

HEART TO HEART

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*Octavius Winslow's
Experimental Preaching*

Tanner G. Turley



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Heart to Heart

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TO MARSHA

*My wife
My love
My best friend—
“You surpass them all.”*

and

To the glory of

MY TRIUNE GOD

*My salvation
My joy
My life—
“From You, through You,
and to You are all things.”*

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INTRODUCTION

With the opening words of his 1907 Lyman Beecher Lecture at Yale University, P. T. Forsyth prophetically warned, “It is, perhaps, an overbold beginning, but I will venture to say that with its preaching Christianity stands or falls.”¹ Nearly a century later John Stott boldly stated, “Preaching is indispensable to Christianity.”² If Forsyth and Stott are correct, the health of the church and her mission of taking the gospel to the nations are proportionately related to the health of preaching. Regrettably, many churches today are languishing from anemic homiletical convictions and practice. Walt Kaiser expressed this concern when he wrote, “One of the most depressing spectacles in the church today is her lack of power. . . . At the heart of this problem is an impotent pulpit.”³ If the church is to recover her missiological muscle, she should humbly learn from the faithful heralds of church history. One such pastor and preacher is Octavius Winslow (1808–1878).

Winslow served the church for nearly forty-five years as a pastor, preacher, and prolific author. He shepherded two congregations in New York City for the first five years of his ministry and spent the next forty in the English towns of Leamington Spa, Brighton, and Bath. Though he served Baptist churches most of his life, he finished his ministerial career in the Church of England. He exercised a prolific ministry, publishing more than forty books, with most being printed multiple times.⁴ By all accounts, he was

1. P. T. Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (London: Independent Press, 1907), 1.

2. John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 15.

3. Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 235–36.

4. Joel Beeke, foreword to *Our God*, by Octavius Winslow (London: John F. Shaw, 1870; repr., Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2007), vii–viii.

also an excellent preacher. One historian summarized his ministry by saying, “As a writer and preacher he had few equals.”⁵

Perhaps the greatest strength of Winslow’s homiletic involved how he embodied the Reformers’ view of preaching. They believed preaching should be the *explicatio et applicatio verbi Dei* (the explanation and application of the Word of God).⁶ Winslow consistently explained the text by grounding his sermons in doctrine and centering them in Christ, but he did not stop there. He longed for people to experience the truth. That is why he followed the apostolic pattern of indicative-imperative preaching.⁷ By doing so, he avoided dry, *merely doctrinal* sermons, which fill the head but shrivel the heart. At the same time, he avoided shallow, *merely applicational* sermons, which provide practical instruction devoid of real substance. Winslow believed true preaching is experimental preaching: the skillful combination of sound doctrine aimed at life application.⁸ Experimental preaching presses the significance of doctrine into hearers’ lives so that they experience the power of God’s truth. Octavius Winslow effectively demonstrated the practice of applying doctrine to life through his experimental preaching.

Experimental Preaching: Addressing the Heart

Because this work centers on Winslow’s experimental homiletic, a clear understanding of what he meant by experimental Christianity is vital. First,

5. T. B. Dudley, *From Chaos to the Charter: A Complete History of Royal Leamington Spa* (Royal Leamington Spa, U.K.: P. & W. E. Linaker, 1901), 246.

6. Sidney Greidanus says, “From the 17th century on, Reformed theologians had defined the sermon as *explicatio et applicatio verbi Dei*.” *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts* (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1970; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 92.

7. See John Carrick, *The Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002). Carrick states, “The central thesis of this book is that the essential pattern or structure which God himself has utilized in the proclamation of New Testament Christianity is that of the *indicative-imperative*” (5). Carrick goes on to say: “True preaching . . . always involves a balance between the *indicative* and the *imperative*. True preaching always involves both *proclamation* and *appeal*. True preaching always involves *explicatio et applicatio verbi Dei*—it always involves the explication and application of the Word of God. The indicative mood is the native sphere of the explication of the Word of God and the imperative mood is the native sphere of the application of the Word of God” (145–46).

8. Joel Beeke offers the following definition of this homiletical model: “Experiential (or ‘experimental’) preaching addresses the vital matter of how a Christian experiences the truth of Christian doctrine in his life.” “Experiential Preaching,” in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Lake Mary, Fla.: Reformation Trust, 2008), 53. Note that Beeke uses the terms “experiential” and “experimental” interchangeably. John Calvin did as well (54).

it will be helpful to understand what he does *not* mean. The kind of experimental preaching Winslow practiced is completely incompatible with the kind proposed by homileticians such as John Killinger in the 1960s and 1970s. Their unconventional approach focused on experimentation with various forms of communication. Killinger explains, “The only rule is that there are no rules which may not be broken. Real communication is not static and can seldom be accomplished for very long without experimentation and innovation.”⁹ His primary theological assumption is that “God, in Christ, has called us out from all totalitarian superstructures, even those of mind and spirit, and it is wrong of us to obligate or enslave ourselves to them again, even in the name of religion and piety. Our first obligation now is to our own centers of freedom.”¹⁰ For Killinger, man’s creativity and freedom overrule methodological practices grounded in Scripture.¹¹ It is not surprising that experimental preachers of Killinger’s day replaced “old-fashioned” sermons with innovations such as playlets, dramatic monologues, dialogue sermons, enigmatic parables, mime shows, clown acts, and multimedia presentations.¹²

Other potential misunderstandings of experimental, or experiential, preaching remain. Experimental preaching is not simply preaching one’s experience. This was a common misperception in Winslow’s day.¹³ Experimental preaching does not spring from experiential learning theories that promote

9. John Killinger, ed., *Experimental Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 9.

10. Killinger, *Experimental Preaching*, 15.

11. Interestingly, Killinger takes his Christology one step further. He writes, “What has been called the *kenosis* or self-emptying of Christ finally makes it impossible for us to make any unambiguous statements about him. Who he was, what he did, what he meant by what he said, has a way of eluding us. Precisely when we think we have caught the truth in our hands and call to a neighbor to look, it evaporates and leaves us feeling silly and empty-handed. What is asked for is a spirit of constant inquiry—a pledge to follow in the way without either the hope or the despair of arriving at finalities.” *Experimental Preaching*, 16.

12. John Killinger, “Experimental Preaching,” *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*, ed. William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 150. Killinger also displays contempt for some of the most influential names who side with the historic understanding of biblical preaching. He wrote, “The secure old positions and rationales of [John] Broadus and [William E.] Sangster no longer cast their freezing shadows over neophyte preachers—the former are indeed almost unknown among the latter.” *Experimental Preaching*, 17. For a deeper look at these “old positions,” see Broadus’s classic work on preaching. John Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1887).

13. Nineteenth-century pastor Robert Smith said, “There is a great difference between preaching experience and preaching truth experienced. The former should be seldom indulged in; the latter should always be aimed at. Without experience of the truth proclaimed, a man conjures with mere words, or at best deals with abstractions which never

learning through “concrete participation in the daily processes of living rather than categories of information.”¹⁴ It has even less to do with the agenda of the “New Homiletic” and its narrative sermon structure, which seeks to create an experience for the listener.¹⁵ Finally, it does not involve the experiential storytelling advocated by some today in the emerging church movement.¹⁶

Winslow advocated an altogether different view. Although he never provided a straightforward definition, he described experimental Christianity at length.¹⁷ In the preface of his first major work, *The Inquirer Directed to an Experimental and Practical View of the Atonement*, Winslow presented a case for the necessity of experimental Christianity. His opening argument read, “The religion of the Lord Jesus is valuable only as its power is experienced in the heart.”¹⁸ He went on to explain:

The man of mere taste may applaud its external beauty—the philosopher may admire its ethics, the orator its eloquence, and the poet its sublimity, but if the Spirit of God take not his own truth, and *impress it upon the heart, as to the great design of its revelation*, it avails nothing. What numbers there are who rest in the mere theory of Christianity. As a *practical principle* they know nothing of it. As a thing *experienced*

move the heart.” *The Quiet Thoughts of a Quiet Thinker* (London: Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1896), 101.

14. John D. Hendrix, *Nothing Never Happens: Experiential Learning and the Church* (Macon, Ga.: Smith & Helwys, 2004), 15.

15. See David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Fred Craddock, *As One without Authority* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979); Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1980); and Henry Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008).

16. See Mark Miller, *Experiential Storytelling: (Re)Discovering Narrative to Communicate God’s Message* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003). Miller defines experiential storytelling as “creating an environment that allows others to participate in the telling of a story through sensory interaction” (7). In order to create a multisensory experience, this approach basically utilizes anything the mind can imagine, including Play Doh® (105).

17. Winslow wrote much about experimental Christianity. His first two major works dealt with experimental views of the atonement and the Holy Spirit. See Octavius Winslow, *The Inquirer Directed to an Experimental and Practical View of the Atonement* (London: John F. Shaw, 1856; repr., *Atonement and the Cross* [Stoke-on-Trent, U.K.: Tentmaker, 2008]); and *The Inquirer Directed to an Experimental and Practical View of the Holy Spirit* (London: John F. Shaw, 1840; repr., *The Work of the Holy Spirit: An Experimental and Practical View* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2003]). One working assumption is that Winslow’s experimental homiletic can be deduced from his views concerning experimental Christianity. At the same time, a careful study of his sermons is necessary to this effort, as it is conceivable that a preacher’s preaching may not match his theology.

18. Winslow, *View of the Atonement*, 7.

in the heart, it is a hidden mystery to them. They speak well of it as a religious system; believe its Divinity, and even defend its doctrines and extol its precepts; yet make no approaches *towards a personal and practical obedience to its claims*. In a word, they know nothing of *repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. It will surely appear to a spiritually-enlightened mind, a subject of vast and solemn moment that this delusion should be exposed—that this foundation of sand be undermined, and *the absolute necessity of experimental religion*, as necessary to an admission within the kingdom of glory, be strenuously and scripturally enforced (emphasis added).¹⁹

Winslow said that experimental Christianity is an “absolute necessity” and involves “a personal and practical obedience” to the truth of Scripture. In sum, it is truth “experienced in the heart.” From this description, it is not difficult to deduce what he believed about experimental preaching.²⁰

Another way to discern how “experimental” was understood in Winslow’s day is by examining how his predecessors and contemporaries utilized the term. Reformers such as John Calvin pointed to the need for “measuring experienced knowledge against the touchstone of Scripture.”²¹ One of the first published works on methodology, “Of Particular and Experimental Preaching,” surfaced early in the eighteenth century. John Jennings, in lectures to his students, criticized preachers who fill their sermons with doctrine but “do not sufficiently consider that holiness is the very design of Christianity; and our preaching on other topics is in order the better to enforce duty and render men like Christ.”²² He likened experimental preaching to the work of a skilled doctor who knows his patients well. Concerning the pastor’s responsibility to reach the hearts of his hearers, Jennings wrote:

Now, what success can we reasonably expect if we do not take into close consideration the case of our several spiritual patients? If a man, professing to be a physician, should administer or prescribe one constant medicine for fevers, and another for consumptions, and so for other

19. Winslow, *View of the Atonement*, 7–8. The original wording, archaic spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, and emphases from the original works will be retained throughout.

20. See chapter 5, “Preaching to the Heart,” for a detailed investigation of Winslow’s understanding of experimental Christianity and preaching.

21. Beeke, “Experiential Preaching,” 54.

22. John Jennings, “Of Particular and Experimental Preaching,” in *The Christian Pastor’s Manual: A Selection of Tracts on the Duties, Difficulties, and Encouragements of the Christian Ministry*, by John Brown (Edinburgh: David Brown, 1826; repr., Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 2003), 50. Jennings clearly exposed the connection between experimental preaching and the doctrine of sanctification.

distempers, without considering the age, constitution, strength, and way of living of his patient, and not vary his method and medicines as those vary, we would hardly call this the regular practice of medicine. Nor can I think this general and undistinguishing way will be more safe or likely to answer its end in divinity than in medicine.²³

Experimental preachers consider the condition of their hearers and address the heart accordingly. Philip Doddridge, one of Jennings's pupils, claimed that experimental preaching leads hearers into their own hearts.²⁴ Ultimately, the preacher's goal is to apply a remedy and restore the soul into right fellowship with God.

Like their predecessors, Winslow's contemporaries also addressed the nature of experimental preaching by distinguishing it from mere doctrinal instruction. They believed many sermons devolve into impotent lectures by neglecting the practical side of truth. Daniel Kidder spoke to this when he praised the value of experimental preaching: "How superior, in the judgment at least of the more devout, and for all the great ends of the ministry, is an experimental style of preaching to that which is merely intellectual—essay like!"²⁵ While experimental preaching is more than mere doctrinal divulgence, it is certainly not less.

True experimental preaching must be grounded in doctrine. That is why Daniel Moore, an Anglican contemporary of Winslow, said experimental preaching is "the Gospel of Christ laid open, in its more spiritual and subjective aspects;—shewing the relation of dogma to piety, and the direct action of a doctrinal system on the sympathies and experiences of the heart."²⁶ To understand experimental preaching, one must grasp the relationship between doctrine and life. Experimental preaching begins with truth, and then presses truth on the heart to lead people to respond in obedience and faith.²⁷

23. Jennings, "Of Particular and Experimental Preaching," 61.

24. Philip Doddridge, "Extracts from Doddridge's Lectures on Preaching," in *The Preacher's Manual*, ed. Sheva (London: Richard Baynes, 1820), 137.

25. Daniel P. Kidder, *A Treatise on Homiletics: Designed to Illustrate the True Theory and Practice of Preaching the Gospel* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1864), 278.

26. Daniel Moore, "Preaching," in *The Authorized Report of the Church Congress Held at Leeds: October 8th, 9th, 10th, & 11th, 1872* (London: John Hodges, 1872), 213.

27. Contemporary theologian David Clark insightfully says, "If a theology does not transform a Christian's heart and her church, it fails calamitously. Theology misfires if it fills a believer's head with Christian knowledge without affecting his character and demeanor." *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2003), 232.

Charles Bridges explained, “This view of the scheme of the Gospel widely differs from the dry and abstract doctrinal statement. Its life consists not in the exposition, but in the application of the doctrine to the heart for the sanctification and comfort of the sincere Christian.”²⁸ This type of preaching served as the hallmark of Winslow’s ministry.

Why Winslow?

Many preachers could be the subject of this study. So why focus on Winslow? Joel Beeke calls him “one of the most valued non-conformist ministers of the nineteenth century, largely due to the earnestness of his preaching, and the practical excellence of his prolific writings.”²⁹ Winslow enjoyed a widely influential ministry in the nineteenth century, but little has been uncovered about his life and work.

Though he exercised a productive and thriving ministry, virtually nothing on Winslow has been published aside from brief material included in the front matter of some reprinted works and a brief dictionary article.³⁰ Several of his works have been reprinted, but he still remains relatively unknown among today’s theologians and church historians.³¹ Sadly, it seems he did not leave a diary or journal behind.³² Winslow lacked a biographer in his day, and no one has taken up the task since he died more than 135 years ago.³³ Preaching historians have also overlooked him.³⁴ Considering the popularity and significance he acquired during his era, this is surprising.

28. Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry with an Inquiry into the Causes of Its Inefficiency* (London: R. B. Seely & W. Burnside, 1830; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006), 260.

29. Beeke, foreword to *Our God*, vii.

30. See Joel Beeke, foreword to *Morning Thoughts*, by Octavius Winslow (London: John F. Shaw, 1857; repr., Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2003); J. H. Y. Briggs, “Winslow, Octavius,” in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 1213; and Randall J. Pederson, “The Life and Writings of Octavius Winslow,” in *Midnight Harmonies, or, Thoughts for the Season of Solitude and Sorrow*, by Octavius Winslow (London: John F. Shaw, 1851; repr., Grand Rapids: Ebenezer Publications, 2002).

31. I am indebted to several publishing houses that have made some of Winslow’s rare works more accessible. Some of those include Reformation Heritage Books, Soli Deo Gloria, Banner of Truth, Tentmaker Publications, and Kessinger Publishing. Joel Beeke is one scholar who has worked to raise awareness concerning Winslow’s ministry. He has written the forewords or introductions to several of Winslow’s reprinted works.

32. Because Winslow compiled many of his mother’s and son Whitmore’s journal entries into books, I believe he must have also practiced this discipline. If a personal journal ever existed, there is sufficient reason to fear such a treasure of information has been destroyed.

33. The *Dictionary of National Biography* does not even include an entry on his life.

34. Winslow is omitted by the following preaching histories: Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, 2 vols. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905; repr., Birmingham,

Ministerial Contributions

Winslow's gifts blessed the congregations he served and the broader evangelical world. His many important contributions can be observed in four key areas: preaching, literary production, personal reputation, and pastoral effectiveness.

Winslow exercised an influential ministry from the pulpit. Several pieces of evidence verify that he preached with great effectiveness and should be counted as one of the most prominent servants of his day. First, and perhaps most convincing, Winslow was frequently invited to fill the pulpit for special occasions at other significant and notable congregations. The most famous opportunity came when Charles Spurgeon invited him to preach at the opening of the Metropolitan Tabernacle on April 4, 1861. He preached a sermon titled "Christ's Finished Work" from John 19:30.³⁵ It is highly doubtful Spurgeon would have invited a mediocre preacher to his pulpit for such a momentous occasion. Winslow was also invited as a guest preacher for several different Christian denominations across the United Kingdom³⁶ and other

Ala.: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2003); O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004); Clyde E. Fant and William M. Pinson Jr., *A Treasury of Great Preaching*, 12 vols. (Dallas: Word, 1971); David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998); Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–2010); F. W. Webber, *A History of Preaching in Britain and America: Including Many of the Biographies of Many Princes of the Pulpit and the Men Who Influenced Them*, 3 vols. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1952). The sheer number of great Victorian preachers is a possible factor in historians bypassing Winslow.

35. See Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Tex.: Pilgrim Publications, 1986), 7:243–48. In the conclusion of his sermon, Winslow spoke a prayer of blessing over Spurgeon and the ensuing gospel work: "And now, from my heart, I ask the blessing of the Triune God upon my beloved Brother, the grand substance of whose ministry I believe from my very soul is to exalt the finished work of Jesus. And I pray that this noble edifice, reared in the name and consecrated to the glory of the Triune God, may for many years echo and re-echo with his voice of melody and of power in expounding to you the glorious doctrines and precepts of Christ's one finished atonement." *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 7:248.

36. His *Glimpses of the Truth As It Is in Jesus* is a series of sermons that he delivered on a trip to Scotland. He wrote in the preface, "It is proper briefly to allude to the history of this work. Scotland is its birth-place. It contains the substance of a few discourses which the author delivered from the pulpit of different Christian denominations, during a recent visit to that magnificent and interesting land." Octavius Winslow, *Glimpses of the Truth As It Is in Jesus* (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1856), v.

important events including conferences,³⁷ missionary societies,³⁸ church meetings,³⁹ and universities.⁴⁰ Second, many individual sermons were published as tracts or pamphlets, and at least five of his books are identifiable as sermon compilations.⁴¹ His annual New Year's sermons also "enjoyed considerable popularity."⁴² Third, people in his day provided glowing reviews of his preaching. He was noted as "a preacher of considerable power and ability."⁴³ Henry Christmas, in his book *Preachers and Preaching* (1858), wrote about the most notable preachers in England in the nineteenth century. After providing sketches of ten of England's most prominent preachers, Christmas recognized Winslow in a short list of other commendable preachers. Of the

37. He delivered addresses at conferences for the Evangelical Alliance and other meetings. For examples, see Octavius Winslow, *Practical Suggestions Appropriate to the Present Religious Crisis* (London: William Hunt & Co., 1868); and Evangelical Alliance, "Evangelical Alliance: The Bath Conference," *Evangelical Christendom: A Monthly Chronicle of the Churches* 7 (November 1866): 554.

38. The Baptist Missionary Society, "Anniversary Services," *The Baptist Magazine* 41 (April 1849): 248.

39. W. H. Summers, *History of the Congregational Churches in the Berks, South Oxon and South Bucks Association with Notes on the Earlier Nonconformist History of the District* (Newbury, U.K.: W. J. Blacket, 1905), 256.

40. See Octavius Winslow, *Eminent Holiness: Essential to an Efficient Ministry* (London: Houlston & Stoneman, 1843).

41. Those five works include Octavius Winslow, *Glimpses of the Truth As It Is in Jesus; The Inner Life: Its Nature, Relapse, and Recovery* (London: John F. Shaw, 1850 (these first two works include sermons from various texts)); *No Condemnation in Christ Jesus: As Unfolded in the Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* (London: John F. Shaw, 1853; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991); *Patriarchal Shadows of Christ and His Church: As Exhibited in Passages Drawn from the History of Joseph and His Brethren* (London: John F. Shaw, 1863; repr., Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Treasures, 2005 (these sermons are from Genesis 41–47)); and *Soul-Depths & Soul-Heights: Sermons on Psalm 130* (London: John F. Shaw, 1874; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006). These sermons demonstrate Winslow's commitment to preaching the whole counsel of God from both the Old and New Testaments. I am convinced some of his other works are probably sermon compilations, though they lack explicit evidence supporting such a view. Some of those include *Christ and the Christian in Temptation: Counsel and Consolation for the Tempted* (London, 1878); *Emmanuel, or, Titles of Christ: Their Teaching and Consolations* (London: John F. Shaw, 1869); *The Foot of the Cross and the Blessings Found There* (New York: Robert Carter, 1868; repr., *Atonement and the Cross* [Stoke-on-Trent, U.K.: Tentmaker, 2008]); *Pisgah Views, or, The Negative Aspects of Heaven* (London: John F. Shaw, 1873); and Octavius Winslow, *The Tree of Life: Its Shade, Fruit, and Repose* (London: John F. Shaw, 1868).

42. Lucius E. Smith, ed. "Editorial Notices," *The Baptist Quarterly* 1 (1867): 380. Several of these New Year addresses were collected in book form. See Octavius Winslow, *Divine Realities, or, Spiritual Reflections for the Saint and Sinner* (London: John F. Shaw, 1860).

43. Judy Middleton, *The Encyclopaedia of Hove and Portslade D to E* (self-published, 2002), 4:74.

nonconformists, he had the most to say about Winslow. He described him as “a most admirable preacher, and a highly educated and high-minded Christian gentleman.”⁴⁴ Finally, one can discern his homiletical gifts by noting with whom he preached on some special occasions. The fact that Winslow preached with the likes of Spurgeon and R. W. Dale speaks well of his preaching credentials.⁴⁵ Winslow fulfilled his calling as a herald with great force and fruitfulness.

His massive literary output serves as another feature of his valuable ministry. He was considered one of the “best religious writers in Europe” and was mentioned with the eminent Scottish divine Thomas Guthrie and the heralded German pastor F. W. Krummacher as “stars of magnitude which have been long above the horizon.”⁴⁶ He averaged publishing more than one book per year after his first work hit the press in 1838.⁴⁷ His writings reached a multitude of readers through multiple printings. One of his contemporaries said he was “one of the most widely and deeply influential writers of the present day.”⁴⁸

Another indication of Winslow’s influence involves his reputation among other evangelicals. He was regarded as “an eminent Nonconformist.”⁴⁹ One reviewer called him an “eminent minister of Christ.”⁵⁰ He also served as a reviewer of other books and wrote a recommendation or introduction to several books during his ministry.⁵¹ Aside from his involvement in the

44. Henry Christmas, *Preachers and Preaching* (London: William Lay, 1858), 116. Powerful preachers such as Charles Spurgeon, Robert Hall, Thomas Chalmers, and R. W. Dale demonstrate the quality of Christmas’s observations. That Winslow was listed after these greats is significant.

45. Baptist Missionary Society, “Recognition and Ordination Services,” *The Baptist Magazine* 49 (1857): 504.

46. The American and Foreign Christian Union, “Book Notices,” *Christian World: A Magazine of the American and Foreign Christian Union* 14 (March 1863): 95.

47. See Octavius Winslow, *The Inquirer Directed to an Experimental and Practical View of the Atonement* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1838).

48. George Cole, *Euthanasia: Sermons and Poems in Memory of Departed Friends* (London: William MacIntosh, 1868), 303.

49. Catherine Marsh, *The Life of the Rev. William Marsh, D.D.* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1867), 179.

50. “Notices of Books,” *The Christian Observer and Advocate Conducted by Members of the Church of England for the Year 1875* (February 1875): 157.

51. See Octavius Winslow, introductory preface to *The Spirit of Holiness*, by James Harington Evans (New York: J. S. Taylor, 1837); Octavius Winslow, introductory preface to *Sermons on the First Epistle of Peter*, by Hermann Friedrich Kohlbrügge (London: Patridge & Oakley, 1853); and Octavius Winslow, preface to *The Nature and Evidences of Regeneration*, by George Townshend Fox (London: William Hunt, 1872).

Evangelical Alliance, one other evidence of his esteemed reputation was the respect paid by those who differed with Winslow theologically.⁵²

Finally, Winslow's effectiveness as a pastor confirms his ministerial worth. As will be noted later, Winslow demonstrated an ability to be used by God to grow churches. Both Warwick Street and Emmanuel Chapel enjoyed great success under his ministry. The latter witnessed 1,300 congregants sitting under his preaching weekly.⁵³ Most importantly, Winslow was loved by his people. All of these aspects reveal his valuable contributions as a gospel minister.

The primary concern of this work deals with identifying Winslow's homiletic theology and methodology. The absence of a specific work on preaching by Winslow himself presents a challenge for pinning down his homiletic. Thankfully that challenge is alleviated by the amount of ink he devoted to preaching and related topics in his abundant writing ministry.⁵⁴ Additionally, his sermon compilations provide a great treasure for analyzing the prominent elements of his homiletic.

Chapter 1 provides a biographical sketch of Winslow's life and ministry. After tracing his birth, heritage, and early life, it presents a summary of his conversion, education, and ordination. Then an investigation of his ministerial career addresses the historical context in which he ministered, noting the Puritan influence on his ministry as well as the golden age of preaching in Victorian England. It also unfolds his view of ministry before describing his five pastorates in New York, Leamington Spa, Bath, and Brighton. Notable events are highlighted, such as the controversy with Spurgeon over baptismal regeneration and his decision to leave the Baptist church in order to complete his ministry in the Anglican church. The chapter concludes by providing an account of his death and legacy.

Chapter 2 outlines Winslow's theology and methodology of preaching. It argues his theology of preaching provided the impetus for his pulpit practice. First, an examination of his convictions concerning the nature of preaching

52. See "Review," *The General Baptist Repository and Missionary Observer* 4 (1842): 21. The reviewer wrote, "The...work is by an esteemed living author, who though he is decidedly Calvinistic in his views, and occasionally takes up a position from which we dissent, has so much of the savour of deep piety, and holy spirituality, as commend him to our love, and his work to the perusal of all who desire to 'grow in grace.' While meditating on the most impressive passages, we could not avoid reflecting, how little, both practically and experimentally, true Christians differ from each other" (21).

53. "Death of the Rev. Dr. Winslow," *Brighton Gazette*, March 7, 1878.

54. I am greatly appreciative of the people at www.grace-ebooks.com who have made thirty-four of Winslow's books available electronically in searchable PDF format.

is offered. Winslow believed speaking God's words was both weighty and a delight. His theology of the Holy Spirit and preaching is covered next. He believed the Spirit is essential for the work of regeneration, illumination, anointing, and sanctification. This chapter also covers Winslow's methodology of preaching by analyzing the influence of Jesus and the Puritans on his homiletic. In the end, it presents a case that Winslow's methodology should be described as experimental. The two foundational pillars of Winslow's experimental homiletic are explained in the next two chapters.

Chapter 3 analyzes Winslow's doctrinal preaching. His doctrinal preaching was grounded in Scripture. Because he viewed the Bible as inspired by God, he staked his preaching on the trustworthiness and effectual power of God's Word. Winslow's understanding of the gospel and the importance of doctrinal precision is also covered. The last major section demonstrates how Winslow preached the doctrines of grace, addressing their content and the results that accompany proclaiming them.

Chapter 4 expounds on the previous chapter by highlighting the dominant doctrine of Winslow's preaching: Jesus Christ. Winslow's writings, preaching, and ministry were thoroughly Christ centered. An examination of his hermeneutic is offered before moving to his preaching practice. It then discusses his convictions concerning Christ-centered preaching and analyzes Winslow's sermons from various genres of Scripture. Additionally, it argues that Winslow's Christ-centered preaching was motivated by his Trinitarian theology. He believed the work of redemptive history focuses on the person of Christ because it is Jesus who reveals the Father, and the Spirit who reveals the Son.

Chapter 5 describes how Winslow preached to the heart. His theory of experimental preaching is explained at the onset of the chapter. It then examines the goal of experimental preaching by highlighting Winslow's doctrine of progressive sanctification and the preacher's responsibility to preach for holistic change. An analysis of the key experimental elements in Winslow's preaching, including its applicatory, discriminating, interrogating, illustrating, exhortative, and persuasive qualities closes the chapter.

Chapter 6 considers what Winslow has to say to today's church with several constructive proposals for today's preachers. It concludes that Winslow's homiletic has much to teach contemporary preachers regarding a theology of preaching and experimentally declaring the relevance of doctrine for one's life in a Christ-centered manner. Finally, two of Winslow's sermon manuscripts are included as samples in appendixes 1 and 2 covering an Old

Testament and New Testament text, respectively. Following the appendixes is an annotated bibliography of Winslow's works.

It is necessary to begin with the man himself, because true experimental preaching begins with a heart constantly being changed by God's grace. It is illegitimate for preachers to declare a gospel they fail to experience. Winslow was a man who first preached from the heart before he sought to preach to the heart.