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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—CRITICISMS ON SOME OF THE ABLEST REPRESENTATIVE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

BY AN EMINENT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS.

NO. VII.—REV. JOHN A. BROADUS, D.D.

PART I.

I HAVE named in my title a man with every natural endowment, except, perhaps, plenitude of physical power, to have become, had he been only a preacher, a preacher hardly second to any in the world.

A conjectural judgment like the foregoing, it is, to be sure, almost always unwisely bold and hazardous to put forth. I simply record the impression which, after some familiarity acquired with the man himself, seen and heard both in public and in private, and after no little conversance with his productions in print, I find fixed and deepening in my mind concerning Dr. Broadus.

The natural course of treatment for adoption in the present paper obviously would be to attempt the justification of a claim so large, so extraordinary. But the basis of evidence supplied, on which in making the attempt, I could found, is, I confess, too narrow for me discreetly to build an argument to such purpose upon it. Dr. Broadus has put himself in print as a preacher and speaker in only one collective volume of "Sermons and Addresses," and his record of practical results accomplished through labor in the pulpit is, though considerable, yet not imposing. Dr. Broadus is distinctively a scholar, distinctively a teacher, and besides, though less distinctively, an author. His preaching work has been incidental, rather than principal, in his career. He presents a conspicuous example, perhaps an example quite unique, in the living generation, of the man who, notwithstanding that this must be said of him, yet enjoys, and justly enjoys, among the well-informed, a national reputation as preacher.

As teacher of preachers, Dr. Broadus enjoys a reputation more than national. For his treatise entitled "The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons" has crossed the Atlantic, as well as made the tour of this continent, everywhere acknowledged to be one of the very best contribu-

ment has strengthened the old apologetic. A mere list of the statements of either Testament which have been paraded as inaccuracies, but which archæology has proven to be rather subtle indications of supreme accuracy, would constitute a telling sermon in defense of Scripture. These examples must, however, suffice. It must be already apparent that recent criticism has not so affected the old line of "Christian Evidence" as to set them aside or evacuate them of their force. It has rather, by detecting and uncovering their points of weakness, led to the filling up of their gaps, and thus to a large increase in their strength.

The single question that is left to ask has already received its reply in the last remark. What has been, then, the effect of recent criticism on the validity and force of the Christian evidences? Is there, on the whole, less cogent reason now available for accepting Christianity on rational grounds than has seemed to be within reach heretofore? A thousand times no. Criticism has proved the best friend to apologetics a science ever had. It is as if it had walked with her around her battlements, and, lending her its keen eyes, pointed out an insufficiently guarded place here and an unbuttressed approach there; and then, taking playfully the part of aggressor, made feint after feint towards capturing the citadel, and thus both persuaded and enabled and even compelled her to develop her resources, throw up new defenses, abandon all indefensible positions, and refurbish her weapons, until she now stands armed cap-a-pie, impregnable to every enemy. The case is briefly this: recent criticism has had a very deep effect upon the Christian evidences in modernizing them and so developing and perfecting them that they stand now easily victor against all modern assaults.

III.—SHOULD QUESTIONS AT ISSUE BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES BE DISCUSSED IN THE PULPIT? IF SO, WHAT QUESTIONS, AND WHEN?

NO. I.

BY HOWARD CROSBY, D.D., NEW YORK.

It is the natural desire of the world to drag the church down to its level. The unrenewed heart can have no sympathy with heavenly themes, nor any knowledge of holiness. Hence the newspapers, which are the exponents of the world's sentiments, and which also assume to know everything, laud the preacher who comes down into the popular arena and takes part in the rough and tumble of politics, provided he takes part on their side. It is with the same utter ignorance of vital Christianity with which they praise the liberality of the Christian minister who indorses the theater and laughs at doctrine. Unfortunately, the Church of Christ has many unworthy ministers, who are ready to do anything for popularity, and who would degrade the

gospel to any extent to get a puff from the newspapers. It is through such that the world is strengthened in its sentiment that Christians are hypocrites, and that Christianity has in it no more of truth than Buddhism or Islam. It is through such that the current phraseology regarding "press, pulpit and stage," as co-ordinate powers in civilization, is supported, and the infinite distance between divine and human means obliterated.

The pulpit is not a human institution. It has no relation whatever to the lyceum platform or the political rostra. All such association of ideas is false and injurious. The pulpit represents the divine revelation to lost mankind. It is the stand of God's ambassador speaking not his own thoughts but God's, and endeavoring to reconcile an alien and rebellious world to God. The great theme of the pulpit is Christ, the Son of God and the Lamb of God, the Divine Victim for sin and the Divine Victor over sin for every one that believes or trusts. The pulpit calls for repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It looks out upon all men as alike sin-ruined and needing a renewal, which can only be by union with the spotless God-man and by the action of the Holy Spirit. The pulpit thus, calling all men to come to the only source of spiritual healing, presses upon the attention of those who come the revealed truths concerning the sustenance and nourishment of their spiritual life, unfolding the deep things of God as they are to be found in the inexhaustible mine of the Word. Human knowledge and human wisdom, that is knowledge and wisdom derived simply from human research and cogitation, are not the bases of the pulpit, and hence any comparison of the pulpit with the press or the stage is absurd. The same blunted perception that would put them together would see no difference between Shakespeare and the Bible.

It is from this standpoint regarding the pulpit that we are to answer the question at the head of our article.

With political parties as such the pulpit has nothing to do. Political parties are made such by differing views on public expediency, and these views are influenced by birth, education, disposition of mind or local connections. These views are on a different plane from the truths of revelation. There is no more communion between them than between patriotism and arithmetic. When a pulpit meddles with the political strife, it is simply abandoning its high duty and giving its name to a false character. The minister is no longer a representative of Christ, and his message is no longer a message of salvation. The church ministered to by such a preacher may grow in numbers and popularity, but will be dwarfed in spirituality, and lose all power to extend the Redeemer's kingdom.

But we are asked, "Suppose that in the political strife great moral questions are involved—then ought not the pulpit to give utterance in

the matter?" All great moral questions are treated in God's Word, and it is the preacher's duty to bring all the treasures out of this divine treasury. The grand principles of righteousness which are inculcated by the Holy Spirit must be ever insisted on. But it must be remembered that scarcely any political strife is upon a naked question of morality. When a moral question is involved, the point of strife is generally regarding the application of a moral principle to a particular case, and not on the merits of the moral principle. Now, in such a contest the preacher has no more wisdom than any other Christian man, and he has no right to give his view as God's view, when the Christian community is divided in opinion. However ardent he may be in his feelings, he must not let his feelings lead him into the degrading of the pulpit by making it a combatant in a doubtful matter. The pulpit must confine itself to the enforcement of plain, revealed truth, and must leave the application of that truth to the conscience and reason of men.

We may conceive of a question of pure morality dividing political parties, but we doubt whether the conception could ever find its illustration in the history of any civilized State. We may conceive of a political party founded on the one idea that stealing was to be commended, that all theft was honorable. In such a case, the pulpit, in proclaiming God's Word, would perforce be taking a political attitude. But the common case of pulpit interference in politics is vastly different from this. It is the assumption that a particular form of application is the only right one in the matter of a moral principle. For example, it is the duty of the pulpit to declare God's denunciation of drunkenness, and to seek to remove this sin from the land. But Christians differ widely on the way of doing this. This being the case, for the pulpit to preach "prohibition," and to take sides in the political struggle on this ground, is an arrogant assumption of a divine commission where none exists, and brings contempt upon the holy office. Every man must speak and act according to his convictions, but the pulpit is not to be confounded with "every man." The pulpit as such must keep aloof from these differences, and must not attempt to sway men hither or thither according to private views, as if they were the Word of God.

It is this interference of the pulpit in purely mundane matters that not only detracts from the influence of the ministry but also presents an entirely false idea of the church and religion to the world. The church is looked upon as a civilizer, rather than a kingdom of God in the midst of a sinful world. Religion is regarded as a mere morality, with a philosophic basis, instead of a new life founded on a divine revelation and a divine *ἐπέπνευα*. The distinctive claims of God on the human heart are lost sight of, and righteousness is reduced to a mere ethical level.

The Church of Rome has taken this ground of political interference, and has thus departed wholly from the side of Christ and the Word, becoming a great political institution, a world-power, its spiritual elements very naturally being transmuted into superstition and fraud. This is the danger that threatens any church which forsakes its separated and holy attitude, and whose pulpit is erected in the forum.

When men go to church to listen to the ministers of the Word, they wish (or ought to wish) to hear the great truths of revelation that will comfort the burdened soul and cheer the faint, that will help the weak to resist temptation, and show the true source of all strength in Jesus Christ. They do not wish to hear the themes of the bourse, the market and the Congress discussed. They have enough of that during the week. They feel that the church is no appropriate place for such subjects. They would rather have their hearts and minds prepared by high and holy thoughts to meet all the questions which come before them in life with a general preparedness of godly trust and dependence. Where the church conforms to this need, there is spiritual prosperity and Christian growth. There Christ is honored and men are made firm in their faith. But where the political questions of the day are discussed from the pulpit, there the church is but a mob, and all the distinctive features of the body of Christ are lost.

When the minister chooses these political themes for his sermons, he shows his lack of appreciation of his own calling, and of the marvelous richness of God's Word as a reservoir of pulpit subjects. He discloses the fact that he is not a student of the sacred oracles, the thorough knowledge of which would have effectually excluded political subjects from his choice. He also reveals his own want of unction and of sympathy with the divine work of the Christian ministry. The tariff and woman suffrage cannot be a substitute for Christ's gospel. You may say that there is a moral question in each. So there is. But the moral question in each is so involved with questions of expediency and of methods that the preacher who carries these subjects into the pulpit, instead of drawing men to Christ, creates division among the disciples of Christ. And what we say of the tariff and woman suffrage is true of slavery and intemperance in their political relations. The wrong of abusing our fellow-man and the wrong of drunkenness, as both set forth in God's Word, are very apparent to all; and these sins, with others, may very properly be dwelt upon by the preacher of Christ's gospel, and every man urged to contend against these sins in every way he may, as a Christian and a citizen, according to his conscientious ideas of duty. But when the preacher begins to advocate a particular way of overcoming slavery or intemperance and to denounce all other ways, he has become the politician, and has abandoned the authority of God's Word for personal opinion. As we have said before, all moral questions that are involved in political questions are to be handled in the pulpit

singly, and not in their political forms, and it is in these political forms that they appear as questions at issue between political parties.

Especially in times of high political excitement should the pulpit be calm and free from entanglement with the prevailing strife. Of course, many will assail it for such calmness. They will denounce it as cowardly, unpatriotic, indifferent, reactionary or even corrupt. But a faithful pulpit must expect assault from the world. Just as no man can live a consistent Christian life without the reproach of the ungodly, so no preacher of the gospel can be faithful to his exalted charge as an ambassador for Christ without exposing himself to the shafts of malice from the spiritually ignorant.

A minister of the gospel has before him in his ministrations Christians of various political parties. They are equally devout and attentive. They teach in the Sabbath-school, they take part in the prayer-meeting. One will see at a glance that it would be a breach of Christian propriety and of common tact for the minister to make his pulpit a partisan pulpit. He would divide his congregation and destroy his usefulness with those whom he would drive away. To the fiery soul that would advocate such division and destruction as tokens of grand work for God, we would suggest that where devout Christians differ as to methods of applying moral principles to great public questions, it is somewhat presumptuous for a minister to assert that his view of the matter is God's view, and some may think that the division and destruction wrought by such pulpit assertion is not a grand work for God, but a wretched work of Satan. We have seen flourishing churches, splendidly situated to do great good to the community, filled with eager listeners to gifted ministers, rent asunder, broken to pieces, sold out and extinguished by the preaching of questions at issue between political parties. Who is responsible for the loss of so much evangelistic power in the community but the preacher who has become politician? It is a fearful thing for a minister to leave the great truths that pertain to salvation and eternal life, and to dabble in the differences that divide political parties. He is wasting grand opportunities, and he is losing the confidence of his hearers, even where he does not destroy his church. He is building with wood, hay and stubble, that must meet a day of fire in which he himself will be saved as by fire.

It is a common cry in the newspapers that the church must adapt itself to modern ways, which means that it must secularize itself. On the contrary, the church is to keep conservatively to its old lines. It is to wean people away from the world. It is to maintain eternal war against the natural heart. It is to teach the ugly doctrines of sin and hell, the utter depravity of man and the necessity of regeneration. It is to insist upon the separation of the believer from the unbelieving world. It is to show that the Lord Jesus Christ alone can save and

strengthen the soul, and that all compromises from this standpoint are absolutely impossible.

The "modern ways" of making the pulpit a platform for political harangues, where people are drawn together as to a town-meeting, and where every feature of "the man of God" is obliterated, are the ways to be shunned by a holy church and by a people jealous of God's honor and glory. It is the pressing duty of the church to resist the tendency to secularize the pulpit and put it alongside either of the press, to discuss politics, or of the stage, to amuse people. Both forms of deterioration are at work, and the devil furnishes a multitude of earthly influences to help it.

Gathering, then, our thoughts to a focus, we answer the query at the head of our article, "Should questions at issue between political parties be discussed in the pulpit? If so, what questions, and when?" by this plain response: "No, never!" A pure church and a holy God demand this reply. The edification of God's saints and the needs of a sin-ruined world demand this reply. The character of the gospel as a divine revelation demands this reply. God's kingdom is not of this world, and the strifes of earthly States are not the subjects of thought in that kingdom. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost are the elements of that realm, the righteousness coming from God to the heart, and bringing with it as its eternal companions the peace and the joy. The ministers of such a kingdom will be wary how they reverse this truth and attempt to make an earthly State the object of their official regard, and to proclaim an earthly righteousness, born of the imagination and promoting strife and sorrow.

The pulpit should ever be the representative of God's truth (not man's) to the needs of the human soul.

IV.—PREACHING NOT SERMONIZING: AN OLD-WORLD CONTRAST.

By J. B. HEARD, D.D., ENGLAND.

"A CORDIAL communication of vitalized truth." This is a definition of a sermon not easily improved on. It touches off in two short phrases what a sermon should be, both as to matter and manner. To borrow a distinction of the old school logic, we have at once the formal and final end of preaching brought before us: "vitalized truth;" this is the final end of preaching; while a cordial communication of that truth is the formal end of the sermon as a discourse. The sermon, in a word, ends as it began, a mere skeleton of what is a study of Scripture, passed on from the study to pulpit when it has these two marks of preaching—that it is vitalized and that it is cordial. As the first, it is living experience, truth which has been hammered out cold on the anvil of our