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THE  
CHURCHMAN

JULY, 1895.

ART. I.—POLITICAL PREACHING: ITS INFLUENCE  
AND DANGERS.

A RETROSPECT.

FEW, we might almost say none, of the many writers who have taken in hand the history of our country during the troubled times of the Stuarts have realized the vast influence which the pulpit exercised (unhappily almost entirely for evil) on the mind of the nation and on the fate of that unfortunate dynasty. Poisoned with a flattery which knew no bounds, and invested with attributes which could only belong to the Divine Being by the clergy of that day, from the episcopate to the humblest teacher of the Church, the claims of the successive sovereigns rivalled, and almost exceeded, those of the Papacy itself. Even in the days of the despotic Elizabeth there were not wanting men to give faithful advice and even solemn warning to kings and princes—a memorable instance of which was given by the famous divine, Mr. Edward Dering, who, in a sermon preached before the Queen in 1569, warned her, “lest she, who had been *tanquam ovis*, as a sheep appointed to be slain” (Ps. xlv. 22), “should come to be chastised *tanquam indomita juvenca*, as an untamed and unruly heifer.” He had taken up the mission of a prophet, and naturally incurred the fate of a prophet by undergoing persecution as a Puritan.

But the accession of James I. found the Church of England in a state of servile submission to the Crown, which renewed the worst days of Henry VIII., and from which for two centuries it never rose. No English Churchman can read without the deepest humiliation the narrative of the Hampton Court conference as it is recorded by Bishop Barlow. Every utterance of the King was met with the Herodian response,

"It is the voice of a god, and not of a king." When we read the frivolous arguments and puerile discourse of the King, and the peremptory and overbearing manner in which he met every difficulty of the Nonconformists, we may well be amazed at the information that "the Conference raised such an admiration in the Lords in respect of the King, his singular readiness and exact knowledge, that one of them said he was fully persuaded his Majesty spake by the instinct of the Spirit of God. My Lord Cecill acknowledged 'that very much we are bound to God who had given us a King of an understanding heart.' My Lord Chancellor, passing out of the Privy Chamber, said unto the Dean of Chester, standing by the door: 'I have often heard and read that *Rex est mixta persona cum sacerdote*, but I never saw the truth thereof till this day.'" To which the narrator adds his own estimate of the royal perfections, by applying to him the title of a "living library and a walking study."<sup>1</sup>

The sermons preached before the King during the conference were of the same inflated character. Instead of charitable endeavours to heal the wounds of the Church and to meet the difficulties of the Presbyterians and other Nonconformists, they were devoted to magnifying the exclusive powers of the episcopate, the rights of the King in the calling of religious assemblies, and the duty of entire subjection. As a climax to all this will-worship and false humility, Dr. King, who calls the King "our Solomon, our peacemaker, who, after the Prince of Peace, hath best interpreted that name amongst us," completes his adulation by addressing him with the words of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon; and in his zeal for the King, forgets even his reverence to the Trinity, by ascribing to Christ, with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost*, all might and mercy in the Church for ever.<sup>2</sup>

The "King's son," for whom these worthy divines invoke so many blessings, was present with his father at the conference. "This noble young prince," writes Dr. Barlow, "was sitting upon a stool," and received on this occasion the grounds of his education in the Divine right of kings, and, in their virtual impeccability, a lesson which was so fatal to him in his after-life. In the year 1627, two years after his accession, his education in the nature and extent of his own powers and attributes was completed by his chaplain, Dr. Maynwaring, in two sermons on "Religion and Allegiance," preached before him, on July 4, at Oatlands, and on July 29, 1627, at Alderton, and published by his command. These sermons were after-

<sup>1</sup> Barlow's Hampton Court Conference. Lond., 1604, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon of Dr. King, Dean of Christ Church. Oxford, 1607.

wards burned by order of both Houses, suppressed by proclamation, and the author of them impeached. They were reprinted in 1709, on the occasion of the confusions occasioned by the famous sermon of Dr. Sacheverel, who renewed their doctrine. The doctrine of passive obedience, that corollary of the "Divine right," was brought out by Dr. Maynwaring in its most unmitigated form, and the deification of kings in what we must designate as its most blasphemous development. The former of the two sermons referred to is on Eccles. viii. 2.

"The sublime power," he writes, "which resides in earthly potentates, is not a derivation or collection of human power scattered among many and gathered into one head, but a participation in God's own omnipotency, which He never did communicate to any multitudes of men in the world, but only to his own vicegerents. And that is His meaning when He saith, 'By Me kings reign. Kings they are by My immediate constitution, and by Me they rule and exercise their so high and large authority.'

"All the significations of a royal pleasure are, and ought to be, to all loyal subjects in the nature and force of a command. As well for that none may nor can search into the high discourse and deep counsels of kings, seeing their hearts are so deep by reason of their distance from common men, even as the heavens are in respect of the earth. As also that none may dare to call in question the judgment of a king, because the heart of a king is in the hand of God, and he turneth it which way he pleaseth. Who, then, may question that which God doth proclaim from heaven to be in His hands and at His guidance? And for his sovereign will (which gives a binding force to all his royal edicts), who may dare resist it without incurable waste and breach of conscience? . . . Nay, though any king in the world should command flatly against the law of God, yet were his power no otherwise to be resisted, but for the not doing of his will; in that which is clearly unlawful to endure with patience, whatsoever penalty his pleasure should inflict upon them, who in this case would desire rather to obey God than man. By which patient and meek suffering of their sovereign's pleasure they should become glorious martyrs, whereas by resisting of his will they should for ever endure the pain and stain of odious traitors and impious malefactors."

Of the duty of the Parliament, he further writes: "Although such assemblies . . . be most sacred and honourable, and necessary also for those ends for which they were at first instituted, yet know we must that ordained they were not to this end to contribute any right to kings, whereby to challenge tributary aids and subsidiary helps, but for the more equal imposing and more easy exacting of that which unto kings

doth appertain by natural and original law and justice, as their proper inheritance annexed to their imperial crowns from their very births.

"Secondly, if they would consider the urgent and pressing necessities of state, that cannot stay without certain and apparent danger, for the motion and revolution of so great and vast a body as such assemblies are, nor yet abide those long and pawing (*sic*) deliberations when they are assembled," etc.

He then proceeds to assert the urgency of the King's demand for subsidies, involving the honour of the King, his security, the relief and succour of his uncle, the King of Denmark, and similar reasons.

In the second sermon he pursues the same theme. One extract will be sufficient to complete the view of his doctrine, which unhappily guided his too willing pupil to the precipice over which he fell. "If we demand the reason why religion doth thus associate God and the King, it may be conceived to be from three causes: 1, Either from the communion of names, for God is not only said to be standing *in synagoga Deorum*, 'in the assembly of Princes,' as One of them, but doth also vouchsafe to them the participation of His own most blessed name—a privilege which he never did impart to any creature, but only unto such as are most near and dear to Him—namely, to kings, whom alone the Scriptures honour with that high and noble grace to be called Gods. 2, Or else from the propinquity and near-bordering of such offences as reflect upon God and His anointed King. 3, Or else from that purity of beneficence which men enjoy from God and sacred kings."

In this fatal teaching we may truly say that "coming events cast their shadows before." The ship-money, the dispensing with or suspension of Parliamentary Government, the demand of subsidies for foreign wars, the limitation of the power of the Parliament in granting supplies to the mere adjustment of whatever burden the King might lay upon it—all these unconstitutional doctrines were here impressed upon the mind of the unfortunate King, and a Laud was too soon found to carry out the theory of a Maynwaring into a successful practice. For Laud was less a preacher and a theorist on Governments than an energetic actor in the events which gave such doctrines so vivid a reality.

In the terrible reaction which followed so speedily, the pulpit was still the most important factor. A new school had arisen, which, taking its stand upon the Old Testament history, forced into an unnatural harmony with its terrible judgments the gentler laws of Christianity which were in direct opposition to them. The very texts of the sermons preached before the

Houses of the Legislature at this time, not to speak of their polemical and sometimes grotesque titles, gave to the pulpits a strange reactionary influence. It would seem as though the Puritan divines of that day were rather following the Parliamentary forces into the field than encouraging them by their distant prayers. The sermons on the appointed fast days, which were renewed on every reverse of the army, had so stirring a character, and presented so far greater an eloquence and force than those of the Monarchy, that the influence of the pulpit for evil was more than ever conspicuous. Every sermon of the great divines of that day (and when we remember that they included the Owens, the Calamys, the Caryls, the Marshalls, the Sedgewicks, and a number of really eloquent preachers, we cannot but give due weight to their influence) was like a call to arms. A favourite theme was the curse of Meroz for not coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

With the Restoration, this great reactionary influence passed away, and the canonization of the murdered King, and the celebration of the day of his "martyrdom," brought in the influence of the pulpits in a new form and to a new end. It was the day of revenge and of reprisals, and too well and bitterly was it celebrated. The 31st of January found all the pulpits of the Church attuned to one pitch, and those who care to examine the dreary literature of the "martyrdom" sermons, of which the writer of these lines has many of the more popular specimens, must be led to confess that no greater injury was ever inflicted on the Church of England than the institution, on that day, of a service which kept alive for generations every saddest memory of events which had no bearing upon their present interests or feelings, but which were represented as though they lived for ever, and involved sins which, contrary to every Divine promise of mercy, were described as being inexpiable. Even learned and moderate men like Bishop Beveridge, Bishop Blackall, and others, forgetful of the words of Ezekiel (chap. xviii.), which their extreme interpretation of the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children so absolutely refutes, carried on the delusion, which sometimes assumed an almost absurd manifestation. In a sermon of Dr. Friend, preached before the House of Commons in 1710, on Jer. iii. 25, "We lie down in our shame," etc., he asks: "Is there no way of blotting out the infamy of this day—must we always lie down in our shame? and must our confusion for ever cover us? It must—for 'it is written in a table, it is noted in a book,' in an immortal book, 'that it may be for ever and ever, that this is a rebellious people.' But though no method can be found wholly to

extinguish the reproach, yet there is room left to lessen the degree of it." More, surely, could not be said of the death of our Lord and its effects upon the Jewish people—though our forefathers never invoked the penalty of the King's death for themselves and their children. But these excesses of idolatrous zeal were even less injurious than the opportunity thus yearly given to the extreme Episcopalians to pour forth the vials of their wrath upon the helpless Presbyterians, a course which at last forced the Nonconformists to break the silence they had wisely maintained on these anniversaries, and to clear themselves of the charges brought against them without any reason or historical authority. A defence of this kind was put forth with much moderation at the chapel in Blackfriars by S. Wright in 1714, who observes: "The more I have acquainted myself with the history of those times, the more I wonder at such men as are continually ascribing those fatal divisions to religion, when it is plain that for several years religion was not concerned in the quarrel. They were matters of State and of the Civil Government, illegal raising of money, discontinuing of Parliaments for twelve years together, with several trials of men, and very hard sentences passed upon them, for things that would by no means justify such severity. Sometimes forces were raised and fleets fitted out to no purpose, and at other times, as was suspected, to ill purpose. These, I say, and such like things, were the first occasions of public strife and contention. And if religion, together with these things, was insisted on, it was not more than what everyone might expect, when the Queen was a Papist, and Archbishop Laud was so very severe upon all that did not come as near the Papists as himself" (p. 13). The preacher, passing on to the almost universal prostitution of the celebration of the 30th of January to the cause of strife and contention, and to the perpetuation of all the evils it professed to deplore, proceeds to say :

"The 30th of January fast we have reason especially to complain of being thus perverted. Instead of being solemnized by a humble reflecting upon, and heartily bewailing the vices and contentions which once proved so destructive, some men are doing all they can to revive our jealousies and uneasinesses, cherishing an implacable temper against a whole body of men for an action which is as generally abhorred among us as among themselves. And our fathers did more to have prevented it than many of theirs did, though some, indeed, of our warmest accusers are the children of those men that were then of the same denomination as ourselves. The Dissenters have rather chosen to be silent upon the stated returns of these days than to say anything that should renew or widen our breaches.

This behaviour we think more suitable to the religion we profess, and most conducive to the healing those disorders that have been our shame and misery in former times." If we needed any proof of the spirit engendered by the commemoration in question, we might find it, among many similar ones, in a sermon on the anniversary in 1715 by Luke Milbourne at St. Ethelburga's, the opening sentence of which will be enough for the patience of the reader: "Those infamous rebels who about the middle of the last age made the kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland but one great field of blood, the dismal theatre of all those prodigies of impiety which men or devils could invent or perpetrate, and which earth or heaven itself could suffer; those rebels, out of their principles of hellish policy and impudence, were wont to mock God by a pretended fast," etc. These excesses of invective, carried on ever since the Restoration, and the association with them of the name of Laud—a name of bitter recollection to all who had heard or read of his reign of terror—were the main cause of the divisions between High and Low Church which we see this day in their full development. For the apotheosis of Charles I. recalled that of Laud. We even read that a medal of the Archbishop was coined in the Tower soon after the Restoration, with this inscription, "Sancti Caroli Precursor," by which title the Archbishop is compared to St. John the Baptist, as the King in the 30th of January commemorations is constantly and emphatically paralleled with our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

But, as if January 30 did not give a sufficient opportunity for the bitter invectives of the preachers against Nonconformity, November 5 was added as a fitting occasion for recalling to the minds of their hearers the dangers not only of Popery, for which the celebration was instituted, but also of Nonconformity, then regarded as more immediately dangerous. Accordingly, on November 5, 1709, the too famous Dr. Sacheverel, the Coryphæus of the High Church party of the day, preached his well-known sermon entitled "The Perils of False Brethren both in Church and State." To anyone who reads this mass of inflated nonsense it must appear wonderful that it should have occasioned so great a celebrity as to become the subject of a State trial and a solemn condemnation by the highest authority in the land. It set forth the old doctrine of the "subject's obligation to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme Power in all things lawful, and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatever." It denounces any attempt at resistance under the pretext of self-defence, and places among the number of "false

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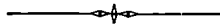
<sup>1</sup> See "Observations on the Keeping of Jan. 30 and May 29," by J. G. G., Lond., 1694, p. 5.



brethren" all who oppose the monstrous doctrines which were believed by the public and by the Church itself to have been buried with their author, the fated Archbishop. The confusions which followed this attempt to revive all the worst evils of the former century are too well known to need the pursuit of them in this rapid sketch.

We have now briefly traced the evils which the political preaching of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has inflicted upon our Church, how much it has contributed to increase and perpetuate our "manifold divisions," how justly it has brought us under the charge of will-worship and idolatry, and into the sin of "having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (Jude v. 16). For these "great swelling words" were not uttered without the motive, however latent, of proving a higher degree of orthodoxy, a more unquestionable loyalty, a greater horror of crime, a more profound affection for the person of royalty, and, in a word, proving that the preacher "was not as other men are." And though the provocations to this guilt have been removed by the wise severance of religion from politics and the disuse of polemical services, the danger still remains. The pulpit is still too panegyrical in its character, too onesided in its appreciation of the great events that are passing on around us, and too partial in their application. We may well, therefore, take a solemn lesson from this brief review of the influence of the pulpit for evil during our past history, and fix more and more upon our minds the great rule of the Apostolic preaching, "We preach Christ crucified"—a sufferer with whose life no human life can ever be compared without dishonouring it, a Teacher whose lesson was ever one of love and mutual forbearance, and who proved in His Divine life and expiatory death that the truth of God can never be reached but through love unfeigned; that, in the words of St. Augustine, "Non vincit nisi veritas; victoria veritatis est charitas" (Sermon 358).

ROBERT C. JENKINS.



## ART. II.—THE DEFENCE OF CHITRAL.

Not once or twice in our fair island story  
Has the path of duty been the way to glory.

TENNYSON.

THE defence of Chitral is a very brilliant episode in the recent history of India. We have heard that it has been compared with the memorable defence of Lucknow; but it