

## B. A Topical Message

1. By definition a topical message is a message on a particular subject or topic. Under the heading of "topic" will come issues of the day, stress on some doctrine, biographical accounts, etc. The thing that makes this a different message form is that it concentrates on the subject more than the text. It will have text behind it, of course, but the emphasis is on the subject and many, many texts may be included in the total treatment. Many homileticians frown on the topical approach (fearing it does not give enough credit to the text) but if used well these messages may deal with a problem or a teaching to an extent that the other forms of messages cannot go. Well, we will not argue about that. There are some guidelines necessary when thinking of a topical message and in a very brief form they are these:

- a. Don't use them as a means of "getting at" someone. A biblical talk must be pointed, of course, but it is not maliciously pointed for that is an abuse of speaking privilege....the hearer cannot strike back.
- b. Be sure they are related to a total biblical picture
- c. Be sure they are relevant to your audience. It is possible to take some topic and speak at great detail about it and suddenly discover no one in your hearing has the faintest idea of what is important about it or why they should know anything about it.

### 2. General Procedure:

- a. Select a topic:

This will largely be something from your observation in life or your reading in the Scripture in which some special item will come to your attention. A special interest on the part of the speaker is not bad if the above guidelines are kept in mind. A biblical doctrine is always appropriate, I think, and any subject that is given great stress in the Scripture (prayer, for instance) is very suitable. Special holidays on our calendars also give rise to useful topics. But if one uses topics for speaking, one must be careful not to ride a "hobby horse"...always speaking on the same topic and eventually becoming more annoying than edifying. The topic will need a foundation in Scripture, of course, and a central Scripture from which to work. You may select the topic and look for appropriate Scripture---this has the hazard that in not finding a Scripture to your liking you might "stretch" one to make it fit---or the topic may arise in a reading from the Bible and your biblical text will be set before you.

- . Prepare an introduction that will announce the topic.

Explain why you have chosen it, and at least hint at how you will treat it. Make sure the