FINDING HIS VOICE:  
THE SERMONS OF F.W. BOREHAM  
(1888 – 1916).

F.W. Boreham at the Hobart Baptist Church. Photograph courtesy of Laurie Rowston

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STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

This thesis submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, and no unacknowledged assistance has been received in its planning, drafting, execution or writing. All sources on which it is based have been acknowledged in writing, as has the supervision which I have received in the process of its preparation.

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“History is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies.”


“Preaching . . . has in it two essential elements, truth and personality. The principle of personality once admitted involves the individuality of every preacher . . . Every preacher should utter the truth in his (sic.) own way, and according to his (sic.) own nature.”

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PREFACE.

This research began eight years ago when I started reading through F.W. Boreham’s sermon manuscripts. I was compelled by the poetry and creativity that was evident in these printed messages. Three years ago I decided to turn this area of interest into a Master’s paper. Geoff Pound had written his thesis about Boreham’s editorials for the Melbourne Age and Hobart Mercury, but little had been researched about Boreham the preacher. The aim of this study is to provide a clear account of F.W. Boreham’s preaching and how this contrasted with the church and society of his day.

The writing of this paper has required something of a global effort covering three continents. Manuscripts have been sent backwards and forwards to Geoff Pound in the United Arab Emirates. Geoff has always been diligent and wise with his responses. His enthusiasm for this topic has been a point of sustenance throughout the research. In order to gather some of the required primary documents I have followed the track of F.W. Boreham’s life around the world, from his birthplace in Tunbridge Wells (United Kingdom) to his places of ministry in Theydon Bois (United Kingdom), Mosgiel (New Zealand), and Hobart (Australia). In each of these locations people have been very helpful. In England Robert and Cynthia Bird drove me across county lines in order to discover more about the intricacies of Clapham Common, Tunbridge Wells and Theydon Bois. In Hobart local historian Laurie Rowston was a valuable source of much important information. In Dunedin (near Mosgiel) Don and Fran Bird were welcoming hosts and a great help in discovering Otago’s libraries and universities.

The primary documents that I have used for this thesis have mostly been the sermon manuscripts of F.W. Boreham from 1891-1916, which are held in the Baptist Union of Victoria Archives at Camberwell. Here Rhonda Shaw has been a patient source of help. There was also a range of sermons printed in the Taieri Advocate from 1896-1901 together with Church and Diaconate Minutes from Mosgiel and members of staff at the Hocken Library in Dunedin were able to assist me in accessing these important primary documents.

Much of this thesis was written at my parents’ house in Mentone. Principal Rev. Dr. Frank Rees of Whitley College has given me the time, space and leave from work to put this research together, while the Whitley Librarians Lorraine Mitchell, Beryl Turner and Robin McComiskey were able to provide access to the College’s Boreham Collection. Rosemary Dillon and Simone Rickerby at Whitley have also given practical assistance. I am also grateful to Dr. Ross Langmead for loaning me a copy of his thesis, which has helped to provide a structural framework to compare this research with. My cousin Steven Merry has read through the manuscript and provided some helpful grammatical improvements.

This writing and travel has been a fruitful path of discovery not just about F.W. Boreham but also about Baptist churches and ministries throughout the world. I imagine that Boreham, who was also an avid writer and traveller, would have approved of this aspect of the research. It has given me cause to discover new ways of
doing things as a minister. In this way I hope that F.W. Boreham may have seen this project as being a useful one.

While I have been travelling the world in search of documents and newspapers, my wife Melissa has cared for our three little boys. Now that this project has drawn to a close, it is time for me to enjoy the company of my family and to find my own voice as a Baptist minister.

The style used throughout this essay for references to books and articles in the footnotes and bibliography has been taken from Kate L. Turabian’s A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations and John Grossman’s The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors and Publishers. The style used for sermon manuscripts has been adapted from Lawrence D. McIntosh’s A Style Manual for the Presentation of Papers and Theses in Religion and Theology. Spelling has been taken from The Oxford Dictionary.

Rev. David Enticott
July 2008.
ABSTRACT.

F.W. Boreham (1871-1959) was a noted essayist, author and minister who had a significant impact on Baptist churches in Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia. This thesis investigates Boreham’s development as a preacher, during the formative years of his ministry from 1888-1916. The thesis examines the original sermon manuscripts written by Boreham and answers two questions, using historical and homiletical frameworks. Firstly, when did F.W. Boreham find his voice and confidence as a preacher, and secondly, what influences were most significant during specific phases of his ministry? These questions are responded to by outlining each distinct period in Boreham’s early pastorates.

In the United Kingdom (1888-1895) Boreham’s preaching lacked confidence and his messages were predominantly influenced by a number of popular Christian speakers including Dwight L. Moody, C.H. Spurgeon, Dr. Joseph Parker, A.T. Pierson and F.B. Meyer. Other less significant factors shaping his preaching were: a love of nature and stories, a desire to be practical, a strongly evangelistic theology, training at the Pastors’ College and experience as a Student Minister at Theydon Bois. He shared evangelical emphases of conversion, the Bible, the cross and mission. His style of preaching was topical and evangelistic. Boreham was yet to find his voice at this early stage and his preaching was more derivative than distinctive. His lack of self-assurance was suggested by a reluctance to preach on difficult passages and hesitancy about bringing creativity into the pulpit.

Mosgiel (1895-1906) represented a phase of ministry where Boreham’s preaching voice continued to be developed. He discovered a range of new influences such as: some contemporary issues, a theological framework centred on beauty, the lives of his congregation members, ministry challenges and the specific direction of his mentor-Rev. J.J. Doke. His growing confidence was suggested by a willingness to speak out against the sectarian nature of New Zealand Baptists. At Mosgiel Boreham used a more narrative style of preaching and he was slowly learning to be himself in the pulpit. In particular he allowed his poetic understanding of the Scriptures to determine both the titles and content of many of his later sermons in New Zealand.

When F.W. Boreham moved to the Hobart Tabernacle (1906-1916), he found his preaching voice. His sermons became an imaginative blend of influences such as photography, writing, a love of literature, a creative approach to evangelism, education and biography. The First World War also profoundly influenced him. He adopted a narrative and imaginative style of preaching that reflected his personality. This was in stark contrast to the conservative nature of the broader Australian society and Tasmanian Baptists. Most importantly, he was able to preach on challenging Bible passages (which he had avoided doing in the United Kingdom) and he was also willing to critique some of his earlier ministry influences. A preaching and debating class was established which suggested that Boreham had moved from being
influenced by others to becoming an influence on others himself. In his own words it was at Hobart that Boreham learnt to “preach . . . as nobody else does.”

The thesis concludes that Boreham’s growth as a preacher included a unique combination of his pastoral experiences, many cultural and literary sources, plus his own creativity. All this was possible only because he developed a sense of himself as a preacher, no longer derivative nor seeking to emulate others, but rather permitting himself to exercise his own voice.

Rev. David Enticott
July 2008.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION.

This thesis seeks to answer two important questions regarding the preaching of the Baptist minister F.W. Boreham. Firstly it sets out to discover the stage of his ministry when F.W. Boreham found his unique voice and confidence as a preacher. This will involve setting Boreham against his political, social and ecclesial context and asking if he was unique or simply a product of his time. The second question explored by this thesis is what influences moulded F.W. Boreham’s voice during each phase of his ministry? Historical and homiletical methods are outlined in order to provide some important frameworks when examining the kind of influences revealed within the sermon manuscripts. By using these approaches a picture will emerge as to both the shapers and the shape of Boreham’s preaching.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF F.W. BOREHAM’S PREACHING.

F.W. Boreham (1871-1959) was a significant figure within the Australasian church who had a vital and lasting impact upon Baptists through his preaching. In his seminal work on preachers from the sixteenth century onwards, Ralph G. Turnbull held that Boreham “stands supreme as a representative of preaching ‘down under.’”

Boreham’s speaking career spanned nearly sixty-seven years beginning at an open-air meeting in the London suburb of Clapham in 1888 and ending at the Scots Church in Melbourne in 1955. Finishing his preaching life at a prominent Presbyterian Church was one indicator of the acclaim which greeted Boreham’s speaking across denominational and geographic boundaries.

Boreham was a gifted communicator, who turned many of his sermons and stories into articles or essays for his books. His writing career was no less prolific than his

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output as a prominent preacher. It was through his writing in newspapers and published books that Boreham came to international prominence, such that he was introduced at a pastors’ meeting in the United Kingdom as the person whose name was on their lips, books were on their shelves and illustrations were in all of their sermons.\(^3\)

3. SCOPE.

The scope of this research will be limited to the years 1888-1916 in Boreham’s ministry, rather than exploring his later years at the Armadale Baptist Church (1916-1928) and the Scots’ Presbyterian Church (1937-1955). This containment of years will make the thesis more manageable. One limitation of this work is that while preaching is largely an oral and aural experience, this research will be restricted to Boreham’s handwritten sermon manuscripts and those that were re-printed for the *Taieri Advocate* (a local newspaper in Mosgiel, New Zealand).

4. METHODOLOGY.

This thesis involves using methods of history and homiletics (chapter two). In terms of historical analysis the first task involves analysing the nature of the primary sources themselves, to gain an overview of how many sermons are in the collection, ideas about how the manuscripts were used and asking the vital question of why they were retained. It needs to be shown that these manuscripts are in fact a significant sample of Boreham’s preaching career. As with any historical research, there is also a requirement to check these manuscripts for authenticity, making sure that the handwriting matches Boreham’s in other places. There is a further test to be done in terms of when the manuscripts were written.

Once the authenticity, use and motive for retention have been established, the next task is homiletical. A range of different preaching styles and approaches are examined. The analysis of Boreham’s sermons then begins with a section outlining the background, both religious and secular, for each phase of his ministry (chapters

three to five). Prominent preaching styles for each era are explored. Fred Craddock writes that a sermon can only be understood once it has been set in its cultural and spiritual context. After the context has been outlined, the work of looking for patterns and prejudices can be commenced, which will show whether Boreham did develop his own voice in his sermons. The aim here is to provide clarity by weaving the threads of Boreham’s sermons together, while also noticing changes in themes and emphases. The main features of each sermon that will be examined include: titles, structures, illustrations and stories, Scripture references (and in particular what is and is not referred to in a given passage), overall purposes, topics and language.

5. ASSUMPTIONS.

The overriding assumption of this thesis is that preaching is personal and as such can provide much insight to a preacher’s personality. This is in accord with Phillips Brooks’ statement that preaching combines “truth and personality.” This assumption means that the story of F.W. Boreham’s ministry and life can partly be told through his sermon manuscripts.

6. STRUCTURE.

The thesis is divided according to some of the main phases of Boreham’s career: the United Kingdom 1888-1895 (chapter three), Mosgiel- New Zealand 1895-1906 (chapter four), and Hobart- Australia 1906-1916 (chapter five). In each of these locations F.W. Boreham worked as a Baptist minister. Every chapter begins by briefly outlining the political, social and ecclesial background for each location. This will

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5 In a work on sermons in England during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, J.W. Blench sets his task as looking for “significant patterns” that might emerge through manuscripts and printed texts. J.W. Blench, Preaching in England in the Late 15th and 16th Centuries (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), xv.
6 Bradley and Mueller describe the goal of the historian as bringing about “the reintegration of the parts” so that they may be “disentangled for the sake of analysis.” James E. Bradley and Richard A. Mueller, Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Work and Methods (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 25.
provide a clear contrast with Boreham’s preaching and help to bear in mind a central question of this thesis: at what stage did Boreham find his unique voice and confidence as a preacher? After this section on context every chapter examines a range of important preaching influences at each location. These are the factors that shaped Boreham’s messages and preaching voice. A concluding section is added which returns to the main questions of the thesis and seeks to explore what kind of preaching style was prevalent for Boreham during the given period. Some final thoughts are included about the significance of this research for today’s church.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCHING THE BOREHAM MANUSCRIPTS:
HISTORY AND HOMILETICS.

1. INTRODUCTION.

This chapter outlines some important views about history and homiletics. It begins by discussing a range of ideas about the nature of history and then asks a number of questions that will guide the accuracy of this research on F.W. Boreham’s sermons. The aim of this section is to ground the thesis in careful, historical methods.

The chapter then explores a variety of homiletical issues beginning with different conceptions of preaching. Following this the method adopted for examining Boreham’s sermons throughout the thesis is detailed. Finally a range of homiletical approaches is given in order to provide a grid for categorising Boreham’s preaching style.

2. VIEWS ABOUT THE NATURE OF HISTORY.

Historical research depends on clear and critical analysis of primary documents, such as F.W. Boreham’s 267 sermon manuscripts from 1891-1916, but how might this research be undertaken and what methods should be employed? Over the past two hundred years there has been much debate about the shape that historical writing should take. Scholars have questioned if it can ever be done objectively or if it is always subjective. During the nineteenth century, several writers, such as Leopold von Ranke, believed that the aim of history was to assemble an objective, accurate and exact portrait of the past.

In recent times, this view has been challenged. Historians have asserted that it is impossible to write about the past as one might put together a scientific paper or experiment. The conditions can never be repeated. Instead this more recent idea holds that historical writing and research is often artistic, in that it gives a certain shade and
colour to what has already happened. It adds another layer of interpretation to the story. The advantage of this approach is that it focuses realistically on the perspective of the historian. History, as with poetry or fiction, is always selective. Stories are told, but also left out. In this way, Barbara Tuchman notes that the historian as artist “supplies a view or understanding that the viewer or reader would not have gained without the . . . creative vision.”

However, there is need for care and diligence here. The argument of history as an artistic endeavour should not be stretched to breaking point. While Tuchman may hold that the historian is a “creative writer on the same level as the poet or novelist,” this is not quite true. The difference is that the historian, unlike the poet or novelist, does not start with a blank page that can be filled out by one’s imagination. Instead, the historian begins with what has already happened and then brings the pieces together into a collage. The art is in the collection of pre-existing and primary materials together, while making sure that in the process, the original story is not lost or covered over. In the case of the Boreham manuscripts the aim will be to accurately piece together the main influences of his sermons, in order to tell the overall story of his preaching voice and developing confidence.

This meticulous, weaving approach to the past requires a clear methodology. Boreham’s sermons can only be understood and evaluated once they have been placed in their proper context and shown to be an authentic record of his preaching career. John Tosh argues for such a thorough technique in *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions*, as he asserts: “Above all, myths may flourish when historical knowledge is superficial and no alternative perspective is freely

9 Tuchman, *Practising History*, 45.
10 Establishing the background is an important exercise when chronicling any historical figure. Keith Clements thus defines church history as: “The study of the development of the life of the church . . . in all its branches, in the context of the life of the world and in relation to other religious and social movements.” Keith Clements, “The Mutual Contribution of Church History and Systematic Theology: The Holocaust and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a Case Study.” *Pacifica* 20 (2007): 163.
available." There is a need to dig more deeply, in order to uncover the whole truth behind an event, but how might this take place? What are the key questions that arise from writing history and how might these shape and inform research on the sermons of F.W. Boreham?

3. HISTORICAL QUESTIONS.

a. How many primary documents are in the collection?

The sermon manuscripts held at the Baptist Union of Victoria archives provide a valuable cross-section of F.W. Boreham’s preaching life. They are not complete but they offer the possibility of a detailed examination of Boreham’s preaching influences and style. The number of sermons varies from year to year. For example from his earliest time ministering in the United Kingdom to the end of his preaching at the Hobart Baptist Church in 1916, the following number of manuscripts are available:

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There are some possible reasons for the wide fluctuation in sermon totals from each year during this period. For example the explanation for the relatively sparse collection of manuscripts from 1891-1893 was that Boreham was attending the Pastors’ College in London. He was an itinerant preacher for much of this time. The

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12 These archives are located at Level 1, 1193 Toorak Road, Camberwell, Victoria, 3124.
number increased in 1894 as he continued in a student pastorate at Theydon Bois, a small village north of London. This meant that he was preaching on a weekly basis, both in morning and evening services.

The numbers also rise steadily from 1894 at Theydon Bois until 1903 at Mosgiel, reaching a peak of twenty-four in 1900. They decline in 1903 as F.W. Boreham and his family embarked on a trip to the United Kingdom. They were on vacation for several months and this explains the low number of sermons in the collection for this particular year. From 1896-1901 an average of one Boreham sermon per month was included in the Taieri Advocate. These are an invaluable source of information as the articles are a verbatim copy of the manuscripts. From 1911-1915 many sermons from the “Texts That Made History” series were published in five devotional books. Together with the manuscripts, these printed sermons do represent a significant sample of Boreham’s preaching career. The number of sermons in the collection from Hobart remained constant, pitching from seven to ten per year, until Boreham’s shift to Armadale in 1916.

b. How were the manuscripts used?

F.W. Boreham noted in his autobiography, My Pilgrimage that he never preached from a written manuscript. The story that he recounted was that an elderly member of the congregation at the Mosgiel Baptist Church, called ‘Tammas,’ would visit him each week with a lengthy critique of the sermon he had just delivered. Tiring of this distraction Boreham decided one day that he would stop this intrusion, by saying that his errors had all come from not using a manuscript. He offered to change his ways by delivering a more polished performance the following week, straight from the printed page. The old man subsequently relented, due to his aversion for preachers reading their notes.¹³

This habit of preaching from memory had been with Boreham from the beginning. T. Howard Crago writes that Boreham’s first sermon, preached in the open-air at the

Clapham Common in 1888, was written out on six pages. It was copied in full. However, Boreham did not use this manuscript, because he could recite every word. He would practice his sermons over and again to ensure that he did not lose a major point on the day of delivering his message.\textsuperscript{14}

The main evidence for Boreham not preaching from his written sermon notes is that the topics and major points he covered were nearly always easy to remember. While Boreham claimed that the reason for this simplicity and repetition was to prevent important points being forgotten by his congregation, it was also for his own benefit. Simple structures and ideas helped him to remember what he was about to say. A sermon that is easily retained by the preacher can be readily passed on to the congregation. For example, in the simple manner that would become a trait of his preaching, when he gave a message at Mosgiel on the theme of Pentecost he structured his sermon around three major themes: “The significance of the Pentecostal blessing, the recipients of the Pentecostal blessing and the immediate results of the Pentecostal blessing.”\textsuperscript{15} In his conclusion he stated that at Pentecost “the disciples’ hearts were affected, lives were affected, tongues were affected, homes were affected and neighbours were affected.”\textsuperscript{16} Such a deliberate and repetitive structure suggests that Boreham wrote out his sermons not just to prevent forgetfulness for his congregation, but for himself as well and in this way he could preach effectively without notes. The written notes allowed him to structure his thoughts and gave him a clear, memorable outline. They formed the skeleton of what he would share with his church community. They provided him with a way to polish his language. Committing words to paper allowed Boreham to explore more deeply the intricate meanings behind a given text or phrase of scripture.\textsuperscript{17} This also meant that he was able to re-work ideas for various books, articles and editorials.

\textsuperscript{15} F.W. Boreham. 1898. “The Pentecostal Gift.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 16 January, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript. All sermons noted in this style are located at the Baptist Union of Victoria Archives, Camberwell, Victoria.
\textsuperscript{16} Boreham, “The Pentecostal Gift.”
\textsuperscript{17} Boreham encouraged all preachers to write their sermons down on paper as this allowed them to ask, “Whether this word or that or the other best clothes” their “thought.” Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 153.
c. Why were these particular sermons retained?

The most effective and truthful historical records are those that are not pruned away in order to leave a manufactured trail behind. Sometimes historical figures may destroy or lose a certain document that could cause them embarrassment, so as to give a favourable impression. There is little of this kind of self-consciousness in Boreham’s records. He maintained his manuscripts because he wanted to hold onto them for future use and reference. Boreham recycled many of his messages, having made a decision in 1901 that he would preach one new sermon each Sunday and one old one.\(^\text{18}\) There is evidence of recycling earlier than this and many of the sermons within the collection were repeated. For example, Boreham re-used the following number of his messages from 1891-1916:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Count of Sermons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1 out of 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>0 out of 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1 out of 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>9 out of 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>8 out of 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>6 out of 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>9 out of 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>7 out of 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>5 out of 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>11 out of 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>8 out of 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>13 out of 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>5 out of 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>17 out of 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>17 out of 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>5 out of 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>4 out of 9</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>8 out of 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>6 out of 10</td>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>9 out of 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>7 out of 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>4 out of 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>5 out of 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>6 out of 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>7 out of 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>3 out of 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this list shows, not every manuscript kept by F.W. Boreham was the basis for another message. What then was his purpose in retaining these one-off sermons? A significant factor was that Boreham loved to keep a complete record of everything he had done. This related to his newspaper editorials, which were cut out and pasted in large scrapbooks, and his preaching manuscripts. In a book called \textit{My Preaching Record}, Boreham methodically recorded every sermon he had ever preached.\(^\text{19}\) His eye was often on the future. He kept these manuscripts because he felt that even if he

\(^{18}\) Crago, \textit{The Story}, 96.

\(^{19}\) Crago, \textit{The Story}, 38. There are no traces of this preaching record in any of the archives visited for this thesis.
did not repeat an entire theme or idea, he could always use some of the stories, phrases or illustrations again either in the pulpit or in print.

His sermons became a part of his intricate filing system. For example, in a message named: “Children of the Free,” he included the details of fourteen stories on the back of the manuscript.\(^{20}\) This message would not be repeated, but in Boreham’s mind, this did not mean that its information should be wasted. It could always be fashioned into a devotional piece. Within many of his manuscript envelopes Boreham would include newspaper clippings on passages or people he had referred to in his sermons. Stories and illustrations would be written in full on the inside cover or back page. Therefore, his main reason for retaining his materials was not to shape or manipulate his legacy. There is little evidence to suggest that he threw away efforts that he was embarrassed about. Instead he filed them so that he might use his material again. This lends a degree of historical weight to the accuracy of these manuscripts as a record of F.W. Boreham’s preaching career.

**d. Are these sermons authentic?**

The question of authenticity raises two separate issues. The first is to see whether Boreham’s handwriting in sermon manuscripts matches his writing style in other places. A sample of messages during his time at Mosgiel reveals that Boreham’s handwriting is the same as recorded in other primary documents, such as inside a number of his own books, letters and records that are retained in the Whitley College library. These sermon manuscripts were therefore written by F.W. Boreham.

A vital second issue arises regarding the question of whether these sermons were re-written long after Boreham had first preached them. As John Tosh notes, it is important to test “whether the script is right for the period and place specified.”\(^{21}\) If most of the sermons had been re-written at a later date, then they could not be relied

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upon to accurately tell the story of Boreham’s developing confidence and influences as a preacher. One way of testing this is by looking at the ink. A sample reading of these manuscripts suggests that for sermons preached in Hobart the ink is both thicker and darker than at Mosgiel. There are also some stylistic differences. Up until 15 August 1897 Boreham denoted Bible readings and hymns by writing on the outside cover sheet of his printed manuscript: “Read: . . . Sing: . . . ” After this date he changed his style to: “Read: . . . Hymns: . . . ”

Therefore taking 1895 as an example, a clear analysis can be undertaken to show whether the sermons were penned in 1895 or if they were mostly re-written at a later date, according to whether the word ‘Sing’ or ‘Hymns’ appears on the cover page. A study of the packet from 1895 reveals that four out of twelve were composed at a later date and eight were actually penned in 1895. This test of authenticity becomes vitally important when marking significant changes in Boreham’s self-assurance and influences throughout the years. For example, in one of the re-written sermons in 1895 Boreham added a number of illustrations, such as: “Shot for desertion, Drummond, Watkinson, Maori Girls, Rhine and Cortes.” 22 This shift to stories represents a later change in Boreham’s preaching. Care must be taken here in drawing conclusions.

Another development was that in 1902 Boreham started to type out his sermons. Those that have been added later have not been typed. This test for authenticity shows that of those manuscripts in the 1902 packet, thirteen were from the actual year and four were re-written at a later date. Due to Boreham’s tendency to re-write some of his messages, my procedure will be to give greater weight to those sermons that were actually written at the time, when looking for changes in his preaching voice and individuality. Less credence will be given to sermons thought to have been composed at a later date.

4. HOMILETICAL QUESTIONS.

22 F.W. Boreham, 1895. “Many went back.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 7 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
a. Views about the Nature of Preaching.

Homiletical analysis of F.W. Boreham’s sermons can be just as difficult to grasp as a clear historical understanding. This is because the nature and purpose of preaching within the Christian church has been debated for millennia. Some writers have chosen to focus on the preacher, arguing that such speaking is “truth through personality.”\(^{23}\) According to this view the key components are the revealed word of God (the Scriptures) and the character, affections, intellectual and moral composition of the preacher- the personality.\(^ {24}\) Others have chosen a simpler formula.

In the twelfth century Alun of Lille argued that “preaching is an open and public instruction in faith, whose purpose is the forming of” people.\(^ {25}\) As such it should be straightforward and easy to understand. For Alun of Lille preaching should not be creative or “glitter with verbal trappings, with purple patches.”\(^ {26}\) Instead it should “rain down doctrines, thunder forth admonitions” and “soothe with praises.”\(^ {27}\) While a doctrinal approach may be important, at its heart preaching can still be creative and personal. It is the artistic linking of God’s word with the current situation of the congregation and the world. In this way preaching may involve drawing together the context and content of God’s word yesterday to the situation of today and the Christian hope for tomorrow. The approach of this thesis will be to affirm that preaching, like history, is a creative exercise and thus can reveal much about the preacher’s personality. As George Herbert said in *The Country Parson*, “When he preacheth he procures attention by all possible art.”\(^ {28}\)

b. What materials might tell the story of F.W. Boreham’s preaching?

\(^ {23}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 14.
\(^ {24}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 14.
\(^ {25}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 10.
\(^ {26}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 10.
\(^ {27}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 10.
\(^ {28}\) Lischer, *Theories of Preaching*, 52.
As with any artistic endeavour the selection of materials by a preacher is all important and revealing. In reviewing the changes in Boreham’s confidence and influences, this thesis will examine a range of areas within the manuscripts. These include looking for recurring themes and sources among Boreham’s sermon titles, subjects, language, structures, illustrations and stories, Scripture references (and in particular what is and is not referred to in a given passage), overall purposes and topics. As preaching is creative this approach will be akin to examining the materials and subject matter adopted by any artist.

c. What are the different forms of preaching?

Once the materials have been gathered and themes have emerged, a final question can be asked in each chapter about the form of preaching that was most prevalent during a particular phase of Boreham’s ministry. This is a question of overall technique and approach. In his book *Creative Styles of Preaching*, Mark Barger Elliott describes a number of different preaching styles, such as: narrative, Biblical (exegetical), evangelistic, topical, pastoral and imaginative.\(^{29}\) He calls this a survey of “the homiletical landscape.”\(^{30}\)

Narrative preaching is centred on giving an address where the structure and shape are provided by key stories. A narrative sermon “proceeds not by argument and propositions but by plot, character and emotion.”\(^{31}\) Here the story of King David or the Apostle Paul may be told to evoke pathos or curiosity in the congregation. In contrast to this, an exegetical or expository message often takes the shape of a particular Bible passage. Here the structure assumes the same flow and direction as the Scriptural reference. Exegetical sermons can proceed verse by verse or even word by word. The aim is to uncover the meaning of a given text. An evangelistic method is filled with appeals for the listeners to change the direction of their lives or to suggest a new approach for the wider community. Topical sermons address particular


\(^{30}\) Elliott, *Creative Styles*, ix.

issues facing individuals, the church or society. This may include themes that have a prophetic edge such as the Christian in the workplace or tackling the current environmental crisis. Pastoral preaching has its focus on issues of everyday concern including grief, depression or family life.\textsuperscript{32}

Mark Barger Elliott is less clear about creative preaching styles as he argues that they combine “imagination and proclamation.”\textsuperscript{33} Joseph Sittler gives a slightly more prominent role to the imagination in preaching by stating that it is this quality that forges links between the passage, the listeners and the world. However, he misses the point that a sermon may in and of itself be a creative piece of writing—full of poetry, metaphor and story. Elizabeth Achtemeier provides a clearer definition when she states that creative preaching is:

“The fashioning of a sermon into such an artistic and effective whole that the Word of God, spoken through the text, is allowed to create that reality of which it speaks within the individual and corporate lives of the gathered congregation.”\textsuperscript{34}

An important aim of this research will be to examine which category of preaching best describes F.W. Boreham’s technique for the major phases of his ministry in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia. These different preaching styles will provide a grid to hold up against Boreham’s sermons and preaching influences throughout this thesis.

\textsuperscript{32} These notes have been summarised from Elliott, Creative Styles of Preaching and Scott Wilson, The Practice of Preaching.

\textsuperscript{33} Elliott, Creative Styles, 146.

\textsuperscript{34} Elizabeth Achtemeier, Creative Preaching. Finding the Words (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), 11.
CHAPTER THREE
RILLS AND RIVERS:
F.W. BOREHAM'S PREACHING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (1888-1895).

A lake near the site of F.W. Boreham’s Church at Theydon Bois, where he served as Student Pastor. Photograph by the author.

“My life resembled a lake into which many rills and rivers were emptying themselves, yet which had no outlet for its ever-accumulating waters.”

F.W. Boreham looking back on his early years in the United Kingdom, as quoted in Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 70.
1. INTRODUCTION.

Reflecting on his earliest years as an impressionable boy and adolescent, F.W. Boreham once wrote that it was as though his influences were shaping him like rills and rivers.\textsuperscript{35} This chapter details a number of these formative factors, to see if they reflected the young preacher discovering his own voice and developing his confidence as a preacher.

The chapter begins by outlining the social and ecclesial context to which Boreham was preaching in the United Kingdom during the late nineteenth century. This context is compared with the early influences that shaped F.W. Boreham’s sermons, in order to show whether his preaching was unique or a product of its time.

2. F.W. BOREHAM IN CONTEXT.

a. The Society

F.W. Boreham was born in Royal Tunbridge Wells (Kent) on 3 March 1871. His early childhood and churchgoing was thus set against the backdrop of Victorian England. There were a range of key factors and events during this time, which shaped late Victorian society. Growing economic wealth together with “a cluster of restraining moral attributes- earnestness, respectable comportment and behaviour, character, duty, hard work and trust” marked the period from the 1850s to the 1870s.\textsuperscript{36} A popular book of the times was a self-help manual on manners by Samuel Smiles. It was also an era noted for its scientific advances with the publication of Charles Darwin’s \textit{Origin of the Species} in 1859.

William Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli were the dominant political figures during the later stages of the Victorian era. Disraeli served as Prime Minister from 1874-1880 and brought about a number of progressive pieces of legislation to tackle social

\begin{itemize}
\item[Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 70.]
\end{itemize}
issues. In particular he advanced the cause of the fifty-six hour week for labourers and factory-workers that was ratified in 1878. In addition to demanding work environments, the Industrial Revolution was leaving its mark on cities such as London which were both polluted and overcrowded. William Booth reported that in the year 1890 London had “2,157 people found dead, 2,297 had committed suicide, 30,000 were living in prostitution, 160,000 had been convicted of drunkenness and more than 900,000 were classed as paupers.”37 In response to these social challenges and the growing power of industry, Gladstone sought to legalise unions and grant them legal protection.

In the 1890s the British Empire continued to expand and many in the United Kingdom took an active interest in other parts of the world. This growth was shown by the fact that from 1884-1896 2.5 million extra square miles of territory came under British colonial authority.38

b. The Church and Baptists.

Evangelicalism was the key influence on Boreham’s church and Baptists in the United Kingdom during the nineteenth century. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846 and its articles of association referred to the Trinity, human sin, eschatology, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, conversion, incarnation and atonement.39 A number of these areas were to become key evangelical emphases. The lasting features of evangelical belief can be neatly summarised as “conversion, the Bible, the cross and missionary activity.”40 Conversion was the door enabling the believer to enter into eternal salvation, the Bible was the authoritative word of God,41 the atonement of Christ won God’s reprieve for sin and this good news should be shared with everyone via evangelistic activities. Mission was linked to evangelism

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38 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Great Britain,” 90.
39 These articles are concisely summarized in David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 19-20.
40 Bebbington, *The Dominance*, 21.
41 The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* notes, “The Evangelicals were suspicious of rituals and of appeals to any authority other than that of the Bible.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Great Britain,” 87.
and figures such as David Livingstone in Africa were viewed as role models. These were the pillars of faith and theology for the evangelical church in the United Kingdom.

Preaching was the means by which these beliefs could be disseminated to the congregation and the wider world. In some sermons the mere mention of the Bible, without any creative additions, was thought to be sufficient for salvation. Creativity was resisted in many quarters and in its place was a call for expository preaching. Baptists shared this focus on an expository style whereby sermons were often “a medley of Biblical texts employed to support or controvert a particular theological tenet.”

At the Pastors’ College, a vital evangelical and Baptist post, the cross was seen as a theological centre-point. Many preachers throughout the United Kingdom copied those who reinforced these evangelical values, such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Dwight L. Moody.

The Evangelical movement was particularly strong in Clapham, a small village near London. Here important leaders such as William Wilberforce shared evangelical convictions but with a focus on social justice. In particular Wilberforce and others rallied against slavery, which was barred within the British Empire by the Emancipation Act (1833). A number of groups were founded in Clapham with an interest on improving social conditions. These included: The Church Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, The Society for Bettering the Condition for the Poor and the Society for the Reformation of Prison Discipline. The establishment of the Salvation Army also reflected this focus on everyday concerns as a response to growing industrialisation. In 1890 William Booth, the founder of the Army, wrote a book called In Darkest England and the Way Out as a means of

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42 Henry Gaud, the President of the Australian Methodist Conference in 1867, called for “God’s truth” not “fancies and speculations.” He was an advocate for “a plain and perspicuous style.” Henry Gaud, Christian Advocate and Wesleyan Record (10 April 1867), 16, quoted in Bebbington, The Dominance, 86.


44 Bebbington writes that Spurgeon and Moody “earned enormous respect and widespread imitation.” Bebbington, The Dominance, 37.
beginning to address the concerns of rapid population growth, overcrowding and spiritual decline.\textsuperscript{45}

In addition to the rise of evangelicalism there were other significant factors impacting Christians in the United Kingdom during the nineteenth century. One important change occurred with the Oxford Movement, led by John Henry Newman who advocated for one holy and apostolic church. Newman and others insisted on a more liturgical and ordered approach to worship with an emphasis on ritual and ceremony. In 1845 Newman became a Roman Catholic and over the next six years a number of Anglican priests followed his example.\textsuperscript{46}

Many Baptists responded strongly against this trend towards a greater emphasis on ritual and liturgy, with J.H.Y. Briggs noting that the Catholic Renewal was “partly responsible for the development of low views of churchmanship, ministry and the sacraments.”\textsuperscript{47} Baptists moved away from formal structures and practices and gave particular attention to the rise of evangelistic techniques and Sunday Schools. This led to some tensions between those who wanted the church to grow numerically and those who sought spiritual development amongst covenanted members.\textsuperscript{48}

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, these discordant notes between evangelism and personal spiritual growth were brought into greater harmony. Dr. Richard Glover, a Baptist in Bristol, expressed this goal neatly when he stated that the New Testament stressed both personal response and personal responsibility.\textsuperscript{49} Some Baptists such as John Clifford led the way in taking this approach further by adopting a focus on evangelism that was centred on issues of social justice. Clifford argued that, “The church existed not for itself but for a world of need.”\textsuperscript{50} The emphasis was

\textsuperscript{45} The notes in this paragraph are a summary of Shelley, \textit{Church History in Plain Language}, 364-393.
\textsuperscript{46} Shelley, \textit{Church History in Plain Language}, 370-1.
\textsuperscript{47} Briggs, \textit{The English Baptists}, 11.
\textsuperscript{49} Briggs, \textit{The English Baptists}, 27.
\textsuperscript{50} Briggs, \textit{The English Baptists}, 25.
on ‘Applied Christianity,’ that is faith with a practical focus. Clifford defined ‘Applied Christianity’ as being comprised of “vast, cosmopolitan movements, strong in the passion of the cross, rich in the spirit of self-sacrifice and prophetic in addressing issues of good for all men (sic.).”51

These trends towards an evangelistic and practical form of Christianity led to the rapid growth in the number of Baptists in Britain during the nineteenth century. Members of Baptist churches grew from 40,763 in the United Kingdom in 1834, to 182,875 in 1868 and 353,083 in 1900. Sunday School numbers also increased dramatically from 189,971 in 1867 to 516,346 in 1900.52

Baptists were interested in a pragmatic approach to Christian faith at the end of the Victorian era. In 1887 a theological dispute arose where C.H. Spurgeon accused Baptist leaders and ministers of promoting a watered down version of Christianity, whereby old Calvinist doctrines had been diluted. This came to be known as the ‘Down-Grade’ controversy, which led to Spurgeon’s subsequent withdrawal from the Baptist Union.53 The fall out among Baptists was small however and most churches and ministers maintained their practical affiliations with one another, such that both General (Arminian) and Particular (Calvinist) Baptists became a single Union of churches in 1891.

c. F.W. Boreham’s Preaching Background.

Although F.W. Boreham attended the St John’s Anglican Church as a child, he was to become entrenched within the evangelical movement from his days at the Emmanuel Church in Tunbridge Wells. After moving to London at the age of sixteen, he picked up on the theme of mission by beginning his speaking career giving evangelistic

messages in outdoor settings in the evangelical stronghold of Clapham in 1888. He then quickly seized the opportunity to address a church community. It came with less than an hour’s notice, on Sunday 31 May 1891 at the Park Crescent Congregational Church. Throughout the remainder of 1891 Boreham preached to other congregations such as the church near the Wandsworth Road Railway Station. At the beginning of 1892 he accepted an invitation to become the regular preacher at the Park Crescent Congregational Church. The church announced its new appointment with a notice stating:

“Mr. Frank Wm. Boreham (Author of Won to Glory & c.)
Will preach the Gospel of Christ
On Sunday next, and until
Further notice,
At 11A.M. and 6:30P.M.”

The young preacher stayed at the Park Crescent Congregational Church for the next five months. He left this church on 26 July 1892 to become a student at the Pastors’ College (later to become Spurgeon’s College). For the rest of 1892 F.W. Boreham spoke at a variety of churches, such as the Kenyon Baptist Church in Brixton and at Forest Row, which often had student preachers from the Pastors’ College. This changed in August 1893 when he was appointed as the Student Pastor of the Baptist church at Theydon Bois, a small village north of London. The church grew and developed during his time as minister, with the establishment of a new building and several baptisms. In late 1894 Boreham sensed a call of God to minister at the Mosgiel Baptist Church in New Zealand.

The majority of the sixteen manuscripts from the United Kingdom are taken from this later period at Theydon Bois but there are also sermons from 1891-1892. These earlier messages were delivered at the church near the Wandsworth Rd. Railway Station, the Park Crescent Congregational Church in Clapham, Kenyon Baptist in Brixton and at Forest Row. These sermons provide a valuable cross-section of F.W.

54 F.W. Boreham came into contact with a group who organised open-air evangelistic campaigns. He gave his first address on a street corner in Clapham. His theme was a text from the scriptures: “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 80.
55 Crago, The Story, 45.
Boreham’s early ministry and reveal a variety of shapers that were beginning to mould his preaching. Some of these influences were evident from the beginning as controlling factors throughout the manuscripts. Others were more like rills- barely formed and just starting to take shape.

3. INFLUENCES ON F.W. BOREHAM'S PREACHING


The common at Tunbridge Wells. Photograph by the author.

Frank William Boreham was raised in the village of Tunbridge Wells (Kent), which is located an hour’s train ride south of London. During Boreham’s lifetime his birthplace provided a stark contrast to industrial cities such as London, Manchester or Newcastle with their smokestacks and growing pollution. Today Tunbridge Wells remains a picturesque village, surrounded by lush English countryside. A large common, or public garden, still dominates the western side of the town, as it did in F.W. Boreham’s time.
The captivating beauty of F.W. Boreham’s surroundings in the Kent countryside was to have an influence upon his preaching. The end of the Victorian era was also noted for the ongoing influence of Romanticism that placed an emphasis on aesthetics and beauty.

Boreham encountered nature and beauty in a variety of ways. The experience of walking to church had just as profound an effect on him as did each service itself. His father, Francis, was a keen walker, and on many occasions he would find a new way to walk to the Sunday worship service. Each moment in the creation was an experience to be savoured for the young F.W. Boreham.\(^{56}\) It was sacramental, a place resonant with God and grandeur. The family also went out for walks on Saturdays. Their father would season these hikes by means of using his “raucy conversation about nature.”\(^{57}\) The key was to observe one’s surroundings. F.W. Boreham was taught to cherish the natural world.

Later, when Boreham returned to Tunbridge Wells on a trip from New Zealand, he described its surrounds as follows:

>“Its sylvan valleys, bespangled with primroses and bluebells and violets, its fragrant hedgerows aglow with the hawthorn and the honeysuckle; its exquisite parks carpeted with an infinite variety of ferns and flowers; its verdant and undulating common . . . its magnificent forests; its romantic walks; its arching avenues; its giant rocks and dainty mosses.”\(^{58}\)

These are the notes of someone who as a child was an observer, who paid attention to his environment. However, although nature was an influence on his preaching, it did take time to develop.

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\(^{56}\) He wrote: “We always set out . . . in a perfect fever of curiosity and every step of the way was made brimful of interest.” F.W. Boreham, *The Other Side of the Hill* (London: The Epworth Press, 1917), 113.


The impact of nature on his early preaching was borne out in two ways. Firstly there were some illustrations in his sermons that referred specifically to the creation, such as “snow on cottages.” 59 This was a pervasive image of newness in Christ that covered everything— all sins and mistakes. Another strong picture from the environment, contained in these early sermon manuscripts, was called “arctic rivers.” 60 Here Boreham included a quotation to elaborate on what he meant. The quote stated: “Some Christians like the rivers which flow into the Arctic Ocean are frozen over at the mouths.” 61 Again this scene may have been an effective illustration, as it could have been easy for a listener to picture what a frozen river might look like and to visualise an Arctic landscape filled with snow and icebergs.

Despite these references, it was only in his sermons after 1895 that Boreham allowed the creation to have free reign as an illustrator of divine truth. 62 As an example of this, on 4 February 1894 he delivered a message at Theydon Bois that was entitled “A word fitly spoken.” 63 The text for the day was Proverbs 25:11 and the headings chosen related both to the passage and the audience. It was a literal reading of the verse. By the time he reached Hobart and gave the same sermon in 1910, the title and headings had changed dramatically. The new theme was freed from a literal interpretation and modified to “Lips like Lilies.” 64 The headings were: “Some like thistles, some like poppies, some like violets, some like daisies.” 65 He thought that a person’s use of language could be thorny, misused, loving or divine. Nature was his

59 F.W. Boreham. 1892. “Walk in the newness of life.” Sermon, Clapham, United Kingdom, 12 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript. As with all of Boreham’s manuscripts, this illustration was denoted by a squiggly line underneath the key phrase or title of the story.
60 F.W. Boreham. 1894. “A word fitly spoken.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 4 February, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
61 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
62 A notable exception, where Boreham did use nature as a guiding force, was a sermon entitled “Roots, Shoots, Fruits” from Theydon Bois in March 1894. Here he preached on a text taken from Matthew 7:20: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” and said that Christians should be known not by their roots, or shoots but instead by their fruits. In this message he teased out some of these links with the natural world by holding, “It is well to be reminded that we are not saved by profession, sap brings shoots: not shoots sap.” F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Roots, Shoots, Fruits.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 25 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
63 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
65 Boreham, “Lips like Lilies.”
means of explaining the point and as such it had been given its full voice. Here were the flowers and colours of the common at Tunbridge Wells coming to life. This use of the real world also allowed for the possibility of different interpretations, as a metaphor from nature can be understood and pictured in different ways.

These relatively sparse references to the creation in his early sermons were nearly always used to explain a theological or practical issue. Nature, rather than being a revelation of God, was more illustrative of other forms of revelation. When Boreham spoke at Theydon Bois on the theme of Christians being released from condemnation, he used a scene from the natural world to make his point. Here there was a graphic backdrop of waves, wind and thunder, that only Christ could abate. Such references to nature were still rare by the time Boreham left England in 1895. In his final four sermons at Theydon Bois in late 1894 he only used one illustration from creation.

The second and more pervasive impact of the living world on his preaching was that it taught him to be curious. Boreham valued the instinct of curiosity highly. It was to become an invaluable tool both for the preparation and content of many of his sermons. He was able to gain spiritual merit or value from a simple phrase or word. His messages sought to probe the hidden depths of spiritual matters.

Therefore, more than providing illustrations, the natural world at this stage of his ministry gave Boreham a curious spirit. It was detailed and contained surprises that

66 F.W. Boreham. 1894. “No condemnation.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 20 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
67 In this sermon Boreham said that Christians were accused but not condemned. To show what it was like to be accused he drew a mental picture for his hearers. This started with a lifeboat that was tossed about by the waves and the wind. There were clouds overhead and the sound of thunder all about. Christ was the one to bring relief in the midst of this dramatic scene. The clouds, waves and thunder may have provided his message with a convincing natural backdrop to the point he was trying to make - that Christ was able to rescue a disciple from danger, from condemnation. Boreham, “No condemnation.”
68 This was contained in a sermon on the second coming of Christ entitled: “Behold! I come quickly” taken from Revelation 22:12. The reference was to the impact Christ’s second coming would have on the “heavens- earth- sea.” F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Behold! I come quickly.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 17 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
69 Boreham commented, “The world owes more than it can ever acknowledge to the instinct of curiosity, and so do I.” F.W. Boreham, The Home of the Echoes (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), 25.
could be unravelled. For Boreham the scriptures held a similar kind of detail. He was able to take, and sometimes even twist, a single phrase or sentence from a text into several different places and meanings. Sometimes this would not exactly accord with what the text itself was saying. For example on 10 December 1893 he preached a sermon at Theydon Bois, which was based on one sentence of scripture: “Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord” (Deut. 6:12).70 From these six words he constructed five points: “To forget God: is to miss the chief object of life, is Satan’s most subtle temptation, is to abandon hope, is to forget all that’s worth remembering, is impossible.”71 One sentence had been not only expounded, but expanded as well, to cover a variety of topics. It had unfolded and opened up, like many things in nature.

It was only in his later years that Boreham allowed this sense of curiosity to spread from himself to his congregation. Perhaps part of the reason for his initial reluctance to feed the theme of creation into his sermons was that Boreham believed at this stage of his ministry that nature was restricted in terms of revealing God. He said that it was “the shell and not the kernel . . . the part and not the whole.”72 It could not meet the deepest needs of a person’s soul.73 Boreham’s earliest sermons allowed only a little room for creativity or the creation. This suggests that he was yet to find his self-assurance as a minister and preach in full voice.

b. Stories.

While Francis Boreham imparted to his son a love of nature, his mother gave him a passion for stories. Fanny Boreham revelled in tales from the Bible and beyond. As a storyteller, she had a profound influence upon her young son’s impressionable mind.74

70 F.W. Boreham. 1893. “Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 10 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
71 Boreham, “Beware!”
73 F.W. Boreham, The Golden Milestone and Other Bric A Brac (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1915), 121-5. Here he wrote that while “nature is very, very beautiful,” “there are things for which my soul is aching, but which neither bush nor beach can give me. I need a Saviour.”
74 In this regard F.W. Boreham shared something in common with one of his models for ministry, George Augustus Selwyn, an early Bishop in New Zealand. In his biography on Selwyn, Boreham commented that Selwyn’s mother fired him with “apostolic passion and dauntless devotion.” F.W. Boreham, George Augustus Selwyn: Pioneer Bishop of New Zealand (London: S.W. Partridge & Co. Ltd., 1911), 23.
Every Sunday night Fanny would share her stories around the fireplace, while her husband went to an evening church service. Here characters would come to life.

This regular Sunday night ritual fostered in the budding minister a deep love of storytelling that would later become a vital feature of his preaching style. F.W. Boreham once recounted that of all the stories he had heard “none ever moved me like those stories that in the flickering light, mother told.”75 Faith and stories were linked for Boreham right from the very beginning. From his mother he learnt that stories were able to animate and inform faith.76

However, as with his use of nature, it took time for this influence of storytelling to have a significant impact upon F.W. Boreham’s preaching. There was a restricted use of illustrations in all of his manuscripts from 1891-1892. This changed in 1893. When Boreham preached at Theydon Bois on 25 June of that year there were ten illustrations contained within this single manuscript. These stories ranged from historical occurrences to observations drawn from everyday life, such as how a teacher instilled learning in a child. Something had shifted. Stories became more central. F.W. Boreham did not mention the reason for this in his writing, but there were two possible explanations suggested by his own situation. Firstly during 1892-1893, Boreham undertook regular preaching exercises in front of his fellow students and faculty at the Pastors’ College. He may have learnt from the sermons of the other students or from their feedback on his own messages the importance of including a tantalising narrative. Secondly, preaching every week at Theydon Bois meant that he had to work harder to hold the congregation’s attention. He no longer had the novelty of the itinerant preacher being able to deliver a one-off sermon. Preaching in the same location meant that he needed to add a richer variety of material in his messages.

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75 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 26.
76 Some of these stories stayed with Boreham for the rest of his life. He wrote, for example, “The conception of the cross that is always in my mind in preaching and in writing is the conception that took shape within me at the fireside in those days of long ago.” Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 30.
As F.W. Boreham began to include more stories in 1893, he had a special affinity with those he considered to be arresting. These narratives were designed to capture the congregation’s attention and to leave them spellbound. Here it is easy to see the ongoing influence of his early experiences as an outdoor preacher. For example, in a message on the theme of: “A word fitly spoken,”77 he started with a tale about Aesop. The topic of his address was how language could build up or destroy others. He told a memorable story of how Aesop provided proof to his Master Xanthus that tongues could either be the best or the worst things in society.78 A graphic image was given of Aesop returning from the market with an animal’s tongue that he served for supper on two separate occasions.

This simple episode could have created an unforgettable mental picture for Boreham’s hearers. It may have held them riveted as they listened to the rest of his sermon describing how to use words wisely. It had both humour and human interest, valuable tools that Boreham adopted from his experiences as an evangelistic outdoor preacher. It would also have pierced the collective imagination and memory of the church community.

F.W. Boreham often enjoyed introducing these types of dramatic tales. When he preached on the text “there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ,”79 he drew his listeners in by having them imagine a courtroom setting. He painted the picture of a hushed courtroom waiting for a verdict- guilty or not guilty. Every person in the court was on the edge of their seats. Satan stood as chief prosecutor, sins were the convicting evidence, the jury was each person’s conscience and the final sentence from the judge was: “Depart from me.”80 Even reading the manuscript it is easy to imagine the judge’s gavel being delicately poised above his head, as he was about to deliver his verdict. Just at the moment of condemnation Christ entered the room to

77 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
78 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
79 Boreham, “No condemnation.”
80 Boreham, “No condemnation.”
release the congregation from its “chains, fetters and manacles.”
They were to be free forever.

For a story to be effective, as well as being emotionally engaging, it must also draw a gripping conclusion. It needs suspense. F.W. Boreham’s courtroom tale gathered in momentum, like the pages of a murder mystery. It was a creative, fresh way of telling an old story. It rushed towards resolution. Boreham had learnt from his mother this art of animating a good story.

Some stories also had more life than others. The ones F.W. Boreham remembered were those that moved him emotionally. He wrote that when his mother spoke of the cross she could bring him to tears. Emotion became an important way of telling the story. These strong feelings were particularly contained in the gospel accounts of Jesus’ death. Four days before leaving for New Zealand F.W. Boreham preached at the Tunbridge Wells Tabernacle. The title of his address was, “Who bore our sins.” Time and again throughout his message he used the story of the cross. He spoke of Jesus’ burden in carrying the cross and of his thirst. The congregation was taken to Calvary and Gethsemane. Boreham himself may have been returning to his mother’s fireside stories for one last time on English soil. The story of the cross was not just dramatic, for Boreham it was the central story of faith. It was the believer’s manifesto and continued to have an impact upon his early preaching. It was his central motif, just as it was for many evangelicals.

The cross was also positive and laden with hope. The gospel story had resolution. At this stage of his ministry Boreham loved a story with a happy ending, like those that his mother told around the fire at Wroxton Lodge. When he reflected on these tales he

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81 Boreham, “No condemnation.”
82 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 30.
said that they were drawn from an age of “chivalry and . . . gold,” and were “remote
and rainbow-tinted.”

This desire for rainbow-flecked tales coloured Boreham’s reading of the Bible and his
presentation of it in his sermons. Stories of triumph, rather than tragedy, from the
Scriptures sat more comfortably with the preacher in training. As a result, Boreham
was not always faithful in his interpretation of a given text. For example, when he
preached on Ezekiel chapters 1-3 he spoke of what it meant to serve God effectively.
His final point was the “secret of successful service.” However, he had little in his
manuscript about the cost of service, which is the major thrust of the passage itself.
There is no mention in Boreham’s manuscript or sermon topics about how “briers and
thorns” would surround Ezekiel or that the prophet would “dwell among scorpions.”
Instead Boreham skipped these verses of tragedy and trial. He rushed ahead to chapter
3 verse 14 that contains a vision of God’s glory. While Boreham finished by speaking
of how faithful service could be successful, in this sermon he brushed over some
important themes in the text itself. At times in these earlier manuscripts Boreham
was afraid of speaking the hard word to his congregation or of detailing a message
that in any way could be construed as being negative. He wanted stories with a happy
ending.

This point of not telling the whole story is also borne out in a message that Boreham
gave at Theydon Bois, from the Book of Hosea. He chose as his theme the phrase:
“I will allure her.” This sense of allurement was the main focus of Boreham’s address
as he spoke of the “cause, nature and purpose” of the allurement by God. This
represents the one single positive part of the Hosea text. Boreham left out large

84 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 26.
85 F.W. Boreham. 1891. “Some secrets of successful service.” Sermon, Wandsworth, United Kingdom, 20 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
86 The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments - Translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his Majesty’s special command (London: The Cambridge University Press). In each of these sermon manuscripts Boreham cited from the King James Version of the Bible.
87 The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments.
88 F.W. Boreham. 1894. “I will allure her.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 11 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
89 Boreham, “Some Secrets.”
portions of the passage that refer to Israel being like a “whore.”

God’s judgment from the text was not mentioned by F.W. Boreham. Instead he cushioned the language of the passage by stating that Israel “had ceased to love the Lord” and “was drawing pleasure from other sources.” While Boreham may have loved Biblical stories, he did not necessarily want to tell the whole story from a passage. Instead he sometimes shaped and pared away the rougher edges that might be contained within a given text. He hastened to get to the positive message, rather than stay with notes of condemnation or judgement.

In a revealing statement, Boreham wrote in one of his manuscripts that certain words should be used sparingly, if at all. This list included words of “anger and rebuke.” Boreham followed his own advice in these early sermons and seemed unwilling to include notes of anger or rebuke from the Scriptures. He found it hard to move beyond the rainbow-tinted stories of his mother. This struggle for honesty is not unusual for any young preacher. It often takes time to gain enough confidence to be able to leave a strong challenge with a congregation and to bring a word of reproach from the Bible. As with his reluctance to mention the creation, this avoidance of hard topics suggests that Boreham was yet to find his voice as a preacher.

Another element largely missing from these sermons is biographical stories. Boreham noted in his autobiography that he particularly enjoyed reading biographies as a young boy and teenager. Yet in these early years of his ministry he rarely referred to the life stories of others. There were two exceptions to this point. The first was in a message from Theydon Bois in 1894. Here there were a number of references to historical figures, but while most of these have been added at a later date, the

90 The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testament.
91 Statements of judgment in the King James include Hosea 1:6: “I will have no more mercy upon the house of Israel”, 2:10 “I will discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers”, 2:12 “I will destroy her vines and her fig trees.” The Holy Bible.
92 Boreham, “I will allure her.”
93 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
94 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 9.
95 F.W. Boreham, 1894. “Behold the King’s Spear!” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 11 November, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
inclusion of some references suggests a growing influence.\textsuperscript{96} History became more important as F.W. Boreham developed as a preacher and pastor. In his last sermon at Tunbridge Wells he finished with a poem citing Randolph Murray’s words to the elders at Edinburgh after their loss at Flodden and the death of the King.\textsuperscript{97}

c. George Jones and the Emmanuel Church

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Emmanuel_Church.png}
\caption{The site of the Emmanuel Church in Tunbridge Wells. Photograph by the author.}
\end{figure}

F.W. Boreham’s preaching was also cultivated by factors outside of his family home at Upper Grosvenor Road. He was influenced by the context and the faith of those

\textsuperscript{96} For example, there was a reference in this manuscript to William Wallace. This was added later as it was taken from an article in the \textit{British Monthly} on November 1, 1901, 607.

\textsuperscript{97} F.W. Boreham, “Who bore our sins.” The poem was written by W.E. Aytoun and contained the words: “Never yet was royal banner, steeped in such a costly dye! It hath lain upon a bosom, where no other shroud shall lie! Sirs, I charge you, keep it holy, keep it as a sacred thing/ for the stain ye see upon it, Was- the life blood of your King.”
around him. The village of Tunbridge Wells had a strong evangelical heritage. The names of the streets and sites around town, such as Mount Sion and Mount Ephraim, bore out this vibrant Christian past. Francis and Fanny Boreham lived out this legacy by attending the St John’s Anglican Church and later the Emmanuel Church on Mount Ephraim. The latter was part of the Countess of Huntington’s connexion and was situated near the family home of Wroxtton Lodge. Fanny and Francis sought to pass their faith onto their son.

During his years in Tunbridge Wells from 1871-1887, F.W. Boreham heard many sermons and met several ministers. The first of these was one of his earliest models for ministry, Rev. George Jones, who served at the Emmanuel Church from 1849-1888. During this time he established a girls’ school and was later remembered as an “active educationist parson.” Boreham believed Rev. Jones to be a model minister. The sight of Jones walking to the pulpit in his cassock and stole left quite a mark on Boreham’s impressionable mind. However, his memories of church were not always favourable under George Jones’ leadership.

F.W. Boreham struggled to see a purpose in the preaching of his church minister. He reflected that the sermons at Emmanuel under Jones’ tenure “seemed so hopelessly remote from real life and from the pleasures and pursuits of the week.” He continued that he was not able to detect much application or purpose in many of the messages that he heard at the Emmanuel Church.

This question of usefulness in preaching was one that Boreham often returned to in his writing. The perceived lack of application in the sermons at Emmanuel was to have a lasting influence on him. It haunted him that his own efforts could be

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98 The Archbishop of Canterbury remarked in 1888, “Tunbridge Wells was a kind of sacred city... They looked upon it from without as a kind of modern Jerusalem.” Alan Savage, Royal Tunbridge Wells: A History of a Spa Town. Revised by Charlie Bell (Tunbridge Wells: Oast Books, 1995), 151.


100 Savage, Royal Tunbridge Wells, 158.

101 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 20

102 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 47.
described as being without practical value.\textsuperscript{103} Boreham believed that sermons should be related to real life and of the “simplest kind- exhortations to pity, consideration, gentleness and counsels as to the common duties of life.”\textsuperscript{104}

This desire to be useful was a driving force behind many of F.W. Boreham’s sermons in England. He wanted his messages to make sense and to have a clear application. He preached for practical impact. The earliest manuscripts from Boreham’s time in England have little Biblical context and are not exegetical in approach. Instead he was nearly always anxious to get to the main point and apply the Biblical narrative to real life. He wanted his preaching to adopt a topical style. The applications in this approach were often limited to the realm of the individual rather than society.

At times this stress on usefulness would be at the expense of mentioning God. The first sermon with a structure centred on God was given in Christmas 1893.\textsuperscript{105} Up until this point Boreham’s sermons looked at the “we” of the congregation. There are many examples of this throughout his topic headings such as: “We are to have life, we are to enjoy newness of life, we are to walk in newness of life” (emphasis mine).\textsuperscript{106} Boreham was desperate to connect with his listeners and to give them simple, clear and achievable applications. He was a young minister hoping to communicate effectively with his congregation.

His earliest efforts from 1891-1893 might be labelled: ‘Leaves from a manual on Christian living.’ In this stage of ministry he explored how Christians should serve, walk in newness of life, be saved, know the Lord, remember God, live out the fruits of the Spirit and speak. These topics were useful and practical, but they were not always accurate exegetically. They were concerned with the issue of right living and holiness. One further example of his desire for usefulness was contained in a sermon

\textsuperscript{103} He commented, “It is certainly most humiliating when our congregations go home” and do not understand what they have just heard. For any speaker this would be a “wholesome horror’ if their people should ask: ‘What on earth was the Minister talking about?’” F.W. Boreham, \textit{Faces in the Fire} (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1916), 266.

\textsuperscript{104} Boreham, \textit{The Other Side}, 142.

\textsuperscript{105} F.W. Boreham. 1893. “A Saviour and a great one.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 24 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{106} Boreham, “Walk in the newness of life.”

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he gave on how best to use one’s words. His thesis was that “the word spoken should always fit the speaker and the hearer.” Boreham wanted his messages to have real life application for his congregation, to influence their actions, words, emotions and thoughts. While he may have admired George Jones’ ministry, he did not want to share in his legacy of sermons that could not speak to the everyday concerns and issues of the individual believer.

d. Dwight L. Moody and Evangelistic Preaching

The visit of Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) to Tunbridge Wells had a profound influence on F.W. Boreham. In contrast to the preaching of George Jones and others at the Emmanuel Church, Boreham found Moody’s sermon easy to understand and to apply. Dwight L. Moody was the child of a bricklayer and his language was plain and direct. His stories moved Boreham. The American evangelist’s mood changed with the content of his sermon. Boreham recalled that: “He became sometimes impassioned and sometimes pathetic.” His preaching had emotional peaks and troughs and was marked with variety. This was preaching not as a lecture, but more as a performance. It was intimate, warm, and moving. The goal was conversion.

Moody’s sermon in Tunbridge Wells was based upon a single text and one simple sentence, yet its impact was ongoing. When the American evangelist revisited the United Kingdom in 1893 Boreham was a young man at the Pastors’ College. Over the space of a fortnight he heard him preach on thirty or forty occasions. Once more he

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107 Boreham, “A word fitly spoken.”
108 He later recalled Moody’s visit to Tunbridge Wells by writing that he could still picture “the temporary platform on which he stood; the great crowd; the languor of the sultry summer’s day, the smell of the grass; the American twang in the preacher’s voice; the text; the line of reasoning; the telling illustrations and above all, the passionate appeal—those all come back to me.” F.W. Boreham, The Uttermost Star and Other Gleams of Fancy (London: The Epworth Press, 1919), 179. The date of these visits was between 1881-1883.
109 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 51.
111 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 52.
112 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 95.
was taken by Moody’s captivating presentation and unforgettable style of delivery.\textsuperscript{113} Moody left a lasting impression on F.W. Boreham. In \textit{My Pilgrimage} he reflected:

“I doubt if any of the students of that day have ever shaken off, or would like to shake off, the impact upon their own plastic and impressionable minds of the rugged and commanding personality of Mr. Moody.”\textsuperscript{114}

The impact was that Moody’s sermons contained much of the evangelistic theology that was adopted by F.W. Boreham. For example in one sermon Moody stated: “As I was coming along the street today I thought that if I could only impress upon you all that we have come to a vineyard, to reap and to gather.”\textsuperscript{115} Moody’s sermons, at times, lacked Biblical content and context and were based more on personal experiences. He drew from a strong atonement theology which saw the world as being “diseased.”\textsuperscript{116} His was a “simple gospel message.”\textsuperscript{117}

F.W. Boreham sought to emulate Dwight L. Moody’s preaching style and content. For Boreham, an evangelistic tone and direction would be the target of effective preaching. This need to evangelise was derived, in part, from Boreham’s own theology and his distaste for meaningless theory. In a message called “Roots, Shoots, Fruits,”\textsuperscript{118} Boreham outlined his abhorrence of mere doctrine. The reason for his rejection of doctrine alone was that it had “often been linked to a useless life, an unholy life and spiritual death.”\textsuperscript{119} For Boreham, theology, like preaching, needed to be useful and topical. It had to be personal. He held that salvation should lead to personal “devotion to Christ, piety of life, obedience, love for others, conformity to Christ and good works.”\textsuperscript{120}

This focus on salvation and evangelism had a profound impact on Boreham’s sermons. On two occasions prior to Christmas in 1892 and 1893 he chose to preach

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} He wrote that Moody was like “a volcano in ceaseless eruption, a miracle of tireless activity.” Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 96.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 96.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Dwight L. Moody, \textit{The Best of all his Works} (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 14.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Moody, \textit{The Best}, 15.
\item \textsuperscript{117} D.W. Bebbington, \textit{Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A history from the 1730’s to the 1980’s} (London: Routledge, 1995), 162.
\item \textsuperscript{118} F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Roots, Shoots, Fruits.”
\item \textsuperscript{119} Boreham, “Roots, Shoots, Fruits.”
\item \textsuperscript{120} Boreham, “Roots, Shoots, Fruits.”
\end{itemize}
on the topic of salvation, rather than focus exclusively on the details of the birth narratives of Jesus in Matthew and Luke. In 1892 at Forest Row while he began by exploring the details of the angelic declaration, his understanding of this cry was related to the whole ministry of Christ, not just his birth or incarnation.\textsuperscript{121} Here the text was both expounded and expanded to apply to the death of Christ on the cross. This address was laden with the crucifixion, from the beginning to the end. At the start Boreham said that the incarnation was “only surpassed by Calvary.”\textsuperscript{122} His emphasis on evangelism was all-encompassing.

His next Christmas sermon at Theydon Bois in 1893 also contained a heavy dose of this theological medicine that could cure all spiritual maladies. The difference with his 1892 Christmas sermon was that here the focus was on Jesus more than Boreham’s listeners. This was borne out in the chosen theme which was “A Saviour and a great one.”\textsuperscript{123} He began by stating that Jesus was sent into the world to save many and in a rare autobiographical note he added that “he has saved me.”\textsuperscript{124} Jesus came to deliver people from hell and the curse of sin to life, heaven and holiness. Here was Boreham’s theological medicine in a bottle- that sin could be healed by Christ and the cross.\textsuperscript{125} The direction was undeniably evangelistic and the tone often imperative, although the latter did diminish with time. For example, in a sermon from 1891 he stated that in regard to service the “call must be heard, must be obeyed.”\textsuperscript{126} By 1893 his sermons became more invitational. In a message on remembering God while adopting an imperative theme: “Beware!” Boreham concluded with a point

\textsuperscript{121} The angelic statement was: “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good will toward men.” F.W. Boreham. 1892. “Christmas Sermon.” Sermon, Forest Row, United Kingdom, Christmas 1892 (no exact date provided), Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{122} Boreham, “Christmas Sermon. ”

\textsuperscript{123} Boreham, “A Saviour and a great one.”

\textsuperscript{124} Boreham, “A Saviour and a great one.” F.W. Boreham rarely referred to himself or his family in his messages. No mention was ever made of the disability that he suffered as a young person in a train accident at Tunbridge Wells or of Stella and the children in any of his manuscripts.

\textsuperscript{125} F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Bethel.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 3 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript. In this sermon Boreham stated that it was at Bethel that God revealed “his provision, his presence and his power.”

\textsuperscript{126} F.W. Boreham. 1891. “Some secrets of successful service.” Sermon, Wandsworth, United Kingdom, 20 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
reminding his hearers that while they may forget all, they should still “remember him.”127 The tone here was lighter, it was encouraging and pastoral.

Another shift began to occur in the flavour of his sermons from Christmas 1893. Boreham slowly became more concerned with a variety of important theological themes that extended beyond atonement. He began to add more comprehensive notes of context at the beginning of his sermons, detailing what had been happening in previous passages or providing more background for a given Biblical character. He was not as rushed to get to the point of application and sometimes even allowed the only application to come from the Biblical character in the text itself.

These theological themes continued to come into sharper focus during his final months at Theydon Bois. He spoke of sin on a variety of occasions. He tackled the theme of eschatology in a message delivered at Theydon Bois on 17 June 1894.128 In this sermon the stress was on offering instruction about Christ’s Second Coming. This address provided a number of details about Boreham’s eschatology. He believed that Christ’s Second Coming would be “glorious, unexpected and sudden.”129 The purpose of his coming would be to separate his own from those who did not know God. According to Boreham, Christ would return both to reward the faithful and to deliver “vengeance to the faithless.”130

Concepts of eschatology and soteriology were repeated in another sermon at Theydon Bois in 1894, entitled: “Salvation or Damnation.”131 Once more, Boreham returned to his evangelistic theology of choice. He was disparaging towards three kinds of preachers- those who gave people the sentiment that God is good, those who argued for works without faith or those who offered faith without works. What is interesting about this particular message is that it showed that Boreham was just beginning to work through the implications of this theology. The outcome of a sentimental faith

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127 Boreham, “Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord.”
128 F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Behold! I come quickly.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 17 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
129 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
130 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
131 Boreham, “Salvation or Damnation.”
was that there was “no sin, no justice, no cross, no hell.”\textsuperscript{132} This would lead to arrogance and inattentiveness. He argued that those who preached works caused people to rely on “ritualism and formality,” while those who offered faith without works led to “nominal Christianity.”\textsuperscript{133} In this sermon Boreham seemed to move from believing his theology to actually understanding it and its implications. His knowledge was beginning to broaden. To him, true faith was expressed by belief in the cross and works together.

In these later manuscripts, from 1894, Boreham did not place such a heavy emphasis on the need to connect immediately with the congregation. Instead, headings within each sermon often came directly from the Biblical text. For example, in a message on Christ stilling the storm at sea, he spoke of “the alarm of the disciples, the action of the master and the result.”\textsuperscript{134} In this way the application could be drawn directly from the passage itself.

This reflected one other development in his overall style during this time, which took shape during 1894. It was that he became increasingly able to combine his two main themes of right teaching and right living, or exegesis and application. In a sermon with an eschatological theme, he started by providing his teaching on the essence of Christ’s return.\textsuperscript{135} He finished with a note of application by speaking about the implications of his coming, for each person. In a sermon delivered first in late 1894 he started by looking at the cross theologically, but then closed by asking every Christian to treasure what Christ had done for them.\textsuperscript{136} In these messages he was able to move from what he saw as right teaching to right living. His style though was still undeniably evangelistic and aimed to mirror D.L. Moody- he was preaching for change in the hearts and minds of his congregation.

\textsuperscript{132} Boreham, “Salvation or Damnation.”
\textsuperscript{133} Boreham, “Salvation or Damnation.”
\textsuperscript{134} F.W. Boreham. 1894. “Peace! Be still.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 10 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{135} Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
\textsuperscript{136} Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”

Charles Spurgeon once implored his students to learn from successful ministry models.\(^{137}\) When F.W. Boreham went to London at just sixteen years of age in 1887, it gave him the opportunity to carry out Spurgeon’s advice. Boreham found London to be both thrilling and terrifying. He was overwhelmed by the sheer mass of people in the capital.\(^{138}\) This led to a crisis of identity, which he sought to resolve both by finding a deeper faith and looking to strong Christian examples of successful ministers.

Shortly after F.W. Boreham arrived in London he experienced a spiritual conversion. Although he had undoubtedly experienced God at Tunbridge Wells,\(^{139}\) he was to credit his shift away from the family home as bringing about significant development in his faith. It represented his spiritual awakening.

It also gave him the chance to learn from a number of powerful and well-known Christian leaders. His mind was impressionable.\(^{140}\) He was looking for ways to share his faith with others. He sought out other preaching models, to supplement George Jones and Dwight L. Moody’s influence upon him. One of the first in London to leave such a stamp was F.B. Meyer (1847-1929). Meyer had a profound impact upon Boreham’s life.\(^{141}\) In particular, Boreham was taken by Meyer’s practical emphasis on holiness. Meyer was, according to David Bebbington, “The only Baptist speaker to

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\(^{138}\) Boreham wrote, “London took my breath away. It appalled me. I had never imagined such pushing, jostling multitudes. I remember standing in the heart of the world’s metropolis, under the very shadow of St Paul’s, and shivering in the thick of the crowd at my own utter loneliness.” Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 58-9.

\(^{139}\) He even felt something of God’s presence was symbolised by the tower at his church. He said, “I was awed by a dim, subconscious sense of the vast, the sublime, the infinite that towered above me.” F.W. Boreham, *The Other Side*, 114.

\(^{140}\) Boreham reflecting back on this stage of his life noted, “My mind must have been as impressionable as a sensitive plate. The least thing swept me off my feet.” Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 61.

\(^{141}\) One example of this is that F.B. Meyer wrote the Introduction to Boreham’s first book. F.W. Boreham, *Won to Glory: A Review of the 24th Chapter of Genesis* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1891).
gain prominence on the Keswick platform before 1900." He often picked up on one of the themes of Keswick that was viewed as “a place where the practical outworking of a wholesome relationship with Jesus Christ is to be seen in transformed lives.”

F.W. Boreham enjoyed the way that Meyer’s preaching captured the listeners’ attention and feelings. Meyer would use his emotions throughout his Bible classes. At times he would leave his seat and exclaim: “O my brothers, I want you always to remember this!” Boreham joined one of Meyer’s classes with hundreds of others. The topics were closely related to F.B. Meyer’s own spiritual experiences. There was a practical undertone to his preaching, as Meyer was interested in the theme of right living. He argued that God’s word should be applied to “each individual in the audience.” It should be useful. As discussed previously, Boreham readily adopted a similar theme in his own messages. His stress on practical Christian living was closely aligned to Meyer’s focus on holiness.

However, Boreham’s sermons were not identical to Meyer’s. The main difference between Meyer and Boreham was that the former advocated an expository style of preaching. This meant taking one book of scripture and then preaching a series from it. Each verse could then be understood in its proper context. Boreham did not use this method of teaching from 1888-1895. He preferred to adopt an evangelistic style and to take a single text from a wide variety of Biblical sources.

Another person to leave an imprint on the young preacher’s sensitive mind was Dr. Joseph Parker (1830-1902), who spoke regularly at the City Temple Thursday Service in London. The lure was again the attractiveness and emotion of the speaker. Parker

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142 Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, 178.
144 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 65.
145 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 65.
147 Meyer, Expository Preaching, 91.
impacted his audience just like D.L. Moody. Boreham did see faults in Parker and his pronounced preaching style, but he also learnt from him.\textsuperscript{148}

Parker’s specific legacy for Boreham’s preaching was that he taught him the virtue and value of re-iterating what he said.\textsuperscript{149} This habit of repeating key points and entire sermons was also employed by F.B. Meyer. The positive aspect of this exercise was that if a sermon was re-told on a number of occasions it gave the speaker confidence. Pauses could be produced for dramatic effect. The preacher would seem to grasp for a word and then would emerge triumphant “like a diver who has found his pearl.”\textsuperscript{150}

Such a dramatic rhetorical device, if delivered effectively, would leave the audience spellbound. Repetition was imperative to Parker both within the same sermon and in terms of delivering the same sermon twice. These lessons were never to leave Boreham. He took this principle and adapted it to his own ministry.

Right from the very beginning this technique of repetition had a marked effect on F.W. Boreham. He was concerned with repeating his main themes, so as to drive his point home. Boreham was interested not just in poetry and memorable words as a way of remembering the sermon himself, but also as a means of reiteration for the congregation. For example, in the earliest sermon from 1891, Boreham formulated six headings all around the theme of service. These were: “The basis, attitude, enticement, authority, spirit and secret of service, for every Christian.”\textsuperscript{151} This duplication within the delivered sermon itself would have made the point clear to the congregation at Wandsworth. It gave Boreham a sharp focus. Such a concern for repetition is consistent in a number of sermons from this period.

One reason for highlighting certain words and themes over and again was simple. Boreham believed that every sermon or form of verbal communication had a certain

\textsuperscript{148} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 98.
\textsuperscript{149} Boreham commented that Dr. Parker “taught me- as also did Dr. Meyer- the high art of repeating myself.” Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 98.
\textsuperscript{150} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 99.
\textsuperscript{151} Boreham, “Some secrets.”
degree of “leakage.”152 That is, the hearers would only capture a limited portion of what was being said and because of this the pulpit was the place for ideas to be stressed and repeated. The more that a preacher’s content was re-affirmed, the more the congregation would retain it. As we have seen already, re-iteration of key ideas also allowed F.W. Boreham to preach without notes. For these reasons, repetition was a vital principle in Boreham’s preaching.

In time F.W. Boreham sought not just to repeat points from within a sermon, but to repeat an entire sermon at different locations, as well. However, he did not start out this way. Only one of his four messages from 1891 and 1892 was delivered again.153 This may have been because he felt that they were inadequate and not worthy of another hearing. This had changed by 1893. A sermon taking the topic, “Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord” was delivered at Theydon Bois, Godstone (a village in Surrey), Forest Row, the Kenyon Baptist Church (in Brixton) and finally the Mosgiel Baptist Church (New Zealand) over a two-year period.154 In 1894 Boreham gave a sermon entitled “Bethel” at the opening of a new church at Theydon Bois.155 He was to repeat this sermon on a number of occasions over the coming years. He delivered it when the Mosgiel Church was re-opened in 1895, at the opening of the Ashburton Baptist Church (New Zealand) in 1896, at unnamed locations in 1905 and 1907, at the Armadale Baptist Church in 1924 and at the Box Hill Baptist Church in 1925.

He also began to repeat sermons in quick succession. For example, a message on Christ stilling the storm in Mark’s gospel was delivered at Theydon Bois on 10 June 1894 and at Twickenham on 8 July of the same year.156 Another sermon with the theme, “Behold the King’s Spear!” was delivered nineteen times over the next

152 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 100. Boreham listed the causes of leakage for the congregation as being: “The acoustic properties of the building, the ears of the congregation, sultry conditions” and that “minds will wander.” Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 100.
153 Boreham, “Some secrets.”
154 F.W. Boreham. 1893. “Then we shall know if we follow on to know the Lord.” Sermon, Theydon Bois, United Kingdom, 25 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
155 Boreham, “Bethel.”
156 Boreham, “Peace! Be still.”
twenty-one years.\textsuperscript{157} A pattern had clearly been established by 1894 that sermons could be given time and again.

One more precedent was set in 1894. For the first time in these manuscripts, Boreham repeated parts of one sermon in another. In 1892 his farewell sermon at the Park Crescent Congregational Church assumed the headings: “We have here cause for madness, we have here cause for sadness and we have here cause for gladness.”\textsuperscript{158} Boreham re-stated these headings in a sermon delivered at Theydon Bois on 17 June 1894.\textsuperscript{159} His topic was the Second Coming of Christ. He said that the impact of Christ coming again was to usher “sadness, madness and gladness.”\textsuperscript{160} The headings were used in a different way, but repeated nonetheless. His emphasis on repetition had grown from re-iterating words and phrases within a given message, to re-telling entire sermons. Boreham would follow this path set by Dr. Parker for the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{161}

C.H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) was another preaching model from Boreham’s early time in London. Spurgeon was a commanding Baptist preacher in the late nineteenth century. His reputation as a thorough and informative teacher of the Scriptures was well established, but he did not captivate F.W. Boreham who claimed that he never felt fully engaged with what Spurgeon was saying.\textsuperscript{162} In Boreham’s eyes, Spurgeon lacked the raw emotion, drama and performance of Moody, Meyer, and Parker and he argued that his presence was not so much compelling as being rational and eloquent.\textsuperscript{163}

One key aim of Spurgeon’s messages was that, in his own words, they “should have real teaching in them and their doctrine should be solid, substantial and abundant.”\textsuperscript{164} This left Boreham feeling dry and concluding that the fires of passion in Spurgeon’s

\textsuperscript{157} Boreham, “Behold the King’s Spear!”
\textsuperscript{158} Boreham, “Farewell Sermon.”
\textsuperscript{159} Boreham, “Behold the King’s Spear!”
\textsuperscript{160} Boreham, “Behold the King’s Spear!”
\textsuperscript{162} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 64.
preaching had diminished as he reached the end of his career at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.\(^{165}\)

Despite these misgivings, some of Boreham’s later sermons from this period indicate a similarity to Spurgeon’s style of drawing application from the main theological point of a text.\(^{166}\) He also shared Spurgeon’s stress on evangelism and the cross. Like Spurgeon, Boreham preached from a variety of texts throughout the year, rather than adopting Meyer’s method of exploring one book of the Bible at a time. Both Spurgeon and Boreham preached from single passages.

C.H. Spurgeon clearly had a greater impact on F.W. Boreham than the young preacher realised. Before leaving for New Zealand, Boreham made mention of C.H.S. (Charles Haddon Spurgeon) in an illustration. This related to the point “it is an honour to have a great man concerned about you.”\(^ {167}\) Boreham could see the greatness of Spurgeon as a person, but not the clear impact that he had imparted on his own preaching.

A common thread running through each of Boreham’s preaching models, like Spurgeon, was that they all sought to bring about change in their listeners’ lives. This was also a driving factor behind Boreham’s sermons and influences, as well. For example, his stress on usefulness, evangelistic theology and repetition were all designed so that his sermons would have an impact upon his congregation. His desire was that his sermons should be remembered. In this way Boreham shared much with a number of preaching models, such as Dwight L. Moody, F.B. Meyer, Joseph Parker and C.H. Spurgeon. He drew from each of them and was yet to discover his own distinctive method of preaching.

\(^{165}\) Boreham, *My Pilgrimage*, 64.

\(^{166}\) There are numerous examples of this in Spurgeon’s Sermon Notes. In a sermon on Lot’s wife for example, he made the point that Lot lingered. Drawing from the text he reminded his congregation, “When our worldly occupation is incessant and takes up most of our thoughts, we are hindered from decision.” C.H. Spurgeon, *My Sermon-Notes. Genesis to Proverbs. A Selection from Outlines of Discourses Delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1887), 9.

\(^{167}\) Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
f. The Pastors’ College.

The influence of F.W. Boreham’s preaching models was consolidated by the period that he spent in theological training. After his baptism in 1890, Boreham was encouraged to apply for the Pastors’ College at the recommendation of his Minister, Rev. James Douglas. He started college on 9 August 1892. Together with the experience of working as the Student Pastor of Theydon Bois this was to have a significant influence on his preaching, in a variety of ways.

Every day a student of the College would be expected to deliver a sermon. This would then be critiqued by fellow students and faculty. When Boreham undertook this exercise he was complimented for his style of delivery and for the “light and popular touch about his utterances.” However, his presentations were not seen as being perfect. In particular, other students said that his high-pitched voice and monotonous delivery required further work. It is impossible to gauge from the manuscripts whether Boreham made these changes in his manner and delivery. What can be shown is that during his time at the Pastors’ College the use of stories and his treatment of theology did change markedly. Both became more detailed. This was in keeping with the overall movement of his sermons from 1892.

A vital part of College training was the discussion of sermon plans and outlines. Boreham’s earliest manuscripts were simple, outlining just one or two main points and filling them out with three or four illustrations. After completing training at the Pastors’ College, the last sermon that he preached in England was far more detailed. It had a greater emotional direction and the impact of it was heightened as Boreham’s ideas progressed. It was loaded with atonement theology and finished with a poem by

\[168\] Boreham noted in My Pilgrimage that this was the usual custom for each week.  
\[169\] Crago, The Story, 50.  
\[170\] Crago, The Story, 50.  
\[171\] Randall, A School, 18.
W.E. Aytoun.\textsuperscript{172} It would seem that he had carried out the plan for sermon outlines given to him at College.

Another influence was that the state of the College forced Boreham to continue with his study and research long after he had completed his course. When he commenced in 1892 C.H. Spurgeon had just died, soon to be followed by the College Principal, David Gracey. This meant that classes could be cancelled at short notice. This compelled Boreham to conduct his own reading and it was also a constant reminder of the somewhat incomplete nature of his theological education. These two aspects would become vital points for the level of reading and research that Boreham would later feed into his sermons in other pastorates.\textsuperscript{173} He would pursue lifelong learning.

A further influence from the Pastors’ College was the lecturer Dr. A.T. Pierson. Boreham derived two lessons from Pierson that would have an impact upon his preaching. The first was the vital role played by careful preparation. Boreham came to understand that Pierson’s sharp rhetorical devices were a result of thorough practice and preparation.\textsuperscript{174} Prior to delivering a lecture or sermon, Pierson had a clear understanding of both the substance and style of his speech. This provoked Boreham to write more detailed manuscripts as a means of enhancing his preparation.

The second important influence was Pierson’s unmistakeable sense of enthusiasm, which rarely failed to impress F.W. Boreham. In part, he was taken by Pierson’s energetic delivery.\textsuperscript{175} He was also impressed by his attitude. He commented in My Pilgrimage that Pierson was dubbed ‘M.R.’ by his students. This was because any topic that he addressed was considered to be: “Most Remarkable.”\textsuperscript{176} Pierson’s

\textsuperscript{172} In this sermon Boreham stated that “sin must be punished, sin and men are inseparable” but that “he (Christ) bore the reproach of sins.” Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
\textsuperscript{173} He was later to write of the need to make “up the leeway after leaving College.” Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 93.
\textsuperscript{174} Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 94
\textsuperscript{175} In My Pilgrimage Boreham asserted of A.T. Pierson that “he magnetized us all.” Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 94.
\textsuperscript{176} Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 94.
passion was unmistakable. His speech was filled with “superlatives.”

This led Boreham to see the importance of not only repeating, but also stressing vital subjects. This emphasising of certain points was not lost on Boreham. Many of his sermon headings from this period were laden with exclamation marks such as: “Beware! Lest thou forget the Lord,” “Peace! Be still,” “Behold the King’s Spear!” or “Behold! I come quickly.” Like Pierson, he loved to hold people’s attention by introducing a dramatic theme and once more this reflected Boreham’s evangelistic style and emphases.

At times he also sought to emulate Dr. A.T. Pierson’s emotional delivery. This had been present in Boreham’s preaching from the start of his speaking career. When F.W. Boreham preached his first sermon at the age of seventeen in 1888, on the street corner at Clapham, he gave an impassioned plea. The text was: “To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Looking back Boreham felt that theologically and exegetically the sermon had little to recommend it. He was later to assert that young ministers could only master their work through mistakes. In spite of the shortcomings he did see one virtue in his effort. It was the same quality that drew him to the preaching of Moody or Meyer and away from C.H. Spurgeon. It had much raw emotion and vigour. The young preacher was filled with an evangelistic spirit. His delivery was enthusiastic; he was imploring his hearers to draw close to God. It was “set in a tense key.” It was filled with “Ohs” and other exclamations. It is difficult to know the exact emotional tenor of this sermon, as there is only

177 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 95.
178 Boreham, “Beware! Lest thou.”
179 Boreham, “Peace!”
180 Boreham, “Behold the King’s Spear!”
181 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
182 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 80.
183 Boreham, The Golden Milestone, 236.
184 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 81.
186 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 81.
Boreham’s word to go by. What can be shown is the way that F.W. Boreham sought to add a passionate flavour to his messages.

Throughout much of his early ministry, and influenced by models such as A.T. Pierson, Boreham endeavoured to maintain his energy and emotion in the pulpit. He saw this as a vital way of reaching his congregation. Boreham spoke of emotions in his sermons without necessarily stating what his own feelings were on a given topic. His sermons also sometimes exhibited an emotional flow or direction. He was able to build momentum, from a rational introduction to an emotional or gripping conclusion. In his 1893 Christmas sermon at Theydon Bois he made the statement that Jesus was able to save people there and then. He drew his thoughts together with a poem:

“For those who are following far, yet near,  
When all shall meet at His glorious feet  
In the light and love of his home so dear.  
Yes home tonight.”  

His intention was to invite people into their ‘spiritual home’ with God. The picture was an evocative one, as it elicited images of rest and comfort for his listeners. It is interesting to note the sharp contrast between ‘home’ and an earlier image used by Boreham in the same sermon, that of ‘hell’ and ‘fire.’ In this message he was outlining the gospel of appeal. For F.W. Boreham each person faced a choice between ‘hell’ or ‘home.’ This was an emotional decision as much as a rational one.

Towards the end of his time at Theydon Bois in 1894, Boreham’s sermons became more emotional. As he began engaging with theological rather than practical topics, the emotional pitch of his sermons seemed to shift as well. Themes such as Christ’s Second Coming were laden with feeling.

For Boreham, the cross remained the deepest place of emotion. In a sermon at Tunbridge Wells, Boreham concluded by speaking of the cross’ implications for each

187 Boreham, “A Saviour and a great one.”  
188 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
of his listeners. It was a passionate appeal. He wanted the Christian to value it, the unconcerned to know that they were treading under the foot of the Son of God and the anxious to be comforted that Christ had borne their sins. The increased emotional pitch of these sermons may have reflected Boreham’s own conflicting feelings about leaving home for the uncertain territory of Mosgiel in New Zealand. He was going to leave his friends, his family and his wife to be, Stella, back in England. In his autobiography, F.W. Boreham makes little mention of the anguish that he may have experienced prior to leaving home. The only hint of it may be in these sermon manuscripts. In his final English sermons it may have been Boreham’s own anxiety, rather than A.T. Pierson’s influence that led to such a strong sentimental undertone.

**g. Ministry Experiences**

![The Theydon Bois Baptist Church as it stands today. Photograph by the author.](image)

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189 Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
190 Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
191 T. Howard Crago did mention a little of this sense of uncertainty in his biography of Boreham, as he wrote of “the pain of wrenching himself away from all he held dear.” Crago, *The Story*, 63.
One reason for F.W. Boreham being so impressionable and influenced by his preaching models and the Pastors’ College was that his confidence was not fully developed. Instead of finding his own unique outlet as a way of preaching, he looked to other ministers and lecturers as his examples. He sought guidance from those who he perceived had achieved a degree of spiritual influence and success. While his early experience of preaching on the street corner at Clapham gave him some feeling of competence, F.W. Boreham was still feeling his way as a preacher and pastor. He was yet to find his voice. Each outdoor preaching engagement that Boreham undertook was done in the presence of an older man, who would provide a critique of the message. While this may have given him direction, Boreham’s belief in his ability as a preacher was not yet fully formed.

When he was first invited to preach at the Park Crescent Congregational Church in Clapham for five months during 1892, Boreham said the experience was like: “A soldier . . . who found himself in the frontline totally unarmed and unequipped.” Regardless of his own perceived limitations and lack of confidence, Boreham continued to preach. He became the Student Pastor of the Baptist church at Theydon Bois; a small village in Essex located around twenty-five kilometres north of London, on 2 August 1893. There are some hints of his self-assurance and individuality developing during this time. For example, when a service was held to celebrate the successful fund raising venture that enabled the congregation to purchase a new organ, the young preacher spoke on the life of Robert Moffat. The topic was “Daybreak in Darkest Africa.” A picture that Boreham had completed with crayon and paper accompanied the message.

This unique and original approach suggests that Boreham grew in self-belief over his early years, through experiences such as ministering at the Park Crescent Congregational Church or the Theydon Bois Baptist Church. His sermons started to

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192 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 82.
193 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 90
195 Crago, The Story, 53
become a little more audacious and creative and there were some small signs of his confidence starting to develop during this period.

While limited at first, Boreham slowly became better equipped at telling people the whole story behind a passage. His sermons were more direct. For example, when speaking from the Book of Revelation he said that one of the reasons for Christ’s return was “vengeance” on those who had not accepted his cross in faith. He was also able to preach in 1894 on “a way of salvation” and “a way of damnation.” These themes suggest that while Boreham was not yet able to bring the full range of his inventive talents to a text, he was slowly learning to share a hard word with his congregation, as his sense of self-belief in his preaching ability grew.

**h. Social Issues and National Events**

F.W. Boreham was interested and engaged in the social issues and national events of his time. He went to Parliament to hear the Prime Minister William Gladstone speak during a difficult period in English history. Despite this, his interest in public events had little impact upon his preaching in this early period. There is not one example of Boreham using a contemporary event as an illustration or point of contention in his English sermons. His references to the world were more generic than specific, such as illustrations about “busy men and interviewers” or the way in which the telephone must be “heard and obeyed.” He also mentioned England in this same general way. In the only reference to his nation through these manuscripts, Boreham asked in one sermon: “Why is England what she is? Because (she is) ruled by inflexible justice.”

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196 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
197 Boreham, “Salvation or Damnation.”
199 Boreham, “I will allure her.”
200 Boreham, “Some Secrets of Successful Service.”
201 Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
Boreham did not mention important national or international events. In 1892 a serious and severe strain of influenza led to a number of tragic cases throughout the United Kingdom. It resulted in the death of C.H. Spurgeon. Yet no reference was made to this situation in any of Boreham’s sermons from 1892.

F.W. Boreham also rarely referred to events in his local church setting. One exception was his farewell message to the Park Crescent Congregational Church, where he stated that they had cause for “madness, sadness and gladness.” Boreham’s only mention of church events was if there was a significant change.

Another discussion of the local church was in a sermon delivered for the opening of a new church building at Theydon Bois on 3 June 1894. This message focussed on Jacob naming the place of his encounter with God Bethel. This sermon also revealed something of Boreham’s own ecclesiology as it referred to the church as a place of God being revealed. He likened the church to a family home where the children of God had to adhere to certain rules, whilst also receiving blessings from the Father. However, this home seemed to be separate from the rest of the community. Those inside were incapable of having a clear view on the outside world. The walls were high, the boundaries clear.

There was only one other point at which Boreham directly addressed what was happening in the church. Towards the end of his time at Theydon Bois his messages contained some small pastoral notes. In a sermon on Christ’s return he spoke of the sadness those in congregation may have felt as they thought of being separated from loved ones. In another later sermon he spoke of the burden of sin that could lead someone to become anxious. These may have been real pastoral needs within his church community that Boreham was just beginning to focus upon in his messages.

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202 Crago, The Story, 43.
203 Boreham, “Farewell, Sermon.”
204 Boreham, “Bethel.”
205 Boreham, “Behold! I come quickly.”
206 Boreham, “Who bore our sins.”
However, he was either unwilling or unable to engage with pastoral needs and social issues outside of the church.

4. CONCLUSION: A DERIVATIVE OR DISTINCTIVE VOICE?

The main factors shaping F.W. Boreham’s early sermons in the United Kingdom were derived from other prominent ministers. Boreham’s distinct voice was muted and shackled, as his confidence was not yet fully developed. He looked to his ministry models for a pattern to follow and these were his major influences during this period. His sermons were useful in a way that F.B. Meyer’s were direct pleas for holy living, drew on rhetorical devices from Joseph Parker, sought to capture the emotion of A.T. Pierson and contained the evangelistic tone of Dwight L. Moody. They also bore similarities to C.H. Spurgeon’s preaching, in terms of his selecting a one off text each week and drawing points of application from the theology imbedded in a given passage. His overall method of preaching was both evangelistic and topical. It was not prophetic and did not engage with important social or national issues of the time. He was also reluctant at first to preach on difficult passages or texts, and tended to avoid controversy. These were all indicators that his self-assurance as a preacher was not yet fully formed.

Boreham’s rivers of influence and approach to preaching were largely cautious and derived from other sources. They were flowing from places far from home. While F.W. Boreham had found an outlet for his faith through preaching, he was largely speaking through the voice of different ministers. He also shared a number of the strong emphases of the evangelical movement as it sought allegiance to conversion, the Bible, the cross and evangelism.

It was his experience at the Pastors’ College that helped to bud the beginnings of Boreham’s original approach. In time, it would be the secondary influences that would replace the primary ones in his preaching. The rills would become rivers. In this way, Boreham’s sermons would be remembered for their pervasive use of nature,
their gripping stories, the creatively crafted words and his love of history and biography.

These small, distinctive notes and influences were just beginning to be heard in his sermons from 1888-1895, as his confidence grew. His life, ministry and preaching would be a work in progress, as it is for each of us. F.W. Boreham once wrote, “Each person on the planet is a novelty, is absolutely unique.” He continued that each person “sees as nobody else sees.” Therefore they must “paint or preach or pray or write as nobody else does.”207 They must be themselves, but this takes time. Sometimes it requires moving away from familiar surroundings, which is what F.W. Boreham did when he sailed for New Zealand in January 1895.

207 These quotations are taken from: F.W. Boreham, I Forgot to Say (London: The Epworth Press, 1939), 133.
CHAPTER FOUR
BROADENING BANKS:
F.W. BOREHAM’S PREACHING AT MOSGIEL (1895-1906).

The Taieri River Mouth in the Otago province of New Zealand— a favourite holiday destination for the Boreham family. Photograph by the author.

“I forget the points— I can never remember sermons— but I remember that he laid great stress on the fact that you can widen the mouth of a river until it is so broad— and so shallow— as to be incapable of navigation. ‘On the whole,’ John said impressively, ‘it is better to be narrow and deep.’”

1. INTRODUCTION.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, Dwight L. Moody, C.H. Spurgeon, F.B. Meyer, A.T. Pierson and Dr. Parker largely influenced F.W. Boreham’s preaching voice in the United Kingdom. The emphasis in his sermons was an evangelistic and topical style mainly based on imitating others. His approach was mostly cautious and risk-free. As a reflection of his lack of confidence, when he started his New Zealand ministry Boreham said that “my methods were obsolete; my technique was woefully ineffective; the management of my voice was as bad as could be.”\(^{208}\) He was yet to find his voice and a unique manner of preaching.

This chapter examines F.W. Boreham’s arrival in the New Zealand province of Otago in 1895 and traces the development of his confidence and preaching style during this pastorate. Boreham’s sermons are contrasted with the political, social and ecclesial issues of his time, to measure what impact his setting had upon his ministry. A range of influences are then outlined to see in what way he was able to develop his preaching method and content at the town of Mosgiel.

In his later writings F.W. Boreham often referred to a fictional nom de plume- John Broadbanks. Broadbanks was described as the long-standing minister of the Silverstream Church, who took time to see the value of saying no to the demands of others. A key question for this chapter is: Did this name of ‘Broadbanks’ express a reality that was evident in Boreham’s own preaching and ministry at Mosgiel? Was it a time of growing individuality or did his preaching voice continue to be an imitation of others?

2. F.W.BOREHAM IN CONTEXT.

a. The Society.

F.W. Boreham moved to New Zealand during an era of significant social change. The isolated nature of the colony and its relative newness meant that a fresh approach could be taken by various political leaders.209 A progressive Liberal government ruled the country from 1890 onwards and they were willing to put in place a number of new laws. The social environment was one of innovation and a willingness to take risks.210

A key Liberal politician, Richard Seddon, was to provide the impetus for this pioneering spirit. He assumed control of the New Zealand government as Premier in 1893. Seddon instituted a range of new developments, some of which marked the country as different and distinct from the rest of the world. The Premier was instrumental in the establishment of twelve new government departments. A further development was that in 1893 New Zealand became the first country in the world to grant women the vote, while in the same year, in the Auckland suburb of Onehunga, Elizabeth Yates became the first woman in the British Empire to be voted as mayor.211 Voting in New Zealand had always been extended more widely than other colonial societies. Maori men were granted the vote in 1867, while the requirement

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209 The structure of the political system in New Zealand was established by a constitution that was ratified by Westminster in 1852. This constitution enacted a separation of powers between provincial governments and two central Houses of Parliament. In order for legislation to be approved it needed to be passed by the House of Representatives, the Legislative Council and then the Executive Council that consisted of the Governor and Ministers. The Leading Minister was referred to as the Premier until 1902, when the position’s title was changed to Prime Minister. Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003), 202-203.

210 J. Ayson Clifford notes that: “The 1890s were the golden age of New Zealand politics. Swept into power in the 1890 election, the Liberals held sway for twenty years. They enacted some of the world’s most radical social legislation.” J. Ayson Clifford, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of New Zealand*, vol.2. 1882-1914. (Wellington: Baptist Union of New Zealand, 1982.)

211 This trend towards gender equality was to continue throughout the country’s history so that: “New Zealand was the first country in the world in which all the highest offices were occupied by women, between March 2005 and August 2006: the Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II of New Zealand, Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright, Prime Minister Helen Clark, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives Margaret Wilson and Chief Justice Sian Elias.” *Wikipedia, “Politics of New Zealand,”* available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Politics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Zealand_Politics); Internet; accessed 20 September 2007.
for male voters to have property was removed in 1879. There were other significant reforms, such as the passing of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act (1894). This legislation actively encouraged trade union membership among workers and also sought to promote negotiation over strikes.

A variety of other important legislative measures were implemented over the next twelve years. The old age pension was enacted in 1898, although it was restricted to those considered to be impoverished.\textsuperscript{212} The Liberal Workers Dwelling Act (1905) provided poor workers with the opportunity to rent homes from the state, while the government was able to purchase large estates from wealthy landowners in order to redistribute them to smaller farmers. By the time of R.J. Seddon’s death in 1906 it could be argued that the fledgling country had met its goal of “showing the way to the rest of the world.”\textsuperscript{213}

This willingness to take risks and to pioneer social experiments did not mean that New Zealand abandoned all links with the past. Old ties were not readily forgotten as New Zealand remained closely connected to its roots in the British Empire. When the Boer War was about to start in 1899, New Zealand offered a contingent of mounted rifles prior to the war even being declared. There was an upsurge in loyalty for Queen and Empire. Over the next three years New Zealand sent out another nine contingents, gave nearly 6,500 men for the war effort and raised more than 13,000 pounds of public donations.\textsuperscript{214} This rise in support for the colony’s British roots was also witnessed in the outpouring of grief at the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901.

b. The Church.

Institutional Christianity was brought to New Zealand with the first missionaries in 1814. These early Christians did not exhibit the same openness to change as leaders

\textsuperscript{212} King, The Penguin History, 269.
\textsuperscript{213} King, The Penguin History, 282.
\textsuperscript{214} King, The Penguin History, 286-7.
like R.J. Seddon. In time many Christians were divided by loyalties from the old country and sectarian disputes arose.\textsuperscript{215} For example, conflict broke out in Christchurch on Boxing Day 1879 when a group of Protestants carrying orange flags were met by a gathering of Irish Catholics at the Borough Hotel. There were further riots in Timaru, on the East Coast of the South Island, along these traditional Protestant and Catholic fault lines. Protestants were also worried about Catholic schools and the “insistence on Catholic marriage.”\textsuperscript{216} There was suspicion on both sides of the divide.

Among these different denominations there were some common marks of Christian identity in New Zealand. Many were sceptical about Darwinian evolution and the challenge presented by the German higher critics.\textsuperscript{217} Christians in New Zealand also expressed different views about whether to keep the Sabbath, the issue of baptism and how to understand and interpret the Bible.\textsuperscript{218} These debates led some to become cautious in their approach to Christian doctrine. This conservative and at times reactionary strand among Protestants was in stark contrast to the progressive flavour of the New Zealand Government.

Much preaching of the day was also marked by a similarly rigid and risk-free response to God. This was particularly so among the predominantly Presbyterian surrounds that F.W. Boreham encountered in Dunedin (Otago), near the town of Mosgiel. For example, in 1897 Rev. William Hewitson, of the Knox Church, Dunedin, gave an address on homiletics, saying that the most important task of the preacher was the “orderly breaking up of the subjects (in a Biblical text) into

\textsuperscript{215} The nature of the church in New Zealand during this era is difficult to trace. A number of works on New Zealand church history start by commenting on how limited research has been. Peter Matheson clearly outlines some of the gaps in the story as he says that sermons and church records remain to be analysed. Peter Matheson, “The Contours of Christian Theology in Aotearoa New Zealand,” Susan and William Emilsen, Mapping the Landscape- Essays in Australian and New Zealand Christianity. Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ian Breward (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 255.

\textsuperscript{216} Allan K. Davidson and Peter J. Lineham, Transplanted Christianity: Documents illustrating aspects of New Zealand Church History (Auckland: College Communications, 1987), 197.


\textsuperscript{218} Davidson and Lineham, Transplanted Christianity, 204.
divisions. There was a requirement here to deal with every word in a scriptural passage and to track key theological points through the entire Bible. An exegetical method like F.B. Meyer’s was encouraged. No short cuts could be taken and this was a rational, though predictable, approach. It was preaching by technique rather than inspiration.

These sermons were also loaded with “thick or explicit theological language.” Sermons printed in F.W. Boreham’s local newspaper in Mosgiel spoke of Jesus as the “Lamb of God” and referred to every “poor sinner.” Much Biblical and theological knowledge was assumed in these messages. Other sample sermons from Boreham’s immediate context in Mosgiel and Dunedin lacked drama and shape. A message by J.M. McKerrow from the East Taieri Presbyterian Church followed a predictable pattern by speaking of “the success of man’s self-reliance” and “the failure of man’s self-reliance.” Stories were told of Sir Isaac Newton and Thomas Carlyle but they did not build any sense of anticipation or resolution. Some messages took a defensive stance almost immediately. The emphasis on exegetical technique often meant a lack of creativity and imagination. This background is crucial to bear in mind as it presents a significant grid to compare with the preaching styles adopted by F.W. Boreham during his time at Mosgiel.

The churches also followed predictable patterns in terms of their support for the Boer War. This reflected a broader allegiance to Great Britain, leading Peter Matheson to conclude, “The braided rivers of New Zealand theology were largely fed by sources outside this land.” As an example of this reliance on British influences, the New Zealand Hymnal, published in 1872, had few examples of local hymnody or

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219 William Hewitson, “A Talk to Teachers,” Taieri Advocate, 6 October 1897, 1.
220 Rev. C. Connor followed this approach to the letter. In a message on James he started by expounding each word in the text. There was little room for a creative approach to the passage. Rev. C. Connor, “Preaching column,” Taieri Advocate, 23 December 1896, 1.
223 J.M. McKerrow, “Preaching column,” Taieri Advocate, 16 September 1896, 1.
224 McKerrow, “Preaching column,” Taieri Advocate, 16 September 1896, 1.
225 Matheson, “The Contours,” 258.
theology. Church ministers and members waited eagerly for the latest magazines and journals to arrive from the United Kingdom. Designs and structures of church buildings were also largely borrowed from British prototypes. While the Liberal government forged ahead with its own progressive and unique ideas, the mainline churches in New Zealand were often trapped in ways of doing things that were derived from foreign, rather than local, sources.

There was also a desire among New Zealand Christians for a practical, as opposed to an intellectual, form of faith. Some expressed caution about forms of theology that were seen as being too cerebral. The church took its time to catch the spirit of social reformers but towards the start of the twentieth century “there was a new openness to intellectual and in some instances social criticism, to an historical and literary approach to texts of Scripture.” However, this openness was not uniform, and within the church the call for reform remained narrow. It tended to be restricted to moral issues and in particular the changing of Liquor Laws and the desire for temperance. There were only some small glimpses of wider reform. One of these was seen in changing views on women serving in positions of church leadership, to match women being given the vote in 1893.

c. The Baptists

The Baptist Union of New Zealand was established in 1882, although Baptists had been active in New Zealand earlier than this date as they traced their heritage to a

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228 Matheson, “The Contours.” 262.
229 Davidson and Lineham, Transplanted Christianity, 181.
230 In 1901 Rev. Rutherford Waddell’s St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Dunedin reflected these changing attitudes. This congregation now allowed its Deaconesses to visit some of the more underprivileged parts of their town, while in the following year the Presbyterian General Assembly formally decided to set up the office of Deaconess. Davidson and Lineham, Transplanted Christianity, 217.
small church in Nelson. From the beginning the denomination sought to represent key Baptist ideals and it provided a voice for a “small, though energetic Christian community.” While they were marginal in number, Baptists did hold onto a number of strong convictions and had some distinctive traits. Evangelism became one such feature of Baptist faith in New Zealand. J. Upton Davis from the Hanover Street Baptist Church in Dunedin both championed and explained the Baptist view. In a speech given in 1880 he noted:

“There are two things for which Christianity greatly cares- the conversion of each man’s (sic.) heart to belief in Jesus, and the consequent devotion of the life to Him in every department.”

This statement accorded well with British Baptist themes of personal response and personal responsibility. These twin pillars of mission and holiness were to be given a prominent place among New Zealand Baptists for the remainder of the century.

In 1889 Thomas Spurgeon, son of C.H. Spurgeon, was appointed as Union Evangelist. Thomas’s preaching, like that of his father’s, was based upon one single sentence of Scripture. He spoke with enthusiasm and a desire to reach those who were not considered Christians. A series of sermons given by Thomas Spurgeon in Owaka (Otago province) left the following impression on one of his hearers:

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231 The first Baptist Church in the colony met at Nelson on 3 May 1851. A carpenter called James Horne felt convicted that he should be baptised. Horne gathered a group of believers around him and these early Baptists conveniently selected the schoolrooms in town as their site of worship, as it was the nearest location to the river. The movement then spread slowly to a range of different locations. In 1855 a Baptist church was planted in Auckland, while a church at Dunedin on the South Island, was founded in 1863. The Mosgiel Baptist Church, was founded in 1883. These notes have been summarised from Clifford, A Handful of Grain.

232 J. Upton Davis, “The Case for the Baptist Denomination,” The New Zealand Baptist, February 1881, 1–4 as quoted in Martin Sutherland, Baptists in Colonial New Zealand: documents illustrating Baptist life and development (Auckland: New Zealand Baptist Research and Historical Society, 2002), 54. It should be noted that not all Baptist churches were small- they varied in size, with over fifty members at Invercargill and one hundred and fifty members at Caversham. Larger churches, such as Hanover Street (Dunedin) and Oxford Terrace (Christchurch) had over two hundred members. By 1880 there were one thousand members of Baptist churches on the South Island and six hundred on the North Island, with adherents perhaps numbering a total of five thousand people. Sutherland, Baptists in Colonial New Zealand, 61.

233 The New Zealand Baptist spoke of the need for ministers to be “able to champion those principles so dear to every Baptist.” The New Zealand Baptist, July 1881, 88–89, quoted in Sutherland, Baptists in Colonial New Zealand, 87.

234 J. Upton Davis “The Case For...” 62.
“A clear bell-like voice, a ready utterance, a good presence, an engaging manner with occasional flashes of wit. His sermons were clear and simple, well-arranged and made as clear as daylight with the illustrations he used, so that the dullest intellect could follow him.”

The reach of evangelistic theology on New Zealand Baptists was profound. It even guided many of their moral views. For example, the pursuit of temperance by a number of leading Baptists was also partly based on mission principles, as alcohol was seen as stifling the goals of the evangelist and the church. The question was couched not just in terms of saving people, but also about what they needed to be saved from. Here Baptists developed a long list of sins, including drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco, and incurring debt. They were against what George Marsden was to so aptly call “bar room vices.” This focus on individual shortcomings and sins was not unusual for New Zealand churches in the late nineteenth century.

Some Baptists were interested in broader social issues beyond their support for the Boer War, such as poverty. Among these was the minister of the Ponsonby Baptist Church, Archibald Henry Collins, who was also a member of his local school committee and on the Conciliation Board that was given the task of resolving trade

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235 The New Zealand Baptist RHS Archive 0.13/8, as included in: Sutherland, Baptists in Colonial New Zealand, 156.

236 It should be noted that this repeated Baptist stress on mission and evangelism was expressed in different ways across the denomination. At the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church in Christchurch, under the guidance of William Birch, a number of steps were taken to attract new followers: the name of the church was changed to the Christchurch Baptist Tabernacle, Sankey’s hymns were encouraged and the service adopted a “mission-hall style.” Clifford, A Handful of Grain, 9. In Dunedin a different tack was taken, as members were encouraged to visit people from the community on Sunday evening. Clifford, A Handful of Grain, 29.

237 Clifford, A Handful of Grain, 4.

238 In an unpublished letter from 26th of October 1904, William Ings wrote of the South Dunedin pioneers: “Believing the friendship of the world to be enmity with God, as they built they sought to exclude the world specially in the shape of amusements, debt, drink and cigarettes and sought chiefly the young.” William Ings, unpublished letter, 26October 1904, quoted in Clifford, A Handful of Grain, 36.


240 Davidson and Lineham write, “Churches and church people . . . often played the role of moral policeman in their society. Inevitably they were preoccupied with the behavior of the working class.” Davidson and Lineham, Transplanted Christianity, 230.

241 Thomas Spurgeon was a rare dissenting Baptist voice against the Boer War. Clifford, A Handful of Grain, 114.
It was only towards the end of Boreham’s time in New Zealand that the Social Gospel movement, led internationally by figures such as Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch in the United States and John Clifford in the United Kingdom, began to take root amongst New Zealand Baptists. In a speech as President of the Baptist Union in 1905 the Rev. J.J. North spoke of the socialism of Jesus, holding that social beliefs and social action were a natural, normal and necessary part of Christian faith. This theme was carried on by the next President of the Baptist Union of New Zealand A.S. Adams who, in his inaugural address, asserted: “We believe that . . . Applied Christianity is the social dynamic which alone can be used to break in pieces the powers of darkness and evil, and to enthrone righteousness and truth.” Here the enemy was seen as being represented by social structures, but this view was really only starting to be believed by some New Zealand Baptists. During the late nineteenth century, the focus of their hostility had more often been directed towards other Christian groups rather than social ills and reform.

The source of this Baptist sectarianism could partly be traced to a perceived lack of respect by other Christian denominations in New Zealand. The minister of the Hanover Street Baptist Church in Dunedin, J. Upton Davis, noted that at the Episcopal Synod in Dunedin it was said: “It is monstrous that Church of England children in the Industrial School be should be subjected to the teaching of the Baptists.” Baptists could not ignore such derision.

This open sense of suspicion did not just flow one way. Baptists also directed it toward others, often meaning that the movement, while trying to be evangelistic, was both sectarian and inward looking. This led to a variety of consequences. As a result of their minor place in New Zealand, Baptists felt the need to justify their own

243 North stated: “You can no more separate social activity from Christian faith than you can untwist light and heat plaited from a sunbeam.” Clifford, *A Handful of Grain*, 69.
245 Davis, “The Case For . . .”, 55.
position within the Christian tradition. It also made Baptists defensive about protecting the prominent place given by the denomination to believers’ baptism. To be a Baptist was to believe in believers’ baptism. Christians who did not affirm this principle were seen as wrong. Thus the Constitution of the Baptist Union of New Zealand said, “The immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism.” While F.W. Boreham’s denomination wanted to be energetic and evangelistic, its smallness and insignificant place within New Zealand Christianity also meant that it could be defiantly sectarian.

3. INFLUENCES ON F.W. BOREHAM'S PREACHING.


F.W. Boreham arrived early in 1895 in the small town of Mosgiel, located a short distance from Dunedin in the province of Otago on New Zealand’s South Island. It has already been stated that his ministry commenced during a time of rapid change in the colony’s social and political life. In the United Kingdom from 1888-1895 Boreham had been reluctant to add many stories of social change and relevance into his sermons. His wider context rarely found its way into the pulpit. In Mosgiel this reluctance to mention contemporary events gradually started to shift, although references to the Seddon Government and the progressive Liberal Party were rare.

When Boreham repeated an earlier message from Theydon Bois, called: “No condemnation,” he made the point of people facing unenviable choices. He preached this sermon shortly after arriving in New Zealand. Boreham spoke about difficult choices by mentioning Captain Dreyfus, a member of the French army. In December 1894 Captain Dreyfus was court martialed and sentenced for having

246 To quote Davis again: “Men holding Baptist principles are associated with Bishops in revising the English version of the Bible.” Davis, “The Case For...”, 55.
247 Davis, “The Case For...”, 57.
249 F.W. Boreham. 1895. “No condemnation.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 28 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
provided some sensitive information to a German military official in Paris. Boreham was not criticising Dreyfus’ actions or providing a theological reflection on war, instead he simply used this story to tease out his theological point.

A poem from the freshly inaugurated Olympic Games in Athens was included in 1896 when Boreham spoke of the Apostle Paul’s Letter to Timothy. In another sermon he mentioned titles such as ‘Lord,’ ‘Shah,’ ‘Czar,’ ‘Emperor,’ ‘King’ and ‘President’ in a message with the theme “Jesus Christ is Lord,” but again these references were made to draw out his main theological concept, rather than to question each of these roles and their impact on the world.

In 1897 Boreham gave an ebullient speech in favour of Queen Victoria when he addressed the Otago and Southland Auxiliary of the Baptist Union. In 1898 he added recent articles from the newspaper into his messages. For example, in the opening sermon in a series on Nehemiah, he used a story about Germans in Australia denying or concealing their cultural background. Another message asserted that if Dunedin were to experience a time of economic prosperity, Mosgiel would also benefit greatly. As with his previous stories, however, there was no real sense of theological engagement. He did not measure current events against Biblical standards. His expanding engagement with contemporary issues was only really seen in his response to the outbreak of war in South Africa. Boreham spoke with passion and fervour at several public meetings. He was gripped by the Boer War from 1899-1902 and made a still rare allusion to a current event by speaking about the victory for the

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252 F.W. Boreham, 1896. “Jesus Christ is Lord!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 26 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

253 F.W. Boreham, “Address to the Otago and Southland Auxiliary of the Baptist Union of New Zealand,” Taiteri Advocate, 2 June 1897, 2. Boreham commented, “As Baptists we shall allow ourselves to be second to none in loyal regard for and esteem for the present illustrious occupant of the Throne of our Empire.”


255 F.W. Boreham. 1898. “Homely Talks with Nehemiah- Neighbourly help.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 27 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
British Empire at Mafeking, in a sermon labelled: “Our Daily Bread.” Boreham engaged with what was happening to the British troops and provided words of encouragement for his congregation against the backdrop of war. His message was plain and simple-to persevere, in spite of the cost. He drew comparisons to Waterloo, Lord Nelson and Martin Luther at Worms as he called his listeners to “Stand!” This address was not just spiritual but political as well.

He continued to discuss the Boer War throughout 1901, with the church even hosting the East Taieri Rifles Church Parade on Sunday 8 December. In this sermon Boreham borrowed from a number of military ideas and ideals. His flavour was imperialistic as he shared that “the military idea has a distinct colour in Christian teaching.” He extolled a number of common qualities such as: unity, perseverance, confidence of victory, heroism and serving under the command of another. The War was endorsed rather than critiqued by Boreham. In this way, he reflected the majority view in New Zealand churches and the wider society. What is also revealing about this message is that the passage from Revelation 6:2, listed with his sermon title, was not mentioned once in his manuscript.

Boreham also began to engage with other issues. In 1901 he wrote a critique of the Seddon Liberal government, for the New Zealand Baptist:

“We trust that the mad craze for new legislation will now die down. Mr. Seddon is an altogether extraordinary person. He has achieved a success that is absolutely unique. By sheer force of character, and strength of will, he has climbed to an eminence of power that many a despot might have envied. In a land that he had made proverbial for its advanced democracy, he has, strangely and probably unwittingly, won to himself the most autocratic position that any man in a free country could possibly enjoy.”

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256 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “Our Daily Bread.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 1 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
257 Boreham, “Our Daily Bread.”
258 F.W. Boreham. 1901. “Conquering and to Conquer.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 8 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
259 Boreham, “Conquering and to conquer.”
260 Boreham, “Conquering and to conquer.”
261 Boreham, “Conquering and to conquer.”
Yet despite these strong views, there was only one sermon from his whole time at Mosgiel that steered towards a prophetic rather than an Imperial tone. This message was based on Jeremiah 36 and was headed: “The Pen-Knife among the Pages.” Boreham spoke of leaders “who are very apt to forget the limits of their authority.” R.J. Seddon was included with David, Pilate, and Jehoiakim. The reason for this was that the Liberal government was seeking to pass legislation about Sabbath laws. Boreham thought that due to the challenge presented to the Sabbath this constituted a political and religious issue and thus could be mentioned from the pulpit. Politics without such a connection to matters of faith should be left unsaid in sermons. Straight after this sermon he preached a series on the story of Elijah for three months, which did not pick up on any issues of national debate or interest. It would be the case that for the rest of his time at Mosgiel, mentioning contemporary events would be the exception rather than the rule for F.W. Boreham. There was no reference in any of his sermons to liquor licensing or temperance, despite his active involvement in the movement. His focus was more local than national and he thought that politics was more for the pen than the pulpit. As with the United Kingdom, this would continue to be an important limitation in his preaching.

b. Denominational Roles.

Despite this lack of engagement with contemporary issues, Boreham did challenge sectarian views prominent among Baptists during his time at Mosgiel. His banks were becoming broader than the church of his day and his confidence was growing as he slowly learnt to share some of his opinions from the pulpit. In contrast to his stance on the Boer War, Boreham was willing to swim against the tide of mainstream opinions among Baptists in regards to other denominations. He was also not a strict literalist when it came to Biblical interpretation and he preferred to find different meanings in a passage rather than pursue narrow understandings. For example, in a sermon focussing on the Book of Revelation, he was not concerned with the literal description

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263 F.W. Boreham. 1904. “The Pen-Knife among the Pages.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 6 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

264 Boreham, “The Pen-Knife.”
of there being no sea, instead he sought to delve deeper into what was being meant symbolically.\textsuperscript{265} He was even open to the work of the German Higher Critics, and warned against ministers who scared their congregations about new ways of understanding the Bible.\textsuperscript{266} Boreham was beginning to share his own understandings of the Christian faith.

One reason for this open-mindedness and growing self-assurance was that during his time at Mosgiel, Boreham accepted a variety of denominational and civic roles. The earliest of these commenced in 1897 when he was elected as the Chairman of the Otago and Southland Auxiliary of the New Zealand Baptist Union. This involved him travelling by train or horse and cart, in order to undertake different appointments and celebrations at a variety of Baptist churches in his surrounding area. Boreham became a popular speaker at these events.\textsuperscript{267} This expanded role beyond Mosgiel opened Boreham to a wider vision of the church and society. Where previously his messages in England had been bound to the life and times of the individual believer, Boreham’s vision burgeoned at Mosgiel. He began to see issues impacting the wider church.

This influence was picked up as a major theme in a sermon that he delivered from Nehemiah that had the title of: “Neighbourly help.”\textsuperscript{268} Drawing from the story of Jericho helping Jerusalem, he maintained that in a similar way Baptist churches should come to the aid of one another. They should be able to see outside of the walls of their own individual churches. Boreham extended this point to also cover other denominations, an issue that he had not addressed during his ministry in the United Kingdom. The key was to remember that regardless of denominational boundaries and allegiances, the work and the church belonged to Jesus.\textsuperscript{269}

\textsuperscript{265} Boreham here revealed: “They are saying there shall be no more isolation.” F.W. Boreham. 1902. “No More Sea.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 13 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{266} Boreham wrote, “Ministers by attacking it (i.e. higher criticism) have created needless alarm and a false impression of its temper and achievements. No fundamentals (are) concerned.” Boreham, “The Pen-Knife.”

\textsuperscript{267} Crago, The Story.

\textsuperscript{268} F.W. Boreham. 1898. “Neighbourly help.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 27 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{269} Boreham, “Neighbourly help.”
The theme of an expanded ecclesiology stayed with Boreham throughout his time at Mosgiel. It reflected his theology stretching beyond the strict confines of his context. In a sermon called “My Church,” he outlined the marks of the church as: “Holiness, brotherly love, unity and continuity.” This list presents an interesting contrast to the traditional marks of the church—unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. For Boreham these were the defining features of the church, not denominational labels. The purpose of the Christian community was centred on worship, testimony and service. His ecumenical approach was evident in a message where he spoke about the ‘Forty-five sisters of Anglet.’ He extolled them as significant models for his congregation to follow.

One sermon from Mosgiel was later turned into a booklet called “Christian Baptism.” This was particularly revealing, in terms of Boreham’s denominational views. Here he asserted, “As Baptists we will be second to none in our desire for unity in the church of Christ and love one to another on the part of all who bear our Saviour’s sacred name.” He then went on to outline a case in support of baptism by immersion for believers. Support for his arguments came not from within Boreham’s own denomination but rather from the practices of the Greek Orthodox and the views of noted figures from the past (such as Peter Lombard), prominent Presbyterians (such as Dr. Chalmers) and Anglican Bishops. More than this Boreham actively welcomed sermons from his main protagonist on this issue of baptism in his “Preaching Column” for the Taieri Advocate- Rev. J.M. McKerrow. The banks of his theology were becoming broader than many in his denomination.

The main weakness in his ecclesiology was that, at times, Boreham’s view of the church could be too idealistic. For example, he spoke of the church being filled with a

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270 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “My Church.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 1 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
271 Boreham, “My Church.”
274 Boreham, “Christian Baptism.”
sweet fragrance and the world being refreshed with this life. Was this really a valid description of any church in New Zealand?

There were, however, some small hints of a growing realism. In 1904 a sermon on ecclesiology affirmed that while the church should hold onto its certainties, it should also deal with its problems and difficulties. It needed to see itself as: “calling, not controlling; as weary, not working; as impotent, not mighty.” In keeping with his broad focus, these problems were not assigned to one denomination they were issues for churches of each and every flavour to face. In Boreham’s mind matters of theology, doctrine and ecclesiology were issues of personal preference. This was an unusual stance for a New Zealand Baptist and reflected his growing individuality. What really mattered to him was God, as revealed through the Scriptures.

c. Congregation Members.

The township of Mosgiel. Photograph by the author.

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277 In one sermon Boreham attacked those arguing for Calvinism, Arminianism, antinomianism for their limited views of the Scriptures, adding that these each reflected “a mere matter of preference,” rather than God’s revealed truth. Boreham, “The Pen-Knife.”
While Boreham’s increasing denominational openness and reference to at least some contemporary events do suggest a developing sense of distinctiveness and confidence, these areas were not his central influences at Mosgiel. Instead Boreham placed a high value upon pastoral care and spending time with his congregation above all other shaping factors during most of his time at Mosgiel. Rev. Alfred North, Minister of the Hanover Street Baptist Church in Dunedin, spoke about the vital role played by pastoral care at Boreham’s induction service. Responding to the issue of Mosgiel seeming to be an insignificant congregation in a remote location, North turned to the inexperienced pastor and said: “You will find in every human being an object of desire and reverence and abounding interest.” In response Boreham asked God “to wing” his “words to the hearts of those who hear.”

The early years of Boreham’s call at Mosgiel were filled with a range of specific pastoral challenges. Just months after starting ‘Wullie,’ who had played a pivotal role in the church, passed away. The congregation experienced a deep sense of sorrow and loss at his death. Boreham was later to reflect that he had “rarely seen grief so general and so sincere.”

Pastoral issues, such as ‘Wullie’s’ death and Boreham’s placement in his first permanent ministry position, were to have a pivotal impact upon his preaching. He was shaped both by his environment and the people that he served. Throughout his time at Mosgiel, Boreham became more honest and open, and at least some difficult issues were not avoided as readily in his messages. He sought to speak to people about the dilemmas within their everyday lives. His concept of usefulness from an earlier period of his ministry had grown with his regular pastoral visitation and growing competence.

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278 Sutherland, *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand*, 216.
280 F.W. Boreham quoted in Mosgiel Baptist Church, *Church Minutes*, 6 July 1895, Hocken Library, Dunedin.
One sermon in particular stands out in this vein. It was entitled: “Art thou He that should come?” 282 Topics were considered here such as temptation and testing. Boreham looked at these issues in a frank and forthright manner. In this address he spoke of how the Lord challenged the faith of his people, and that he did this in love, wisdom and power. There was a depth to the words that Boreham employed, as he affirmed, “The best of Christians have their seasons of depression.” 283 This came from a variety of causes, such as one’s surroundings, physical condition or spiritual trials. These would have been comforting words for his congregation to hear and they were grounded in the reality of everyday life.

Sermons such as this represented a significant shift in Boreham’s thinking. He had changed his style from a mainly evangelistic approach to a more pastoral method. He had moved from bringing in a pre-formulated atonement theology to fit his hearers, to actually listening to them and their concerns. He sought a manner of preaching that was more incarnational and invitational. Gone were the rigid certainties of Theydon Bois, to be replaced with a profound sense of the mystery of God. 284 As with his views of different denominations, he was starting to think for himself.

Boreham also drew on other pastoral themes. He talked about spiritual tiredness and a sense of being isolated in faith, in a sermon with a captivating title called: “What a Weariness!” 285 This alienation might mean losing one’s sense of God’s love and majesty and could be reflected in a decline of worship or service. The cure for such spiritual malady was confession and consecration. In other messages he preached on the theme of death and dying 286 and he spoke of handling monotony and repetition in.

282 F.W. Boreham. 1895. “Art thou He that should come?” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 28 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
283 Boreham, “Art thou.”
284 In one sermon Boreham noted that: “The life of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most profound mystery that has ever confronted the minds of men.” F.W. Boreham, “Jesus Christ,” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 31 March 1897, 1.
286 F.W. Boreham. 1897. “The Blessed Dead.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 11 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
life. Another sermon encouraged his listeners that times of trial and testing were God’s way of refining, that they were “angels in disguise.” He was developing a theology of suffering.

This pastoral emphasis showed that Boreham was increasingly engaging with everyday life in his local setting. While he did maintain his allegiance to an evangelistic, atonement centred theology; a more personal voice was beginning to be heard. This was an everyday voice centred on an incarnational God who was present in trials and tribulations. Mosgiel was a time when Boreham grew in his understanding of the normal dilemmas of life. He spoke by using stories that people could relate to. In a message that bore a label of evangelistic theology, called “Ye must be born again,” Boreham found a more engaging way for people to be confronted with the gospel. His illustrations were of a man who had lost his watch and of a grub that emerged from a cocoon into a new life. These were taken from common places and events that could be held within people’s memories. Other sermons used earthy analogies. In talking about church life and the need for everyone to be involved he shared that a congregation where only a few participated was like the sound of an orchestra, in which less than half of the members were playing their instruments. It was incomplete, unfulfilled and could not live out the composer’s vision.

This pastoral thread was woven throughout some of his messages in 1898, where Boreham preached a sermon labelled: “When there’s love at home.” Here he developed a number of points outlining the importance, challenge and value of work at home and of establishing a loving family life. The home was the place where

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288 F.W. Boreham, “As Silver is Tried,” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 28 April 1897, 1.
289 F.W. Boreham. 1895. “Ye must be born again.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 20 October, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
291 F.W. Boreham. 1898. “When there’s love at home.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 22 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
people could set a spiritual example and provide encouragement for one another’s faith journey.

Pastoral care continued to be an important focus during much of Boreham’s ministry at Mosgiel. In 1900 he preached an eight-week series on the subject of prayer. He chose earthy topics that people could relate to, such as: “Some Secrets of Success in Prayer” and “Some Secrets of Failure in Prayer.” This series also showed that pastoral care could have an educational or didactic purpose. In one message Boreham spoke on the “Philosophy of Prayer,” choosing to teach about the theories and world-views of Edison, Voltaire, Andrew Murray, and Spurgeon. By teaching people about themselves and the ideas of others, Boreham was expanding the horizons of his congregation. A further pastoral issue was addressed when F.W. Boreham once more spoke on the topic of death after the passing away of a Mr. Swallow. This sermon even contained a note of tribute to Mr. Swallow, noting his conversion and faith, while also speaking of the grief that comes with the loss of a friend. These pastoral sermons contrasted sharply with the more exegetical approaches taken by other preachers in Dunedin and Mosgiel.

Strangely this pastoral focus diminished with time. In his latter years at Mosgiel F.W. Boreham chose only sparingly to preach on issues of concern and comfort to his congregation. In a message taken from Isaiah 40:29 he talked of different symbols of God’s care, while claiming that God’s most vital work was not upholding the stars, but rather reviving weary people. In another sermon he gave the illustration of Dante mourning the loss of his wife and exclaiming: “I want to find peace.”

292 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “Some Secrets of Success in Prayer.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 17 October, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
293 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “Some Secrets of Failure in Prayer.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 16 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
295 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “The Happy Dead.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 23 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript. This sermon notes that Mr. Swallow was buried on 20 September 1900.
296 F.W. Boreham. 1903. “Power for the Faint!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 29 November, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
297 F.W. Boreham. 1904. “Peace Past Understanding.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 18 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
Boreham then shared about the peace that can come only from God. These pastoral notes became fewer so that by 1905 and 1906 there were no sermons related to dilemmas such as death, change or anxiety. However, when Boreham would later reflect on his Mosgiel experiences, it was the people that he remembered the most. A number of slim volumes were published, such as *The Merry Men of Mosgiel* or *The Bachelors of Mosgiel,* which would focus on personalities and issues within Boreham’s first permanent pastorate. It was the people and his pastoral care of them that stayed with Boreham as an ongoing influence. His willingness to honestly engage with pastoral matters also suggests that his self-assurance as a preacher during his early years at Mosgiel was growing. He was no longer avoiding difficult issues, as he had done in the United Kingdom.

**d. Beauty.**

![Scene from the Southern Alps, South Island (New Zealand). Photograph by the author.](image)

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299 F.W. Boreham, *The Bachelors of Mosgiel* (London: The Epworth Press, 1933). Copies of these slim vignettes of personal and pastoral history are held in a glass cabinet at the Mosgiel Public Library.
During his ministry at Mosgiel F.W. Boreham would often take long hikes on the Taieri Plain. This engagement with his surroundings was also evident in his walking to pastoral visits and family trips to the Taieri River Mouth. Boreham immersed himself in the creation and these vivid experiences in nature began to find their way into his messages. It was not just that Boreham mentioned the creation; instead he began to develop a theological framework for understanding and grasping the activity of God within the natural world. Beauty was at the centre, it was an underpinning reality.

In 1896, Boreham preached a sermon entitled: “The Discovery of the Beautiful.” It represented something of his theological awakening. He had always been open to the grandeur of the natural world, and this was shown through the influence of his father taking him for walks through the Tunbridge Wells common. However, in the United Kingdom, Boreham was reluctant to preach on this theme. He felt that nature could only ever be a limited communicator of God’s truth. In 1896 he discovered the voice of creation and creativity. He encouraged his congregation to “look out for what is beautiful” and gave illustrations from the world of art. It was as if he found a way of bringing his aesthetic appreciation of nature into the pulpit and to be himself. He also discovered a means of linking his love of beauty with his theme of pastoral care by imploring his hearers to see the majesty of Christ as revealed in other people.

In 1897 he referred to beauty in five separate sermons. This theological emphasis began to gain greater weight for Boreham; it became a philosophical centrepiece that he would build upon for the rest of his ministry. He spoke about the beauty of God and his work. In one sermon he went into great detail in his portrayal, detailing the majestic symmetry of the lion’s frame, the plumage of birds and the grace of a petal falling to the ground. This was a detailed and rigorous approach to the living world.

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300 Crago, *The Story*, 73. The Taieri River Mouth is a scenic location, situated approximately twenty-five kilometres southeast of Mosgiel.
302 Boreham, “The Discovery of the Beautiful.”
303 F.W. Boreham. 1897. “How great is His beauty.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 14 November, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
His point was that God was in all the surging power behind a wave and the glory evident in a mountain range. Even the disciples’ experience on the Mount of Transfiguration was not out of his reach, as he talked of its sensuality.\textsuperscript{304} His approach was beginning to be more imaginative. He was slowly finding his own voice.

Another sermon took his listeners to the waters of a nearby stream. Boreham had them imagine the river running over the stones and made four simple points from his text: the waters were a metaphor for the purity and simplicity of the Christian life, the rocks illustrate the difficulty of the world around us, the waters soften the rocks and in turn the rocks purify and brighten the water.\textsuperscript{305} Here the truth embedded in the creation could be adapted to the truth of spiritual discernment, discovery and direction. As with his development of pastoral care as a prominent theme, this represented a significant shift away from a one-dimensional atonement theology. Here the world and the church could interact and benefit one another. God was not depicted as an angry, wrathful being requiring appeasement, but rather as the source of all beauty, actively drawing people in. God was the inspiration behind an artwork and the pattern woven through the intricate nature of the creation. God was beautiful in the richest sense of the word.

The centrality of God’s beauty became a well-developed theological point for Boreham. The wonder of God could be accessed in his word and in his work. The creation then was “not merely the work of God” but more profoundly “a revelation of God.”\textsuperscript{306} Here Boreham’s theology was being stretched in an exciting new direction. Jesus too held an important place within this conception of God’s beauty as Boreham considered the wonder of his work and personality. Eschatology was even included within this framework so that “the progressing revelation of the beauty of God will be

\textsuperscript{304} F.W. Boreham. 1897. “Jesus only: A sermon on the Transfiguration.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 12 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{305} F.W. Boreham. 1897. “The waters wear the stones.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 28 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{306} F.W. Boreham, “The Beauty of God (part 1),” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 20 April 1898, 1.
the rapture of eternity.”307 There was little guilt within his new theological approach. Instead those who could not see the wonder of God were not explicitly condemned to hell, but rather, were ‘missing out.’ Boreham had found a way for his positive nature and personality to form a compelling theological framework.

This aesthetic shift was also reflected by a more visual and original approach by Boreham in his messages. He began to introduce several word pictures throughout his sermons. For example, in an illustration on someone passing their exam and gaining a degree he had his congregation picture a graduate’s cap and gown, and he heard the sounds of the applause resonating throughout the convention centre.308 In another message he conveyed an image of the Castle at Chillon that is clean above but contains a dank, dark dungeon deep below as a way of describing the reality of hidden sin.309

During his early years at Mosgiel, F.W. Boreham continued to preach on the centrality of the cross, but he did it in a much more evocative way than his earlier messages at Theydon Bois. Gone were the borrowed approaches from prominent Christian preachers. Instead Boreham took his people to Calvary- visually and aurally. The story of Jesus’ death was told simply but profoundly, via the use of the best words that Boreham could conjure, “Trial, scourging, spitting, nails, crown, jerk, fiercest examination, nerves, limbs, brain, tongue.”310 With simplicity and passion, Boreham had opened up his reading from 1 Peter 3:18. He still wanted his sermons to be remembered and he had discovered that the most effective way for this to happen was by painting an original picture for his congregation. Not every image would be beautiful or easy to sit with, but many would be nearly impossible to forget. His sermons were moving not only towards a pastoral style, but an imaginative one as well. This was to be a different approach to preaching, when compared with many of

308 Boreham, “Ye must.”
309 F.W. Boreham, “Blessed are the Pure in Heart,” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 29 July 1899, 1.
310 F.W. Boreham. 1896. “Christ suffered for sins!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 1 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
Boreham’s contemporaries in other Protestant churches around Dunedin, who sought a more exegetical and methodical style.

**e. Challenges and Responsibilities.**

In 1896 F.W. Boreham asked to edit a regular column for the *Taieri Advocate*. The idea was that ministers from the local area would send in a regular contribution to the local newspaper. They would take it in turns to have their sermons published.\(^{311}\) The impression given by Howard Crago and F.W. Boreham is that few local pastors took up this opportunity and that the column quickly became Boreham’s own. Boreham wrote “the thing degenerated into the publication of a weekly sermon from my own pulpit.”\(^{312}\) This is not accurate historically. The records of the *Taieri Advocate* reveal that instead a variety of local ministers did write for the Preaching Column. These included J.M. McKerrow from Mosgiel Presbyterian (who Boreham had challenged over Christian baptism), W. Will from East Taieri Presbyterian, Rev. C. Conner who was preaching at the East Taieri Presbyterian Church, J.A. Somerville and Thomas Paulin from the North Taieri Presbyterian Church.\(^{313}\) On average F.W. Boreham wrote one Preachers’ Column on the fourth week of every month. He was not writing every week.\(^{314}\) The remainder of the columns were filled with either local preachers or those from overseas, such as Charles and Thomas Spurgeon, Joseph Parker, Alexander MacLaren, G. Campbell Morgan, Dr. Talmage and Dwight L. Moody.

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\(^{311}\) In the first preaching column Boreham said that he would “heartily welcome contributions from the pulpits and pens of the neighbourhood.” F.W. Boreham, “Preaching Column,” *Taieri Advocate*, 6 August 1896, 1.


\(^{313}\) While these local preachers did contribute Boreham was frustrated that they did not always add regular contributions and in one editorial note he said that over the next few weeks he was hoping “shortly to be able to publish sermons by several Taieri ministers.” F.W. Boreham, “Preaching Column,” *Taieri Advocate*, 2 December 1896, 1. Thomas Paulin was later to answer this call and become something of a regular contributor with four columns published during 1899.

\(^{314}\) These printed sermons do provide an invaluable source of information as they are unchanged from the original manuscript and message that was delivered at Mosgiel. This is suggested by comments that they contain from Boreham, such as: “Our subject this evening.” F.W. Boreham, “A Pertinent Question,” Preaching Column, *Taieri Advocate*, 27 January 1897, 1. Another printed manuscript in The Advocate quoted Boreham concluding with: “I want to say before I close.” F.W. Boreham, “Preaching Column,” *Taieri Advocate*, 7 April 1900, 1.
Boreham’s job was to edit the column every week and this task added to what was already a considerable personal and pastoral load.

The Annual Report of the Mosgiel Baptist Church in 1897-1898 referred specifically to the weight of these burdens as it stated:

“It has been our privilege to sympathise with him (F.W. Boreham) in the time of trial through which he has been called to press . . . We are thankful to have Mrs. Boreham in our midst again. Several of our members have also been called upon to pass through sorrow and our sympathy and our prayers have been manifested on their behalf.”\(^{315}\)

While Boreham was able initially to feed these challenges within a pastoral care focus over time they wore him down. A study of Boreham’s autobiography and the Mosgiel Baptist Church Minutes reveals a range of further personal and pastoral challenges.

In 1897, while on holidays, the Borehams were held personally liable for starting a large bushfire and were subsequently sued. This left them with only a small amount of savings to draw on.\(^{316}\) Stella’s health also suffered after the birth of their first child, to the point where doctors feared for her life.

The Church and Diaconate Minutes also reveal a further variety of ongoing and complex pastoral issues during 1898-1899. In particular F.W. Boreham was charged by his congregation members to tackle a couple within the church, Mr. and Mrs. Perrins, who were selling refreshments to cyclists on the Sabbath (in the afternoon). Boreham visited them and asked them to cease their practice. When they refused they were suspended as church members for a period of six months.\(^{317}\) After this time if they did not relent they were to be “expunged from the church roll.”\(^{318}\)

\(^{315}\) Mosgiel Baptist Church, *Church Minutes*, 14 March 1898, Hocken library, Dunedin, New Zealand.
\(^{316}\) Boreham recounts this story on page 167 of his autobiography, *My Pilgrimage*.
\(^{317}\) The report in the Deacons’ Minutes stated that Boreham “had again visited Mr. and Mrs. Perrins with reference to the Sunday night traffic in Refreshments. He had not succeeded in convincing them of the unrighteousness of this practice.” Mosgiel Baptist Church, *Deacons’ Minutes*, 17 May 1898, Hocken Library, Dunedin, New Zealand.
\(^{318}\) Mosgiel Baptist Church, *Church Minutes*, 15 May 1898.
Davidson suffered a similar fate for reasons not given, while Mr. H. Stewart resigned from the church membership on account of a report attacking his character. Another four members resigned from the church in 1899, some of whom left to join the Salvation Army. There were disputes about whether the bread at communion should be broken or cut. This would be the most challenging phase of Boreham’s ministry at Mosgiel and while T. Howard Crago may assert that this period of 1897-1900 was marked by improving sermons, this is not clear from the manuscripts themselves. Editorial, pastoral and denominational duties all weighed heavily.

The result of this pressure was that Boreham’s sermons became flatter and less imaginative. For a time he lost his growing sense of confidence. This is partly suggested by the fact that in 1896 Boreham repeated 60% of his sermons, and by 1898 he would only deliver 30% of his messages again. This lack of repetition points to a certain sense of deficiency or embarrassment that Boreham felt about his efforts. It was the only time throughout the entire period of ministry at Mosgiel and Hobart that Boreham did not repeat his sermons regularly. He had run out of steam. One plausible explanation for this was that Boreham spread himself too thinly. On reflection he commented, “A river can be widened until it is so shallow as to be incapable of navigation.” In other words, a person can become ineffectual by taking on too many tasks. The evidence for this is contained within Boreham’s sermons in 1898.

Many of Boreham’s messages from this particular year were straightforward. A number were wordy, cumbersome and overly simplistic. They did not have his theological centres of pastoral care and beauty, and were shallow. He adopted a more exegetical and traditional style. They also lacked the neatness of a sermon from 1896 where, picking up on the theme of 1 Corinthians 13, he stated that someone without

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319 Mosgiel Baptist Church, Church Minutes, 20 July 1898.
320 Mosgiel Baptist Church, Church Minutes, 21 September 1898.
321 Mosgiel Baptist Church, Deacons’ Minutes, 26 April 1899. The minutes reported, “Concerning the Communion service Mr. Swallow suggested that the bread should be broken, not cut.”
322 Crago, The Story, 77.
323 Crago, The Story, 97.
faith is like a ship without a rudder, someone without hope is similar to a ship without an anchor and a person without love is like a vessel without a propeller. Here Boreham’s words were beautifully and carefully crafted but this was not the pattern for his whole pastorate at Mosgiel. For example, in a message given on 20 March 1898, Boreham included only three stories or illustrations. The manuscript stated “this love is compared with the love of Christ for us: 1. it was love, 2. it was a dignified love, 3. it was a disinterested love, 4. it was a costly love.” Points such as these lacked surprise, insight and creativity. It was as if Boreham had run out of stories. He began to copy the dry exegetical techniques of others in the New Zealand church. A spark was missing.

During 1898 Boreham preached a long series with the heading: “Homely Talks with Nehemiah.” He would never speak on this theme again, which was something of an anomaly for Boreham. Charles Spurgeon was referred to on a number of occasions throughout these messages, suggesting that Boreham’s pool of resources had nearly evaporated. He also returned to the atonement theology that had been so central to his experience at Theydon Bois. Here sin was described as “the vilest, blackest, ugliest thing that ever cursed the lower world.” Christ became sin on our behalf so that we might have a clear path to God. Another sermon spoke of God’s hatred and punishment of sin. While Boreham’s banks and influences may have broadened at Mosgiel, during 1898 they narrowed and dried out. Here he was more in line with his fellow Protestants and Baptists in New Zealand.

The trend towards a narrower bank of stories and ideas from which to draw from continued through the final months of 1898 and into all of 1899. The topics and themes that he chose to speak about were simple and straightforward. In a sermon

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326 Another sermon from this time followed an obvious path as it spoke of “the faintness of an unsatisfied heart, the way in which the faintness was cured and the way in which the cure manifested itself.” F.W. Boreham, “Jacob’s Faintness and Its Cure,” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 9 February 1898, 1.
327 F.W. Boreham, “He was made Sin!” Preaching Column, Taieri Advocate, 23 July 1898, 1.
328 F.W. Boreham, “Preaching Column,” Taieri Advocate, 10 December 1898, 1.
called: “The stairs that go down from the city of David,” he commented that “there are steps that go down from the city of David” and not surprisingly that “there are stairs that go up from the city of David.” A number of sermons contained four stories or less. Some such as “A Great Woman” had no illustrations or metaphors at all. The message and the structure were instead taken directly from the Biblical text. When he did use narratives they were somewhat thin and obvious. In a sermon about growing he said of Jesus “he grows on you.” His only other analogies in this message related to the ripeness of fruit as a sign of development and the Apostles Peter and Paul.

In addition to preaching on the theme “Grow,” another sermon looked at the topic “Revive.” Boreham here was speaking as much to himself as to his congregation. His preaching needed to be stretched and renewed; it had to find some further resources. In 1899 only five out of his twelve sermons were repeated as Boreham did not think them worthy of another hearing at Hobart, Armadale or Scots. The preaching column that he edited for the Taieri Advocate leaned heavily on other local and overseas preachers; it was as if he had temporarily lost his voice and his developing sense of trust in his ability as a preacher.

f. J.J. Doke.

Boreham’s friend, J.J. Doke, provided a strong antidote to the young minister’s flatness in 1898 and 1899. Doke was the Pastor of the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church in Christchurch. He had married Frank and Stella Boreham and often gave his

329 F.W. Boreham. 1898. “The stairs that go down from the city of David.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 20 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
331 F.W. Boreham. 1899. “Grow!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 2 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
332 Boreham, “Grow!”
333 Boreham, “Grow!”
334 F.W. Boreham. 1899. “Revival!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 3 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
335 Those chosen were: Alexander MacLaren, G. Campbell Morgan- twice, Joseph Parker, Master Willie Powell (the boy preacher from Wales) and Dwight L. Moody.
younger colleague valuable advice. When Boreham confessed his tiredness and lack of resources for preaching, Doke offered him some simple steps in order to undertake a systematic course of reading each week.

While this was a significant event in Boreham’s development, there are some discrepancies about when and how this encounter between Doke and Boreham actually took place. In his autobiography Boreham noted that this happened as he was “just beginning” in his ministry at Mosgiel. T. Howard Crago, writing twenty years later, commented that this meeting took place in 1900, five years after Boreham had started his pastoral work in New Zealand. While it is difficult to know the exact date of the visit, J.J. Doke did conduct a mission in Mosgiel from 10-20 September in 1899. There is no other record of Doke visiting the Mosgiel Baptist Church during 1899 or 1900, so this would seem the most likely time for the pivotal conversation between Boreham and Doke to take place, four years after Boreham had commenced his New Zealand pastorate.

In addition to uncertainty about the dates of the visit, these conflicting accounts also provide differing reports about the content of the conversation between the older minister and his younger apprentice. For F.W. Boreham this meeting was one that changed the direction of his ministry. Doke’s advice to him was direct and clear: “Read my dear man.” Here Doke was the pivotal person to get Boreham started on a lifetime of reading. However, Crago wrote that Boreham was already an avid reader prior to meeting Doke and that the two ministers had often compared notes on books previously. Here Doke’s guidance was not so much to start reading but to adopt a regular system of working through historical accounts and novels. This is where the two accounts are in agreement— that Boreham’s advice from Doke was to begin reading systematically. He started buying and working through one book per week.

The sermon manuscripts also bear out the impact that Boreham’s meeting with Doke had on his preaching. In many ways, they show that the year 1900 represented a

336 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 141.
337 Crago, The Story, 90.
338 Mosgiel Baptist Church, Deacons’ Minutes, 26 July 1899.
339 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 141.
significant shift in Boreham’s pulpit ministry. His sermons were no longer flat, as they were throughout 1898-1899. This was the year that his messages expanded, not only in content, but also in his use of poetry and historical narratives. His banks broadened once more.

After the visit from Doke in September 1899, Boreham’s sermons from 1900 were fresh and alive. He chose captivating titles for his messages such as: “The Whisper and the Thunder” and “The Seraphim, Their Posture and Their Song.” The former was a poetic understanding of a line from Job 26:14. Here Boreham preached in full voice, his range had developed and stretched. He had re-discovered his self-assurance as a preacher. Stories were derived from Longfellow, botanists, painters, geologists, Carlyle, Buchanan, Tennyson and the Spanish Armada. Boreham was alive to God and the Scriptures. The theology in this sermon was largely poetic, it was beautifully written and left space for the congregation to explore God further. He said of God: “How small a whisper do we hear of him.” This statement was rich and evocative. The sermon was filled with detail, an important Boreham trademark.

Doke influenced Boreham’s preaching by giving him a clear, step-by-step path to follow in terms of historical reading. The older minister advised his younger counterpart to begin with Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and then to work his way through each of the periods detailed in Gibbon’s writing, by purchasing other books on these events. The first sermon with any reference to Gibbon was taken from 6 May 1900. In his autobiography Boreham wrote that his congregation was inflicted with Gibbon in every sermon. He said:

“My unfortunate and long-suffering little congregation were dumfounded by the discovery that whether the text were taken from the Psalm or Gospel or Epistle, it could only be effectively expounded by copious references to the Avars, the

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342 Boreham, “The Whisper.”
343 Boreham, “The Whisper.”
344 F.W. Boreham. 1900. “Watch and Pray.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 6 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
Sabians, the Moguls and the Lombards, and could only be successfully illustrated by romantic stories about the hermits, the Caliphs, the crusaders and the monks.\textsuperscript{345}

However this was not quite the case. Instead his evening sermons used more of these historical illustrations than his morning ones. For example on 6 May his early sermon had one reference to Gibbon, while his later one on the same day referred to Gibbon six times and Carlyle once. His evening sermon even borrowed its theme of: “The Christ of the Boundless Empire” straight from the pages of Gibbon.\textsuperscript{346}

This concept of preaching on historical themes in an evening service was to develop a significant trend in Boreham’s preaching that would carry on to Hobart. His practice would be to preach a conventional message in the morning, uncovering hidden meanings in Biblical texts, and a more biographical sermon in the evening, such as his “Texts that Made History” series at the Hobart Tabernacle. This matched the mood of each service, with the morning being more formal than the evening. Once more, the range of Boreham’s preaching voice and pastoral confidence was developing- it was able to reach different notes. His regular reading habits became a vital component of this growth.

By the end of 1900 Boreham’s sources for quotes and illustrations had stretched beyond Gibbon. In one message on prayer he managed to weave together illustrations that referred to Persian monarchs, Malek and Nizam, Hudson Taylor, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Spanish Armada and Saint Rosalie, all held together by a poem by Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson.\textsuperscript{347} The approach was clumsy and cumbersome. It lacked the neatness of his later years, where one story would be used to make one point using a narrative preaching style. Yet despite this, the growth in Boreham’s sermon content and approach during 1900 would suggest that this was the most significant year in his preaching development so far.

\textsuperscript{345} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 143.
\textsuperscript{346} F.W. Boreham. 1900. “The Many Crowned King.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 6 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{347} Boreham, “Some Secrets of Failure in Prayer.”
These changes were to have a significant effect on the remainder of Boreham’s time at Mosgiel. He slowly became more daring and at times launched into sermons that were based mainly around historical narratives. One of these was called: “Hannibal’s Alpine Strategy”348 that reviewed the basis of Hannibal’s success. Boreham stitched these points together into some logical items of application for his congregation. Works of history and literature would now be added to beauty, pastoral care and the Bible as vital sources of divine revelation, under the inspiration of Rev. J.J. Doke. His love of reading would set him on a unique path that would guide the direction for much of his future preaching.

g. Poetry.

Having found a valuable source of historical and topical content that could be fed into his sermons, F.W. Boreham began to work on the deployment of language in his manuscripts. His messages became more refined, reflecting a better flow and rhythm. In June 1901 Boreham gave a sermon that bore out this neater approach. It was headed: “From Death to Life.”349 In poetic language he described Christ as the one who “whispers to soul of its state, speaks to conscience of sin and appeals to heart for love.”350 He finished by telling stories about butterflies and Spring. Gone was the tortured, simplistic language of 1898 and 1899. Here points could cascade and flow into one another.

He began to develop the poetic gift of being able to unfold the meaning behind a single word, to see what many do not. Another sermon was based on a single word from Psalm 46:11- “Selah,” meaning a rest in a piece of music.351 The ‘selah’ allowed time to think about what had gone before and prepared the singers for what was yet to come. In this way it was a symbol of Sabbath rest. Boreham’s topics also became more quirky, unusual, original and memorable, such as one called “Left-Handed

348 F.W. Boreham. 1902. “Hannibal’s Alpine Strategy.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 5 October, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
349 F.W. Boreham. 1901. “From Death to Life.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 9 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
350 Boreham, “From Death to Life."
351 F.W. Boreham. 1901. “Selah.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 28 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
Folk.” He was able to probe hidden depths of passages. In a message on the Beatitudes he held that “God can reveal himself more readily to the pure in heart than the mighty in intellect.” Words were used to open a text for further possibilities, rather than explaining every term in a closed, rational, exegetical way. One example of this was to portray eternity as being similar to “an artist’s untouched canvas.” A poet invites further thought, to “lay hold of” the eternal “even though you cannot comprehend it,” while an exegete hopes to answer all questions. Boreham’s theology had room for mystery as his preaching adopted a more creative style.

This change reflected a growing discernment in Boreham’s preaching. He was now eager to find the right word and the right story, and placed more of an emphasis on quality over quantity. His confidence was expanding. In one message he listed nineteen separate illustrations and stories, but crossed most of them out. Only six were used when this message was delivered to the congregation at Mosgiel.

This developing confidence came from him eliciting a more valid response from his hearers. In one of his sermon packets a poem was included in response to a message by Boreham, called “He stood.” The poem was not in Boreham’s handwriting and bore the note: “FWB’s sermon to me.” It was a response from one of his congregation members and read in part:

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“I cannot hope to slay the foe
And glory win, but this I know
My King shall find me true.”
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Boreham’s poetic spirit had spread from the printed page to the pulpit and on to the pews of his congregation. Little wonder that for the rest of his ministry, his sermons would continue to be a poetic representation of the Scriptures and theology. This

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352 F.W. Boreham. 1902. “Left-Handed Folk.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 2 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

353 F.W. Boreham, “Blessed are the Pure in Heart.”


356 F.W. Boreham. 1902. “Beware of Worthless Imitations!” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 4 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

357 F.W. Boreham. 1901. “But he stood.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 22 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

358 Boreham, “But he stood.”

359 Boreham, “But he stood.”
represented his movement towards a more creative, original and imaginative style of preaching. The main deficiency with this style was that it meant that his exegetical understanding of passages was limited. Throughout the manuscripts at Mosgiel there is not one translation of a word in Greek. There are also few references to Biblical commentaries. He did not consult theological texts for different points of view on contentious issues, instead he learnt to trust his own poetic understanding.\footnote{F.W. Boreham. 1901. “Faith or Works?” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 28 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.}

**h. The Need for a Change.**

The church that was built shortly after F.W. Boreham’s time at Mosgiel. It is now used as a Christian School. Photograph by the author.

Mosgiel had presented F.W. Boreham with the opportunity to draw together a number of his important preaching themes and influences- it had been a rich time of growth and development. In 1903 after eight years of ministry in New Zealand the Boreham
family boarded a boat for a long vacation in the United Kingdom. While this did assist with Boreham’s preaching for a short time upon their return, his last year at Mosgiel was difficult. He described finishing in the country church as being similar to a “long, drawn out Gethsemane.”\textsuperscript{361} He was itching for a change.

This desire for a new placement is borne out in his sermons, as once more they became flat and lacked vigour and creativity towards the end of 1905 and into 1906. Some illustrations drew obvious points, while others were stale, such as Taieri Mouth which he had referred to in a previous message.\textsuperscript{362} His sermons seemed to lose their sense of urgency and application. Gone were the earlier influences of pastoral care, beauty, literature and poetry. One message entitled: “A Day with Jesus” closely followed the Biblical narrative from Mark 1:21-34 and there were few creative flourishes.\textsuperscript{363} Here Boreham was more describing a text instead of interpreting it by using his imagination. Another looked at Hebrews 7 and the reference to Melchizedek. Here Boreham spoke about the “divinity, humanity and dignity of the perfect priesthood,”\textsuperscript{364} but it was not clear how this could apply pastorally or practically to his listeners. There were only two stories or illustrations included in the manuscript. One message with the title: “The Bearers of the Vessels” had just two illustrations with one being a fairly simple point in which a boat that needs to be untied was likened to a Christian that is still attached to the temptations of the world.\textsuperscript{365} These messages were without the sense of literature and poetry that shaped Boreham’s sermons from 1900 onwards.

Towards the end of his time in New Zealand F.W. Boreham returned to the Garden of Gethsemane, just as he had done towards the conclusion of his ministry in the United Kingdom. Once more he found himself addressing the emotions of Jesus on his way

\textsuperscript{361} Boreham, \textit{My Pilgrimage}, 173.
\textsuperscript{362} F.W. Boreham. 1905. “The Wind From Heaven.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 5 February, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{363} F.W. Boreham. 1905. “A Day with Jesus.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 2 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{364} F.W. Boreham. 1906. “A Priest Like Melchizedek.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 25 February, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{365} F.W. Boreham. 1906. “The Bearers of the Vessels.” Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 8 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
to the cross. He needed to find some additional pastoral challenges. While this final topic remained the same, much had changed in Boreham between his time in the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

4. CONCLUSION: A DEVELOPING VOICE.

F.W. Boreham’s preaching influences at Mosgiel all led him to develop a concept of God that was broader than many in his denomination or the Protestant Church in New Zealand. He was becoming an original voice among Baptists. In contrast to his society this theology did not lead to Boreham advocating for pioneering social change. He was not a radical innovator like R.J. Seddon. Instead it caused him to deepen his appreciation for God and the Christian faith. He learnt to analyse key aspects of belief, for example saying that “conversion implies less a passport to future bliss than a present transformation of life.” Gone were the simple truths of Theydon Bois and in their place was a growing theological understanding that left room for mystery and humility. He was also willing to explore the implications of his expanding theological framework.

Where others in the New Zealand church used the assumed theological language of an exegetical style and conventional church wisdom, Boreham began to prefer the more open language of poetry and pastoral care that created numerous openings for his listeners. He was willing to preach by inspiration rather than by technique and his style was becoming increasingly imaginative. He was moving away from the topical and evangelistic approaches that he had mimicked from others in the United Kingdom. His major influences were pastoral care, beauty, a denominational role, ministry challenges, J.J. Doke and poetry. He also made reference to at least some contemporary events.

368 As an example of this depth, Boreham said in one sermon: “Only an artist can fully appreciate art, only a poet can fully appreciate poetry, only God can fully appreciate Christ.” F.W. Boreham, “Jesus Christ,” Preaching Column, Taiieri Advocate, 31 March 1897, 4.
369 In a message on Christ as King he looked at what this meant for believers, the church and mission. F.W. Boreham, “Ashamed of Christ!” Preaching Column, Taiieri Advocate, 26 May 1897, 2.
While Boreham may have stated that it was at Hobart that he came into his own as a preacher and minister, it was really during his first permanent pastorate in Mosgiel that his preaching developed its unique style. As his confidence grew he began to preach with his own voice, rather than with one borrowed from prominent Christian leaders. On vacation at the Taieri River Mouth Boreham would spend long periods of time practicing throwing his voice against the broad banks of the river and sand dunes. In many ways this action was symbolic of his time at Mosgiel. It was to be a period of growth and preparation. The span of his life had expanded with his sermons. His voice was becoming more pastoral, poetic, varied, informed and adventurous. However, this period was also marked by inconsistency as well. Two flat periods from 1898-1899 and 1905-1906 suggest that Boreham’s self-assurance and unique approach to preaching were not yet fully formed.
CHAPTER FIVE
DEEPER WATER:
F.W.BOREHAM’S PREACHING AT HOBART
(1906-1916).

The Derwent River in Hobart. Photograph by the author.

“*I felt that I was doing business in deep waters!*”

1. INTRODUCTION.

“Beware when the great God lets loose a great thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk. It is as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city and no man (sic.) knows what is safe or where it will end.”

This quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson was included in one of F.W. Boreham’s earlier sermons from his time at Hobart. In 1906, at the age of thirty-five, Boreham moved from a growing country church populated by farmers and surrounded by small streams to a larger city church that was attended by politicians and framed by a large river.

So far we have discovered that in the United Kingdom Boreham’s sermons were moulded by prominent speakers, such as C.H. Spurgeon, F.B. Meyer, Dr. Joseph Parker, A.T. Pierson and Dwight L. Moody. At Mosgiel he went through some flat spots in his preaching, where his sermons were tired and had few new ideas, but overall this was a time of ongoing growth and development. His voice was becoming more pastoral, poetic, varied, informed and adventurous.

In this chapter the nature of the Australian society, church and Baptists is outlined to compare with Boreham’s preaching. The chapter then illustrates how his preaching voice continued to develop and be stretched against this backdrop by his ongoing influences. A concluding section asks whether Boreham finally found his voice and reflected the above quote from Emerson, through his ministry at the Hobart Tabernacle from 1906-1916.

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2. F.W. BOREHAM IN CONTEXT.

a. The Society

In 1906 F.W. Boreham sailed from New Zealand to Hobart, Australia. He arrived in a country that had only recently become a federated nation on 1 January 1900. Many saw this as a momentous occasion. Processions and parades were held from the city to the bush. In Sydney children marched under the banner of: “One people, one destiny.” This phrase indicated that the Australian people had already become united with a singular, clear identity. In reality it was not so simple.

The Australian Commonwealth was borne more out of a sense of compromise than conviction. In these early years Federal Governments were often wedged between several competing interests and as a result lacked clarity and purpose. The Commonwealth had been established without a flag, anthem or capital city. The new Constitution avoided mentioning both the role of Prime Minister and the term Cabinet, both of which were to become key pillars of government. From the beginning, the process of Federation was forged bearing divergent interests in mind. The old colonies became new states and were often fierce in protecting their individual rights and privileges. In order to appease these interests every state, other than Tasmania, had a representative in the first Cabinet. The Senate had equal representation from every state, in spite of significant population differences. The new nation would be sandwiched between competing rival forces.

373 Welsh, Great Southern Land, 337. Despite these shortcomings only eight out of forty-four referendum proposals to change the Constitution since 1906 have been passed.
374 Frank Welsh notes that at Federation “all Australian colonies were henceforward to be states, albeit each retaining its own administration and with the Governor in Government House continuing as before.” Welsh, Great Southern Land, 334.
The electorate was equally indecisive for much of this early period of Australia’s life as a Federated nation, with eight administrations being voted in during the first ten years. At the time of writing, Australia has only had twenty-six Prime Ministers, and seven of these held office during the first fourteen years after Federation. Each of these Prime Ministers did share one underlying commitment— to maintain strong conditions for Australian workers. This obligation to preserve and protect benefits for workers and industry alike was expressed in a variety of ways.

It was the motivation to maintain favourable wages that undergirded much of the impetus for the ‘White Australia’ policy. It was thought that cheap labour from overseas should be restricted. One implication of this was that Pacific Islanders were prohibited from entering Australia after 31 March 1904. The Pacific Islanders who had been crucial in the establishment of the cane industry in Queensland could only stay in Australia until 31 December 1906. After this date they were to be removed from the country. In order to stringently police this ‘White Australia’ regime, a test would be held for those seeking to immigrate—one that could be given in any European language (not just English). This reflected the view that the Australian workforce, population and companies should be insulated at all costs. The Australian people wanted equality for some, not all.

Underlying these notes of isolation was an inherent distrust of other nationalities and people groups. For example, the first Prime Minister Edmund Barton once stated, “There is no racial equality. Nothing we can do by cultivation, by refinement, or by anything else will make some races equal to others.” Alfred Deakin, Prime Minister during three terms from 1903-1910, echoed this sentiment as he advocated that Australia should be “one people and remain one people without the admixture of

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375 This lack of decisiveness is shown by the first Federal election which did not give a resounding result to any group. Labor received sixteen seats in the House of Representatives, Deakin’s Protectionists thirty-two and the Free Traders, led by George Reid, twenty-seven.

376 The basis of the ‘White Australia’ policy came from an act that was passed on 23 December 1901 to place clear limits and boundaries around immigration. Cathcart, Manning Clark’s History, 463. The legislation was called the Immigration Restriction Act (1901).

377 Cathcart, Manning Clark’s History, 464.

378 Welsh, Great Southern Land, 343.
other races.” These views of racial inequality extended to the treatment of Aboriginal people by the Federal Government. While women were given the vote in 1902, Australia’s indigenous population was barred from the ballot box until 1966. Even for women the rise to political power was slow and gradual, with the first woman being elected to the House of Representatives forty years after Federation. In the formative days of the Australian Commonwealth, a clear boundary was drawn between who was ‘in’ and who was ‘out.’ Politicians and the wider population were cautious and conservative.

The difference between Australia and New Zealand was that while the former largely followed the latter in terms of progressive social policies, Australia also drew much clearer lines about who could enjoy the benefits of citizenship. This matched the mood of the electorate and population, in a society where a scandal could be caused by mixed bathing or a man walking along a crowded Sydney street without wearing a hat. Australians were mostly resistant to change and new things.

Views on many issues were even more strident in Tasmania than on the mainland, as there were fewer shades of grey. This statement by a contemporary commentator was especially pertinent in Boreham’s time:

“Something about Tasmanians means that they find it very difficult to hold two contradictory opinions. There is a tendency for Tasmanians as a small community to box themselves into one camp or the other and for the debate to become heated, and worse, personal.”

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379 Welsh, Great Southern Land, 341.
380 Welsh, Great Southern Land, 349.
381 These benefits were often considerable. In 1904 the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration was established and in 1907 the Federal Government introduced a system called New Protection. This meant that tariffs would be lifted for local producers if they paid a fair and reasonable wage to their workers. In 1908 the Old Age pension was introduced, but once more the boundaries were clearly marked. Pensions would not be given to those from Asia, Aborigines, Pacific Islanders or New Zealand citizens.
382 Cathcart, Manning Clark’s History, 475.
383 Manning Clark writes that this conservative spirit even reached the realm of popular entertainment so that “entrepreneurs found it was not in their material advantage to try any experiments in Australia.” Cathcart, Manning Clark’s History, 486.
A prominent politician from Tasmania, King O’Malley, claimed that “an Aborigine is not as intelligent as a Maori. There is no scientific evidence that he is a human being at all.”

b. The Church.

One source of this conservative outlook was that Australians at the turn of the last century saw themselves as a Christian nation and the clause, “Humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God,” was included in the Federal Constitution. The character of this Australian brand of Christianity was sometimes sectarian and often careful and guarded in nature.

The conservative nature of Australian Protestant Christianity came to the fore during the 1890s Depression. The response of the church to this economic downturn was the provision of charity, rather than offering a critique of the social structures that attributed to rising poverty. Many Australian ministers did not actively pursue the Social Gospel. Instead much theology was transplanted from the United Kingdom, rather than from an indigenous, locally grown vision of God. Support for the ‘Mother Country’ was also shown by commitment to the First World War. This gave ministers the opportunity to espouse values such as “freedom, sacrifice and heroism.” Some even saw the battle as a cleansing agent to purify the Australian soul; others actively encouraged young men to enlist. As the war escalated the churches organised a national day of prayer on 11 December 1915.

The Australian churches responded to a range of other social issues. Many were supportive of women being given the vote but silent about Aborigines not receiving the same privilege. A Mothers’ Union was established in Tasmania in 1892 and

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J. L. Welsh, Great Southern Land, 351.
Thompson, Religion in Australia, 36.
Ian Breward, A History, 106.
churches actively engaged with the suffrage movement. For many Protestant leaders
the main social issue revolved around the call for temperance and restricting the
liquor industry.  391

In Tasmania congregations were marked by a similar conservative bent towards
temperance and strict morality. Here the ‘Early Closing of Liquor Bars League’ was
established. Other examples of a conservative approach to faith in Tasmania were
evident. One notable story was that of a lady in Wynyard who was found to have
crossed out anything in her Bible that she found to be “objectionable, deleting the
entire ‘Song of Solomon’ and any reference to biological functions.”  392

c. The Baptists.

Baptists in Australia were seen as a “holy remnant” with their views in support of
justification by faith alone, believers’ baptism, the authority of the Scriptures and the
priesthood of all believers.  393 The Baptist Union of Tasmania was formed on 27 May
1884 with the express aim to “promote the unity, edification and prosperity of the
Baptist churches of Tasmania.”  394 The Hobart Baptist Church was also established in
the same year. It, like every other church in the state, had a minister trained at the
Pastors’ College, in England. These ties to Calvinist doctrine and the Spurgeon family
would remain strong. Charles Spurgeon’s son Thomas visited Tasmania on six
separate occasions throughout the nineteenth century.  395 When theological
controversy broke out between C. H. Spurgeon and the Baptist Union in the United
Kingdom,  396 the Day-Star paper of the Tasmanian Baptists proudly proclaimed:

391 Breward, Australia- The Most Godless Place?, 41.
392 Shakespeare, In Tasmania, 295.
393 Ken Manley, From Woolloomooloo to Eternity: A History of Australian Baptists, vol. 1, Growing an
Australian Church (1831-1914) (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006), 199.
394 Laurence F. Rowston, One Hundred Years of Witness: A History of the Hobart Baptist Church
395 Philip J. Hughes, The Baptists in Australia (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service,
396 Laurie Rowston writes, “Clifford’s attitude about the new interpretations of the Bible put him into
conflict with Spurgeon. Clifford had long urged attention to Darwin’s work and German
Higher Criticism.” Laurence F. Rowston, Tasmanian Baptists and Higher Criticism, May
“There is no down grade or troubling element of any sort. We are in a country that moves slowly, and perhaps would not account with some for our old fashioned and puritanical ideas of Christianity. Anyhow it is a fact that ‘modern thought’ finds no favour with us.”

This overtly conservative stance left Tasmanian Baptists at odds with some of their counterparts in other Australian churches and sometimes made them a source of derision. The push against the modern and the new was also to find many different expressions with Tasmanian Baptists. A report from the Baptist Union of Tasmania Assembly in 1905 said that the concepts in a talk from Rev. C. Palmer on evangelism were up to date and that this “rather staggered some of the more conservative brethren.”

Such views of suspicion were also evident in the Hobart Baptist Church, where F.W. Boreham was to minister from 1906-1916. Boreham was preceded by Robert McCullough, Morrison Cumming and James Blaikie, who were each evangelical and evangelistic. Their ministries were often conducted against a backdrop of resistance to change and a strict moral order. A key member of the church, Harry Benjafield wrote a letter to the local newspaper arguing that alcohol was ten times worse than an invading foreign army. When John Clifford visited Tasmania the Hobart Baptist Church refused to host him, on account of his theological differences with C.H. Spurgeon. This was the only capital city in Australia where Clifford was not welcomed by local Baptists. McCullough, Cumming and Blaikie also had their own problems to contend with. In 1890 a dispute broke out between McCullough and a leading Deacon in the church, with the former issuing a resignation letter that stated:

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398 A writer to *The Southern Baptist* noted: “It is a marvel that no one in Tasmania protests against such bigotry. Is there no party in Tasmania bold enough to protest against certain narrow-minded men making the Baptists of that island ridiculous in the eyes of the intelligent religious public in Australia.” Letter to the editor, *The Southern Baptist*, 17 July 1901 as quoted in Rowston, *Tasmanian Baptists*, 6.
399 Laurie Rowston notes, “It was well known that the Tasmanian Baptist churches including Hobart, when compared with their brethren in Victoria and South Australia, were conservative and were proud of the fact. They rejoiced in those who held to old truths.” Rowston, *One Hundred Years: A Draft*, 59.
400 *The Southern Baptist*, “Report from the Baptist Union of Tasmania,” 28 November 1905, 278.
“I am sorry that I shall have to inform you that I shall cease to be your pastor six weeks from this date. It has been brought before me that it is through me that there is not more success in the church and further that my wife both by her dress and behaviour gives general dissatisfaction in the church and is looked upon as a hindrance to the work.”\(^{402}\)

After an outcry from the church membership, the pastor was promptly reinstated and the Deacon departed. When McCullough finally left Hobart the church was impressed that his successor Morrison Cumming continued to emphasize a conservative approach to matters of faith and the Bible. An early review of one his sermons noted that: “There was no uncertain sound; one could easily discern that he did not belong to the new school of doubting theology; for which we praise the Lord, as we still cling to the old truth.”\(^{403}\) Preaching was expected to adhere closely to evangelical doctrines.

James Blaikie followed Cumming and was also known for his keeping to the “old gospel.”\(^{404}\) Despite this conservative pedigree he, like Robert McCullough, faced difficulties. During his time as Minister his Secretary resigned as “he would not tolerate any doubt being expressed nor any different viewpoint being advanced.”\(^{405}\) Congregation members were brought to the notice of the church for having a “disorderly walk” with God.\(^{406}\)

A serious controversy erupted over the lining of the dome at the Hobart Tabernacle in order to improve the acoustic quality of the building.\(^{407}\) J.T. Soundy, a Senior Deacon, opposed this project from the beginning- thinking it lavish and wasteful. When the newly installed dome did not improve the acoustic quality of the building Soundy and two other Deacons resigned in protest. In August 1905 five new Deacons were

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\(^{402}\) Laurence J. Rowston, One Hundred Years of Witness: A History of the Hobart Baptist Church 1884-1984 (Hobart: The Hobart Baptist Church, 1984), 16.


\(^{404}\) Rowston, One Hundred Years- A Draft, 40.

\(^{405}\) Rowston, One Hundred Years- A Draft, 46.

\(^{406}\) Hobart Baptist Church, Deacons’ Minutes, May 8 1904- July 14 1926, 7 September 1904, Library, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay Campus, Churchill Avenue, Sandy Bay, Hobart.

\(^{407}\) The dome was to be “boarded in and lined with metal.” Hobart Baptist Church, Deacons’ Minutes, 10 April 1905. The motion to carry out this work was passed unanimously, although after much debate.
elected. Blaikie soon left as well, together with the organist and choir conductor.\textsuperscript{408} The debate continued with Soundy being quoted as saying that the “alterations to the ceiling of the Tabernacle” were “a curse.”\textsuperscript{409} Some believed that the Church Secretary, Brother Pitt, held similar views. There was also dissension over the untidiness of the room used for Christian Endeavour.\textsuperscript{410}

This was the church and the context facing F.W. Boreham when he arrived at the Hobart Tabernacle in 1906. They were often more focussed on themselves and their internal battles than on the wider community. It was an environment where to bring in any new form of thinking or theology was to express doubt. It would be interesting to see if Boreham shared these concerns by drawing his influences from mainstream evangelical thinking or if he dared to find his voice by looking for more creative influences against such a reactionary and cautious backdrop.

\textsuperscript{408} Hobart Baptist Church, \textit{Deacons’ Minutes}, 24 July 1905.
\textsuperscript{409} Hobart Baptist Church, \textit{Deacons’ Minutes}, 3 October 1905.
\textsuperscript{410} Hobart Baptist Church, \textit{Church Meeting Minutes}, 25 March 1906, Library, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay Campus, Churchill Avenue, Sandy Bay, Hobart.
3. INFLUENCES ON F.W. BOREHAM’S PREACHING.

a. Ministry Setting at the Tabernacle.

The Hobart Tabernacle where F.W. Boreham was the Minister from 1906-1916. Photograph by the author.

Frank and Stella Boreham arrived in Hobart on Friday 29 June 1906, seemingly unaware of the divisions that had led to a rift in the Tabernacle’s congregation. There is no mention of any congregational difficulties in either Boreham’s autobiography or Crago’s biography—perhaps the change of minister was as helpful for the members of the Hobart Baptist Church as it was for Boreham himself. The initial contact with Boreham had been on account of a letter written in his support by Rev. C. Bayall of Caversham, New Zealand.411 The appointment was to be for twelve months with the possibility of extension if both parties agreed.

411 Hobart Baptist Church, Deacons’ Minutes, 31 January 1906.
Boreham claimed in his autobiography that Hobart was the making of his ministry and preaching.\textsuperscript{412} Gone were the uncertainties of Mosgiel where he feared the arrival of a prominent visitor amongst the small church population or wondered if he had run out of ideas. Instead at Hobart he sensed that he could be himself, without fear of repetition or criticism. His confidence and individuality as a preacher could grow and develop. This was to be a remarkable achievement when held against the conservative nature of the wider Australian society and church, together with the Tabernacle’s bent for criticising ministers.

One reason for his growing self-assurance was that F.W. Boreham was determined to improve as a speaker. He would often write notes of evaluation to himself after preaching. Titles and concepts were sharpened and the length of sermons was also critiqued.\textsuperscript{413} On a regular basis, F.W. Boreham would evaluate the strength of his own messages.

The sermons themselves show an attention to detail and a love for arranging words in the right order. In one message on John the Baptist he spoke of “bats, rats, grass-prophets, priests, altars.”\textsuperscript{414} He had a poet’s eye for detail and an ear that could hear the correct arrangement of words. In a phrase draped with eloquence he stated, “John (the Baptist) looms up in the sunset of the old faith.”\textsuperscript{415} Every word mattered. If too many words were used this was also noted by Boreham.\textsuperscript{416} He sought neatness and excellence in the arrangement of his messages. A good example of this was a sermon that he preached on the work and character of the Holy Spirit. This was carefully

\textsuperscript{412} In his autobiography Boreham wrote: “It was at Hobart that I found myself. From the moment at which I entered the pulpit for the first time I realized that I was preaching with a confidence and an enjoyment that made my ministry a perfect revelry . . . I uttered my soul from the Hobart pulpit with an assurance and a delight to which, at Mosgiel I had been a stranger.”


\textsuperscript{413} For example in a sermon called “The Hermit-Herald” Boreham wrote on the back of his manuscript: “If preaching again at Hobart take as text Luke 3:1-2 and see for good introduction \textit{Crises of Christ} p.112.” F.W. Boreham. 1906. “The Hermit-Herald.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 14 October, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{414} Boreham, “The Hermit-Herald.”

\textsuperscript{415} Boreham, “The Hermit-Herald.”

\textsuperscript{416} He wrote after one effort that it was “delivered to a crowded church but felt that it (i.e. the sermon) was overcrowded.” F.W. Boreham. 1907. “If the Lamp Be Smoked!” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 20 January, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
divided into: “The Majesty, Mission and Modesty of the Holy Spirit.” Messages that had been given previously at Mosgiel became more polished and the number of illustrations reduced. This represented a changing philosophy for Boreham. He had learnt that it was better to tell one story well than to skim over many stories ineffectively.

Boreham worked repeatedly on his earliest efforts at the Tabernacle. For the first time an entire sermon was crossed out and restarted. The topic was a central one for Boreham—“The True Evangelism.” After making several changes he added a note on the back that read “went finely.” These sermons clearly mattered to F.W. Boreham. One comment on the back of a message about Samson said: “The sermon went splendidly: but took 48 minutes. The first part dragged a little. The last part went finely . . . reached a great climax at his death.” These are the notes of someone enjoying their craft, while also seeking to refine it further. Comments from congregation members were added to give further encouragement or critique.

This desire to evaluate his messages stayed with F.W. Boreham during his whole ministry in Tasmania. Five years after he had begun, he wrote on the back of a manuscript: “Try again- perhaps on Sunday evening. Be careful to first explain the nature of the stream, then its application to Assyria etc.” In a sermon from 1915 he wrote, “Went very well indeed. Nasty night but crowded. A.G. Brown and his son Cecil present.” Later in his next pastorate at Armadale in 1917 he noted: “Congregation thin: Anniversaries at South Yarra and East Malvern and something

418 For example a sermon preached at Mosgiel on 11 October 1896 originally contained thirteen illustrations, when it was repeated at Hobart this had been reduced to just three. F.W. Boreham. 1908. “Samson.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 24 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
420 Boreham, “Samson.”
421 F.W. Boreham. 1908. “Samuel the Seer.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 21 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
422 F.W. Boreham. 1911. “The Streams that flow softly.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 10 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
special at Methodist Church. Voice broke—preach again later—perhaps in series.”\textsuperscript{424} Ministry is a notoriously difficult vocation to quantify. These notes on the back of his sermons were markers to remind Boreham of what each preaching experience was like. He tried for an objective summation. These assessments were also to be constant reminders of the need to keep working on his preaching style, timing, content and delivery. Boreham sometimes even critiqued his messages as they were being delivered.\textsuperscript{425}

F.W. Boreham wanted to keep on improving and developing as a preacher. This was an essential element of his growing assertiveness. He believed that in every aspect of life a person “was made to soar.”\textsuperscript{426} This suggests that Boreham was able to stand aside from his own efforts and to evaluate them objectively. The sermon manuscripts show that he was more concerned with maintaining his own high standards than to be sensitive about any criticism from the congregation. The outcome of this pursuit of excellence was that others were glowing in their praise of his preaching. A reporter for The Southern Baptist, on hearing Boreham speak, enthused that he “never gives less than his best and that ‘best’ is of a very high character indeed.”\textsuperscript{427} Boreham had reaped the reward of acclaim from others by learning how to be both critical and objective about his messages. This desire to stand over and to evaluate filtered into many parts of his preaching at Hobart and was to be a crucial factor in him preaching with confidence and individuality.

\textbf{b. Creative Evangelism.}

From his earliest days in England, F.W. Boreham harboured the heart of an evangelist, even trying unsuccessfully for a missionary post in China with Hudson Taylor. He was thwarted in this endeavour due to his earlier accident at Tunbridge


\textsuperscript{425} F.W. Boreham noted during one message, “It occurred to me in preaching that a fourth might be added to the 3 closing points- the Efficiency of Divine Help.” F.W. Boreham, 1912. “The Four Carpenters.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 10 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{426} F.W. Boreham, The Golden Milestone, 97.

\textsuperscript{427} The Southern Baptist, 17 November 1910, 750.
Wells that had left him with a disability. He continued to look for other ways of being a missionary. In London his first sermon had been in the open air at Clapham Common in an evangelistic service. Yet this desire to reach others with the good news of Jesus was sharply contrasted with Boreham’s own reticent and retiring personality. At Mosgiel he had preached fewer sermons than in the United Kingdom on evangelistic themes while at Hobart he found a different approach to becoming an evangelist. Boreham was always uncomfortable about asking people to come forward as part of an altar call and as a sign of their conversion. He believed this to work well for others, such as Dwight L. Moody, but it did not match his own nature. A service at Hobart solved his dilemma where without any prompting two women came forward at the end of the sermon with tears streaming down their faces. Boreham believed this to be the work of God and from this point on he would leave altar calls and responses of repentance to the mysterious undertaking of the Holy Spirit rather than his own contrived efforts.428

This did not mean that his evangelistic heart was denied. He instead found a new way to spread the gospel message, which did not copy the technique of his earlier influences such as Dwight L. Moody. His approach was becoming more distinct. In his history of the Hobart Tabernacle Laurie Rowston writes, “Boreham was probably the first minister in Hobart to make use of a notice board to advertise his sermon titles.”429 Boreham wanted to spark the curiosity and interest of passers-by with his arresting sermon titles. This would become an important evangelistic tool. He chose topics such as: “The Selective Love of Jesus,”430 “The City built on Sapphires,”431 “A Preacher on Strike,”432 “Lions Leashed and Loosed.”433 A member of his congregation remembered that these:

428 F.W. Boreham wrote of this event from August 1908 in Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 208-9.
429 Rowston, Hobart, Unpublished, 52.
431 F.W. Boreham. 1907. “The City built on Sapphires.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 6 October, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
432 F.W. Boreham. 1908. “A Preacher on Strike.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 16 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
433 F.W. Boreham. 1909. “Lions Leashed and Loosed.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 26 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
“Sermon titles were intriguing and caused much conjecture as to what would be the subject emanating from the title, and crowds came to pack the church on Sunday evenings. The titles were beautifully lettered by Mr. Nelson.”

Later on during his time at Hobart, handbills would be prepared to outline the sequence of sermons in a series. It was the wording and the creativity of his messages, rather than his theology, that were radical at Hobart. This was to be a vital determinant of his ongoing success as a minister and a key reason for his acceptance by a conservative congregation.

This emphasis on an arresting title almost certainly stemmed from Boreham’s earliest desire in his messages to captivate his congregation. He aimed for preaching that was attractive and interesting. This was especially the case with his Sunday evening sermons. He would often link his introduction with the title that had been posted on the billboard. In one message he spoke of: “The Rubbish Heaps of Life.” His first thought was to describe the process of sifting through what should be thrown out and what should be retained in an office. This was mixed with a poem from Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Hannibal’s Alpine strategy. Here Boreham would creep up on a Bible passage and introduce theological ideas slowly. His aim was to draw people in through the catchy titles and to retain their attention by preaching interesting sermons.

This was particularly evident in the public lectures that Boreham gave from May 1907 onwards. These Town Hall addresses were delivered after the Sunday evening sermon. They were used as a bridge between the church and the community. Different churches often hired the Town Hall but the focus for them was on giving lectures that

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435 For example a flier was prepared for a series in 1910 that read “Hobart Baptist Church. On Sunday evenings at 7pm, the Rev F.W. Boreham will deliver Three Special Addresses Entitled: A Pageant of Fire on December 4th, 11th and 18th.” Archives, Baptist Union of Victoria, Camberwell, Victoria.
437 This was agreed to at a church meeting on 15 April 1907. Hobart Baptist Church. Church Meeting Minutes, 15 April 1907.
provided information rather than carrying evangelistic themes. This once more reflected Boreham’s unique approach to ministry.

A Congregation member, Les Kerr, remembered Boreham’s Town Hall messages as being “a great attraction” both to those inside and outside the Tabernacle’s membership. In one such lecture from 1908 Boreham began with the theme “Are We Living in a Haunted House?” He unfolded his topic slowly, starting with fables and fairy tales of haunted houses. The aim was to unlock the imagination of his listeners. These haunted houses were symbols of a universe where much happened that could not be understood. Places such as the towering Mount Wellington held untold memories. He then introduced the concept of the brain as a haunted house. A quote was included from Bill Sykes in Charles Dickens’ Oliver Twist. Boreham had taken his listeners on a journey and crept up on God like someone nervously wandering through a haunted house. His apologetic strategy was clever and well thought out. Throughout his ministry at Hobart Boreham would continue to use the Town Hall for lectures by himself and others, so that when he celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of his ministry in 1916, meetings were conducted for a week in this venue, with a range of visiting speakers.

These town hall lectures together with his sharp, noticeable titles and interesting introductions were each markers of a creative approach to evangelism. Together they contributed to the sustained growth of the Tabernacle’s congregation during Boreham’s time as Minister, so that from 1906-1916 the membership went from 180 to 320. This was in stark contrast to Baptist patterns across Tasmania. In 1912 the

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440 F.W. Boreham. 1908. “Are we Living in a Haunted House?” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 12 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.


Annual Meeting of the Tasmanian Baptist Union spoke about the lack of conversions and in light of this an hour was spent asking God to bring more people into the churches.\textsuperscript{443} The growth of his church afforded Boreham with space to be creative.

However, not all of his preaching was of this evangelistic, creative manner. In comparison, his Sunday morning sermons at times adopted a different flavour. They often started with some contextual notes or referred to a given passage straight away.\textsuperscript{444} The titles for these morning sermons were also drawn from the Biblical narrative itself. For example, a sermon taken from 3 John adopted the title of: “A Lovely Little Letter” and stuck closely to the text itself for its main points.\textsuperscript{445} Here Boreham was beginning to use different styles for different occasions. He was comparable to a singer working on their vocal range.

c. Photography.\textsuperscript{446}

F.W. Boreham first became an active photographer in 1907. He quickly developed an affinity for this art form and spoke of its magnetism.\textsuperscript{447} He saw his dark-room as a “magic grotto” and “enchanted place.”\textsuperscript{448} He bought himself a Victor plate camera and began taking photographs of everything from a ship arriving in port\textsuperscript{449} to a cave at a nearby beach.\textsuperscript{450} In time, he submitted some photographs to the \textit{British Photographic Magazine}, and Boreham’s biographer T. Howard Crago noted, “As experience was gained, so the quality of work improved.”\textsuperscript{451}

\textsuperscript{443} \textit{The Tasmanian Baptist}, “Report from Annual Meeting,” (April 1912) 2.
\textsuperscript{444} Examples of this are: F.W. Boreham. 1909. “The Perennial Supply.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 2 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript or F.W. Boreham. 1909. “Heartsease from the King’s Garden.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 12 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript. In both of these cases Boreham begins by expounding the Biblical passage.
\textsuperscript{445} Boreham, “A Lovely Little Letter.”
\textsuperscript{446} Crago, \textit{The Story}, 160.
\textsuperscript{447} He wrote, “The lure of the dark room is indescribable.” F.W. Boreham, \textit{Wisps of Wildfire} (London: The Epworth Press, 1924), 250.
\textsuperscript{448} Boreham, \textit{Wisps of Wildfire}, 250.
\textsuperscript{449} This section is derived from: Crago, \textit{The Story}, 130.
\textsuperscript{450} Boreham, \textit{Wisps of Wildfire}, 251.
\textsuperscript{451} Crago, \textit{The Story}, 130.
Boreham enjoyed the slow nature of taking a photograph and then waiting for it to be developed. In an article for the _Tasmanian Baptist Advance_ Laurie Rowston noted:

“Boreham's photographic work is all the more compelling when we consider that the business of photography in the early years of the twentieth century was a very different affair to that of the present day. There were no point-and-shoot automatic cameras then. A photographer needed a high degree of skill which included knowing how to measure the light and develop and print the film. Boreham must have been a perfectionist because he chose to use a photographic method (the dry glass plate) which was far more complex than what was being offered when he commenced and which became popular. In taking photographs Boreham also became a wordless writer. But more importantly his photographs, like his books, make you see.”  

Photography was a natural art form for F.W. Boreham to adopt due to his reverence for beauty and appreciation of the visual arts. Here he could combine both of these character traits, together with his eye for detail. He could be himself.

Photography shaped Boreham’s preaching during his time at Hobart. His sermons began to acquire a more visual quality. He sought to assist his people in having a living, visual encounter with a text or illustration. A sermon on Revelation 21 provided him with the opportunity to give his congregation a glimpse of a city of sapphires and its amethyst underlying it. A further talk about the Pharaoh in Exodus was replete with references to the broad rivers and vast fields of Egypt, the sphinx and the pyramids; the Palace with its porticoes and parapets. Here hideous, scaly frogs were conjured up for the congregation. In other messages those at the Tabernacle were left to clamber in bare feet over slippery rocks that jutted out into the ocean, to see the petals on the pillars, to travel through the frosty steppes of

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452 Laurie Rowston, “Capturing something of life as it is lived,” _The Tasmanian Baptist Advance_, March 1993, 10.
453 Boreham, “The City Built on Sapphires.”
Siberia or to ride alongside the sandy desolation of the Sahara Desert. Boreham’s sermons became more visual with time as his hobby took hold. One sermon was called “By Rocks and Reefs.” Another message on the Jerusalem Temple in 1911 was simply structured around two pictures - trees being felled in Lebanon and stones being carried through Judean quarries. Like any good photograph, Boreham aimed to take his listeners to the exact location - either from the Bible or an illustration. This style of preaching was different to the approach taken by many Baptist ministers in the Tasmanian Baptist church.

Boreham also enjoyed developing some portraits of Biblical characters. When he spoke of either being a slave or a son in God’s household a picture was framed for his congregation. They could see the slave, the slave owner and the son. Boreham believed that to paint a word picture was to leave an indelible imprint in the minds of his listeners. He hoped that this would provide a powerful antidote to his earlier concerns about a message leaking from his hearers’ memories. He was willing to trust his own unique and visual approach to tackling Bible passages. It was his imagination, rather than other prominent preachers, which would now guide his presentation of a given text.

d. Writing.

It was during his time at Hobart that Boreham’s writing came to the fore. Every week he would write around eight devotional articles with at least half of them being published in various magazines, newspapers and journals. These pieces quickly gained popularity on the mainland, such that there was increasing pressure on Boreham to collect his essays and articles into a published book. This took place in 1912 when The Luggage of Life was printed by the Epworth Press. Boreham aimed to

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458 Boreham, “By Rocks and Reefs.”
write one book each year, but when his “Texts that Made History” series of sermons was undertaken in 1911 and subsequently turned into a range of books, this number increased to two works for publication annually. He wrote vigorously, with the shadow hovering above his head that he may not have many new ideas by the time that he reached forty.\footnote{461}

The flow of his ideas is interesting to trace. While Ralph G. Turnbull asserts in a biographical note that Boreham’s essays were put straight into his messages,\footnote{462} in the early years at Hobart it was his sermons that fed into his writing. Boreham would preach on a given topic and then a month or two later it might appear as an article in a Christian journal. On 21 February 1909 he delivered a message on the theme “The Art of Getting on.” This became an article for The Southern Baptist on 7 July 1910. The order was identical: starting with some notes from Dickens’ Bleak House, and then moving to an illustration about Henry Drummond.\footnote{463}

His articles were written forms of his message. There are several other examples of Boreham recycling and reshaping sermons into articles and essays.\footnote{464} Titles and the content might be changed slightly but the overall theme was often repeated.\footnote{465} However, his writing also influenced his preaching. With time his sermon titles became more literate and poetic, choosing themes such as: “Bloodstains and Teardrops- the Perplexity of Pain.”\footnote{466} These titles were quirky and original.

\footnote{461} This notion was given to him by one of the key members of the Hobart Church- J.T. Soundy. Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 198.
\footnote{462} Turnbull writes, Boreham’s “genius lay in his ability to write well before preaching, but his writing was not the writing of a sermon as such. He specialized in the art of essay writing. These essays were sometimes incorporated into his preaching and the style cultivated affected and influenced his preaching. The substance of most essays appeared in his sermons.” Turnbull, A History of Preaching, vol. 3, 424.
\footnote{464} Lindsay Newnham traces this pattern with two specific examples from Boreham’s career. L.L. Newnham, “Recycling by Dr. F.W. Boreham,” Our Yesterdays: A Publication of the Victorian Baptist Historical Society 5 (1997): 71-78.
\footnote{465} For example the sermon “The Deeps and the Shallows” was changed to “The Call of the Deep” in an article for the Australian Baptist on 3 February 1914. F.W. Boreham. 1914. “The Deeps and the Shallows.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 11 January, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\footnote{466} F.W. Boreham. 1911. “Bloodstains and Teardrops- The Perplexity of Pain.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 2 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
Memorable themes such as this could be advertised either within the *Mercury* or on the noticeboard outside the Tabernacle. His love for poetry and alliteration remained strong and continued to be a valuable evangelistic tool.  

**e. A Love of Literature.**

F.W. Boreham not only enjoyed writing himself, he also derived inspiration from reading the work of others. At Hobart he developed his love of literature and the pattern of regular reading suggested by J.J. Doke at Mosgiel continued. The earliest traces of literary sources in his preaching at Theydon Bois could now be seen in full flower. Illustrations were included from Harriet Beecher Stowe, the Bronte sisters, Victor Hugo and John Bunyan. Boreham’s imagination and reading could be driven in its own direction.

In 1910 from a collection of ten sermons Boreham gave examples from seventeen different sources in literature. These were taken from the writing of: Thomas Macaulay, Matthew Arnold, Rudyard Kipling, John Milton, John Bunyan, Thomas Chalmers, Miller, William Cowper, F.B. Meyer, Rowland Taylor, Benjamin Jowett, Charles Darwin, Mark Rutherford, Emily Bronte, Jules Verne, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the *Expository Times*. The only literary figure to be cited twice was Rudyard Kipling. Boreham’s sources for inspiration were drawn from a wide range of literature. In the same year at his inaugural address as the President of the Baptist Union of Tasmania, he compared the writing of William Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Walter Besant, Hall Caine and Charles Dickens with that of the four gospel writers.  

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467 A sermon from 1913 spoke of “A Song of Safety” and contained points about “the fortress, the foe and the friendly forces.” F.W. Boreham. 1913. “A Song of Safety.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 18 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

468 Boreham, “Hearts ease from the King’s Garden.”


This love for literature and interesting stories was to assume a particular weight for Boreham during his time at Hobart. Boreham often preached series on Biblical characters, such as Samson, Samuel, Naaman, David and Goliath. George Menzies heard one of these studies and said: “I heard a very illuminative and living discourse on the Epistle to Philemon. How he made those characters live!”\textsuperscript{472} In time Boreham enjoyed introducing key fictional characters or reciting poets such as Wordsworth, Tennyson, Emerson or Keats to draw together key points.\textsuperscript{473} George Wainright was to conclude in 1911 about Boreham that “few men have a better acquaintance with literature—whether history, biography, poetry or science.”\textsuperscript{474}

Boreham’s preaching was full of creativity, vigour and life. The characters that he had seen in works of fiction or history had motivated him to imagine his own situations. In 1911 he preached a sermon that was based on a passage from James 1:12—“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” Instead of rigidly holding to a description of this text, Boreham interpreted it with his unique literary, imaginative skills. He did this by inventing his own fictional character and describing a typical day in the life of this young man, from sunrise to sunset. He called it: “A Day with the Tempted.”\textsuperscript{475} Along the way he spoke of the various temptations that would assail this enthusiastic Christian. He charted his spiritual progress from breakfast to supper and everything in between, at home and at work. This was the Bible—invensively applied to everyday life. The Bible according to Boreham should not be confined to the dusty annals of yesterday, rather it should live today and inform tomorrow. By introducing and applying it to a character that the people in his congregation could relate to, there would be no excuse in terms of not seeing the application. Boreham had discovered a more subtle and attractive way for his preaching to be useful which was no longer borrowed from F.B. Meyer. He had the same intent as he did at Theydon Bois but he had found an increasingly effective method of carrying out his intention through using a narrative preaching style. In his comments on the back of his manuscript he wrote:

\textsuperscript{472} George Menzies, \textit{The Southern Baptist}, March 1909, Laurie Rowston, private collection.
\textsuperscript{473} Boreham, “The Deeps and the Shallows.”
\textsuperscript{475} F.W. Boreham. 1911. “The Trail of the Serpent.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 16 July, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
“The sermon went splendidly: some thought it my best idea . . . (it) worked out capitably.”\textsuperscript{476} This love of literature fostered by J.J. Doke at Mosgiel was a key influence upon Boreham’s Hobart messages and shows his ability to follow his own approach to preaching.

\textbf{f. Learning and Education.}

F.W. Boreham’s use of literature and preference for taking risks was in sharp contrast both to the broader Australian society and his own congregation. Boreham did not share such a reactive or overly cautious faith. His theology was not radical, but instead he valued a rational and intelligent approach to matters of belief and religion. He held that the mind was as valid a way of discovering God as the Bible and that the intellect could be a vital source of divine revelation. As his time at the Pastors’ College had been shortened, Boreham saw the value in ministers having ongoing learning and education. He had also learnt from his mentor in New Zealand, J.J. Doke, about the importance of a thorough reading program.

This rational, educative approach to faith was evident from the beginning of Boreham’s time at Hobart. In the winter of 1907 he gave a series of lectures entitled “The Doubts of the Average Man” and considered important themes of the day such as: “What about the First Cause- Has Evolution evicted God?” or “What about the New Theology- How far and how true?”\textsuperscript{477} He was willing to engage with some important intellectual issues of his time and wanted the church to develop a well thought out response to aspects of contemporary life.

Preaching classes were a vital component of Boreham sharing an intelligent approach to faith with others. The erstwhile minister began them in 1907 and these became a venue to debate difficult issues, such as the problems faced by Australian society, and controversial issues such as evolution or socialism. This was another sign of his developing wisdom as controversial issues could be tackled in an environment that

\textsuperscript{476} Boreham, “The Trail.”
\textsuperscript{477} Crago, \textit{The Story}, 129.
welcomed debate, rather than being used to sidetrack church meetings. These classes were to attract up to twenty young men both from the Tabernacle and other churches.478 Here he sought to pass his desire for excellence onto others. Boreham would provide a rational critique of those in the class who gave sermons, just as others had done for him as a student at the Pastors’ College.479 Ministers from the Hobart church plant at Moonah Baptist were included in the group and others from the Class, such as George Craikie, went on to become pastors.480

As well as passing on his intelligent approach to preaching, Boreham also wanted to learn from others. He was willing to take risks and his adventurous spirit and inquisitive mind were a breath of fresh air for the Hobart Baptist Church. This open-minded approach also meant that his understanding of the Bible was broad. He believed that the mind could be a vital tool in understanding the Scriptures. Boreham held that just as the eye could help to understand the object, so could the intellect bring understanding to the issues of faith. In this way stories should not be seen superficially or at a surface level.481 He preached on topics such as: “The Place of Thought in Religion.”482 He was an advocate for rational Christianity and he believed that a refusal to grow in knowledge was an insult to God.483 This intelligent faith bred in Boreham a sense of humility more than rigidity or certainty. Perhaps this is another

478 Notes from the Hobart Tabernacle, May 1908, The Southern Baptist. The structure of these classes was that the syllabus was arranged by the Secretary but was revised by Boreham as President. Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching Class Minutes, 24 May 1909, Library, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay Campus, Churchill Avenue, Sandy Bay, Hobart.

479 Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching Class Minutes, 18 May 1908. Here Boreham responded to a sermon from Mr. Turner and spoke “of good points and its defects.” The minutes of the first class reported that, “Meeting was opened with prayer. Chair is being occupied by our President. Mr. McLeod preached a sermon to criticism, each member taking part in the same. After the summing up of our President the meeting closed with prayer.” Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching Class Minutes, September 1907. The class had a break but was reformed again in 1910. In 1911 the name was changed to The Preaching and Debating Society. Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching and Debating Society Minutes, 12 June 1911. The numbers declined with twenty-two members of the prehearing class roll and twelve members listed on the roll of the Preaching and Debating Society.

480 The Minutes note: “Rev. George Craikie a one time member of the class now has a ministry appointment in England.” Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching Class Minutes, 27 September 1909.

481 Boreham, “Lions Loosed.”

482 Boreham, “The Place.”

reason why he kept such detailed notes after each message. There was always something more to learn from each experience and no religious system, denomination or political party could ever claim to embody all truth. This openness was a lynchpin for Boreham’s developing understanding of God at Hobart. Gone were the many allusions to a clear, straight-forward atonement theology. His emphasis on pastoral care from Mosgiel had also been largely left behind. In their place was a willingness to share stories, poetry and new ways of viewing things. He wanted to pursue an ongoing education. Boreham also continued to resist sectarianism; his open mind would not allow it. He participated in regular pulpit exchanges with those from Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist churches and preached on the theme of: “The Ideal Church: A Golden Dream.” When the Anglican Bishop of Hobart’s wife passed away, Boreham organised a note of condolence from the Tabernacle.

This influence of learning and education also allowed Boreham to develop the valuable art of being able to critically evaluate a text. This skill was often missing in the earliest years of his preaching, but at Hobart while he would not look at a text in great detail, he could place a book of the Bible within its own frame and genre. One example was that he saw the little letter of Philemon as occupying the same place in the New Testament canon as Jonah in the Old Testament. Both were small books about people avoiding a God-given duty. He even explored different theories of his long held views about the atonement, holding that “the chief peril lay in regarding any one theory . . . as a complete unfolding of the whole, instead of merely revelation of a part.” This reflected his ongoing growth and willingness to share his own views.

Boreham was now more a servant than a slave to a Biblical passage or another person’s theology. In his early years Boreham was stuck in trying to describe a passage accurately. He was bound by the Bible. For example in a message from

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484 Boreham said that there is “clearly room for catholicity in this world. No school of philosophy: no political party: no ecclesial body (could contain) all truth.” Boreham, “The Ideal Church.”
485 Hobart Mercury, 13 July 1907, 9.
486 Hobart Mercury, 18 February 1911, 8.
487 Hobart Baptist Church, Church Minutes, 14 April 1907.
489 The Southern Baptist, 17 November 1910, 750.
Mosgiel in 1895 on the siege of Samaria he laboriously outlined the nature of this event. He described the actions of Elisha, God and the Samaritans in rigorous detail. He kept strictly to the boundaries of the narrative. When he repeated this message in 1910 it had been altered significantly. He had moved from description to interpretation. He was able to stand over the passage and draw out its meaning. In this later sermon on the same passage, he could now refer succinctly and poetically to the prophet and the scoffer.\textsuperscript{490}

F.W. Boreham also enjoyed using the Bible to develop creative titles for his sermons such as: “Lions Leashed and Loosed.”\textsuperscript{491} Here he started with some words of context about Daniel and then drew three wise lessons from Daniel’s story. He was attracted to wisdom sayings and this paralleled his earlier desire for usefulness in his messages. On the text from Daniel, Boreham noted:

“The coward and the hero see a cat and a lion. The hero sees that the lion is the one to be afraid of and faces the cat. The coward is scared of the cat and runs into the arms of the lion.”\textsuperscript{492}

This emphasis on referring to Biblical wisdom became increasingly important as Boreham launched himself as a Christian writer. A message on: “Life’s Isolations and Inspirations” was later turned into an article with the heading: “Our Desert Islands.”\textsuperscript{493} Both sermon and article alike focussed on how to deal with loneliness and individuality.

These changes in his use of the Scriptures suggest that at Hobart Boreham became an independent thinker. His confidence had grown to the point where he was willing to follow his own judgments. This is revealed in part by his unique views of the Bible. Against a climate that could be conservative and reactionary Boreham was willing to

\textsuperscript{490} F.W. Boreham. 1895. No title given. Sermon, Mosgiel, New Zealand, 8 December, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript and F.W. Boreham. 1910. “The Siege of Samaria.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 3 April, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\textsuperscript{491} Boreham, “Lions loosed.”

\textsuperscript{492} Boreham, “Lions Loosed.”

\textsuperscript{493} F.W. Boreham. 1910. “Life’s Isolations and Inspirations.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 13 February, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
analyse the Scriptures for himself. He believed that an unthinking, misguided allegiance to the Bible was just as mistaken as an unthinking, misguided allegiance to the church. The first was the mistake of the Protestant, the latter of the Roman Catholic. Instead Christians should seek God’s truth, wisdom and understanding evident both in the Bible and Christian tradition.\textsuperscript{494} His desire for truth and a breadth of knowledge from the Scriptures was also evident in his drawing from a range of books from across the Canon. In 1911-1912 he preached from: Revelation (three times), the Psalms (twice), Genesis (once), James (once), 1 Kings (once), 1 Corinthians (once), Zechariah (four times), Isaiah (once), Job (once) and Jeremiah (once). If anything this sense of breadth grew with his ministry. In 1904 he only preached from three Biblical books (Jeremiah, 1 Kings and Philemon). It is equally interesting to note that from 1911-1912 there were no gospel texts used. Perhaps this reflected a desire to continually cover new ground and to find truths hidden away in obscure places. He wanted to surprise his congregation.

His understanding of the Scriptures continued to grow and broaden during his time at Hobart. In 1903 at Mosgiel he gave a sermon on the mystery of suffering. Here he explored two key theological understandings of theodicy. By 1911 this had expanded into seven different points of view. These ranged from the philosophical to the natural, the scientific to the historical, the theological to the person in the street. Every possible angle was explored. This message was detailed and yet easy to understand. When it came to the Bible and its ongoing interpretation, Boreham was willing to be a lifelong learner. In 1910 one of his congregation members saw his preaching as bringing “the searching rays” of a “wonderful lamp”\textsuperscript{495} to matters of faith. When Boreham addressed his preachers’ class he “advised members that it was by information, self-culture and education that they could fit themselves for the public platform.”\textsuperscript{496} Preaching was an endeavours of the mind.

\textsuperscript{494} F.W. Boreham. 1910. “What is Truth?” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 12 June, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\textsuperscript{495} Notes from the Hobart Tabernacle, The Southern Baptist, September 1910.
\textsuperscript{496} Hobart Baptist Church, Preaching and Debating Society Minutes, 19 June 1911.
g. Many Waters Merging.

As well as reflecting an intelligent and unique approach to the Bible and Christian thinking, Hobart was also a period of ministry during which Boreham was able to bring his main influences together. In 1911 George Wainright visited the Hobart Tabernacle. His aim was to spend a week observing the ministry of F.W. Boreham and then to write a report for The Southern Baptist. His observations were headed: “Appreciation of F.W. Boreham.” In particular he was struck by a series of sermons that Boreham had started preaching on Sunday nights called “Texts that Made History.” On Sunday 21 May 1911 F.W. Boreham found himself needing to announce his next sermon series. He had an idea for one fortnightly theme but was stuck for the other fortnight. He had preached a number of interesting series of night sermons at Hobart right from the beginning. Sitting in his chair waiting to give the announcement Boreham came up with the title, “Texts that Made History.” His idea was that every fortnight he would refer to a historical or fictional character and the Bible passage that had changed their lives. In the end “Texts that Made History” extended to more than one hundred messages over five years. It started with Martin Luther and then wove its way through the stories of Richard Baxter, William Law, Hugh Latimer and Blaise Pascal. George Wainright was suitably impressed as he commented, “The ministry of the Rev. F.W. Boreham is the most unique and interesting I have met.”

This was the series where Boreham brought all of his influences and his personality together. His messages would talk about a famous text for a whole range of historical figures. In describing himself as a young minister in the United Kingdom he said that his influences were like rills and rivers being poured into a lake. To continue this metaphor, this series “Texts that Made History” was the place where these many influences merged and deepened—history, photography, writing, a love for literature,

498 Boreham, My Pilgrimage, 198.
499 Wainright, “Appreciation of F.W. Boreham.”
poetry, repetition, learning and education, usefulness and beauty all shaped these messages.

Boreham would often begin a sermon in this series by introducing a historical character, but this was not done through dry description. Instead he would give his listeners a photograph or a snapshot from the key figure’s life. In the first sermon he painted a portrait of the German Reformer Martin Luther. His picture of the English hymn writer William Cowper was memorable for its vivid description:

“A shy, shuddering, frail little fellow . . . a quivering bundle of nerves, slight of figure, with pale, pinched face and eyes swollen with chronic inflammation. Have a good look at him . . . before they bundle him into the cavernous interior of the old coach.”

In another he painted a picture for his listeners of the Quaker William Penn meeting Native Americans under “the wide spreading branches of a giant elm.” These descriptions were Dickensian in character, and photographic in outcome. He was able to re-create a historical scene in minuscule detail.

Boreham injected his passion for writing and literature into these messages. Poetic phrases were employed as a way of lodging concepts in the minds of his hearers and avoiding leakage. Major themes would be repeated time and again. The order of words would be changed. In a sermon that spoke of the Jesuit founder Ignatius Loyola, he had the Catholic leader battling with his own mind. He was thinking- “The whole world! His own soul! To gain the world! To lose his soul!” Literary characters were a valuable source of inspiration as Boreham talked about Robinson Crusoe or Uncle Tom’s text.

503 For example in a message on John Franklin’s text he spoke of someone stumbling across the great explorers remains and finding “a heap of books and bones- and that was all!” Boreham, Life Verses, vol. 1, 28. In a sermon on John Bunyan he said, “There over the portal of the pilgrim path, stands the text that John Bunyan gave to the world.” Boreham, Life Verses, vol.1, 64.
504 Boreham, Life Verses, vol.1, 94. This was the sermon that was heard by George Wainright.
This series consolidated Boreham’s distinct and intelligent use of the Bible. Passages were not so much handled exegetically, as reflected upon with imagination. He crept up on a Biblical passage and often began by drawing out a photographic scene of a person’s life. No context would be drawn upon for the Scriptural reference. Instead a phrase would be lifted out for application and reflection. He did not want to lose people with a dry description. For example, in the message on Martin Luther, Boreham outlined the passage that changed the Reformer’s life—“The just shall live by faith.” No mention was made of this verse’s context or Paul’s situation.  

Boreham’s main aim was to provoke interest and then have the Bible intersect with everyday life. He still wanted his preaching to have a useful flavour, rather than get bogged down in detailed Biblical descriptions. The Scriptures needed to interact with everyday life.

Another influence to have a direct impact upon this series was history and biography. In one sermon he looked back on his childhood and commented:

“Shall I ever forget the night on which I looked for the first time on the life of George Moore . . . by Samuel Smiles? I owe to that childish experience a penchant for biography that has deepened, rather than evaporated with the years.”

This deepening appreciation of others’ life stories and of history saw Boreham preach on Oliver Cromwell, John Bright, Lord Shaftesbury, the Countess of Huntington and a rich variety of other figures from the past.

A further formative influence to be fed into these messages was F.W. Boreham’s abiding reverence for the beauty of the natural world. The creation was used to describe the mysteries and depth of faith. Comparisons were drawn between spending a night in the Arctic with its snow and sleet to being in the sunlight on a summer’s day. A portrait of the Quaker John Woolman included a detailed

description of “a riot of noble forestry- the maple and the magnolia; the rhododendron and the azalea, the chestnut and the basswood . . . the elm and the oak.” This respect for the natural world extended into an interest about scientific thinkers who wrestled with the mysteries of creation. Boreham’s intelligent approach to life meant that he was open to the latest scientific discoveries and was an advocate for Darwinian theories of evolution. Boreham wanted to judge such theories and its leading advocates for himself. In one message he spoke critically of Christians who were dogmatically opposed to the botanist Thomas Huxley, who supported Darwinian evolution. He concluded that we each have a “blind spot” and see truth in part. Unlike in the United Kingdom, Boreham was now able to share a hard word with his congregation.

This degree of openness was also evidenced in the ecumenical and eclectic range of people included in the “Texts that Made History.” There were more Quakers in the series than Baptists. In a church setting at Hobart that had been known for sectarian and cautious tendencies, Boreham openly extolled the virtues of a Carmelite monk, Cardinal Newman or Saint Theresa. Denominational ties or preferences did not bind him.

He painted pictures for his hearers in order to draw them into his message. In a sermon on the Quaker and American settler William Penn he said: “The Algoquin chiefs are gathered in a solemn conclave. They make a wild and striking and picturesque group. They are assembled under the wide-spreading branches of a giant elm, not far from the banks of the Delaware.” Boreham not only wanted his messages to be interesting and invitational, he also wanted them to be simple and easy to follow. Key phrases, such as: “The just shall live by faith,” were repeated time

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513 Boreham, *Life Verses*, vol.3.
and again. Missionary pioneers such as John Patton, John Williams, David Livingstone and David Brainerd were each given their own key text. This eclectic mix reflected Boreham’s desire to draw things together. His ministry was one of varied influences and of learning to speak with different voices. An article taken from *The Australian Baptist* and celebrating Boreham’s twenty-one years in ministry, lauded that “it was seldom that in one man so many gifts and graces combined and blended”\(^{516}\) (emphasis mine). This merging of influences did not mean that Boreham’s sermons lacked focus. His overarching goal was the same as it had been at Theydon Bois and on the streets of London- to find new ways of being an evangelist. The difference was that he was able to achieve his goal more effectively. His preaching was more polished and unusual when compared with many of his contemporaries in the Australian Baptist church.

**h. The First World War.**

Despite Boreham’s willingness to mix his influences and to adopt an intelligent approach to the Bible, he did not always extend such a rigorous approach to his understanding of contemporary issues. He continued to speak about the world in a generic rather than specific sense, just as he had done at Theydon Bois and Mosgiel. For example in a message on true and false ideals Boreham shared about how values are made clearer through a time of national crisis. However, no specific catastrophe was mentioned.\textsuperscript{517} Public issues were discussed and debated in the preaching class, rather than from the pulpit. This class considered controversial issues such as a Local Options Bill, the role of the British Navy, socialism and evolution.\textsuperscript{518} Other issues were debated at a Baptist Union level. In a rare sectarian moment in 1915 Boreham spoke in opposition to state funding for Roman Catholic Schools.\textsuperscript{519} The pulpit was rarely seen as the place for any strident declarations on public issues throughout most of Boreham’s ministry. He rarely, if ever, adopted a prophetic style of preaching.

In keeping with this, at the start of 1914 Boreham’s sermons were predominantly about timeless values. He preached a sermon in January 1914 labelled: “The Deep and the Shallows” that was then turned into an article for the \textit{Australian Baptist}. In this sermon manuscript he drew from his love of nature and spoke of the rapture of the seaside. He painted a picture for his listeners of picnickers by the sea and said that they were “entirely detached from the accidents of any particular age. The world could change as it will and they would not know it.”\textsuperscript{520} In August 1914 the world did change and for a rare time in his sermons, F.W. Boreham engaged vitally with a contemporary political or social matter as the seas of conflict swept the globe. He was dramatically influenced by the outbreak of the war and sought to ask the question of: Where is God in the midst of struggle? On 2 August 1914 he preached on the topic of: “The Comforter Divine.” On the back of his sermon manuscript was the note:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{517} F.W. Boreham. 1914. “Ideals- True and False.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 29 March, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
\item \textsuperscript{518} Hobart Baptist Church, \textit{Preaching Class Minutes}, 1 March 1909.
\item \textsuperscript{519} “Report on the Baptist Union of Tasmania,” \textit{The Launceston Examiner}, 9 April 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{520} Boreham, “The Deeps and the Shallows.”
\end{itemize}
“Preached on occasion of great crisis. Germany declared war on Russia.” He spoke to this uncertainty and offered a vision of a God of hope, strength and love.

For the remainder of 1914, Boreham’s sermons assumed a focus centred on the themes of duty and obligation. While Howard Crago commented that Boreham’s sermons “were not flamboyant or jingoistic” the evidence suggests otherwise. Instead they were filled with British nationalism and fervour for the battle ahead. Here intelligence was left aside for King and country. A message preached on 13 September was a call to arms that was given the title: “The Second Mile.” Boreham here used the example of Christ to show that Jesus not only fulfilled his duties by going the first mile, but he went on doing well by going the second. The implication was that those enlisting were doing the same - they were willing to make sacrifices for a cause that they believed in. One sermon took up American President Woodrow Wilson’s favourite text and another spoke of the King’s faith. The former outlined the importance of enlisting in the army, wearing the uniform and then adorning the uniform with medals and meritorious service. Howard Cargo writes that, during this time, “recruiting was in full swing and some of the Tabernacle’s best young men were appearing in khaki.” These messages addressed the families of these soldiers. They were up to date, engaging, fresh and relevant. They were a mixture of “the newspaper and the Bible.” In Boreham’s sermons it seemed that a long held reluctance to engage with social or political issues was becoming a focal point. Then in 1915 the flavour of his sermons started to shift from duty and

522 Crago, The Story, 158.
523 His editorials from the time were more open-minded with one noting that “the responsibility for this fearfully momentous day is not easily assigned. It is very easy to blame Germany.” F.W. Boreham, “Editorial,” The Hobart Mercury, 3 August 1914, 4.
525 F.W. Boreham. 1914. “President Woodrow Wilson’s Text.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 20 September, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.
526 Crago, The Story, 158.
527 This note is from the theologian Karl Barth as quoted in Steve Norris, “Bible, Newspaper and Internet 10 x 10.” Available from http://www.norrisadvisors.blogspot.com; Internet; accessed 5 December 2007.
obligation to a theme of solace. His messages adopted a more pastoral style, as they had in his early days at Mosgiel.

As families felt the full toll and cost of the war, Boreham uttered words of comfort and consolation. Two months prior to the Gallipoli landing he brought a reflection upon Micah 7:8: “When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” He spoke of the problem of pain and started with an evocative story from the front line. It was told by Canon D.J. Stather-Hunt who was the Vicar of the Holy Trinity Church in Boreham’s birthplace of Tunbridge Wells. The story was of a soldier who had been shot across the eyes, and lost sight. Upon seeing the soldier the chaplain was moved with compassion, and delved into his satchel to draw something from it. The contents were a small bag of lavender with a note that Stather-Hunt read to the wounded soldier. It was Micah’s passage: “When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.” The chaplain said to the soldier: “That sweet smell will remind you of home.” Boreham was unsure about whether to include this narrative and even added a question at the end of his manuscript asking: “Is it morbid?” He believed that it was compelling evidence of an incarnational God able to turn terror to triumph. People needed such stories of comfort from the front-lines of battle.

As the war progressed however, Boreham became increasingly silent about it. He retreated back to the comfort and shelter of his timeless themes. War fatigue had set in both for him and for his congregation. His sermons lost their spark. As he looked out on regiments marching through the streets, broke bad news to families and comforted the bereaved, Boreham’s enthusiasm for the war and for engaging with the issues of his time died down. Throughout 1915 he preached every week from the Tabernacle’s pulpit, which left him exhausted. There was a certain tiredness evident in his messages. One was called “A Sermon on Nothing” and finished with a poem on the theme of atonement.

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529 Boreham. “The Luminous Dark.”

530 Boreham, “The Luminous Dark.”

In Winter 1915 Boreham gave a series entitled: “The Happy Warrior- His Struggles, Reverses and Triumphs.” The series ran from April to September and considered themes such as: “The Enemy- seen through the eyes of a savage”, “Buckling on the Sword,” “Decoy and Ambush” and the “Fight of the Foe.” However, this war was spiritual not physical. It took place upon an eternal battlefield rather than the temporal battlefields in France or the Middle East. What was happening on these earthly battlefields seemed beyond comprehension even to Boreham’s intellect. Creativity and imagination could not be applied to bloodshed.

By the end of the year Boreham’s messages focussed on comforting themes of spiritual satisfaction and stories from Samuel Wesley, Livingstone, C.H. Spurgeon and Dickens. He had moved from the public sphere to the eternal and along the way something was lost. His theology and understanding of the Bible could only be stretched so far. In his autobiography, which was ironically written during the Second World War in 1941, he said about the Great War:

“My health was going from bad to worse. The trouble began with the outbreak of war. People said that I took things too seriously . . . I formed the conviction that at such a time a minister should remain among his own people . . . When hearts were breaking, and the comfort of the gospel was most sorely needed, I felt it my duty to be on the spot . . . such concentration . . . wore me down.”

Two other notes are also particularly revealing. One is a letter from F.W. Boreham to J.T. Soundy dated 1 August 1916. Here Boreham wrote of his “great sorrow concerning the sad news of Cecil Salisbury.” Cecil was a young man who had died in battle during the War. Boreham had endeavoured to convince him not to go due to his “singular position in the home.” Instead Cecil was impelled by “an overpowering conviction of duty.” A further reflection from Boreham’s daughter Joan Lincolne is also important. Looking back in August 1978 she wrote of her

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532 Hobart Baptist Church, _Flyer_, “The Happy Warrior- His Struggles, Reverses and Triumphs,” Baptist Union of Victoria Archives.
533 Boreham, _My Pilgrimage_, 201.
534 F.W. Boreham, Letter to J.T. Soundy, 1 August 1916, Laurie Rowston, private collection.
535 Boreham, Letter to Soundy.
536 Boreham, Letter to Soundy.
“father’s sorrow as, having used his gift of eloquence to ask young men to serve King
and country, he suffered intense regret especially as he had to call at homes and tell of
sons who would not return.”

This was to be the source of his silence. In 1915 at the
height of the war, church and deacons’ meetings were held quarterly not monthly.
Boreham’s deteriorating health and spirit meant that he could not maintain the
previous tempo of his ministry.

F.W. Boreham’s reluctance to mention the war from the middle of 1915 onwards,
suggests that the cost of engaging actively with political and social issues became too
great for him. Early in the war, with his emphasis on duty and obligation Boreham
said in one of his sermons: “We must go so far, whether we will or no. You can never
say, ‘thus far and no further.’”

Sadly Boreham himself found the cost of the war
and of visiting families with the horrific news that their sons had just died on a
foreign battlefield, too great. This led to a growing sense of detachment from the main
social and political issues during his time in Hobart and in the end caused him to seek
a placement with greater administrative support in Armadale (Victoria). As with
Mosgiel, Boreham had reached a flat spot in his preaching at the end of his time in
Tasmania.

4. CONCLUSION: AN INFLUENTIAL VOICE.

The one limitation that F.W. Boreham faced in his preaching at Hobart was that he
was unable to bring the full range of his distinct voice to the grave dilemmas of the
First World War. However, despite this shortcoming, he did pursue an imaginative
style of pulpit ministry that was in stark contrast to the reactionary setting of the
Tabernacle or conservative nature of the broader Australian society in the early
twentieth century. He had shifted from the topical style of his preaching at Theydon
Bois. He had found his voice.

537 Joan Lincolne, “Memories,” August 1978, unpublished typed notes, Laurie Rowston, private
collection.
538 Boreham, “The Second Mile.”
At Hobart F.W. Boreham also made the transition from being influenced by others, to becoming a key influence upon Australian Baptists. People listened to him and his confidence had grown. He not only discovered his own voice, but he also helped others discover theirs as well through a preaching class. When George Wainright visited the Hobart Tabernacle he heard Boreham preach from the “Texts that Made History” series. He looked and listened, concluding that:

“One realised how completely he had held his audience by the noise of the people’s coughing when the sermon was ended. It seemed as though they had been holding their breath lest they should miss a single word of the message.”  

F.W. Boreham and his intelligent, evangelistic approach to faith influenced the nature of the Hobart Tabernacle. Gone were the constant references in church and diaconate meetings to small, internal debates. Their focus had been broadened to match his.  

This wider interest caused Les Kerr, a member of Boreham’s congregation at the Tabernacle, to note the influence that he had on the township and churches of Hobart:

“Ministers of other denominations were either old in their pastorates or of mediocre calibre, but possibly the drain on their attendances through Mr. Boreham’s personality as well as his preaching, woke other denominations to the fact that Hobart was needing a better type of preacher to be appointed to its churches and so by the time Mr. Boreham concluded his ministry in Hobart more capable men were beginning to fill the Hobart pulpits and thus retaining their own following. Mr. Boreham’s presence in the city led to better provision for the other denominations with the termination of his ministry the floating part of the congregation which had been attracted by him and his type of preaching disappeared probably to resume its sermon tasting elsewhere.”  

F.W. Boreham’s experience at Hobart illustrates that the movement from being rigidly influenced by his role models in the United Kingdom to becoming influential himself was now complete. He brought about change in a way that reflected the quote

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539 Wainwright, “Appreciation.”
540 One rare exception was that in a church meeting in 1913 Mr. John Soundy “drew attention to the fact that it was much harder to hear the accompaniment of the piano than the organ and asked the reason why the organ was not used.” Hobart Baptist Church, Church Meeting Minutes, 11 August 1913.
from Emerson that this chapter began with. His influences of photography, creative evangelism, writing, education and literature were a creative and original blend. Finally he was able to follow his own maxim, to preach as nobody else could.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS.

A self-portrait by F.W. Boreham in 1911. Photograph courtesy of Laurie Rowston.
Each person “sees as nobody else sees. He (sic.) must therefore paint or preach or write as nobody else does. He must be himself: must see with his own eyes and utter that vision in the terms of his own personality.”

F.W. Boreham quoted in I Forgot To Say, 133.

1. FINDING HIS VOICE.

This thesis began in Chapter One by outlining two important aims. Firstly it sought to establish at what stage of his ministry did F.W. Boreham find his individuality and confidence as a preacher. This has involved setting Boreham against his political, social and ecclesial context and asking when did he become a unique voice both in his society and among Baptists. The second aim of this thesis was to answer the question: what were the factors that moulded F.W. Boreham’s signature voice? This has been achieved through a discussion about the kind of influences and shapers revealed within these sermon manuscripts. Each chapter has responded to these two central aims.

Chapter Two adopted some historical and homiletical frameworks to help answer these questions of Boreham’s preaching confidence and influences. From a historical perspective a range of views about the nature of history were considered. The conclusion drawn was that history involves weaving the threads of primary documents together. This has been the method used throughout the thesis. The number, use and authenticity of the manuscripts was established to give a clear overview of these primary documents. From a homiletical perspective a range of preaching styles were outlined including: narrative, exegetical, evangelistic, topical, pastoral and imaginative. These were discussed in order to show which category best suited F.W. Boreham’s preaching during a given timeframe.

Chapter Three detailed F.W. Boreham’s development as a preacher in the United Kingdom (1888-1895). It discovered that Boreham’s preaching voice drew together a blend of his main influences such as: Dwight L. Moody, Charles Haddon Spurgeon,

F.B. Meyer, Dr. Joseph Parker and A.T. Pierson. In addition to this, Boreham shared key evangelical emphases about the importance of: conversion, the Bible, the cross and missionary practice. He was more a product of his times than a unique voice among British Baptists during this early stage. His lack of confidence was also suggested by his reluctance to preach about difficult Biblical passages. His preaching was highly influenced by his conviction that sermons had to be useful and evangelistic. Shapers that were later to define Boreham’s preaching, such as nature and stories, were at this point only a marginal focus. His style of preaching was predominantly evangelistic and topical. In the United Kingdom he was yet to find his voice and was a product of his ecclesiastical setting.

Chapter Four outlined a range of important factors that shaped F.W. Boreham’s preaching at Mosgiel (1895-1906). In particular he began to respond to the needs and concerns of his congregation members. He was willing to challenge the narrow sectarianism of New Zealand Baptists and was alive to the influences of beauty, poetry, literature, some contemporary issues and history. This marked a time when he was slowly discovering his voice and learning to critically evaluate his social, cultural and ecclesial contexts. He also moved towards a more pastoral and narrative form of preaching, that was different from the exegetical style adopted by many of his contemporaries in the New Zealand church. There were still traces though of his confidence in ministry and preaching not yet being fully developed. This was particularly evident in flat spots during the middle of his time at Mosgiel in 1898-1899, when he faced a variety of personal, pastoral and family challenges, and from 1905-1906 when he prepared to leave. The minister from the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, J.J. Doke, was pivotal in setting Boreham towards an approach to preaching that contrasted with the church of his day.

In Chapter Five we saw that it was at Hobart (1906-1916) that Boreham found his voice and learnt to think independently. His influences reflected this development as he was shaped by a creative blend of photography, writing, a love of literature, learning and education, and a fresh approach to evangelism. In these sermons every

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543 Bebbington, The Dominance, 21.
word counted and Boreham’s literary approach to preaching came into full flower. This was particularly evident in the “Texts That Made History” series of sermons that painted vivid word pictures of key characters in the story of the Christian church. His use of Biblical texts was again unique when set against the exegetical approach of many, as he sought to creep up on a passage and to evoke curiosity in his listeners.

At Hobart Boreham also evaluated his sources carefully. He was no longer reluctant to be critical about his own or others’ preaching, as his preaching class and sermons both allowed him to speak his mind. In a message on some of his role models from the past he noted that the heritage of these figures was not so much through their sermons as through the songs that were left behind by Ira Sankey or Charles Wesley.\(^{544}\) He was able here to stand outside of his influences. This is what it means to find your own voice and to make a unique contribution. He could break free of Spurgeon, Meyer, Parker, Pierson or Moody’s pattern of preaching and centre his sermons on creative ideas that he had thought of and carefully crafted. He could become his own person. The one exception to this was that his views on the First World War were closely aligned to many others in the Australian church. His inability to apply his distinct voice consistently to contemporary issues in his preaching was a major limitation in each pastorate. He rarely sought to link his creative approach with important social issues of his time.

Despite this shortcoming, F.W. Boreham’s legacy from the Hobart Tabernacle is to have left behind a body of work that is distinct within the annals of Baptist history. His emphasis on: self-evaluation, the importance of words, repetition, creating vivid illustrations, preaching that is useful, an intelligent approach to the Bible and being innovative have each left their mark. A listener upon hearing one of his messages during this period of Boreham’s ministry noted that this: “Is the most unique and interesting that I have met . . . the striking originality . . . and . . . spiritual ingenuity.”\(^{545}\) This was to be a significant achievement when set against a

\(^{544}\) F.W. Boreham. 1908. “The Higher Minstrelsy.” Sermon, Hobart, Australia, 10 May, Preacher’s handwritten sermon manuscript.

\(^{545}\) Wainwright, “Appreciation of F.W. Boreham.”
denominational backdrop that prided itself on resisting innovative thought. His narrative and imaginative style of preaching was also in stark contrast to the conservative nature of the broader Australian society and Tasmanian Baptists.

The final sermon in the collection at the Baptist Union of Victoria Archives bears out this theme of individuality. In a message delivered just before leaving Hobart, Boreham emphasised the need for “singularity and originality, to not be ashamed of your SELF (emphasis his).”546 Fittingly enough the topic was “The Life Complete.” On the back of the sermon envelope was a poem written by F.W. Boreham:

“I will be MYSELF for Him,
Serve him morning, noon and night,
Seek his holy will to know
Set apart for his delight.”547

The artist Sir Joshua Reynolds once said, "Instead of endeavouring to amuse mankind (sic.) with the minute neatness of his imitations, the genuine painter must endeavour to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas."548 However, to find one’s way from imitation to innovation and individuality is not easy for most ministers. It takes time, patience, ministry experience and some key mentors. Throughout this thesis water imagery has been used to describe the process of pastoral formation. For F.W. Boreham the output of his preaching took many years to broaden, deepen and flow in its own unique direction. It was only at the Hobart Tabernacle that his sermons consistently reflected his distinct personality.

547 Boreham, “The Life Complete.”
2. AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

A range of further subjects may still be tackled when looking at the life, ministry and writing of F.W. Boreham. In particular research could be undertaken to explore the later years of his preaching at the Armadale Baptist (1916-1928) and Scots Presbyterian Churches (1937-1955). The question could be asked: Once Boreham had found his voice at Hobart, was it maintained at Armadale and Scots? Analysis could also be completed to see if the river of Boreham’s preaching continued to maintain its flow or if it dried up in his latter years. In addition to this, key influences such as history, biography, photography, beauty, writing and intelligence could be traced to see if they had an ongoing impact on his sermons from Armadale and Scots.

Now that this study has been finished on F.W. Boreham’s preaching to complement Geoff Pound’s research on Boreham’s editorials, further work could be done to detail major theological themes, issues and approaches raised in his fifty-five devotional books. Comparative work may also be undertaken looking at the different styles that he adopted for each form of communication such as sermons, editorials and devotional books, and common theological themes might be highlighted.

Finally, the historical and homiletical approaches used in this thesis could also be extended to chart the development and maturation relating to the preaching of other key identities and figures within the Australasian church.
3. SIGNIFICANCE FOR TODAY’S CHURCH.

It would be an interesting exercise to note the ways in which churches and ministers continue to imitate congregations and pastors who are perceived to be successful, just as F.W. Boreham did in the United Kingdom. In her recent book, *People in Glass Houses*, Tanya Levin decries the lack of originality in the Australian church. She writes cynically, but perhaps accurately, that many pastors may hope one day to be introduced as follows:

“Hi, meet Ian, he’s the pastor of a city church with over 300,000 people. He loves changing lives, planting churches and seeing people radically on fire for God. He has a wife called Lindy and three beautiful children, who all go to church even though their teenagers.”

There is a sense of conformity about many of the songs that we sing and the sermons that we preach as contemporary Australian Christians. Movements sweep across our churches taking most before them—whether it is the *Purpose Driven* series of books, music from Hillsong or the worship style of the Toronto Blessing. Does this reflect a lack of confidence similar to F.W. Boreham imitating those whom he perceived to be successful? F.W. Boreham’s story started out on this path of imitation, but then as his self-assurance developed he discovered the value of incarnation—of the gospel being planted in a way that better reflects its own context. This is a significant challenge for many Australian churches.

As well as calling for an incarnational approach to ministry, F.W. Boreham’s story also provides an encouragement for preachers to continue working on their sermons and their ongoing education as pastors. The importance of J.J. Doke’s visit and Boreham’s systematic approach of reading one book every week, suggest that the process of training for ministers needs to continue long after theological college has been completed. Boreham’s detailed analysis of his own preaching efforts at Hobart

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shows that for some ministers the path towards improving messages lies in honest self-evaluation.

Boreham’s preaching influences such as photography, nature and stories, also imply that leisure time activities, such as going to the movies or the art gallery, can provide a rich source of illustrations and depth for sermons. Shapers such as these may provoke a sense of curiosity, imagination and originality in sermon preparation and presentation.

F.W. Boreham’s sermons equally illustrate the importance of ministers using different voices and styles to communicate with their congregation. Flatness can be avoided by combining a range of exegetical, evangelistic, pastoral, narrative, topical, prophetic and imaginative approaches. Contemporary preachers also have far more opportunities to paint word pictures and to use images in their sermons, via developments in modern technology.

Most of all, this thesis is a reminder that creative pulpit ministry and confidence in preaching takes years to develop. In this way, theological colleges and churches must be patient with aspiring preachers. This thesis therefore calls on congregations to take a risk on ministers with as yet unrealised potential. If the Hobart Baptist Church had not plucked its minister from relative obscurity in a small New Zealand town called Mosgiel in 1906, who knows how the story of F.W. Boreham’s preaching and life would have been written? It is only with opportunities, mentors, leisure activities, patience, a willingness to grow and ongoing education that a preacher can find his or her voice.
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