaking in the clouds. Truth feareth nothing so much as concealment, and desireth nothing so much as clearly to be laid open to the view of all: when it is most naked, it is most lovely and powerful.[29]

John Flavel (1627-1691) echoes the same concern for clarity in a sermon to ministers, saying:

> The greatest part of our congregations are poor, ignorant, unregenerated people that know neither their misery nor their remedy. This will direct us to the great doctrines of conviction, regeneration, and faith; and make us to sit with solicitious minds in our studies, pondering thus in our hearts: 'Lord, what course shall we take, and what words shall we chuse [sic] that we may best convey the sense of their sin and danger, with the fulness and necessity of Christ, into their hearts.' (Italics mine.)[30]

The Puritans had a strong dislike of the slittery and pretentious preaching of the Anglican establishment. Grosart, Sibbes' biographer, gives an impression of the so-called 'witty' style, so much abominated by the Puritans:

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[29]Richard Sibbes, The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes, ed., with memoir, Rev. Alexander Balloch Grosart, vol. 1: The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862), p. 53.

[30]John Flavel, The Works of John Flavel, vol. 6: The Character of a Complete Evangelical Pastor, Drawn by Christ (London: W. Baynes and Son, 1820; reprint ed., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), pp. 571-572.

> The preaching that was fashionable among the 'wits' of the university was a very different thing from the stern reproofs, bold invectives, burning remonstrances, prophet-like appeals of William Perkins. What was now culitvated and extolled was a frivolous, florid eloquence, that boasted itself on its deftly-turned tropes, its high flown paraphrases of the classics, especially Seneca and Cicero, and the Fathers, the multiplied quotations of the 'sermons' published shewing like purple patches on a thread-bare robe. There was trick of manner, mellifluous cadence, simpering refinement, nothing more. The Senhouses[31] et hoc genus omne [loosely translated--'and they're all the same'] sprinkled eau-de-cologne over their hearers (if they durst it had been 'holy water'), while parched lips were athirst for 'living water'--tickled the ear when the heavily-laden soul sought pardon, the weary rest, the bruised balm.[32]

This animosity toward 'witty' preaching grew out of the Puritan zeal for the clear proclamation of the gospel, as is apparent from the previous quote.

In that the Puritans practiced clarity of expression in their sermons, this 'plain' style should not be misconstrued as dullness. True, there were some Puritans whose style would seem more like a theological lecture. William Gouge and John Owen were more technical in their sermons and writings than most of the other Puritans. If anyone has read John Owen, he knows it must be read carefully and slowly for comprehension. Yet Owen's quality of matter drew a crowd of two thousand in London on a regular basis. Nevertheless, most of the Puritans made frequent use of engaging illustrations.

Brooks' style was also influenced by the Puritans' conviction that a sermon should not only be clear, and doctrinally sound, but that

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[31]Richard Senhouse was considered foremost as a collector of all sorts of witty 'knick-knacks'. He flaunted his knowledge of trivia to impress his hearers and gain glory and applause to himself. He was appointed a bishop for his cleverness. See Haller, Rise of Puritanism, pp. 76-78.

[32]Rev. Alexander Balloch Groshart, "Memoir of Richard Sibbes, D.D." in The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes, Vol. 1, ed. the Rev. Alexander Balloch Groshart (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862), pp. 38, 39.

it should also be enjoyable or winsome. Often, it was through the use of illustrations that Puritans made the sermons engaging.

The Puritans used illustrations from their contemporary setting, as well as enthralling stories from history. Their sermons abounded in metaphor and simile. The Westminster Directory of Worship saw the need for making a sermon enjoyable through using illustration: "The illustrations, of what kind soever, ought to be full of light, and such as may convey the truth into the hearer's heart with spiritual delight." (Italics mine.)[33] The Puritan manner of illustrating conformed to their central desire, to penetrate the minds and hearts of people, to direct them in godly living. Stories and figures of speech were not merely ornaments to be poured without measure into the sermon, but were to be used for a purpose. Illustrations served to clarify, to keep the hearer's interest up, to inspire, and to serve as examples. Also, since the hearers delighted in the illustrations, the preacher's message was rendered more palatable. Solomon had said, ". . . sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness."[34] And most certainly did the Puritans want to be persuasive.

The difference between the Puritans' illustrations and those of the 'witty' preachers, is that for the Puritans:

> Whatever contributed to edification was but a means of preaching naked Christ. Whatever did not was vanity. The primary objection to metaphysical wit, learned allusions, tags of Greek and Latin, snatches

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[33]The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, with the Scripture Proofs at Large: together with The Sum of Saving Knowledge, (contained in the Holy Scriptures, and Held Forth in the said Confession and Catechisms,) and Practical Use thereof; Covenants, National and Solemn League; acknowledgement of Sins, and Engagement to Duties; Directories for Publick and Family Worship; Form of Church Government, etc. Of Publick Authority in the Church of Scotland; with Acts of Assembly and Parliament, Relative to and Approbative of the Same. Re-issued by The Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 1976, p. 380. [This is the only title and publication information given.]

[34]Prov. 16:21 (NASB). [NASB = New American Standard Bible.]

> from the heathen poets and philosophers, and all figures of speech depending upon recondite knowledge was that many members of the audience were sure to miss the point. The Puritan preacher was quite prepared to use anything he knew as means to his end, but the end was to make everybody feel the force and reality of what he was saying. . . His sermons were sown thick with imagery, but his images were drawn from sources which people felt they knew, . . .[35]

The Puritans were masters at making pictures with words as well as using picturesque words. They especially liked to draw their illustrations from the England they knew; from farm life, the sea, roadside scenes, the city market or whatever was familiar to their hearers. One Puritan scholar, William Haller, sums it up nicely:

> Illustrations of doctrine drawn from everyday life, especially when touched with something like the interest of narrative, plainly took with the people. The men of the pulpit consequently began to make a feature of such devices, exercising their ingenuity to make the little picture or fable familiar, vivid, appropriate, and in itself striking and amusing.[36]

Maybe there is a certain man that influenced Brooks more than another, but it would be hard to tell. Brooks' one main difference, his outstanding difference, is his abundant use of illustrations. If any reader were to compare the works of Richard Sibbes, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, John Flavel, Samuel Rutherford, Samuel Bolton, Robert Bolton, Joseph Alleine, Richard Baxter, Thomas Watson, Thomas Boston, John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, William Gouge, or Stephen Charnock--any of these Puritans, against Thomas Brooks, one would find Brooks to be fuller in illustrations. If anyone influenced Brooks in this way, it seems that Brooks went further to make the use of illustrations his strong point.

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[35]Haller, Rise of Puritanism, p. 140.

[36]Ibid., p. 148.

## III. SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF BROOKS' STYLE

Having now looked at the more general characteristics of style, seen the importance of a good oral style, and looked into some of the influences upon Brooks' style--the specific characteristics of Brooks' style should now be dealt with. If Thomas Brooks is a model Puritan preacher, the specific characteristics of his preaching are worthy of study and imitation. One does not admire a beautiful painting and simply go off to paint masterpieces. It is only in careful study and practice of particulars that one acquires the ability to be great in any field. So also, it is only in the close study of Brooks' preaching characteristics that one may learn to preach like Brooks. The Apostle John exhorts believers to ". . . imitate . . . what is good."[37]

### Use of Repetition

The first good quality of Brooks' style to be observed is his use of repetition. As was mentioned before, good oral style is repetitious in comparison to good written style. The reason for this is that the hearer cannot take time to slowly think on each idea of the speech because the speech keeps moving at a fast rate. Also, a hearer's mind might be easily distracted from the speakers line of thought. By the time the listener focuses back on the sermon, he may have missed an important ingredient in the preacher's line of argument. Thus the hearer will totally miss that part of the sermon unless the preacher repeats himself.

Repetition is the mother of memory. By reiterating important points, a preacher helps fix these ideas in his listeners memory. Since preachers

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[37]3 John 11 (NASB).

are presenting eternal truths that provide guidance to salvation, one of their prime objectives should be to fix their words upon their peoples' minds. Some speakers might speak in order to move the people by their emotions, for the purpose of getting them to make a one time commitment. Some orators seek only to entertain their audience and gain their approval. The Christian minister's objective is not these. The Christian minister must remind his flock of the message of Scripture that leads to salvation. He is concerned that men, women, boys, and girls forget not the truths that lead to salvation. The Apostle Peter says, "I shall always be ready to remind you of these things [i.e., the things having to do with eternal salvation], even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you." (Italics mine.)[38]

In some cases it may be good to restate a phrase or sentence in the very same words. Most often, however, an idea should be rephrased and fitted with different terminology. By this repetition, clarity of understanding is promoted. If a listener doesn't understand or fully grasp the significance at first, maybe the second or third restatement will hit the mark.

It must be said that repetition of some simple idea, that is sufficiently clear in the first explanation, will only weary and disgust the listener. Repetition of all matters, all of the time, makes a speaker boring. Preachers should heed the suggestion of Broadus on this point: "It is wretchedly tiresome to hear a man carefully explaining what everyone present understands beforehand, or continuing to repeat and open and illustrate what he had already made sufficiently plain."[39] Evidently moderation must be observed in the employment of repetition. What might be excessive repetition for one idea, might be insufficient for another. The preacher must decide what the

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[38]2 Pet. 1:12 (NASB). cf. 2 Pet. 1:13-15; 3:1,2.

[39]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 251.

weightier parts of his sermon are and use restatement in those places.

Brooks uses much repetition when he gives men a solemn warning against damning themselves:

> Well, gentlemen, for a close, remember this, that as Noah was drunk with his own wine, and as Goliath was beheaded with his own sword, and as the rose is destroyed by the canker that it breeds in itself, and as Agrippina was killed by Nero, to whom she gave breath; so if ever you are eternally destroyed, you will be destroyed by yourselves; if ever you are scourged to death, it will be by rods of your own making; and if ever the bitter cup of damnation be put into your hands, it will be found to be of your own preparing, mingling, and embittering.[40]

In the quotation above, Brooks uses four examples of people or things that were harmed by things they created or made. He then states, four times, that persons who are eternally damned damn themselves. Sometimes he repeats the exact same words. For instance, he says, ". . . drunk with his own wine, . . ." and ". . . beheaded with his own sword, . . ." (Italics mine.) He repeats "if ever" four times. Notice the exact repetition in the following two phrases: ". . . if ever you are eternally destroyed, you will be destroyed by yourselves; if ever you are undone, you will be undone by yourselves; . . ." (Italics mine.) This exact repetition gives the ring of importance to his words. It is like Jesus saying, "Truly, truly, I say unto you. . ." Brooks' message, at this point, is weighty and, therefore, permits such use of repetition.

Too much exact repetition gives the impression of triviality, like a little child singing a nursery rhyme again and again without ceasing. For this reason Brooks uses synonomous expressions to prevent monotony. Notice that he has four different expressions for the concept of eternal damnation: "eternally destroyed", "undone", "scourged to death", and "bitter cup of damnation put into your hands". The idea is driven home by the repetition, but not so as to be monotonous.

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[40]Brooks, Works, 2:9.

Brooks uses repetition to help clarify the difference between foolish Bible study and wise Bible study:

> The devil knows he is no loser, and the curious soul but a very little gainer, if he can but persuade him to spend most of his precious time in studying and poring upon the most dark, mysterious, and hidden things of God. He that affects to read the Revelation of John more that his plain epistles, or Daniel's prophecies more than David's Psalms, and is more busy about reconciling difficult scriptures than he is about mortifying of unruly lusts, or that is set more upon vain speculations than upon things that make most for edification, he is not the man that is cut out for closet-prayer. (Italics mine.)[41]

The italicized phrases are all representations of 'foolish Bible study'. He repeats these examples in order to give the listener a clear conception of unwise Bible study as compared with prudent Bible study.

## Use of Simple, Specific, Concrete Words

From these quotes of Brooks it can be seen that wise use of repetition makes a good preaching style. Another characteristic of good preaching style is the use of simple, specific, and concrete words. Since the preacher generally speaks to a broad class of persons, he must adapt his terms to the capacity of ignorant and intelligent alike. The intelligent can understand simple words, but the simple cannot understand large words. Therefore the words must be simple. This does not mean that the speech must be boring. If one uses simple words in unusual ways, the peoples' interest will be stirred and they will remember what is said. For instance, to say "The sharp projectile, moving rapidly through the air, entered the thoracic cavity and perforated a primary organ," would be to use sophisticated, general, and abstract words. To say, "The quick spear buried itself in his heart," is to use simple, specific, and concrete terms in an unusual way.

The Biblical writers were masters of style in many ways. They used

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[41]Brooks, Works, 2:282.

simple, specific, and concrete words in unusual ways. "Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel," is a good example.[42] God has no hands since he is a spirit. Yet the expression is more vivid than saying, "Elijah felt a sense of physical and spiritual strengthening, etc." Great literary figures are also known for their ability to use a limited vocabulary effectively. For comparison, the average college student's vocabulary consists of approximately 250,000 words, while the vocabulary of common people is about 20,000 words.[43] Milton, considered by many as the greatest English poet, employed a little more than 11,000 different words in his writings, while Shakespeare, considered as the greatest English playwright, used only about 25,000 different words.[44] These examples demonstrate that an effective style is not dependent upon a large vocabulary, but rather upon an effective use of basic vocabulary. One rhetorician goes so far as saying, "The kinds of words used in speaking to children are probably the most important kinds of words to use in speaking clearly and forcefully in the pulpit."[45]

Thomas Brooks had an audience drawn from different stations in life. He kept his preaching interesting, but kept the vocabulary simple. Every now and then a refined word might be used, but it is usually accompanied with an explanation of its meaning, or else followed by a few synonyms. In the following quote Brooks uses words that are simple, specific, and concrete in characterizing the rigour of the Christian life:

> As there was no way to paradise but by a flaming sword, nor no way to Canaan but through a howling wilderness, so there is no way to heaven but by the gates of hell; there is no way to a glorious exaltation but

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[42] 1 Kings 18:46 (NASB).

[43] Adams, Pulpit Speech, p. 117.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Adams, Pulpit Speech, p. 119.

> through a sea of tribulation, of persecution, Acts xiv.21,22. The way to heaven is not strewed with roses, but full of thorns and briars, as those 'of whom this world is not worthy' have always experienced, Heb. xi.[46]

Terms like "flaming sword", "howling wilderness", "gates of hell", "strewed with roses", and "full of thorns and briars" quickly form pictures in the mind. If Brooks had only used abstract terms like "hardship", "troublesome", "difficult", and "problematic", the colorful pictures would be gone--as would the depth of comprehension afforded the hearer.

Notice how effectively Brooks explains the feeling of a guilty conscience: "So Daniel chose rather to be cast among lions than that his conscience should be a lion within him, . . . "[47] The idea of a blood-thirsty lion inside of a man, roaring and tearing with his claws, gives an accurate and effective description of a guilty conscience.

Brooks beautifully explains the sufficiency of Scripture with simple words in effective arrangement:

> O sirs! the blessed scriptures are sufficient to direct us fully in everything that belongs to the worship and service of God, so as that we need not depend upon the wisdom, prudence, care, and authority of any man under heaven to direct us in matters of worship: 2 Tim. iii.16, 17 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' The scriptures are sufficient to inform the ignorant, to confute the erroneous, to reform the vicious, and to guide and direct, support and comfort, those that are gracious. Here a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim; here is milk for babes and meat for strong men; here is comfort for the afflicted, and succour for the tempted, and ease for the straitened, etc. Oh, how full of light, how full of life, how full of love, how full of sweetnesss, how full of goodness, how full of righteousness and holiness, etc., is every chapter, and every verse in every chapter, yea, and every line in every verse![48]

Lambs wading and elephants swimming are specific terms. Instead of saying,

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[46]Brooks, Works, 5:418.

[47]Brooks, Works, 5:419.

[48]Brooks, Works, 5:428.

'All animals can be accommodated in this water,' Brooks gets specific--'elephants' and 'lambs'. 'Babes' and 'strong men' are contrasts that are easy to picture also. If Brooks had used abstract or general terms, his sermons would lose much of their clarity and vigor.

In another place Brooks speaks of the value of a clear conscience. Notice the number and variety of concrete and specific terms:

> A good conscience is an impregnable fort. It fears no colours; it will enable a man to stand against the fiercest batteries of men and devils. A good conscience will fill a man with courage and comfort in the midst of all his troubles and distresses. Paul had enough to say for himself when standing before the council; he could say, 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day,' Acts xxiii.1,2. And though as soon as he had said so, Annanias commanded to smite him on the mouth, yet he bears up bravely, because his conscience did not smite him, but acquit him. That man can never want music whose conscience speaks in consort, and is harmonious with himself. A good conscience is a paradise in the wilderness, it is riches in poverty, and health in sickness, and strength in weakness, and liberty in bonds, and life in death, Isa. xxxviii.3 A good conscience will enable a man to triumph over innumerable evils, yea, over death itself. Death to such a person is not the king of terrors, but the king of desires, Phil. i.23. A good conscience will be a Christian's best friend in the worst times; it will be a sword to defend him, a staff to support him, a pillar of fire to lead him, a Joseph to nourish him, a Dorcas to clothe him, a Canaan to refresh him, and a feast to delight him: 'He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast,' Prov. xv.15.[49]

Brooks refers to objects such as a sword and a staff. He mentions people and places that represent comforting Bible stories. Brooks uses specific things and events, in order that his listeners should understand and feel the reality of something purely spiritual; in this case, the comfort of an upright conscience.

Brooks was equally adept in portraying evil men and wickedness as he was at portraying spiritual qualities and righteousness. From Brooks' treatise, The Crown and Glory of Christianity, he describes flatterers:

> Flatterers are devouring caterpillars: flatterers' tongues do more mischief than persecutors' swords, for their swords can but destroy the bodies of men, but flatterers' tongues destroy the souls of men.

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[49]Brooks, Works, 5:502-503.

> Flatterers are the greatest soul-cheaters and soul-undoers in the world. Flatterers dare call vice virtue, they dare call pride neatness, covetousness good husbandry, drunkeness good-fellowhip, prodigality liberality, wantoness a trick of youth, passion zeal, revenge courage, etc. They dare call enormities infirmities, and wickednesses weaknesses; they dare call great sins little sins, little sins no sins; they guild over all their poisonous pills with gold, they draw the fairest glove upon the foulest hand, they lay their neatest colours upon the filthiest sores, they put their best paint upon the worst faces, and the richest robes upon the most diseased bodies; and by these devices they entangle many to their utter ruin: Prov. xxix.5, 'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.' The Hebrew word--Machalik from Chalak--that is here rendered flatterer, signifies a smooth-boots, a soft, butter-spoken man; because flatterers, the better to deceive, do use to oil their tongues and to butter their lips, that so by their smooth, soft speeches they may the more insinuate themselves into men's affections, and so make way for their destruction. Flatterers have their silken nets to ensnare and entangle poor souls to their eternal ruin. Look, as fowlers strew corn and lay baits to draw birds into their nets; or look, as hunters spread their nets, that they may take beasts and prey upon them, or make a prey of them; so flatterers, they spread their nets that they may catch poor souls, and either prey upon them, or else make a prey of them. Flattery is the devil's invisible net; and happy is that soul that escapes it.[50]

Brooks likens flatterers to devouring caterpillars and stealthy hunters or trappers. He compares flatterers to devious pharmacologists that would seduce innocent victims into taking pretty, golden hued tablets; the victims not suspecting that the pills are poisonous. Flatterers are disease-plagued women that hide their rotten, runny cankers with rich clothing and soft-toned cosmetics. Flattery is like smooth leather boots, like butter, or oiled lips in its first appearance, but these are deceptions that lead one to a deathtrap. By using such precise objects, which the common hearer is familiar with, and which are easy to visualize, Brooks makes sure that his auditors grasp the subject and remember it.

## Use of Synonyms

Up to this point two main aspects of a good preaching style have

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[50]Brooks, Works, 4:203-204.

been discussed and exemplified from Brooks' sermons. First, repetition was seen to be more abundantly needed since the hearers are unable to go back and hear some part of the sermon they might have missed or misunderstood. Secondly, the speaker's vocabulary was shown to need words that are simple, and not complex; specific, and not general; and concrete, not abstract. Another technique that improves preaching style is the use of synonyms.

The synonym's basic function is to add clarity to the meaning being conveyed. Some people are accustomed to regular usage of one word for a particular object or action, while others commonly use a different term for the same thing. A word that might quickly conjure up an image in one person's brain might have little or no effect upon another person. What one person calls a 'lavatory' might be a 'sink' to another man, or a 'washbasin' or 'washbowl' to even another. If a hearer's mind stumbles over an unfamiliar word or idea, he will tend to lose the preachers line of reasoning or description. Therefore, synonyms are good helpers to a preacher.

Synonyms can also, when strung together, impress a thought upon the reader. This effect is close to the effect of repetition, in stressing an idea which the preacher considers of great importance. Also, synonyms might be used simply to prevent the monotony which a word causes when repeated many times in a short space.

In Brooks' treatise, The Privy Key of Heaven, he uses synonyms in urging his listeners to look at the good side of their afflictions as well as the bad side. He says,

> If we should come into a painter's or limner's shop, and see a picture half drawn, it might trouble us and startle us, if it did not fright us and amaze us; but yet, when the picture is perfected, completed, and finished, it may prove a very beauteous, lovely, taking piece. The application is easy. Look, as every judgment, every affliction, every rod, hath its black, dark side, so every judgment, every affliction, hath its bright side too. Now, it is the wisdom

> of a Christian to look on the bright side of the rod, the cloud, as well as it is his work to look on the dark side of the rod, the cloud. When a Christian looks upon the dark side of the cloud, he should be humbled and abased; but when he looks upon the bright side of the cloud, he should be comforted and cheered, James v.11. He that is still a-looking on the briary side of the rod, will be very apt to fret and faint under the rod; but he that looks on the rosemary side of the rod, as well as the briary side of the rod, he will bear up patiently, gallantly, and cheerfully under the rod. The voice of the rod is, Look on both sides, look on both sides.[51]

Brooks uses 'painter' and 'limner' as synonyms. 'Trouble', 'startle', 'fright', and 'amaze' are used as synonyms. 'Perfected', 'completed', and 'finished' are used synonomously. 'Beauteous', 'lovely', and 'taking' are all synonomous. All these synonyms are used in only the first sentence of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph has many other synonyms which can be easily picked out upon observation. The important fact to be observed is that Brooks uses enough synonyms to be sure his hearer clearly understands the point he is making. This abundant use of synonyms may seem boring to the reader, but this is actually effective oral style. It is probably best to read such sermons aloud at a medium-fast pace in order to better grasp the quality of the style. If Brooks did not use this repetition, the hearers (since their minds would now and then wander from the sermon) would not accurately comprehend the message. On the other hand, if Brooks always repeated the same exact words, and did not use synonyms, he would become monotonous. He would also lose his clarity, since some of his words might be unfamiliar to various persons in his audience.

## Defining Terms and Ideas

Besides using synonyms there is another way to insure maximum clarity of comprehension: by defining terms and ideas. There are basically

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[51]Brooks, Works, 2:154.

three different methods of definition: by contrast, by comparison, and by analogy. Not only are these methods of definition, or explanation, valuable to clarity, but they also are effective in affecting the emotions. Of comparisons, Broadus says:

> Comparison is often very effective in awakening emotion. Thus we make men feel more deeply how shameful is ingratitude to God, by first presenting some affecting case of ingratitude to a human benefactor. The emotion excited by something as regards which men feel readily and deeply, is transferred to the object compared. For example, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."[52]

## By Comparison

Comparison, contrast, and analogy, though similar in that they define objects and ideas, are different in the manner in which they explain these things. Comparison describes something as being like, or similar to, something else. For example, a chair may be compared to a bench. They are made of the same materials, usually have four legs and a seat.

## By Contrast

Contrast describes something in a negative manner. Instead of saying what something is like, contrast says what something is not like. The use of contrast can be very beneficial when treating some object or idea that may easily be confused with another similar object or idea. A general description of a Bedlington Terrier might make one think of a sheep. They both have curly hair and a very similar shape, at first glance. By contrast, a Bedlington Terrier has four long, sharp, pointed canine teeth, which a sheep does not. A Bedlington Terrier does not have hoofs, but has paws. By showing the differences, a clearer picture is produced.

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[52]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 221.

## By Analogy

Analogy is almost the same as comparison. A comparison is supposed to liken objects or ideas that are directly similar; either in appearance, function, or character. An analogy is supposed to compare objects or ideas that may seem very dissimilar, but are similar in the way in which they mutually relate to some object or theme. A garbage can and a cemetery are not directly similar to one another. Both of these objects, however, bear a similar relationship to the theme of disuse. Just as the garbage can receives those things which have been used and have no more usefulness, so a graveyard receives the bodies of beings that no longer function, that are put away because they have no more usefulness. Just as the garbage thrown out is forgotten, so the people laid in the cemetery are soon forgotten.

For the purpose of style, it is not important to be able to distinguish between a comparison or an analogy. Rhetoricians may debate the difference and insist upon distinctions. The preacher should primarily be careful that he can define his ideas, whether or not he can distinguish between a comparison or an analogy. Even Broadus admits the difficulty in distinguishing an analogy from a comparison when he says, ". . . analogous objects will frequently be similar, also, and this fact has helped to obscure to men's minds the distinction [i.e., between an analogy and a comparison] . . ."[53]

Brooks was a skillful master in defining Biblical truths by comparisons, contrasts, and analogies. He could both clarify and vivify spiritual truth by these methods. In his treatise, The Crown and Glory of Christianity,

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[53]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 178.

Brooks colorfully explains that true repentance must be complete, and not partial:

> True repentance is a turning, not from some sin, but from every sin: Ezek. xviii.30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Every sin strikes at the law of God, the honour of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore the penitent must strike at all. Every sin fetcheth blood from the heart of Christ, and every sin is a grief and vexation to the Spirit of Christ; and therefore the penitent must set upon crucifying of all. Every sin is an enemy to a man's communion with God; and therefore he must set upon forsaking of all. If ever thou are saved, O man, thou must repent as well of thy Achans as thy Absaloms, of thy Rimmons as of thy Mammons, of thy Davids as of thy Goliaths, of thy secret as well as thy open sins, of thy loved as well as thy loathed lusts, of thy babe-transgressions as well as of thy giant-like provocations. If thy repentance be not universal, it will never be effectual. If a ship spring three leaks, and only two be stopped, the third will certainly sink the ship; or if a man hath two dangerous wounds in his body, and takes only order for the cure of one, the other will undoubtedly kill him; or if a man hath two grievous diseases upon him, and will only deal with the physician for remedies against the one, he will without all peradventure perish by the prevelancy of the other.[54]

Brooks compares man's soul to a ship and to the body of a person. Sin's damning power is likened to leaks in a ship, wounds in a body, and diseases of a body. Partial repentance is represented as partial treatment of all these problems. These comparisons could technically be called analogies because each example is likened to partial repentance in its effects and because these examples have no similarity of nature with each other.

In the following excerpt, Brooks uses contrast in order to differentiate true repentance from false repentance. He realized how easily the two might be confused, and so he clarifies by showing what true repentance is not:

> . . . thou canst as well wash a blackamoor white at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well raise the dead at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well make a world at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well stop the course of the sun at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well put the sea in a cockle-shell at pleasure, and measure the earth with a span at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure: . . . I confess that if to repent were to hang down the head like a bulrush for a day, or to whine with Saul for an hour, or to put on sackcloth and walk softly with Ahab for a short space, or to confess with Judas,

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[54]Brooks, Works, 4:193.

> 'I have sinned,' or to say with Simon Magus, 'Pray to the Lord for me,' or to tremble with Felix for a moment--I say, if this were to repent, doubtless you might repent at pleasure; but alas! friends, to repent is another thing, to repent is the hardest and difficultest work in the world; . . .[55]

Brooks refers to the Biblical examples of men, who had a kind of false repentance. In all these examples Brooks is showing what true repentance is not. He shows that true repentance is not an outward posture, an outward weeping, outward punishment of the body, or a mere recognition of guilt. Such clear delineation of spiritual realities should be striven for by all preachers. The clearer the truth is, the stronger the conviction will be.

Brooks is even able to use an analogy to describe the almost indescribable. Brooks maintains that the Christian's joy is a deep, inward, abiding joy that can remain even during troubles and trials. This joy, might not always be seen by a bright, smiling face; yet it is always present in the man that walks close to the Lord. Brooks says,

> . . . the joy of the saints is chiefly and mainly an inward joy, a spiritual joy, a joy that lies remote from a carnal eye. The joy of a Christian lies deep, it cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. Look, as no man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of grapes, nor the fragrancy of the rose of Sharon; so no man can paint out the sweetness and spiritualness of a Christian's joy, it lies so deep and low in a gracious heart.[56]

Brooks likens the indescribableness of Christian joy with the indescribableness of sweetness and fragrancy, and thereby describes the indescribableness! In effect, he says that Christian joy must be experienced in order to be understood, just as the sweetness of honey or grapes must be experienced to be understood. This comparison not only helps define Christian joy, but it affects the sentiments of the listeners. When Brooks likens Christian joy to honey, grapes, and a fragrant rose; he shows the desirableness of this joy, and helps incline his auditory's hearts toward obtaining such spiritual joy.

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[55]Brooks, Works, 4:192.

[56]Brooks, Works, 4:251.

## Sentence and Paragraph Structure

Comparison, contrast, and analogy have been seen to be effective in defining and enhancing the preacher's sermon. Synonyms and synonomous expressions have been evidenced to be valuable tools to a good oral style. It has been shown that repetition, though boring to the written style, is essential to an effective preaching style. Also, the choice of proper words has been studied: that is, the use of simple and specific words, as well as concrete terms, with their ability to make expression clearer and more vivid. Besides these qualities of good oral style, sentence structure can be used to improve the style of the sermon.

The organization of the sentence can make ideas clear, or, if badly organized, muddle the intended meaning. If one said, "I found a black dog's collar," one might wonder whether the collar was black or the dog was black. To say, "Drunkenness frequently is the cause of damnation," might cause the hearer to wonder whether frequent drunkenness is the cause of damnation, or whether drunkenness is a frequent cause of damnation. Carefulness on the part of the preacher will help prevent such confusing constructions.

## Prevent Monotony through Variation

Variation of sentence structure also helps prevent monotony. There is a usual arrangement followed in an English sentence, "The usual arrangement of an English sentence is this: adjectives modifying the subject, subject, adjective phrase or clause, verb, adverb or adverbial phrase or clause, object or other complements with modifiers."[57] If the usual structure is always held

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[57]A. Wigfall Green et al., Complete College Composition, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1945), p. 236.

to, the style will not be as interesting as a style in which an occasional difference in structure keeps the mind alert.

Besides prevention of monotony, unusual sentence structure can be used to draw attention to a particular word or group of words. Broadus says,

> The most prominent position in a sentence is the beginning, and next to this, the end. If now a word which, according to the common grammatical order, would come elsewhere be placed at the beginning or the end, it will attract special attention; it will become one of the important, the emphatic words of the sentence. And in general, to put a word out of its ordinary place will cause it to be specially noticed.[58]

## Periodic Sentence

Over the centuries, particular names have been given to some basically different types of sentences. One type of sentence has been termed the "periodic sentence." The periodic sentence is defined as ". . . a sentence in which the meaning is not complete until the end of the sentence is reached, . . ."[59] Broadus says, ". . . any sentence is called a period when the sense is so suspended as to be nowhere complete till we reach the last clause."[60] An example of a periodic sentence might be: "Finally, after years of hard toil, and long nights spent in study with little hope of success, he saw his translation, now in print." The meaning of the sentence may not be guessed until it is given at the end of the sentence. This structure intrigues the reader. Of course, if this type of sentence structure were too frequently used, it would lose its power. The normal structure of this same sentence would not provoke much interest: "He finally saw his translation in print after years of hard toil, and long nights spent in study with little

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[58]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 258.

[59]Green et al., College Composition, p. 236.

[60]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 256.

hope of success.' This second structure does not have power to hold the hearers attention. The central fact of the sentence is revealed in the first seven words. The other part of the sentence could be dropped and the essential fact would still remain. After the germ of thought is revealed the listener will lose interest in the remaining details.

Brooks uses an occasional periodic sentence, sometimes for variety and sometimes for effect. In The Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures, he says,

> Could I make as many prayers as might be piled up between heaven and earth, and weep as much blood as there is water in the sea, yet all this could not procure the pardon of one sin, nor one smile from God, etc.[61]

In another place Brooks says,

> O sirs! look, that as sin has infected both the souls and bodies of the elect, and chiefly their souls, where it hath its chief seat, so Christ, to expiate this sin, did suffer unspeakable sorrows and trouble in his soul, as well as torture in his body; 'for my soul is troubled' saith he.[62]

The arrangement of both these sentences is more intriguing than if the subject and verb were placed first in the order. The suspense created by the periodic structure intensifies the listener's interest, thereby provoking the hearer to use his hearing and thinking abilities to their fullest.

There are other types of sentence forms which can be used for variation and emphasis. Many people will vary their sentence structure in their everyday speaking, though they do so unconsciously. The preacher should become conscious of his sentence structure and strive to vary his sentence style. Almost all books on English composition and rhetoric discuss sentence structure.

## Sentence Rhythm

Brooks sometimes arranges phrases in such a way that a rhythm is

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[61]Brooks, Works, 5:49.

[62]Brooks, Works, 5:173.

produced. Christ spoke in similar ways. The Beatitudes are an excellent example of good sentence rhythm. The occasional use of sentence rhythm makes the words more striking and also more memorable. Here are some examples of sentence rhythm:

> As there was no way to paradise but by a flaming sword, nor no way to Canaan but through a howling wilderness, so there is no way to heaven but by the gates of hell; there is no way to a glorious exaltation, but through a sea of tribulation, of persecution, Acts xiv.21,22. The way to heaven is not strewed with roses, but full of thorns and briars, as those 'of whome this world is not worthy' have always experienced, Heb xi.[63]

And,

> Sixthly, Every gracious heart is still a-crying out against his sins. He cries out to God to subdue them; he cries out to Christ to crucify them; he cries out to the Spirit to mortify them; he cries out to faithful ministers to arm him against them; and he cries out to sincere Christians, that they would pray hard that he may be made victorious over them.[64]

In the first quotation, the first three phrases are of equal length. In the second quotation, the first three phrases of the second sentence are of approximate equal length. As can be seen, Brooks combines the technique of repetition along with rhythm to make his statements more outstanding and memorable.

## Similar Sounding Words

One other way to structure a sentence, in order to give it more striking appeal, is to group similar sounding words together. Words may sound similar because they rhyme or because they start with the same sound (i.e., alliteration). The author of the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm utilized the device of alliteration. Christ also used alliteration in the Beatitudes. Brooks uses similar sounding words in the following excerpts:

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[63]Brooks, Works, 5:418.

[64]Brooks, Works, 5:19.

> 'Seventhly, I know, through grace, that Jesus Christ is the only person annointed, appointed, fitted and furnished by the Father, for that great and blessed work or office, of saving sinners' souls; . . .'[65]

Also,

> A formal Christian is but a figure, a flaunt, a flourish, a flash, and all he doth is but the shadow of what he should do. A formalist is more light than life, more notion that motion, more head that heart, more outside than inside, more leaves than fruit, more shadow than substance. A formalist is a blazing comet, a painted tomb, a stage-player, a white devil, or a devil in an angel's habit; and what should such devils do in heaven? Certainly if without real holiness no man shall see the Lord, then the formalist, that hath only the shape, the show, the form of godliness, but nothing of the reality and power of it, shall never be blessed with such a sight.[66]

Brooks also uses similar sounding words in a funeral sermon lauding the Christian attributes of the deceased woman. He says, 'She was a Christian all over. She was a Christian in profession, and a Christian in practice; a Christian in lip, and a Christian in life; a Christian in word, and a Christian in work; a Christian in show, and a Christian in power and spirit.'[67]

Of course, such sentence style is to be used sparingly. Alliteration and rhyme can lend a sense of grandeur and profundity when used with profound truths. When overused, like anything else, it becomes trivial or even ridiculous. Brooks does not use similar sounding words very much, but the fact that he occasionally does use such devices, shows that he considered alliteration and rhyme worthy rhetorical devices.

## Figures of Speech

Having seen how Brooks used various arrangements of words in order to enhance his preaching style, let us now look at another area which affects

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[65]Brooks, Works, 5:50.

[66]Brooks, Works, 4:87.

[67]Brooks, Works, 1:405.

preaching style. Figures of speech are the next area of style to be considered. Figures of speech probably do more (than any other element of style) to make a sermon interesting and enjoyable. The pages of Brooks' sermons abound with similes, metaphors, personifications, rhetorical questions and many other figures of speech. In the Plain English Handbook, Walsh says, "A figure of speech is a variation from the ordinary method of expression for the sake of effect."[68] Figures of speech have been classified by ancient and modern rhetoricians. Aristotle lists well over one hundred different figures of speech in his book on rhetoric. Few persons have heard of all the various figures of speech which have been identified and classified. However, there are a few figures of speech which are commonly known, as well as commonly used. Let us consider some of these figures of speech and see how Brooks uses them.

## Simile

A simile is perhaps the most commonly used figure of speech. "A simile is a direct comparison, introduced by like or as, of two things which in their general nature are different from each other."[69] For example, when Christ said ". . . be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves",[70] he was using a simile. Or again, Christ uses a simile when he says, "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father."[71] The Bible is loaded with similes. A simile often aids in conveying the meaning more clearly as well as making a statement interesting.

Brooks used similes with skill. In his sermon, A String of Pearls,

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[68]J. Martyn Walsh and Anna Kathleen Walsh, Plain English Handbook, 6th ed. (Cincinnati: McCormick-Mathers Publishing Company, Inc., 1972), p. 165.

[69]Walsh, Plain English Handbook, p. 165.

[70]Matt. 10:16 (NASB).

[71]Matt. 13:43 (NASB).

he begins with some remarks upon a deceased woman. He uses a simile to describe her faith. "She did duties, but durst not for a world trust to her duties, but to her Jesus, as the dove made use of her wings to fly to the ark, but trusted not in her wings, but in the ark."[72] He later on uses a simile to describe her patient spirit during her afflictions. "Oh how quiet, how like a lamb was she under all her trials!"[73] Again he speaks of her humility by the aid of a simile: "She was very high in spiritual worth, and as low in heart; she was clothed with humility as with a royal robe, and with 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,' 1 Pet. v.5, iii.4."[74] Brooks is able to even draw a simile from tennis balls to show the vanity of worldly goods: "Earthy inheritances are like tennis balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wore out, 1 Tim. vi.17."[75]

## Metaphor

In all these comparisons the words <u>like</u> or <u>as</u> are used to clearly indicate the comparison. Therefore similes leave little room for misunderstanding. A metaphor, on the other hand, is an implied comparison. The disadvantage of the metaphor is that occasionally it may be misinterpreted. Notice the following example:

> And the disciples came to the other side and had forgotten to take bread. And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, "It is because we took no bread." But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves because you have no bread? . . . How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak

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[72]Brooks, <u>Works</u>, 1:406.

[73]Ibid.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Brooks, <u>Works</u>, 1:411.

> to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.[76]

In the above quote Christ refers to the doctrine of the Pharisees in a metaphorical sense, calling their teaching "leaven". The disciples misunderstood Christ's metaphor. If Christ had told them to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees which is like leaven in its influence, then there would be little room, if any, for misunderstanding. Despite this disadvantage, the metaphor gives more force and vigor to expression. For example, Christ said to the Pharisees, "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?"[77] That statement has much more force than if Christ had said, "You are like serpents, you are like a brood of vipers, etc." The metaphor also increases the attentiveness of the audience because it requires them to think. Understanding a metaphor is similar to solving a riddle, though usually a simple riddle. Most people like riddles and most people like metaphorical language because it is a challenge to their thinking.

Brooks was master of metaphorical language. He wanted his people to pay close attention to his sermons, for the good of their souls, and so he made his sermons interesting and delightful by abundant use of metaphor. Notice how Brooks heaps metaphor upon metaphor to extol the grace of God:

> Your best performances are but stinking sacrifices, if they are not attended with the exercise of grace. Grace is that heavenly salt that makes all our services savoury and sweet in the nostrils of God. Grace is of the greatest and sweetest use to the soul; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield at land; it is a staff to uphold the soul; it is physic to cure all diseases, and a plaster to heal all wounds, and a cordial to strengthen the soul under all faintings, etc. Grace is thy eye to see for Christ, thy ear to hear for Christ, thy head to contrive for Christ, thy tongue to speak for Christ, thy hand to do for Christ, and thy feet to walk with Christ. Grace makes men of the frowardest, sourest, crabbedest natures, to be of a sweet, lovely, amiable, pleasing temper, Isa. xi.7-9. It turns lions into lambs, wolves into sheep, monsters

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[76]Matt. 16:5-8,11,12 (NASB).

[77]Matt. 23:33 (NASB).

> into men, and men into angels, as you may see in Manasseh, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and others.[78]

In the above quote, Brooks also uses rhythmic sentence structure along with these metaphors about grace. When Brooks calls grace an anchor, shield, sword, staff, etc., he speaks in concrete terms about a spiritual quality. This method helps define abstract ideas in a way that is interesting.

Here is another example of a well-used metaphor:

> A man that is inordinately in love with the world can never be at rest. . . . the worldling is never at rest; his head and heart are still a-plodding and a-plotting how to get, and how to keep, the things of this world: Eccles. v.12, 'The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.' These three vultures--care of getting, fear of keeping, and grief of losing--feed day and night upon the heart of a rich and wretched worldling, so that his sleep departs from him.[79]

By calling worldly cares vultures, Brooks helps his hearers envisage one of the dangers of worldly cares. He shows that worldly cares will rob a man of sleep and thus take joy out of life.

## Synecdoche

Besides using similes and metaphors, Brooks also employed another figure of speech known as a synecdoche. "A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part is used for a whole or a whole for a part."[80] A Biblical example of synecdoche would be the words of Micah, when he says, "Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war."[81] Instead of saying, "There will be total disarma-

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[78]Brooks, Works, 3:145.

[79]Brooks, Works, 6:273.

[80]A. Berkeley Mickelson, Interpreting the Bible, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p. 186.

[81]Mic. 4:3 (NASB).

ment and no more violence", he speaks of the change of two specific weapons into implements of peace and good. Thus, Micah uses a part (i.e., swords and spears) to represent the whole (i.e., all weapons of war).

Let us see how Brooks uses synecdoche. In his sermon, A String of Pearls, Brooks uses synecdoche to portray the temptations of the world. He says,

> Oh let the men of the world stoop and take up the world, oh let them whose practice speaks them out to be of the world, and to be worshippers of the golden calf, the world, let these dance about it, bow down to it, and take up in it; but let the heirs of heaven divinely scorn to bow down to earth, or to take up in it, or to be much taken with it. (Italics mine.)[82]

Brooks uses the italicized words as synecdoches. The wholes ('world' and 'earth') are being used to represent the various parts (the many different things that make up the 'world').

## Metonymy

Another figure of speech, which is closely akin to synecdoche, is metonymy. In metonymy the name of one thing is used for another "because the two are frequently associated together or because one may suggest the other."[83] In Luke, when Christ is presenting the story of Lazarus and the rich man, he uses metonymy:

> "And he [the rich man] said, 'Then I beg you [Abraham], Father, that you send him [Lazarus] to my father's house--for I have five brothers --that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'"[84]

The terms 'Moses' and 'Prophets' stand for the writings of these men. In this metonymy the authors are used to represent their writings.

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[82]Brooks, Works, 1:446.

[83]Mickelson, Interpreting the Bible, p. 185.

[84]Luke 16:27-29 (NASB).

Brooks uses metonymies to good effect throughout his sermons. When, speaking of heaven, he says, "So this [heavenly inheritance], all this, is the heritage of all God's Jacobs."[85] The term 'Jacobs' is used in place of 'Christians' or 'children'. Since Jacob was a man of faith, his name, was used to represent all others who live by faith (i.e., Christians, God's children). When he speaks of Jacob, specific characteristics come to mind of his life, at least for those who are familiar with Jacob's life. By using a specific person (Jacob) more interest is evoked than by using a more general group of people (Christians).

In another example, Brooks says, "A Christian, though a Lazarus at Dives's door; yet, in respect of his propriety in God and his interest in the covenant, he is the richest and the happiest man in all the world; and why then should he not be content."[86] Brooks here uses the expression "a Lazarus at Dives's door" to represent any Christian in poverty or affliction. It can be seen, here also, that by referring to a specific personality, instead of a general class of persons, a more colorful mental picture is produced.

## Hyperbole

Another figure of speech which, next to simile, is probably the most commonly used figure in everyday conversation, is the hyperbole. Hyperbole is exaggeration or overstatement. The Apostle John was using hyperbole when he said, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written."[87] The Lord uses hyperbole when he tells Moses that

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[85]Brooks, Works, 1:412.

[86]Brooks, Works, 1:443.

[87]John 21:25 (NASB).

he will send Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, into "a land flowing with milk and honey".[88] In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ uses hyperbole when he says,

> And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.[89]

Jesus' instructions to tear out one's eye or cut off one's hand is obviously an exaggeration--to emphasize that sin is heinous and to be strongly hated and struggled against.

Brooks uses a hyperbole in describing the excellence of the heavenly rest after death:

> It is a superlative rest; a rest that infinitely exceeds all earthly rest. All other rest is not to be named in the day wherein this rest is spoken of. Some have purchased rest, for a time, with silver and gold, but this is a rest that all the gold and silver in the world can never purchase.[90]

To say that all other rest is not to be mentioned in conjunction with the heavenly rest is a hyperbolic way of saying that the heavenly rest is so wonderful that it is without comparison.

Brooks uses another hyperbole while discoursing upon the uncertainty of enduring political power: "Worldly crowns are tottering and shaking; most princes' crowns hang but on one side of their heads, and all their interest, power, and policy cannot make them sit fast on both sides."[91] Princes' crowns don't actually totter and shake before they lose them. The exaggeration, however, vividly conveys the uncertainty of prolonged authority. This expression

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[88]Ex. 3:8 (NASB).

[89]Matt. 5:29,30 (NASB).

[90]Brooks, Works, 1:416.

[91]Brooks, Works, 1:459.

is more effective than saying, "The future of kings is uncertain because other men can suddenly rise up unexpectedly and gain control and take the crown for themselves."

## Personification

Another species of figurative language is personification. A personification is a "figure of speech in which some human characteristic is attributed to an inanimate thing."[92] Personification is used in the Bible as a legitimate form of expression. Christ said, "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."[93] Christ is speaking of 'tomorrow' as if it were a person who could exercise his will. The Apostle Paul is personifying death when he says, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"[94]

Brooks followed the same pattern of language as the Bible, by his frequent employment of personifications. Brooks was able to take many abstract, ethical terms; and through personification, describe them in a more concrete form. Speaking of covetousness, Brooks says, "Judas, you know, was a devil in an angel's habit; he seemed to be turned from every sin, but he was not; he was a secret thief, he loved the bag; and that golden devil, covetousness, choked him, and hanged him at last."[95] By portraying covetousness as a murderous devil, Brooks brings out the serious and far-reaching effects of covetousness.

In another sermon Brooks personifies the world as a threatening personage, as well as a tempting damsel. In this passage, Brooks is bewailing

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[92]Walsh, Plain English Handbook, p. 166.

[93]Matt. 6:34 (NASB).

[94]1 Cor. 15:55 (NASB).

[95]Brooks, Works, 4:193.

the lack of godly men in places of responsibility and power. He masterfully describes the situation in the following way:

> What hinders many men from doing gloriously, but consulting with the tempting or the persecuting world? This hath overthrown many. Nay, what hinders men in our age from doing gloriously? They are consulting with flesh and blood, with the tempting world and the frowning world. This hinders men from doing gloriously. I cannot believe but if parliament-men, and others in power and authority, did not look too much upon the tempting world when it smiles and holds forth her beautiful breasts, upon the ugly face of the world when it frowns and threatens, but that they would act more gloriously for God, and for the general good, and for the advancing of the name of the Most High in these days we live in.[96]

The above quote is effective in showing that, if men cannot be enticed to follow the worldly ways, they will probably be intimidated into following worldly ways. His personifications of the world conjure up images of harlots and bullies. People are more interested by earthy, concrete things and persons, than by abstract, ethical conceptions.

In another passage Brooks personifies sins:

> Every godly man would fain have his sins not only pardoned but destroyed. His heart is alienated from his sins, and therefore nothing will serve or satisfy him but the blood and death of his sins, Isa. ii.20, and xxx.22; Hosea xiv.8; Rom. viii.24. Saul hated David and sought his life; and Haman hated Mordecai, and sought his destruction; and Absalom hated Amnon, and killed him; Julian the apostate hated Christians, and put many thousands of them to death. The great thing that a Christian has in his eye, in all the duties he performs, and in all the ordinances he attends, is the blood and death and ruin of his sins.[97]

Sins are portrayed as an enemy, an even human enemy with blood in its veins.

In Brooks' treatise, The Privy Key of Heaven, he uses personification to teach how a guilty conscience is a barrier to effectual private prayer. He portrays the guilty conscience as a haunting ghost or a persistent, tracking hunter. He says,

> What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour,--Mat. viii.19, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,'--that a guilty conscience saith to the sinner, 'Whithersoever thou goest I will follow thee.' If thou goest to a fast, I will follow thee, and fill thy mind with black and

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[96]Brooks, Works, 6:330.

[97]Brooks, Works, 5:18.

> dismal apprehensions of God; if thou goest to a feast, I will follow thee, and shew thee the handwriting on the wall, Dan. v.5; if thou goest abroad, I will follow thee, and make thee afraid of every leaf that wags; thou shalt look upon every bush as an armed man, and upon every man as a devil; if thou stayest at home, I will follow thee from room to room, and fill thee with horror and terror; if thou liest down to rest, I will follow thee with fearful dreams and tormenting apparitions; if thou goest into thy closet, I will follow thee, and make thy very closet a hell to hold thee.[98]

In his treatise, Heaven On Earth, Brooks personifies repentance amidst other figures of speech:

> As Noah's flood drowned his nearest and his dearest friends, so the flood of penitent tears drowns men's nearest and their dearest lusts. Be they Isaacs or Benjamins, be they right eyes or right hands, repentance that accompanies salvation puts all to the sword; it spares neither father nor mother, neither Agag nor Achan; it casts off all the rags of old Adam; it leaves not a horn nor a hoof behind; it throws down every stone of the old buildings; it scrapes off all leviathan's scales; it washeth away all leprous spots.[99]

## Apostrophe

Another form of figurative language is the apostrophe. Apostrophe is very closely related to personification.

> In apostrophe words are addressed in an exclamatory tone to a thing regarded as a person (personification), or to an actual person. Whether the person or thing is present or absent is not important. Most frequently apostrophe is found where the person using it is thinking out loud, as it were, and the object of his thoughts is not physically in his presence.[100]

Christ was using an apostrophe when he said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not have it."[101] Broadus, in his Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, notes that apostrophe ". . . belongs to the language of passion, and,

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[98]Brooks, Works, 2:246.

[99]Brooks, Works, 2:462.

[100]Mickelson, Interpreting the Bible, p. 188.

[101]Luke 13:34 (NASB).

. . . must not occur too frequently . . .'[102] Too much use of apostrophe would make a sermon to appear as an overly melodramatic 'soap-opera' monologue. In Brooks treatise, The Unsearchable Riches of Christ, he uses apostrophe:

> The nation is beholden to none so much as to believing souls. O England! England! thou hadst long before this been a prey to men that delight in blood, had it not been for the faith of the worm Jacob, etc. Christians! as you would have Christ, go on and do more and more for England; as you would be crowned with the choicest and the chiefest blessings, and as you would have vengeance executed upon all that hate, that wage war against and persecute Christ and the saints, be mighty in believing.[103]

Here Brooks personifies England and addresses it in exclamatory tones.

## Rhetorical Question

Another figure of speech which is more frequently used than apostrophe is the rhetorical question, which is also known as interrogation. A rhetorical question is a question which the speaker does not actually expect his audience to audibly answer. Often, the question implies and expects only one correct answer. The Apostle Paul frequently uses rhetorical questions in his writings, especially the book of Romans. In the eighth chapter of Romans, Paul says,

> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?[104]

This method of questioning helps the reader pay closer attention because men normally think more intently when they must respond to questions.

One may find rhetorical questions scattered throughout Brooks' sermons by a casual perusal of his works. Brooks uses two rhetorical questions in the following quote to help believers see that death is good because it brings us

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[102]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 265.

[103]Brooks, Works, 3:187-188.

[104]Rom. 8:31-34 (NASB).

to heavenly glory: "Oh, why then should Christians be afraid to die, or unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is but their coronation day? Who would be unwilling to ride to a crown through a dirty lane or a rainy day?"[105]

In the following quote Brooks uses rhetorical questions to inspire encouragement in his listeners:

> When Alexander was moved to run with some persons of inferior rank, he refused, saying, It was not fit for Alexander to run in a race with any but princes and nobles.
>
> Ah, Christians! are you not more nobly born? are you not better bred? have you not more royal hopes than to stoop to lust, or to do as the men of the world do?[106]

In another place Brooks says,

> This life is full of trials, full of troubles, and full of changes. Sin within, and Satan and the world without, will keep a Christian from rest, till he comes to rest in the bosom of Christ. The life of a Christian is a race; and what rest have they that are still a-running their race? The life of a Christian is the life of a pilgrim; and what rest hath a pilgrim, who is still a-travelling from place to place? A pilgrim is like Noah's dove, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot.[107]

In the above quoted passage, Brooks uses a series of rhetorical questions, along with comparisons, in showing that (in one sense) the Christian life is without rest. All the questions have simple, obvious answers. Nevertheless, teaching in the form of questions can, in moderation, be more interesting than simple statements of the same truth.

## Exclamation

Another figure of speech is exclamation. Exclamation is "An abrupt, forceful utterance; an outcry."[108] The Apostle Paul used exclamation when he

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[105]Brooks, Works, 1:459.

[106]Brooks, Works, 1:445.

[107]Brooks, Works, 1:414-415.

[108]American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. "exclamation".

cried out, 'Wretched man that I am!'[109] Exclamation should be used sparingly because it is an expression of emotional excitement which occurs seldom in every day experience. Brooks uses exclamation fairly frequently in his sermons. Perhaps such frequent use of exclamation was acceptable in his day, but today, in America, it would seem artificial.

Brooks uses exclamation very appropriately in the following excerpt, in which he pleads with, and warns sinners:

> Ah sinners! sinners! that day is hastening upon you, wherein you shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, pain without pleasure, and torments without end! . . .
> Ah sinners! sinners! what a dishonour it would be to God, to Christ, to angels, to saints, to heaven, if such wretches as you are should be admitted into that royal palace, that heavenly paradise, above.[110]

In another place Brooks uses a barrage of exclamations in speaking of Christ's spiritual and physical sufferings. He says,

> Fifthly, If there be a hell, then, Christians, spend your days in admiring and in being greatly affected with the transcendent love of Christ, in undergoing hellish punishments in our steads. . . . Christ's outward and inward miseries, sorrows, and sufferings are not to be paralleled, and therefore Christians have the more cause to lose themselves in the contemplation of his matchless love. Oh, bless Christ! oh, kiss Christ! oh, embrace Christ! oh, welcome Christ! oh, cleave to Christ! oh, follow Christ! oh, walk with Christ! oh, long for Christ! who for your sakes hath undergone insupportable wrath and most hellish torments, as I have evidenced at large before, and therefore a touch here may suffice.[111]

## Dramatism

Another type of figurative language is dramatism. Dramatism is considered, by Broadus, to be one of the most effective rhetorical devices. Broadus says,

> Dramatism gives to discourse a life and vigor and charm that can in scarcely any other way be equalled. To personate some character and

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[109]Rom. 7:24 (NASB).

[110]Brooks, Works, 1:440.

[111]Brooks, Works, 5:141.

> speak his sentiments, to introduce an objector stating his objections, and answer them point by point, to sustain a dialogue between two supposed persons, to reproduce some scene by dramatic description, are methods which all effective speakers more or less employ . . .[112]

Christ, in portraying false Christians and their responses at their judgment, was using dramatism. The passage is found in the thirteenth chapter of Luke. It says,

> And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" And He said to them, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; Depart from me all you evildoers.'"[113]

Here Jesus impersonates the guilty sinners and the glorified Judge carrying on a dialogue. This approach is more intriguing than plain statements about the judgment at the end time.

Brooks uses dramatism in his sermons. In the following quote Brooks impersonates the souls of the damned when they fully realize their end. He says,

> Oh! what trouble of mind, what horror of conscience, what distraction and vexation, what terror and torment, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, what dashing of knees, what gnashing of teeth, will there be among the wicked, when they shall see the saints in all their splendour, dignity, and glory! 'When they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and themselves shut out for ever,' Luke xiii.28. Now shall the wicked lamentingly say, Lo! these are the men that we counted fools, madmen, and miserable. Oh that we had never despised them! Oh that we had never reproached them! Oh that we had never trampled upon them! Oh that we had been one with them! Oh that we had imitated them! Oh that we had walked as they, and done as they, that so we might now have been as happy as they! Oh but this cannot be! Oh this may not be! Oh this shall never be! therefore Oh that we had never been born! Oh that we might be unborn! Oh that we might be turned into a bird, a beast, a toad, a stone! Oh that we were anything but what we are! or, Oh that we were nothing! Oh that now our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we might so die, that we may not eternally die! but it is now too late. Oh we see that there is

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[112]Broadus, Preparation and Delivery, p. 266.

[113]Luke 13:23-27 (NASB).

> a reward for the righteous! and we shall suddenly feel, that by all the contempt that we have cast upon these glorious shining saints, whose splendour and glory doth now darken the very glory of the sun, Dan. xii.3; we have but treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom. ii.4-7; we have but added fuel to those burning coals, to those everlasting flames, in which we must now lie forever, Ps. cxl.10.[114]

As can be seen, Brooks uses much exclamation in the previous quote. It must be remembered that oral style must be more repetitive. Such an occasion as eternal damnation would, seemingly, draw forth the most abundant amount of exclamations.

In Brooks' treatise, London's Lamentations on the Late Fiery Dispensation, he impersonates sinners carrying on a dialogue with Christ concerning their eternal destiny. Brooks preaches as follows:

> 'Depart from me,' is the first and worst of that dreadful sentence which Christ shall pass upon sinners at last. Every syllable sounds horror and terror, grief and sorrow, amazement and astonishment to all whom it doth concern.
>
> 'Ye cursed:' there is the malediction. But Lord, if we must depart, let us depart blessed. No, 'depart ye cursed:' you have cursed others, and now you shall be cursed yourselves; you shall be cursed in your bodies, and cursed in your souls; you shall be cursed of God, and cursed of Christ, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions. Yea, you shall now curse your very selves, your very souls, that ever you have despised the gospel, refused the offers of grace, scorned Christ, and neglected the means of your salvation. O sinners, sinners, all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls! Now thou cursest every man and thing that stands in the way of thy lusts, and that crosses thy designs; but at last all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon thee. Surely that man is cursed with a witness that is cursed by Christ himself!
>
> But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place! No, 'Depart ye into everlasting fire.' There is the vengeance and continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, that shall neither consume itself, nor consume you. Eternity of extremity is the hell of hell. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled, could never be quenched. If all the fires that ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as painted fire upon the wall to the fire of hell.[115]

In this long quote, Brooks effectively pictures the horrors of hell, as well

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[114]Brooks, Works, 1:437.

[115]Brooks, Works, 6:198.

as the desperate pleas of the damned by the dramatic dialogue. He also finishes with a fitting simile of earthly fire being a mere picture of fire, in comparison to the eternal fire of hell.

Brooks uses dramatism in the following quote, impersonating resurrected Christians viewing damned sinners, whose life stories are told in Scripture:

> In this great day, every wicked work, and every wicked worker, shall be brought to light; and indeed it would be but in vain to bring evil works to light; if the evil worker were not also brought to the light. In this great day the saints shall see and know Cain in his person, they shall be able to point at him, and say, Yonder stands that bloody Cain who slew his brother Abel, because he was more righteous than he. And there stands Pharoah, the great oppressor of God's Israel, and he that stood it out against heaven itself; and look, there stands bloody Saul, who lost his crown, his kingdom, his soul, his all, by disobedience; and there is Haman, who was feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next; lo, there stands Pilate, that condemned Christ, and there is Judas that betrayed Christ. In this great day that word shall be made good, every man shall appear to account for the works that he hath done in body, 2 Cor. v.10; so that both wicked works and wicked workers shall plainly appear before our Lord Jesus and all his saints, who with him shall judge the world.[116]

## Use of Sermon Illustrations

We have seen that figures of speech are valuable in making preaching interesting, understandable, memorable, and enjoyable. There is one last ingredient to be studied in this survey of Brooks' preaching style: the use of sermon illustrations. Illustrations are explanations in the form of stories, whether fiction or non-fiction, or in the form of interesting facts taken from history, nature, everyday life, the Bible and other places. Some illustrations might also be designated similes or metaphors, but often one thinks of illustrations as <u>extended</u> similes or comparisons. Jesus was using illustrations from nature when he preached,

> Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more that they? And which of you by being anxious can add

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[116]Brooks, <u>Works</u>, 1:431.

> a single cubit to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.[117]

Brooks uses illustrations from many areas. It would be well to see the various fields from which Brooks chooses his illustrations, that we might study his illustrations in an organized manner.

## Illustrations from the Bible

Brooks uses many stories from the Bible to illustrate his sermons. Sometimes he relates a long story about some Bible character in order to exemplify a character trait that he wants his audience to imitate. At other times Brooks will merely mention the name of some Bible character or event. Since most of the hearers were very familiar with the Scripture, even such a slight allusion conjured up a complete story in their mind, or at least brought to their minds particular outstanding characteristics and traits of the person or event mentioned. The fact that Brooks, as well as other Puritan preachers, frequently refer to Biblical stories, without giving a thorough account of the story, shows that their audiences were much more familiar with their Bibles than the average American Christian of today.

In the following illustration, Brooks refers to an Old Testament story, as well as to Roman Catholic customs, to warn his congregation to not be tricked out of the ancient, orthodox faith, which, he reminds them, is in the way of holiness:

> Holiness is God's firstborn; it is as ancient as the ancient of days. The way of holiness is gray-headed, and of ancientest institution; all other ways are but of yesterday; they are but new ways to the way of holiness. And oh that this might alarm you to look after holiness! The Gibeonites cheated Joshua with their old clouted shoes, and with their old sacks, and old boots, and old garments, Josh. ix.4,5; and so doth Rome this day cheat and delude multitudes of poor, blind,

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[117]Matt. 6:26-29 (NASB).

> ignorant souls, with their old customs, and with their old ceremonies, and old traditions, and old inventions, under a pretence of the good old way, and the good old religion; but certainly the way of holiness, the way of purity, is of the greatest antiquity, and therefore, oh embrace it! oh, walk in it![118]

Perhaps modern day preachers would find it more profitable to go ahead and tell the story of Joshua and the Gibeonites, so that the people would be sure to understand the force of the illustration. Nevertheless, Biblical illustrations should not be avoided because of their obscurity to many church members. The illustrations, especially from the Old Testament, will not only clarify truth and add interest to the sermon, but the illustrations themselves will help familiarize the people with the rest of their Bible. Then, as the people become more and more familiar with their Bible, the preacher can begin making brief allusions to Bible stories. This would help the people to think, to recall the various Bible stories. It might even make them want to look up the stories and study them again.

Brooks uses another Old Testament illustration to describe the complete forgiveness believers receive for any and every sin:

> The greatest sins are finite, but the merit of Christ's redemption is infinite. All the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. There remained not so much as one of them; there was not one of them alive to carry the news; the high and the low, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the honourable and the base were all drowned, Exod. xiv.28; Ps. cvi.11. The red sea of Christ's blood drowns all our sins, whether they are great or small, high or low, etc., 'Though my sins be as scarlet, my Redeemer will make them as white as snow; though they be as red as crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isa. i.18.[119]

In another treatise, Brooks uses a mixture of Old Testament and New Testament illustrations to show that God can and often does protect his saints from peril:

> The enemies of Zion are weak enemies, they are infatuated enemies, they are conquered enemies, they are limited enemies, they are chained

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[118]Brooks, Works, 4:170.

[119]Brooks, Works, 5:399.

> enemies, they are cursed enemies, and they are naked enemies, and therefore they shall never be prevalent enemies over Zion, 2 Chron. xxxii.7,8; Rom. viii.37; Gen. iii.12; Num. xiv.9. Pharoah followed the Israelites, but he and his mighty men were drowned, and Israel delivered, for God was with them, Exod. xiv. Saul hunted David as a partridge in the mountains, 1 Sam. xxvi.20, but Saul perisheth, and David was crowned, for God was with him. Haman hated Mordecai and plotted against Mordecai, but Haman is hanged and Mordecai advanced, for God was with him, Esth. vi. 7. The presidents and princes inform against Daniel and plot against Daniel, but they are by the lions torn and devoured, and Daniel is delivered and exalted, for God was with him, Dan. vi. Herod kills James with the sword and imprisons Peter, but Herod is devoured by worms, and Peter is delivered out of prison by an angel, for God was with him, Acts xii. Let atheists, papists, and persecutors cease from plotting against Zion, from persecuting of Zion, for it is utterly impossible to prevail against Zion.[120]

The Biblical illustrations quoted above do not only serve to show examples of God's protection, but also serve to prove the fact that God can and often does protect his saints.

In the following quote, Brooks again uses both Old Testament and New Testament illustrations, but primarily in the form of allusions:

> In this world we are all Benonis, the sons of sorrow. The way to heaven is by Weeping-cross. Christ's passion-week was before his ascension-day; none passeth to paradise but by burning seraphims; we cannot go out of Egypt but through the Red Sea; the children of Israel came to Jerusalem through the valley of tears, and crossed the swift river of Jordan before they came to the sweet waters of Siloam. There is no passing into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel, death; there is no coming to that glorious city above but through this strait, dark, dirty lane.[121]

Benoni, meaning 'son of my sorrow', was that name that Rachel gave to Jacob's son as she was dying in giving birth to him. Jacob, however, called him Benjamin, meaning 'son of my right hand' or 'son of my strength'. Such an allusion would be missed by most listeners in America's churches today. The reference to the 'flaming sword' is an allusion to the angel with a flaming sword that God placed to guard the way into the Garden of Eden after man had been thrown out. Brooks' audience was much more familiar with the whole

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[120]Brooks, Works, 5:495.

[121]Brooks, Works, 6:403.

Bible than modern Christians, as is apparent from these kinds of allusions.

Though most of Brooks' Biblical illustrations come from the Old Testament, yet he also quoted freely from the New Testament. The following quote is an illustration taken from the life of Christ:

> Again, a man bewitched with the world will prefer the most base and contemptible things before the Lord Jesus Christ; he will, with the Gergasenes, prefer his very swine before a Saviour, Mat. viii.28, seq.; when they saw what a sad market their hogs were brought to, they desired Christ to depart out of their country; these Gergesites had rather lose Christ than lose their porkers; they had rather that the devil should possess their souls than that he should drown their pigs; they prefer their swine before their salvation, and present a wretched petition for their own damnation; they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts; though there be no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell to Christ's departure from a people, yet men bewitched with the world will desire this. Men bewitched with the world will prefer a Barabbas before a Jesus; they will with Judas betray Christ, and with Pilate condemn Christ, and with the Scribes and Pharisees they will cry out, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' away with this Jesus, away with this Jesus; let Barabbas live, but let Jesus die; let Barabbas be saved, but let Christ be hanged. Ah, what incarnate devils will such men prove, who are bewitched with this world.[122]

The preceding quotes have shown that Brooks used Biblical illustrations, from both the Old and New Testaments. Anyone who would read through any treatise of Brooks, would notice that Brooks knew his Bible. He quotes the Old Testament as easily as the New Testament. He frequently quotes from obscure minor prophets, just as easily as many would quote John 3:16 today. If modern preachers had as good a grasp upon the Scriptures as Brooks, they would not find it difficult to find illustrations on various topics, because their familiarity with the large volume of colorful Bible stories would bring to their mind appropriate illustrations.

## Illustrations from History

Besides Biblical illustrations, Brooks used many illustrations from history. His university training becomes apparent from his wide knowledge

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[122]Brooks, Works, 4:200.

of history. Brooks used many things which he studied as illustrations. Some who would read Brooks' sermons today might think him to be arrogant and desirous of giving a showy display of his knowledge. On close observation, however, it appears that he, rather, was trying to use anything and everything for the purpose of making sermons enjoyable, understandable, and memorable. Usually, a person who seeks to impress his listeners with his knowledge often uses words his audience cannot understand and makes allusions to events or stories with which his listeners are not familiar. Such a person desires his hearers to be over-awed with himself because he demonstrates that he knows many more things than his listeners. Brooks was not this kind of man. He always strives to be plain and clear. If he ever refers to some Greek myth, Roman Catholic fable, or bit of classical history, he is careful to explain such unfamiliar stories or events to his audience, so that they will grasp the import of the illustration for the particular point he is making at the time. Yet Brooks usually does not go into great detail on such occasions; he explains only enough to allow the illustration to be understood. By doing this he does not draw excessive attention to the illustration, but keeps the hearers' interest upon the point he is making.

In the following quotation, Brooks uses some of his native history to illustrate the point, that hypocrites always come to a bad end:

> The lowest, the hottest, and the darkest habitation in hell will be his portion whose religion lies all in shows and shadows. Well, spiritual counterfeits, remember this, it will not be long before Christ will unmask you, before he will uncase you, before he will disrobe you, before he will take off your vizards, your hoods, and turn your rotten insides outward, to your eternal shame and reproach before all the world. Counterfeit diamonds may sparkle and glister, and make a great show for a time, but their lustre will soon wear off. . . . Maud, mother to King Henry the Second, being besieged in Winchester Castle, [anno 1141,] counterfeited herself to be dead, and so was carried out in a coffin, whereby she escaped; at another time, being besieged at Oxford in a cold winter, by wearing white apparel she got away in the snow undiscovered; but at last vengeance did overtake her. So, though hypocrites for a time may seem to be dead to sin, and dead to the world, though they may clothe themselves with a snow-like purity, and with the white satin of seeming sanctity,

> yet God at last will unmask and unmuffle them, and vengeance will with a witness overtake them, Job xvii.8, and xxxvi.13; Isa. xxxiii.14.[123]

In another place, Brooks refers to a king he met with in his reading of classical history. In this passage, Brooks explains that sinful pleasure is but a momentary delight followed by sorrow and torment:

> I have read of King Lysimachus, that when he and his array were besieged in one of his cities, and in great danger of perishing by thirst, for a cup of cold water he delivered up the keys of the city to his enemy, which cold comfort he had no sooner tasted but his tongue bewrayed the grief of his heart, saying, 'Oh that, in lieu of so momentary a pleasure, I should be made of a sovereign a servant, of a king a captive!' Ah, what folly and madness is it for men to run the hazard of losing the kingdom of heaven, and the pleasures that be at God's right hand, Ps. xvi.11, for those short-lived pleasures that are but like a blaze, or like the lightning, or like a morning cloud, or the early dew which soon passeth away![124]

In another place, Brooks quotes from the Roman historian, Tacitus. Brooks says,

> I have heard of a senator who, relating to his son the great honours that were assigned to some soldiers whose names were written in a certain book, whereupon the son was very importunate to see that book. His father shews him the outside, and it semed so glorious that he earnestly desired him to open it. No, saith the father, by no means, for it is sealed by the council. Then saith the son, pray tell me if my name be written there: his father replies no; because all the names of those soldiers were kept secret in the breasts of the senators. The son, studying how he might get some satisfaction; desired his father to acquaint him with the merits of those soldiers whose names were written in that book. The father relates to him their noble achievements, and worthy acts of valour, wherewith they had eternized their names. Such are written, said he, and none but such must be written in this book. Whereupon the son, consulting with his own heart that he had no such trophies to shew, but had spent his time in courting of ladies, rather than in encountering of knights, and that he was better for a dance than for a march, and that he knew no drum but the tabret, nor no courage but to be drunk and rant; hereupon he presently retired himself, repented, entered into a combat with his own lusts and affections, and subdued them, and became temperate, continent, valiant, and virtuous. Now, when the soldiers came to receive their wreaths, their crowns, their honors, etc., he steps in and challenges a wreath, a crown for himself. But being asked upon what title his challenge was grounded, he answered, If honours be given to conquerors, then they must be given to me too, for I have gotten the noblest conquest of all. And it being demanded wherein, he answered, These have subdued strange foes, and conquered their outward enemies, but I have subdued myself, I have conquered the enemies that were in my own bosom. O sirs,

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[123]Brooks, Works, 4:91-92.

[124]Brooks, Works, 4:254-255.

> there are no men's names written in the book of life but theirs who by grace and holiness have subdued and brought under their sinful selves, and who have conquered the corruptions that be in their own bosoms, that is, in respect of love and dominion. Many there be who are exceeding inquisitive to know whether their names are written in heaven or no. I would say to such, there is no such way to know this as by your holiness. Hast thou broke off thy sins by sound repentance? Hath the gospel changed thy inside and thy outside? Hath it made thee a new creature, and turned thee from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ? etc. Then, without all peradventure, thy name is written in heaven, and thou art the person that hast the greatest cause in the world to joy and rejoice.[125]

Brooks relates the above quoted story in great detail because the illustration is almost a sermon in itself. The senator's son exemplifies a Christian's life before, during, and after conversion. Another excellent quality of the story is that it properly exalts conquest of self over conquest of outward enemies. Brooks also draws a good parallel between the young man expecting his name in the book because of his self-discipline, and a Christian who can expect his name to be in the book of life because of Biblical holiness.

In another treatise, Brooks quotes from ancient church history. He refers to Macedonius, a patriarch of Constantinople in the fourth century. Brooks uses the story to show that Christians should pursue spiritual things more than material things. Brooks says,

> Macedonius the hermit, retiring into the wilderness that he might with more freedom enjoy God and have his conversation in heaven, upon a time there came a young gentleman into the wilderness to hunt wild beasts, and seeing the hermit, he rode to him, asking him why he came into that solitary place? he desired he might have leave to ask him the same question, why he came thither? I came hither to hunt, said the young gallant: and so do I saith the hermit, Deum venor meum, I hunt after my God;--they hunt best who hunt most after communion with God.[126]

## Illustrations from Nature and Science

Besides Biblical and hstorical illustrations, Brooks used material from nature and science to illustrate his sermons. Some of his scientific

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[125]Brooks, Works, 4:414-415.

[126]Brooks, Works, 6:54.

viewpoints would make modern people laugh or shudder, depending on how they react to medical ignorance and naturalistic fables. The seventeenth century was a period in which doctors still 'bled' their patients in order to get out the 'bad humours'. Also, some of the naturalists of that day came up with some grossly mistaken 'facts' about animals, stones, plants, etc., which people accepted as fact--slavishly accepting the views of the specialists (much the same as many people do today). Brooks sought to put everything he knew to good use. Things he read and heard in school, he wrote down, later using them as illustrations. This is apparent because by reading through all his works, one will find that some illustrations are used again and again. Sometimes these are long illustrations, but they are usually word-for-word perfect when compared. This should not seem unusual though. The Reformers and the Puritans often kept notebooks known as 'commonplace books' in which they recorded anything of value for preaching, writing, or debates. The commonplace books were often arranged in either alphabetical order or some topical order. In these commonplace books would go stories, quotes, observations, etc., which could be used for illustrations. Also, Bible verses, philosophical arguments, and observations upon Bible passages in the original language would be collected to prove doctrines. The commonplace book was a combination 'systematic theology' and 'book of illustrations'. Brooks must have kept one of these commonplace books; and that is where he stored these 'facts' he gathered from the fields of nature and science.

In Brooks' treatise, A Heavenly Cordial, he refers to several means of death which occur in nature, as well as referring to the development of a flower:

> Death is but an entrance into life. That is not death but life, which joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not life but death, which separates the living man from Christ. Death will blow the bud of grace into the flower of glory. Death is a saint's quietus est. All fearful disasters, saith Gregory, which rob the saints of life, do but serve as

> a rough wind to blow them suddenly into their desired haven--I mean heaven. It matters not, saith Austin, whether a burning fever or flash of lightning, or whether a stone in the bladder, or a thunder-stone in thy head, sends thee out of this miserable world; for God minds not, saith he, the immediate occasion of thy coming to him, but the condition and posture that thy soul is in when it cometh before him.[127]

In one of Brooks' most well-known treatises, Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices, he uses illustrations that would be classified as belonging to nature or science. He says,

> Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses his people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine; it is a portion to carry away ill humours, better than all the benedictum medicamentum, as physicians call them. Aloes kill worms; colds and frosts do destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts.[128]

In the above quote, Brooks refers to: the metallurgical process of purifying metal, a medical process that was supposed to be curative, and natural methods by which undesirable life forms are destroyed. He is able to use all of these to illustrate how God helps rid us of our corruptions.

To show how dangerous sin is, Brooks uses the illustrations of poison and disease:

> Fourteenthly, Satan can be content that men should yield to God in many things, provided that they will be true to him in some one thing; for he knows very well, that one dram of poison may poison a man, and one stab at the heart may kill a man; so one sin unrepented of, one sin allowed, retained, cherished, and practised, will certainly damn a man. But,
>
> Fifteenthly, Though all the parts of a man's body be sound, save only one, that one diseased and ulcerous part may be deadly to thee; for all the sound members cannot preserve thy life, but that one diseased and ulcerous member will hasten thy death; so one sin allowed, indulged, and lived in, will prove killing and damning to thee.[129]

In the same treatise, Brooks again uses poison for an illustration, but in a different way. Brooks ability to use an object, event, or story to

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[127]Brooks, Works, 6:431.

[128]Brooks, Works, 1:48.

[129]Brooks, Works, 5:38.

illustrate many different ideas, shows that ability to illustrate is not necessarily a matter of having a large number of stories and interesting facts. Preachers need to take time to think and muse over such stories and facts, that they might see how to apply them to different situations. Here is the second illustration using poison, but in a different way:

> There is as much difference between sin in a regenerate person and in an unregenerate person, as there is between poison in a man and poison in a serpent. Poison in a man's body is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all arts and antidotes to expel it and get rid; but poison in a serpent, is in its natural place, and is most pleasing and delightful: so sin in a regenerate man is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all holy means and antidotes to expel it and to get rid of it. But sin in an unregenerate man is most pleasing and delightful, it being in its natural place. A godly man still enters his protest against sin. A gracious soul, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits.[130]

Brooks would even take the simplest observations, and use them to help clarify truth. There was nothing so small or insignificant that Brooks did not consider it of value in making truth clearer or more delightful. In the following quotation, Brooks justifies God's sovereign decrees and judgments with an observation upon a stick in water:

> If you take a straight stick and put it into water, it will seem crooked. Why? Because we look upon it through two mediums, air and water. There lies the <u>deceptio visus</u>; thence it is that we cannot discern aright. Thus all the proceedings of God in his righteous judgments, which in themselves are just, righteous, and straight, without the least obliquity, seem to us strange and crooked. That the wicked should prosper, and the righteous be afflicted; that good men should be in bonds, when bad men walk at large; that the Israelites should make the bricks, and the Egyptians dwell in the houses; that some of the best of Christians should fall by the pestilence, when many of the worst of sinners have their lives for a prey--these are some of those mysterious providences that many times make some of the best Christians to stagger in their judgments; and why so, but because they look upon God's proceedings through a double medium, of flesh and spirit; and hence it comes to pass that all things seem to run cross, and that God's most just and righteous proceedings are not so clearly and fully discerned as otherwise they might be.[131]

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[130]Brooks, <u>Works</u>, 5:23.

[131]Brooks, <u>Works</u>, 6:428.

## Illustrations from Practical Everyday Life

Brooks also took illustrations from a field that might best be called 'practical everyday life'. What he heard, saw, and experienced in the England of his day, he brought to use in sermon illustrations. In Brooks' treatise on holiness, he uses the scholarly and well-to-do professions as illustrations:

> Again, the holy Christian is the best Christian in the world, nay, he is such a one 'of whom this world is not worthy,' and therefore God cannot but take singular pleasure and delight in him. Many there are which are accounted deep scholars, great linguists, profound philosophers, good grammarians, excellent mathemeticians, sharp logicians, cunning politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, etc., but the truth is, he is the best grammarian that hath learned to speak the truth from his heart, and he is the best astronomer that hath his conversation in heaven, and he is the best musician that hath learnt practically to sing out the praises of God, and he is the best arithmetician that knows how to number his days, and he is the best read in ethics that every day grows holier and holier, and he is the best skilled in economics that trains up his family in the fear of the Lord, and he is the best politician that is as good at taking good counsel as he is at giving good counsel, and he is the best linguist that speaks the language of Canaan; and therefore God cannot but take the greatest content and satisfaction in such.[132]

Brooks also used illustrations taken from the more common professions of his day:

> Present life is not vita, sed via ad vitam, life, but the way to life; for when we cease to be men, we begin to be as angels. They are only creatures of inferior nature that are pleased with the present. Man is a future creature. The eye of his soul looks back. The labourer hastens from his work to his bed, the mariner rows hard to gain the port, the traveller is glad when he is near his inn; so should saints when they are near death, because then they are near heaven, they are near their inn.[133]

And in another place Brooks says,

> Never did the espoused maid long more for the marriage-day, nor the apprentice for his freedom, nor the captive for his ransom, nor the condemned man for his pardon, nor the traveller for his inn, nor the mariner for his haven, nor the sick man for his health, nor the wounded man for his cure, nor the hungry man for his bread, nor the naked for clothes, than she did long to die, and to be with Christ, which for her was best of all, Phil. i.23.[134]

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[132]Brooks, Works, 4:415.

[133]Brooks, Works, 6:402.

[134]Brooks, Works, 6:449.

These kinds of illustrations would be very effective, because the people would almost feel the preacher was talking about them. They would take special interest in these references to situations and feelings with which they were very familiar.

Brooks would sometimes share his ministerial experiences as illustrations:

> Fourthly, If repentance be such an easy work as you suppose, I beseech you tell me, why do many men lie under such horrors and terrors of conscience as they do, for not repenting, whenas repentance would quickly give them ease, and turn their hell into a heaven? I was last winter with a young man, who upon his dying bed for several hours together, being in a dreadful agony, lay crying out, I am damned, I am damned, I am damned, I am damned! Ah, how soon would this poor wretch have got out of this hell, if it had been so easy a thing to have repented, as you imagine it is! and how many, when they have been pressed to repent, have professed, that if they might have a thousand worlds to repent, they could not repent! And will you say that repentance is easy? How many have sought repentance with tears, and would have bought repentance with the price of their dearest blood, but could not obtain it! And will you say that repentance is easy?[135]

Brooks lived during the civil war in England, and it seems obvious (as has been mentioned already) that he saw the war first-hand, probably serving as a chaplain on a warship, as well as in the army. The people he preached to were familiar with the war, many being wounded, others having family members who lost their lives in the war. Brooks uses illustrations that come from knowledge of war:

> O sirs, when the temptation does but touch and take, when you are no sooner tempted but you are conquered, no sooner assaulted but you are vanquished, certainly holiness is at a very low ebb in your souls. That garrison, without all peradventure, is very weak, that is taken at the first assault, and that ship is but meanly manned, that is carried at first boarding, and that soldier is but slightly armed, that is run through at the first thrust; and so that Christian has but little spiritual strength in him, who is worsted and vanquished upon the first appearance of a temptation.[136]

In another place, Brooks again uses war knowledge to illustrate the sin of

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[135]Brooks, Works, 4:194-195.

[136]Brooks, Works, 4:336.

apostasy:

> As a soldier when he forsakes his colours and runs to the enemy, all his former good service is lost and buried in oblivion; so men that profess love to God and his people, and at last meet with difficulties and play the apostate, this their apostasy renders all their former service lost.[137]

Another common sight in the England of Brooks' day was the public execution. Large crowds would come to see men led down the streets, brought up onto a high platform with gallows, then either hanged or beheaded with an axe. In the following ilustration Brooks tries to get his audience to view the end of a sinner's life, instead of viewing the sinner's present enjoyments. He further shows that they should not envy a sinner any more than they would a condemned prisoner:

> All the contentments of this life are not so much to eternity as a dream is to a thousand years. And, oh, how little is that man's condition to be envied, who for these short pleasures of sin must endure an eternity of torments! O sirs! do wicked men purchase, their present pleasures at so dear a rate as eternal torments? and do we envy their enjoyment of them so short a time? Would any envy a man going to execution, because he saw him in prison nobly feasted and nobly attended and bravely courted? or because he saw him go up the ladder with a gold chain about his neck and a scarlet gown upon his back? or because he saw him walk to execution through pleasant fields or delightsome gardens? or because there went before him drums beating, colours flying, and trumpets sounding, etc.? Surely no. Oh, no more should we envy the grandeur of the men of the day, for every step they take is but a step to an eternal execution! The sinner is cursed, and all his blessings are cursed; and who in their wits would envy a man under a curse? Oh, how much more worthy of our pity than envy is that man's condition who hath all his happiness confined to the narrow compass of this life, but his misery extended to the uttermost bounds of an everlasting duration! Mal. ii.2.[138]

## Illustrations from Fiction and Legend

Brooks also uses ancient fables as well as stories whose historical factuality is questionable. He quotes some old stories of Rabbinical discussions which seem closer to legend than fact. Perhaps this area of

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[137]Brooks, Works, 6:354.

[138]Brooks, Works, 5:140-141.

illustrations could be termed fictional and legendary illustrations.

Here is a quote from some Rabbinical tale that serves as a good illustration of the importance of not delaying repentance:

> A Jewish Rabbin, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, exhorted them to be sure to repent the day before they died; to which one of them replied, that the day of a man's death was very uncertain; to which the Rabbin made answer, Repent, therefore, every day, and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die. O sirs, except you do repent today, you cannot tell that you shall repent the day before you die; for who knows today but that he may die tomorrow?[139]

In the same volume, Brooks uses an Arabic fable to illustrate the truth that men are destined to those places for which their natures are fitted. In other words, men who have become holy by the spirit are fit for heaven, but worldlings are only fit for hell. He says,

> Men void of holiness are in the Scripture resembled to chaff, to dust, to dirt, to briars and thorns, which are things that are good for nothing, that are fit for nothing. And what should such men do in heaven, who are good for nothing on earth? The horse is good to carry, the ox is good to draw, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, the ass is good to bear, and the dog is good to keep the house; but what is a man void of holiness good for? An unholy person is good for nothing but to be destroyed, and to make some room for a better person to stand up in that place which he takes up in the world. As the hog in the Arabic fable tells us that a butcher, carrying three creatures upon his horse, a sheep, a goat, and a hog, the two former lay very quiet and still, but the hog kicked, and cried, and would never be quiet. Thereupon the butcher said, Why are thou so impatient when the other two are so quiet? The hog answered, Every one knows himself; the sheep knows that he is brought into the city for his wool's sake, and the goat knows that he is brought into the city for his milk's sake, and so they need not fear nor care; but, alas, I know very well that I have neither wool nor milk, but that as soon as I am come into the city I must be killed, for that is all I am good for. An unholy soul is like a hog, good for nothing but to be killed, Mat. vii.6.[140]

Brooks quotes a fable about a dove and a hawk in his treatise, The Necessity, Excellency, Rarity and Beauty of Holiness. He uses this fable as an illustration of how saints have their proper place of protection:

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[139]Brooks, Works, 4:196.

[140]Brooks, Works, 4:80.

> There is an apologue how the dove made moan to her fellow-birds of the tyranny of the hawk; one counsels her to keep below; but saith another, the hawk can stoop for his prey; another advised her to soar aloft; but saith another, the hawk can mount as high as she; another wished her to shroud herself in the woods, for there she could be secure; but saith another, alas! there is the hawk's manor, the place where he keeps court; another bids her keep the town; but saith another, that is to become a prey to man; but at last one bids her rest herself in the holes of the rock, and there she should certainly be safe, for violence itself could not surprise her there, and there she was safe. Dove-like saints, they have their munitions of rocks to fly to, and there they shall be safe. O sirs! there is no breast plate to that of righteousness, there is no armour of proof, no munitions of rocks, to that of holiness. Noah's holiness was an ark to save him, when Nimrod's Tower of Babel, which was raised five thousand one hundred forty-six paces high, could not secure him. And therefore as you tender your own safety and security in times of trouble and calamity, oh, labour to be holy.[141]

Brooks uses some comparisons, along with a fable, in order to argue along the same lines as the previous quote:

> The patient that is truly sensible of his disease will not say, hereafter will be time enough to send for the physician; nor the wounded man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to fetch the surgeon; nor the condemned man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to sue for pardon; nor the needy man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to look for relief; nor the fallen man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to lift me up; nor the drowning man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to bring a boat to save my life. Now this is the very case of all unsanctified persons in the world; and why then should they cry out, hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to be holy? The boar in the fable, being questioned why he stood whetting his teeth so when nobody was near to hurt him, wisely answered, that it would then be too late to whet them when he was to use them, and therefore he whetted them so before danger that he might have them ready in danger. Ah, sirs, there is nothing more dangerous than for you to have your holiness to seek, when temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers are at your heels.[142]

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[141]Brooks, Works, 4:178.

[142]Brooks, Works, 4:247.

## IV. CONCLUSION

It should be evident that Thomas Brooks was well acquainted with Scripture. Brooks was an able interpreter of Scripture as well. Knowing Scripture and being able to interpret Scripture are foundational requirements for godly ministers. But the ingredient that sets Brooks apart as an exceptional preacher is that he was able to preach truth in such a manner that his message was enjoyable, understandable, and memorable. Brooks was not satisfied to merely preach a body of doctrine. He chose his words with care and clothed his teaching in striking terms and colorful illustrations. He made truth desirable, not boring. He built godly doctrine in the setting most appropriate: amidst interesting language and effective examples. He preached according to the proverb: " . . . sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness."[143]

Modern day preachers should see in Brooks a style worthy of imitation. Preachers should not be content to only find the proper interpretation of Scripture. To preach bare doctrine without an interesting and effective style, is to short-circuit the sermon. Ministers should strive to take the step beyond discerning the truth to be proclaimed; to make the step of deciding how to say what needs to be said. Truth should not be allowed to become tedious and boring because of a poor preaching style. Let all teachers and preachers seek to glorify God's truth by cultivating a winsome manner of presenting truth; and may this brief exposure to Brooks be helpful to that end.

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[143]Prov. 16:21 (NASB).

# APPENDICES

## PREFACE TO APPENDICES

Brooks used a multitude of sources from which to take illustrations, quotes, and references. In an attempt to catalog and enumerate the various types of illustrations and the source of quotes and references one small treatise was selected for treatment. Brooks' treatise, A String of Pearls, is the treatise which was analyzed in order to get an idea of how many illustrations, quotes, and references are made, as well as to catalog such information according to topic or author, as well as giving the page numbers upon which the various illustrations, quotes, and references are found. A String of Pearls is found in the first volume of Brooks' Works. The treatise is sixty-six and one-half pages long. Each appendix has a note of explanation.

Appendix A: Illustrations from the Bible which are quoted in "A String of Pearls"

This appendix is a list of all the Biblical illustrations in A String of Pearls. The name of the person, thing, or event, used as an illustration, is followed by the page number or numbers upon which it is found. By this arrangement, one can get an idea of the amount and frequency of Biblical illustrations Brooks uses. These Biblical references were chosen because they qualified as illustrations. Many other Biblical references were not chosen because they were functioning as proofs of Brooks' argument supporting various doctrines, instead of serving as illustrative examples.

Abel--pp. 431, 447
Abraham--pp. 413, 417, 426, 428, 431, 436, 444, 452, 465
Absalom--p. 433
Achish--p. 447
Adam and Eve--pp. 404, 428
Adam's body--p. 435
Ahab--p. 414
Angels--pp. 433, 439, 449
Apple which Adam ate--p. 455
Ark--p. 460
Asa--p. 465
Beast from the Bottomless Pit--p. 460
Belshazzar--p. 436
Benjamin--p. 426
Body of Christ--p. 432
Bread (don't throw to dogs)--p. 417
Bread which was cast upon the waters--p. 456
Cain--pp. 431, 447, 449
Canaan--p. 440
Chariot--p. 462
Children of Israel--pp. 432, 444
Christ's Ring--p. 413
Christ's Robe--p. 413
Curtains of the tabernacle--p. 427
Daniel--p. 406
David--pp. 402, 425, 426, 433, 436, 444, 447, 452, 459, 465
Delilah--p. 414
Devil-p. 442
Dives--pp. 442, 443, 444
Elijah (Elias)--p. 428
Elisha--p. 433
Ezekiel--pp. 406, 419, 465

Appendix B: Illustrations from Practical Everyday Life, along with Illustrations from Nature and Science which are Quoted in 'A String of Pearls'

This appendix is set up in the same format as Appendix A. Again, care was taken to differentiate between those things which are true illustrations, and those things which perform another function in the discourse.

A Captive--p. 423
A Court--p. 424
A Day--p. 439
A Martyr at the Stake--p. 438
A Painter--p. 401
A Post--p. 433
A Short Nap--p. 453
A Torrent--p. 433
A Weight--p. 439
Actor--p. 405
Alabaster Hand--p. 428
An Heir--p. 442, 446, 447, 449
Ancient Empires--p. 411
Apprentice--p. 423
Arithmetician--p. 425
Autumn--p. 425
Backs--pp. 430, 439
Bank--p. 447
Bears--p. 427
Beast--p. 437
Beautiful Face--p. 449
Bee-hive--p. 418
Beggar--p. 441
Birds--pp. 427, 433, 437
Bitterness--p. 425
Blaze--p. 426
Blush--p. 438
Body--p. 430
Brass Ring--p. 428
Burning Stables and Outhouses--p. 448
Chaff--p. 441
Child in his Cradle--p. 447
Child--p. 450
Chimney--p. 432
Cistern--p. 447
City--p. 447
Cloud--pp. 410, 419, 420, 422
Contests--p. 427
Corn--p. 460
Cradle--p. 425
Crop--p. 456
Crown--pp. 412, 417, 421, 429, 430, 436, 446, 448, 449, 453, 458, 462, 465
Curtain--p. 419
Dancing--p. 425

## Appendix C: Illustrations from Uninspired Literature which are Quoted in 'A String of Pearls'

Brooks used illustrations from Roman history, the writings of the Church Fathers, Mythology, and from the lives and statements of martyrs, Reformers, and other Puritans. Not being well-versed in classical literature, it was hard to determine which persons were authors, and which persons were characters in the authors' works. Therefore, all names were listed just as Brooks referred to them. For instance, Brooks will sometimes quote or refer to Plutarch. The fact is that Themistocles was a character in the writings of Plutarch. If Brooks mentions Themistocles' name in the illustration, then the page reference is listed under 'Themistocles'. If Brooks mentions Plutarch's name in the illustration, then the page reference is listed under 'Plutarch'.

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