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ARTICLE I.

Right and Wrong; or, A Check to Atheism: Being a Review of a Work by Rev. ALBERT BARNES, entitled Faith in God's Word.

We were seated with a young ministerial brother one summer day, by a chalybeate spring on the side of a hill in Tennessee. While enjoying the pretty valley below, and the cold water trickling from its orange-like deposit into a marble basin, he said: "Doctor, is it not easier to believe, with the atheist, that all things have their nature, truth, and right, from the *law* of an impersonal power, than that there is an *eternal personal God*?" We answered: "No. The atheist is guilty of a blunder in this notion. First, he is *conscious* that he is a *personal self*. Secondly, he is equally *conscious* that his *ideas* of power, nature, law, truth, right, are the *creations*, (*before they are perceived*,) of *his personal mind*, under effort of his *will*; and that every thing he accomplishes, is merely giving outward expression to these *free conceptions*; and he knows that wherever he sees law, truth, right, in the things other men have made, these things had their

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that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, from his birth of the Holy Ghost, and his growth in grace, while he is not able to give this his conscious life to the dead of the world, knows that this, his highest faith, is in the witness of the Spirit.

Nay, the atheist himself must admit this; for, while he vainly holds that the highest reason rejects the idea of God, yet he knows that the inferior mind, (as he would have us think,) has ever believed in a Supreme Personal Jehovah; nay, in gods many. He will then say, that those who thus believe must needs receive the supposed word of their God, as itself its highest proof that he speaks; and, also, that such men are bound to hold that the highest evidence in man that God has so spoken, is the witness of the Spirit of the Lord to that simple word. The atheist, we affirm, must admit this. The only question, then, between us, is whether his denial of a God is, or is not, the highest reach of reason. That question has been, and will be, met in its place.

ARTICLE II.

THE VALUE OF THE CHRISTIAN PULPIT.

Novelties in the discussion of a theme so frequently handled in our religious newspapers and periodicals, and so familiar to the larger part of the readers of this Review, the writer of this article has not the vanity to promise, nor the presumption to attempt. There are, however, it occurs to him, signal advantages to be reaped, at least by ministers of the gospel, in the frequent review of a subject which, although familiar, very nearly concerns themselves, and is of never-failing and stupendously practical importance to the race.

An exhaustive treatment of a subject so prolific, and which has filled volumes now deservedly occupying a high place in our religious literature, is not attempted in this brief essay. Yet,

in justification of the mere outline-view to be presented, may be urged this common experience of preachers of the truth. It is sometimes found to be more effectual to present a rapid, imperfect, as to detail, yet complete resumé of a subject, than to discuss thoroughly each of its component parts at successive periods separated by considerable intervals of time. What appears to be lost in the former method, through the necessarily imperfect treatment of each subordinate topic, is more than compensated by the increased momentum imparted to the whole, and the concentration of force at the same instant, upon the same object, and in the same line of direction. It is just the difference, to illustrate our meaning, between attempting to reduce a fort by broadsides, with numerous guns of lighter calibre, and endeavoring to batter it down with a single Columbiad, fired at long intervals, and giving the besieged time to repair the damage after every discharge.

Without further delay, then, we proceed to discuss the value of the pulpit under three aspects of it: its relations respectively to intellect, morals, and religion.

1. And first, of the pulpit as an educator of the popular mind. Its importance as such, although but feebly recognised, can scarcely be overstated.

Without staying to inquire into the cause, it is abundantly evident that there are widely prevalent among us in this practical age, opinions in regard to the nature and ends of education in general, plainly erroneous and extremely pernicious. The *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* of these views is the belief that man's chief end is the creation of material values—of something exterior to himself, which shall add to his individual convenience and comfort, and to the general wealth. Accordingly, that, and that only, is esteemed a right education, which developes, exercises, and thus perfects some particular faculty or set of faculties, and fits them at once to be set to work in the field indicated. Hence, it is frequently asked, "Why should our youth spend so much time in mastering the classics? The lawyer may need a smattering of Latin to enable him to comprehend his legal phrases; the clergyman, some acquaintance with the Greek; but for the rest,

let our boys concentrate their energies upon living tongues, and upon such practical studies as arithmetic, book-keeping, surveying, civil engineering, etc. Then the scholar will pass with credit to himself from the school to the counting-room, and the student emerge from the college hall at once equipped and fully prepared to commence producer, and to add to the general capital by measuring land, building mill-dams, erecting factories, constructing railways, and developing the mineral resources of the country."

Now, that one end of education is to perfect the mind as an instrument with which we may work upon the material world, and convert and subsidize its resources to the manifold uses of life, none will attempt to deny. But this is surely not the only, and, as Sir William Hamilton has conclusively shown, not the main end of education. Its chief design should be the full and symmetrical development of all the faculties and powers of the mind itself, and for its own improvement and enlargement.

Those who adhere to the theory of education upon which we have animadverted, will be slow to discover any particular value in the pulpit as an educator of the popular mind. It has no direct influence in training a hearer for any specific employment; it teaches none of the principles or rules of any art; it imparts no instruction in any of the applied sciences. But assume the more dignified theory of education to be correct, and the value of the pulpit as an educator of mind becomes immediately apparent.

It educates by the truth which it projects into the mind of the hearer. Truth is the nutriment of the intellect, the food upon which it thrives and grows. No one who has not reflected deeply, has any adequate conception of the immense body of truth that the Book of books contains, and which it is the duty of the pulpit to expound.

The pulpit—we of course speak throughout of the educated and Christian pulpit—educates in purity of thought and expression; and this for the reason that the preacher's ideas and words must take shape and be largely colored by that Book which the most eloquent men have studied for the improvement of their oratory. The pulpit educates, that is, calls forth and trains, all the mental faculties and powers by the diversity of the subjects

of which it treats. Now the scenes depicted call into exercise the imagination, now its sharp delineations of truth and falsehood, of sin and righteousness, develope and strengthen the discriminating faculty, the judgment, etc.

The very topics, too, in which the pulpit deals, are of such transcendent importance, that they take strong hold upon the intellect, rouse it from its lethargy, and withal are of such a breadth and length and awful sublimity, that in the very effort to grasp them, the mind is consciously enlarged and invigorated.

The pulpit educates the mind to think and reason by the force of example. The weekly spectacle of an intellectual gymnast, bringing into visible play every mental and moral muscle, teaches those who look on, in a measure, the art displayed. It is natural for birds to fly, yet they learn the art by imitation. It is natural for children to talk, yet they acquire the art by mimicking their elders. So it is natural for all men to reason, yet the ratiocinative powers are stimulated and developed by example. It is impossible to estimate the influence which an educated ministry has had in exciting the mind to think and reason for itself. Intellects that have shone resplendently at the bar and in the halls of legislation, have taken their first lessons in argumentation and oratory from the Christian pulpit. Lord Chatham studied Barrow's sermons until he could repeat many of them by heart. It is said that Patrick Henry caught the fire of his impassioned oratory from the lips of that eminent servant of God and eloquent preacher of righteousness, Samuel Davies.

Once more; the pulpit educates the mind, by the demand which every properly constructed sermon makes upon a concentrated and sustained attention. Every such discourse has a beginning, a middle, and an end; there is a constant progress in the thought from first to last, and a culmination of the ideas in the production of some practical result—the conviction of the understanding, the moving of the affections, or persuasion of the will, or all these combined. Sermons proceeding from educated intellect have a natural tendency to assume this form. Now, when the hearer's attention is arrested at the outset, and he is held to the subject during the entire progress of the dis-

course, his powers of concentration are necessarily strengthened, and his mind disciplined to that habit of patient or continued thought in which Sir Isaac Newton could find the only difference (if difference there was,) between his own intellect and that of ordinary men. A practical proof of the correctness of these views may be found in the general intelligence of those communities whose principal means of intellectual culture has been the pulpit. An instance occurs to the mind of the writer of one who, in her earlier life, enjoyed the most limited educational advantages; yet this deficiency was scarcely apparent in her speech, and in the workings of a mind of more than usual vigor and sprightliness. Her life-long teachers had been an educated ministry living and dead. The writings of the one she perused with avidity; the living voices of the other ever found in her an attentive and interested listener.

2. Passing to another view of it, the Christian pulpit is invaluable to mankind as a teacher of morals.

Morals and religion, it is true, cannot properly be divorced, either in the practice of the individual, or in the instructions of the pulpit. In pagan theology, a wide interval separated them. In Christian theology, they are one and indivisible. There can be no genuine piety where there is no pure morality. The converse of the latter proposition, however, is not deemed by some demonstrable. It is held and believed that there is a morality apart from religion, prompted by different motives and sustained by other principles: that there are moral as well as Christian men. Taking the word morals, therefore, in the sense it bears in common parlance, we affirm that inculcating all the virtues which constitute such a character, (although upon higher grounds,) the pulpit is invaluable to a community as a teacher of sound morality. The Christian pulpit lends all its powerful influence to the promotion of those individual and social virtues, which constitute the cement of society, and opens all its batteries upon the vices destructive of human happiness and of social order and progress.

For example, it teaches truth and honesty. Now, confidence in the word and promise of our fellows is essential to the very being of society. It is felt to be vital, even to an association of

thieves. False to the world, they feel the necessity of being true to each other. Sow broadcast the seeds of mutual distrust, and of necessity society disintegrates, its adhesive power is gone. The pulpit, by the most potent considerations, enforces truth and honesty between man and his fellow-man.

The Christian pulpit is the earnest advocate of temperance. It would be hard to single out any one vice which has inflicted as wide-spread ruin and woe upon the race as intemperance. It need not occasion wonder, therefore, that the best means of removing this monster evil, has been a subject profoundly interesting to the philanthropic mind. The confessed failure of many efforts which have been made, demonstrate the unsoundness of the principles on which they were founded and conducted. Now, while the Christian pulpit cannot and will not lend its countenance and influence to those temperance reformers, who, wiser than their Maker, would invent a morality in advance of, and an improvement upon, Scripture ethics; while it dare not say, as some of them have said: "The Church of God will never do its duty until it banishes wine from the communion table;" as the exponent of divine truth, it must ever be the faithful advocate of temperance in all things, and the stern uncompromising foe of intemperance in every form.

Humanity—including benevolence, sympathy, charity—is another social virtue directly fostered by pulpit instruction. Aside from the express precepts with which it urges the performance of this class of duties, it lays a broad foundation for them, in the doctrines which it promulgates of a common origin, a common ruin, and a common salvation. It teaches every man to recognise in his fellow, of whatsoever race he may be, a brother, inheriting the same fallen nature and ruined prospects for immortality, and capable of the same redemption.

The pulpit directly promotes the peace and order of society by teaching obedience to magistrates.

When political questions are in dispute and men honestly differ as to the question, "Who is Cæsar?" it does not undertake to decide the controversy; but leaving it to be settled at the appropriate tribunal, it contents itself with the inculcation of

obedience to the powers that be—the *de facto* government over us. Yet within this, its limited province, it is a powerful conservator of the public weal.

A like office it discharges by the sanctity its teachings impart to an oath.

Oath-taking seems to be considered indispensable to the successful operation of the machinery of government in all its branches. The occasions on which we are called upon to swear, are almost innumerable. A high authority has said, "An oath is for confirmation, an end of strife." Now, it is not with the majority of men, perhaps, so much the fear of prosecution for perjury, as a religious sense, which holds them to an oath-bound promise. Almost every one has sufficient light and conscience to dread false-swearing. Now, the pulpit, by the awful disclosures which it makes of the essential truth, justice, holiness, and power of the Great Being to whom we appeal in every oath, invests it with a dread sacredness which men fear to desecrate by falsehood.

And this leads to the observation that the pulpit exerts a powerful constraining influence over crime, by adding to the penalties of human laws, the tremendous sanctions appended to the divine. The death-penalty is the highest punishment which human law can inflict; and in executing this, it puts the criminal forever beyond its jurisdiction. Now, divorce death from all that follows it, and many would welcome it as an inestimable boon, and its very nature as punishment would for them be altered. Just where human law fails, the divine comes in with its denunciation, against the obstinate offender, of unending wrath in the life to come. Death for the criminal now comes invested with all the terrors of that eternal retribution to which it summons him. The pulpit, by keeping constantly before the minds of men the certain and awful consequences in the world to come, of misdeeds, which are at once sins against God and offences against society, renders a most important service to human welfare. Jacobin as he was, Robespierre saw and felt that the truths which it is the office of the pulpit to proclaim, are indispensable to the very existence of society.

Allison reports him as having said: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent his being. The idea of a Supreme Being who watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime, is, and ever will be popular."

When, therefore, its true character is preserved, its dignity maintained, when it faithfully echoes the divine oracles, the pulpit is indirectly the palladium of constitutional and regulated liberty; it promotes the peace, order, and prosperity of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and nations, and interposes a solid break-water to the raging floods of licentiousness, infidelity, and fanaticism, when they threaten to overwhelm and destroy all that is valuable or desirable in society. But these are the incidental blessings which the pulpit confers upon mankind; the charities which it scatters by the way, as it proceeds on an errand of mercy of infinitely greater importance to the human family.

3. The chief value of the pulpit to the race, consists in its relation to the soul and to the world to come. The pulpit is God's grand instrumentality for the eternal salvation of lost man.

There are other instrumentalities, valuable and useful, to the same end, and which have the stamp of divine approval in their success. Much has been accomplished for human salvation, through the agency of the printed page—the religious newspaper, tract, book, and above all, the blessed Word itself. The entire capability of this kind of instrumentality has never been fully developed. Scatter, we say, these leaves of the tree of life among the nations. But beyond a peradventure, God's chosen and chief instrumentality for the redemption of our fallen race, is the living voice of a converted ministry—a voice echoing the written word, "translating it into the current forms of thought and speech," and tremulous with the tenderness, or ringing with the vehemence, which a consciousness of forgiven sin and sympathy for the erring, or indignation against guilt, and zeal for God's glory and a Saviour's honor, can never fail to impart. Paul felt this to be the only hope for the heathen, when he accumulates question upon question in that stirring appeal in their behalf to the Church of all ages: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of

whom they have not heard? and *how shall they hear without a preacher?*" Salvation through a preached gospel was the successful plan destined to take the place of man's miserable gropings after saving truth. "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, *by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.*" And when the great Head of the Church looked down from the mount of ascension upon a lost world, and along the track of all coming centuries, he commits to the Church general, assembled by her representatives, this one weapon, and with it bids her conquer the world for her Lord: "Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel* unto every creature."

It has been said that the pulpit has been shorn of much of the influence which it once possessed, by that wonder of modern times, the press. It is very true that the pulpit does not now occupy, as formerly, a position of conspicuous and solitary grandeur, as almost the only teacher of religious truth to the masses. There has sprung up beside it a gigantic power, more nearly ubiquitous than itself. Still, in the matter of influencing mind savingly, there is, and can be, no rivalry between the pulpit and the press. The foreordained plan determined upon in full view of all the occurrences of time, has not been altered. Search the Church records, and the preached word will still be found, we doubt not, to be the main instrumentality by which the lost sheep are being gathered into the fold. Certainly all the grand impulses by which the Church of God has been urged onward in her high career since the days of inspiration, (to go no higher,) stand forever identified with the names of living preachers of the truth. Such names as those of Wiclif, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Whitefield, Wesley, Tennent, and Edwards, mark religious epochs in the history of the cause of God, in the old and the new world. Look to pagan lands, and mark where the light of the gospel shines in the moral darkness; and there you find the religious press busy in disseminating truth, the Christian school by the very science which it teaches undermining the credit of systems of religion irreparably wedded to a false cosmogony; but in and over all, and controlling and necessary to all, you

will discover the self-sacrificing missionary of the cross, without whose continued presence the territory gained must be speedily lost, and the few sparks kindled by his efforts would quickly expire, and leave those regions of darkness in even deeper gloom.

The chief aim, then, of the pulpit, is not to educate mind, or teach earthly ethics, but to fit and train immortal souls for eternity. It rings out perpetually on the ear of a slumbering world its warning cry; it thunders against the obstinately guilty the anathemas of a violated law; it anticipates, in its vivid portrayals, the tremendous scenes of the final day; it judges character in advance of the decisions of the judgment bar; but it startles, alarms, warns, and judges, only that it may prepare men thankfully, joyfully, to receive the proclamation of divine pardon to the penitent; it takes up and echoes that glad message of the angel to the shepherds: "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Its one central grand theme is Christ and him crucified; its one glorious message to sinners: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." And evermore, as with the peal of a trumpet, it stirs and cheers on to victory "the sacramental host of God's elect." On the wall, over against each pulpit, might well be written this sentence, as indicative of its high design: "The glory of God in the conversion of sinners and sanctification of the saints." It is such views of its nature as these, which invest the Christian pulpit with transcendent importance, and clothe it with such awful majesty as should overwhelm with terror him who enters it without the support of a well-established divine appointment, and might well fill with unaffected concern the mind of him who believes he has been called of God, as was Aaron, and force him, under the burden of its responsibility, to cry out with the apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" with him only to recover courage, and gather confidence from the blessed assurance, "Our sufficiency is of God."