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THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

PLACE OF THE PULPIT IN MODERN LIFE AND THOUGHT.

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HAVING lingered long in foreign climes and countries, Plutarch returned home to affirm that he had found cities without walls, without literature, without coin or kings; peoples who knew not the forum, the theater, or gymnasium; "but," added the traveler, "there never was, nor shall there ever be, a city without temple, church, or chapel." Since Plutarch's time many centuries have come and gone, yet for thoughtful men the passing years have only strengthened the conviction that not until cities are hung in the air, instead of founded upon rock, can the ideal commonwealth be established or maintained without foundations of morals and religion. Were it possible for the ancient traveler to come forth from his tomb, and, moving slowly down the aisles of time, to step foot into the scene and city midst which we now do dwell, he would find that, in the influence of religious teachers upon liberty, literature, art, and industry, that would fully justify the reassertion of the conviction expressed so many centuries ago. Indeed, many students of the rise and reign of the common people make the history of social progress to be very

largely the history of those teachers who have lifted up before men Christian ideals and principles, as beacon lights for the human race.

Standing before the Cathedral of Wittenberg, Jean Paul uncovered his head and said, "The story of the German language and literature is the story of Martin Luther's pulpit." Webster through stately oration, Rufus Choate through impassioned address, James Anthony Froude through polished essay, have alike affirmed that the town-meeting and our representative government go back to that little pulpit in the Swiss city of Geneva. In the realm of literature, also, it is highly significant that Macaulay and Morley declare that Shakespeare, Milton, and Tennyson received their literary instrument as a free gift from those monks named Cadmon and Bede, and those pastors who gave us the King James version of the Bible. Modern sermons may have become "dry as dust," yet the time was when the English pulpit united the functions of lecture-hall and library, newspaper and book. For the beginning of our Saxon speech, Müller and Whitney take us back to the cloisters and chapels of old England. But Addison affirmed that the sermons of two preachers, Tillotson and Barrow, were the standards of perfection in English writing, and projected a dictionary that had for its authority the words and phrases used in the writings of these two preachers, whom the essayist thought had shaped English speech and literature. Lord Chatham once referred the dignity and eloquence of his style to the fact that he had committed to memory the sermons of the same Barrow.

In our own land, speaking of the pleas for patriotism and liberty that were heard in the pulpits of New England just before the Revolution, Emerson said the Puritan pulpits were "the springs of American liberty." While in the realm of education, Horace Mann notes the fact that one pastor in New Hampshire trained one hundred men

for the learned professions, and another country pastor one hundred and fifty students, including Ezekiel and Daniel Webster.

Great, indeed, has been the influence of war, politics, commerce, law, science, government; yet we must also confess that the pulpit has been one of the great forces in social progress. Be the reasons what they may, the prophets of yesterday are still the social leaders of to-day. To-morrow Moses will reënter his pulpit, and pronounce judgment, and control verdicts in every court of this city. To-morrow, as Germans, we will utter the speech that Luther fashioned for us, or as Saxons use the idioms that Wycliffe and Bunyan taught our fathers. To-morrow the groom and bride will set up their altars, and, kindling the sacred fires of affection, they will found their home upon Paul's principle, "The greatest of these is love." To-morrow the citizen will exercise his privilege of free thought and speech, and recall Guizot's words, "Democracy crossed over into Europe in the little boat that brought Paul." To-morrow educators will re-read the Sermon on the Mount and seek to make rich the schools for the little ones who bear God's image. To-morrow we shall find that the great arts that enrich us were themselves made rich by teachers of the Christian religion. For great thoughts make great thinkers. Eloquent orators do not discuss petty themes. The woes of India lent eloquence to Burke. Paradise lent beauty to Dante, and strength to Milton. The Madonna lent loveliness to the brush of Raphael. It was the majesty of him "whom the heaven of heavens could not contain" that lent sublimity to the Cathedral of Angelo and Bramante.

Christ's ideal of immortality lent sweetness to Handel, and victory to his oratorio. It was the golden rule, also, that shotted the cannons of freedom against the citadel of slavery and servitude. "The economic and political strug-

gle of modern society," says the great English economist, "are in the last analysis religious struggles—their sole solution, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ set forth through the human voice." In his celebrated argument in the Girard College case, Daniel Webster reviewed the upward progress of society, and asked this question: "Where have the life-giving waters of civilization ever sprung up, save in the track of the Christian ministry?" Having expressed the hope that American scholars had done something for the honor of literature abroad; that our courts of justice had, to a little degree, exalted the law; that the orations in Congress had tended to extend and secure the charter of human rights, the great statesman added these words: "But I contend that no literary efforts, no adjudications, no constitutional discussions, nothing that has ever been done or said in favor of the great interests of universal man, has done this country more credit at home and abroad than our body of clergymen." Weightier or more unqualified testimony was never pronounced. Whatever the future may hold for the pulpit, the past, at least, is secure!

Having affirmed the influence of the pulpit in early and ignorant eras, some writers now declare the pulpit has entered upon a decline, and predict its final decay. In this age of books and papers, men question the need of moral instruction through the voice. Let us confess that never before have the instruments for happiness been so numerous or so accessible. The modern devices for increasing knowledge are now so artful and insistent, the very atmosphere of life is so charged with information, as almost to compel wisdom in the intelligent, and forbid illiteracy in the stupid. For the training of reason, the printing-presses toil day and night. For the training of the practical sense, science has increased books and stuffed the shelves with knowledge.

For the training of taste and imagination the artist printer and photographer have united for multiplying pictures, until without expense or travel the youth can behold the faces of earth's greatest men, visit distant cities and historic civilization. Never before have educators done so much for child life and culture. As soon as the babe can walk, the kindergarten stands forth to allure the little feet into the temple of knowledge. For youth also the public schools have become so powerful and so rich that private schools find it difficult to live under their eaves. New forms of education also are developing. There are schools that train the hand to use the tool, train the arm toward self-support, fit the boy for business in the office or store, lend skill in laying the foundations of the bridge, or springing the truss over some building. Technical schools have arisen, teaching the use and control of the electric forces, the extraction of iron from crude ores, the changing of poisons into balms and remedies, the extraction of oils and medicines from the refuse of coal and wood. Commerce and trade, too, have become so complex that their mastery involves a liberal education.

The youth who has sharp eyes and a hungry mind can now have culture without college. He who handles cotton goods or silk or wool, and traces the rich texture back to the looms that wove them, ponders the mechanical devices that embroidered faces and flowers upon the silk, studies the dyes by which the white wool has become crimson or black, will find that each step lends knowledge. In all ages, life has been a university, and events have been teachers, but never before to the same degree as to-day. Indeed, the youth who in the morning goes forth to his task and walking along watches the method by which the streets are paved, the devices for lighting and draining them, the means by which the taxes are raised and streets paid for; who enters the street-car to journey backward in

thought and note how the rude ox-cart has become the palace-car; who enters the market-place and the forum, to buy and sell and master the devices of production and distribution, will find that knowledge comes streaming in from every side. And to all these indirect instruments of culture must be added the new inventions called "culture clubs." Recently a traveler in Scotland, standing upon a mountain cliff overlooking the sea, found himself in great danger. It seems that the gardener desired to beautify even the steep cliffs and precipices. Loading his double-barreled shotgun with seeds of flower and vines, he fired the seeds up into the crevices of the rocks. Not otherwise, for men and women who have a few moments for rest between the hours, has life become dangerous. To-day, one can scarcely turn round the street corner without running into the president of some new culture club, who straightway empties into the victim two volleys of talk about some wisdom, old or new. The old shotgun is less dangerous than the new club.

Nor must it be forgotten that practical life itself is a university. The use of fire and wind and water; the avoidance of stones and animals and poisons; the mastery of the body, so as to maintain perfect health and high-pressure brain action without nerve injury; the development of skill in carrying one's faculties through the home, the store, and the street, the gaining of one's livelihood—all these are instruments divinely ordained for the culture of the mind, and for the increase of knowledge and wisdom. And in this age, when ignorance is a luxury that only idiots can afford, and knowledge is universal, many have come to feel that the pulpit is a waning force. It is said that the teaching function has been superseded by the press, by books and magazines; that the ethical ideas of Christ are now so fully developed as to be organized into institutions, becoming automatic, and therefore no longer

needing a special voice for their enunciation. John said of heaven, "There shall be no temple there," nor shall any teacher need to say, Know the Lord, for all shall know him. And many have risen up to-day who assert that the pulpit of yesterday has made unnecessary the pulpit of to-morrow; that Christianity has now been organized into our social, domestic, economic, and political institutions, thereby becoming self-publishing. Those kind-hearted persons who once wept lest the loom and the engine should destroy the working-people are now engaged in daily shedding a few tears over the pulpit, soon to be sadly injured by the press, the magazines, and books.

Thoughtful men are not troubled lest some agency arise to dispossess the pulpit. In the last analysis, preaching is simply an extension of that universal function called conversation. It represents an attempt so to bring the truth to bear upon conduct and character as to cleanse the reason, sweeten the affections, and lend inspiration to imagination; so as to strengthen conscience and refine the moral sentiment. The foundation of all moral instruction is in the family, where children are influenced, not by attractions, but by the truth manifest in the voice of the father and the mother, who create an atmosphere about the child. Socrates came speaking, as did Plato and Paul, as did the world's Saviour; and, so long as man remains man, preaching will remain, not as a luxury, but as the necessity of man's existence. So far from books' doing away with the influence of the voice, they seem rather to increase it. In ages when there were no books, men sat silent in the cell or were dumb by the hearthstone. Now that a new book is published, like "The Memoirs of Tennyson" or "Equality," by Bellamy, or "The Christian," by Caine, these books, instead of ending conversation upon the themes in question, seem rather to open into the flood-gates of speech, so that a thousand readers break forth into discussion who

before were dumb and silent. Great is the power of books! Wonderful the influence of the press! But the printing-press is only a patent drill that goes forth to sow the land with the great seed of civilization. But while the drill may scatter the wheat upon the cold ground, it may not pour warmth about the frozen clouds or shed forth the refreshing dew or rain. When the living man called Luther or Whitefield or Wesley or Beecher or Brooks shines forth, then the mind lends warmth to frigid natures, calls down dew and rain upon the newly sown seed, lends light and inspiration to dull and sodden natures.

Should Plato reappear to-morrow in some hall, he need not fear lest the books have dispossessed him of his mission. A book is simply the mummy of a soul. A library is a graveyard where intellects are confined. A printed page catches and holds the passing thought and mood. Strawberries in June quickly pass, and housewives preserve them until winter. Thus books are preserved souls. Through his works Schopenhauer has pickled himself in salt brine, just as "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" is Holmes preserved in the sweetness of sugar. The photographer makes a copy of Juliet, but pictures will never lead Romeo to resign the sweet girl. When books on the bringing up of children make mothers unnecessary, then the press will begin to interfere with the moral teachers. It is indeed given to the printed page to teach the truth regarding axioms, or the nature of solids and fluids, but even then the laboratory strengthens the book. But, so far as moral truth is concerned, the truth is never the full truth until it is organized into personality, and flashes in the eye, or thrills in the voice, or glows in the reason, or guides through sound judgment. And so long as life is full of strife and conflict, so long as men are the children of misfortune, adversity, and defeat; so long as troubles roll over the earth like sheeted storms; so long as dark

minds need light and inspiration, and the pilgrim band, floundering through the wilderness, needs a leader, and a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, will religion remain the guide, the hope, the friend, and support of the people.

Preaching is man-making, man-mending, and character-building. On the one side it is a science—the science of the development of all the powers, animal, mental, moral, and social; the subordination of the lower impulses to the higher faculties, the symmetry and harmonization of all. The genius of preaching is truth in personality. Mighty is the written word of God, but the word never conquered until it was "made flesh." Truth in the book is crippled. Truth in the intellectual system is a skeleton. Truth in personality is life and power. Always the printed philosophy is less than the speaking philosopher. Wallace and Bruce had their power over the clansmen, not by written orders, but by riding at the head of the host. By the torch of burning speech Peter and Bernard kindled the ardor of crusaders. When to Luther's thought was added Luther's personality, Germany was freed. Savonarola's arguments were brought together in a solid chain of logic, but it has been said that his flaming heart made the chain of logic to be "chain lightning." The printed truth cuts with a sharp edge, the spoken truth burns as well as cuts. Men have indeed been redeemed by the truth in black ink on white paper, but the truth quadruples its force when it is bound up in nerves, muscles, and sinews. The soul may be taught by travel, books, friends, occupation. Yet these truths stand in the outer court of the soul. It is not given to them to enter into the secret holy of holies, where the hidden life doth dwell. Preaching is plying men with the eternal principles of duty and destiny, so as to give warmth to the frigid, wings to the dull and low-flying, clarity to reason, accuracy to moral judgment, force to as-

piration, and freedom to faith. Truth is the arrow, but speech is the bow that sends it home.

The nature and functions of preaching grow out of the divine method of education and growth for men. God governs rocks by gravity, bees by instinct, trees by those grooves called natural laws. Man governs his locomotive by two rails and the flanges upon the side of the wheel. But man, made in God's image, is the child of liberty, and God governs the pilgrim host through moral teachers, into whose minds great truths are dropped from heaven, and these men are sent on before the advancing multitude, to lead them away from the slough, to guide them out of the wilderness, and open up some spring in the desert. It is possible to enrich dead things from the outside. Soft wood may be veneered with mahogany, nickel may be coated with silver, and silver plated with gold, but living things must be developed from the inside. Would the husbandman have a rich flush upon the rose? Let him feed the roots. Would the mother have the bloom of beauty upon the cheek of the child? Let her feed the babe with good food, and the pure blood on the inside will lend the rosy tint to the cheek on the outside. Men cannot be made wise or strong or moral by exterior laws or agencies. There are two ways to help a thriftless man. One is to build him a house and place him therein. The other is to inspire in him the sense of industry, economy, and ambition, and then he will build his own house. All tools, books, pictures, laws, on the outside, begin with ideas on the inside. Inspire the reason, and man will fill the library with books. Wake up the taste and imagination in young men, and they will fill the galleries with pictures. Stir the springs of justice, and men will go forth to cleanse iniquities and right wrongs. Quicken the inventive faculty, and men will create tools and machines. It is as useless to seek to make men good or wise by law as to adorn

leafless trees by tying wax flowers to bare branches. The time was when men talked about being clothed with righteousness and character, as if God was a wholesale goods merchant, and kept great bales of integrity, and cut off a new suit for each poor sinner. But righteousness and character are not made for man on the outside. Love, joy, justice represent something done with man on the inside. Our politicians talk about over-production. In reality our industrial troubles are based upon under-hunger. If we could open up a hundred mouths in each living man the cry of over-production would cease. The slave had only three mouths. He wanted a loaf, a cotton garment, a little tobacco. Therefore he bought little, manufacturing languished, and the slave States became poor.

But as the free laborer became educated, he wanted variety in foods, variety in clothes, wanted books, pictures, comforts, conveniences, and he bought widely, and all the Northern factories were busy day and night to supply his hundredfold hunger. Could we by sudden fiat of education open up a score of new wants and hungers through the quickening of the soul within, the new spiritual awakening would appear in a thousand forms of industry and occupation. The great spiritual principles of Jesus Christ are the most powerful stimulants to material civilization that the world has ever seen. It is said that Shakespeare's poems bring thousands of visitors to Stratford every year. His poems indirectly have created more wealth for the people of Stratford than any of the factories or looms in that thriving city. It is still an open question whether Wycliffe with his translation of the Scriptures has done as much for the commerce of England as did Watt when he invented the tools that Wycliffe had first made necessary. Shaftesbury once said that Charles Spurgeon, without discussing problems of government, had done more for social reform and progress than any statesman of his era.

In former ages and generations doubtless men have needed to come in from the field and factory, store and street, and, coming together in one spot, have sought to cleanse the grime from their garments, to sharpen the spiritual faculties, to cast out selfishness, to test the deeds of life by Christ's principles, just as an artist, when his eye is jaded, tests the blue tint by the sapphire or the red by the ruby. But in these days many believe that church-going is no longer obligatory; that sermons have lost their juice and freshness, and, having gone to church once in a month, they feel that they have placed the Almighty under everlasting obligations. Gone now a certain sanctity of the Sabbath, a certain reverence for the church, a certain refinement of conscience, a certain clarity and purity of moral judgment. Gone, also, the old era when the beggar was unknown in the little Christian community, when children and youth grew up without ever having beheld a drunkard, a thief, or a murderer, and when the door of the house or the granary had no lock or bar. Now one-half of the community never crosses the threshold of a church, either Catholic or Protestant. Multitudes, also, decline the moral obligations, and there has come a time when the poorhouse overflows, when the jails are full, when judges must work day and night to overtake the criminals.

Well has a great editor just said that this republic needs tools and culture less than it needs a revival of the moral imperative. From the view point of the publicist, this writer expresses the wish that for a time this nation might have two Sundays a week, for toning up its jaded moral sense. A great multitude of our people have laid the ten commandments on the table by a two-thirds majority. Indeed, they seem to have written and revised the old commandments so that they now read: Thou shalt have gods of self and ease and pleasure before me; thou shalt worship thine own imaginations as to houses and goods and

business, and bow down and serve them; thou shalt remember the Sabbath day, to see to it that all its hours are given to sloth and lounging and stuffing the body with rich foods, leaving the children of sorrow and ignorance to perish in their sodden misfortune; thou shalt kill and slay men by doing as little as possible thyself, and squeezing as much as possible out of others. Thou shalt look upon loveliness in womanhood to soil it with impurity. Thou shalt steal daily, the employer from the servant, and the servant from his employer, and the devil take the hindmost. Thou shalt get thy livelihood by weaving a great web of falsehoods and sheathing thyself in lies. Thou shalt covet thy neighbor's house to possess it for thyself; thou shalt covet his office and his farm, his goods and his fame, and everything that is his. And to crown all these laws, the devil has added a new commandment—Thou shalt hate thy brother as thou dost hate thyself.

Into this piteous lot have multitudes come. And there is restlessness in the heart, unhappiness in the home, hate in the task, anarchy in the street, whose end is chaos, destruction, and death. Plato has a pre-Christian statement as to the function of preaching, and its relation to social happiness and progress. "The things that destroy us are injustice, insolence, and foolish thoughts; and the things that save us are justice, self-command, and true thought, which things dwell in the living powers of God. Wherefore our battle is immortal. The angels and God fight with us as teachers, and we are their possessions."

In his Yale address ex-President White lamented that young men were turning from the learned professions to enter trade and commerce. Materialism, he thought, was an evil spirit that had given its cup of sorcery to youth, and beguiled them from the paths of noble scholarship and the intellectual life. Gone the poets Longfellow, Lowell, Bryant, Whittier. Gone the historians Bancroft, Motley,

Prescott. Gone the great orators and statesmen. Gone also the era when young men like Channing and Starr King, Swing and Beecher and Brooks, entered the ministry. And, remembering that in New England the clergymen have founded the academies and colleges, and that in scores of families like the Emersons there had been seven generations of clergymen who had wrought in the pulpit, the lecture-hall, or taken up the pen of author or editor, the great educator predicted disaster would befall our eager American society. But not the emoluments of commerce alone explain the drift of young men away from the ministry. The ministry is not an easy life. No profession makes demands so numerous or so stern upon nerve and brain, upon mind and heart. In former times, when books were scarce, religious newspapers unknown, and knowledge was not universal, preaching was not a difficult task, and it was easily possible for a clergyman to preach a sermon three hours long in the morning and repeat it at night without the congregation recognizing it. Now all the hearers have books and libraries, and the pew of to-day is wiser than the pulpit of yesterday. The time has come when the preacher must be a universal scholar. He must make himself an expert in social reform; master the facts as to illiteracy, vice, and crime; study the tenement-house question; all social movements in connection with settlements and methods of Christian work. He must carry his studies into physiology and hygiene to note how low and abnormal physical conditions affect the conscience and the spiritual state.

Giving up the theological reading with which the clergymen of a former generation have made the people acquainted, he must study history, politics, the rise of law, and free institutions, the movements of art, the history of philosophy, and, above all else, no facts in connection with science must be permitted to escape his notice. For his illustrations he must draw from the sciences of stars and

stones and animals and plants. To keep step with his work he must read each month some review that deals with the general plans, like the *Forum* or the *North American Review*, the review upon finance, upon reform, upon labor, upon education, upon his own special problems, not forgetting the foreign quarterlies and magazines. In addition to all this there will be at least a hundred volumes each year that he must go through thoroughly, if possible, or hurriedly if crowded. There are also public duties and demands. To-day he enters a home in which some woman, with little children clinging to her dress and crying bitterly, stands beside a young father, now dying. He returns home to find some youth, the child of poverty and orphanage, but of genius also, who needs help and assistance. When evening falls there comes the intellectual stress and task, with a thousand duties for which preparation must be made.

Immeasurable the demands upon nerve and brain. Now and then one arises who is called to the ministry by his distant ancestors, whose father loved moral themes, and had a vision and the outlook upon the realm invisible, whose mother had enthusiasm, imagination, and moral sentiment—gateways, these, through which God's angels come trooping—and father and mother, through heredity, call the child to the ministry. For such a one teaching is automatic and preaching is instinctive, and the work itself is medicinal and recuperative. But even upon these men like Robertson and Channing and Bushnell, the mere strain of delivery is such as to send them home from the pulpit in the state of nervous collapse from which they do not recover until Tuesday or Wednesday. With many the recoil dismounts the cannon. In these days no man would be equal to the difficulties of the ministry, were it not for the happiest of the professions bringing its own rewards, carrying medicine to cure its exhaustions.

No other occupation or profession offers such liberty and personal freedom. The politician is a thread caught in the texture of his party and has little freedom. The merchant must buy and sell what the people want, and must serve them. The lawyer must move in the groove digged by the mistake or sin of his client, while the clergyman is freely permitted to teach the great eternal principles of God, and he steers by the stars. Great is the power of the press. But the press writer has no personal contact with the reader; must report things evil often as well as good. Great is the power of the law. But law is litigious, and the jurist must struggle oftentimes for weeks or months to settle some quarrel or correct some injustice, dealing, as Webster said, with negatives oftentimes. Great is the power of the physician. But nnfortunately, in influencing his patient, his personality must first of all work upon an abnormal condition, and when the patient is restored to health and ready to receive the physician's personality, his task is done. But this advantage adheres in the ministry. It emphasizes the great positive moralities, it handles the most powerful stimulants the world has ever known—eternal truths. It plies men with divine inspirations. It deals with the greatest themes life holds—God, Christ, conscience, reason, sin, salvation, culture, character, duty, immortal destiny. When all other arts have been secured, it teaches the art of right living. When all other sciences have been mastered, it teaches the science of conduct at home, the market, and the forum. It puts its stamp, not into wood that will rot, not into iron that will rust, not into colors that will fade, but into the minds and hearts that are immortal. Multiply the honors and emoluments of the other occupations one hundredfold and they need them all to compensate for the happiness and opportunity of the Christian ministry, seeking to make the church a college for the ignorant, a hospital for hurt hearts, an armory from

which man may receive weapons, that opens up springs in life's desert, plants a palm in life's burning sands.

Well did John Ruskin say that the issues of life and death for modern society are in the pulpit: "Precious indeed those thirty minutes by which the teacher tries to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sin, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of the doors where the Master himself has stood and knocked yet none opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets where Wisdom herself hath stretched forth her hands and no man regarded. Thirty minutes to raise the dead in." And he who hath known the joy of encouraging some noble youth who is discouraged, the rapture that comes when at least one who hath become long snared and held in the cruel trap hath been freed, the joy of feeling that blind eyes have come to see things unseen and deaf ears to hear notes that once were unheard, or hath swung wide some dungeon door to lead forth some prisoner of conscience, will know that it is no profession that conceals such hidden springs, receives such hidden messages, is fed with such buoyancy and happiness as the ministry—the Christian teacher, who brings divine truth to men for God's sake and for man's sake.