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A MAN “MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES”:
THE HERMENEUTIC OF JOHN A. BROADUS
AND ITS IMPACT ON HIS PREACHING

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Howard Jared Bumpers
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APPROVAL SHEET

A MAN "MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES:"
THE HERMENEUTIC OF JOHN A. BROADUS
AND ITS IMPACT ON HIS PREACHING

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Date _____

To Kimberly,
who “is far more precious than jewels” (Proverbs 31:10),
and to
McCartnie Joyce,
Howard Rush,
Maverick Michael,
and
Jett H. H.,
who truly “are a heritage from the Lord” and “a reward” (Psalm 127:3).

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PREFACE

This dissertation would not exist without the love, support, and encouragement of many people. While space prevents me from mentioning every individual who has impacted my life or affected my educational journey, several groups of people deserve recognition for the significant impact they have made upon my life.

First, I am thankful for my dissertation committee and the feedback they have offered. My supervisor, Dr. Hershael York, has provided valuable input along the way. He has also impacted my life in a personal way. I never left one of his seminars without being challenge to love Jesus, love my wife, and love the church in a deeper way. Dr. Robert Vogel is the consummate professional. His knowledge of the field of preaching, his ability to engage with research papers and lead classroom conversations, and his knowledge of Broadus were all formative. It was due to his encouragement to visit the archives and look at the sermon manuscripts of John Broadus that I wrote on John Broadus. Dr. Tom Nettles graciously accepted the invitation to assist with this project, and his knowledge as a historian has been invaluable. I am truly grateful for each of these men.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the members of Crossway Baptist Church, where I have served as a student pastor, and then as the associate pastor, for the past ten years. They have supported and encouraged my academic endeavors in a variety of ways, and I am incredibly grateful for them. One couple in particular deserves special recognition. H. E. and Liz Whitener enabled me to pursue doctoral studies by praying for me, encouraging me, and assisting me financially, and I am

incredibly thankful for their friendship and their support. I could not have done it without them.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my parents, Eddie and Tess Bumpers. They consistently modeled the gospel in their marriage and Christlikeness in their behavior. More than anyone else, they have shaped me and made me into the man I am today. Not only did they shape me personally, but they shaped my approach to ministry. In addition to being my father, my dad was my pastor. His love for Jesus, his love for the church, and his love for preaching have infected me, and for that I am eternally grateful! I love you both!

My wife, Kimberly, has supported my pursuit of doctoral studies from the beginning, although with growing interest as I have moved towards the completion of this dissertation! Her love and encouragement mean more to me than she will ever know. I love you! She has also given me four amazing children: McCartnie Joyce, Howard Rush, Maverick Michael, and Jett H. H. Words cannot express how much I love them. My strongest desire is that they repent and trust Jesus Christ, whom Broadus preached in almost every sermon.

Finally, last in order but first in importance, I must thank the Lord Jesus Christ. He redeemed me with His blood and called me to preach the riches of His glorious grace. I am proof that God chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise! May I love Him and proclaim Him until my dying breath!

Springfield, Missouri
May 2018

Jared Bumpers

CHAPTER 1
A STUDY OF THE HERMENEUTIC AND HOMILETIC
OF JOHN ALBERT BROADUS

Introduction

The study of the history of preaching is an enlightening journey. The paths of preaching history are filled with homiletical giants who have much to teach preachers today, and studying preaching from a historical perspective allows preachers to walk these paths, meet these giants, and gain a deeper understanding of the task of preaching. Alfred Garvie argued the study of preaching from an historical approach was the best way to study the subject. He wrote:

The best approach to any subject is by its history; if it be a science, we must learn all we can about previous discoveries; if an art, about previous methods. The Christian preacher will be better equipped for his task to-day, if he has some knowledge of how men have preached in former days. . . . While in preaching even, as in human activities of less moment, there are fashions of the hour which it would be folly to reproduce when they have fallen out of date, yet there are abiding aims and rules of preaching, which must be taken account of in each age, and which can be learned by the study of the preaching of the past.¹

Even if an historical study of preaching is not “the best approach,” as Garvie suggested, it is certainly a helpful approach. Studying preaching from an historical perspective has at least four benefits: (1) it aids the understanding of history, (2) it contributes to the development of homiletical theory, (3) it aids in the development of rhetorical skills, and (4) it helps us become more careful as preachers and

¹Alfred Ernest Garvie, *The Christian Preacher* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), 22.

listeners.² Those who are interested in homiletics would be wise to study the history of preaching and learn from the giants of the past.

Several attempts have been made to write a comprehensive history of preaching.³ The scope of this dissertation is more limited. Rather than focusing on the history of preaching in general, this dissertation will examine the preaching of one homiletical giant of the past: John Albert Broadus. A legendary figure in the history of preaching, Broadus was one of four men who helped found The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina in 1859.⁴ His classic text on preaching, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, is one of the most influential homiletical works in the history of preaching.⁵ Highly respected for his influence within the Southern Baptist Convention, he is still one of the only Southern Baptists to deliver the Beecher Lectures at Yale.⁶ Given his impact on

²These benefits were listed in a lecture given by Robert Vogel in a PhD seminar on preaching in American history. Robert Vogel, “The Study of Preaching from Historical and Rhetorical Perspectives” (lecture, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, December 2, 2013).

³John A. Broadus, the subject of this dissertation, published a book on the history of preaching. See John A. Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893). E. C. Dargan, one of his former students and his successor at Southern Seminary, also wrote an updated work on the history of preaching, which he dedicated to John A. Broadus. See Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching*, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905-1912). For two more recent works on the history of preaching, see O. C. Edwards, *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004) and Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 7 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998-2010).

⁴For a brief biographical sketch of Broadus’s life and ministry, see chap. 2 of this dissertation. For a somewhat dated history of the seminary, see William A. Mueller, *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: 1859-1959* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959). For a more recent treatment, see Gregory A. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁵John Albert Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1870). Thomas McKibbens suggested Broadus’s treatise “may have had more influence on the preaching of all Protestant denominations in America than any other book written during the last century.” See Thomas McKibbens, “Disseminating Biblical Doctrine Through Preaching,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 19 (July 1984): 42-57. Al Fasol declared, “Broadus wrote the oldest, most continuously used book on homiletics in the history of Christendom.” Al Fasol, *With a Bible in Their Hands: Preaching in the South 1679-1979* (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 78.

⁶W. O. Carver allegedly said, “No Baptist of his generation surpassed Broadus in his influence among Southern Baptists.” W. O. Carver quoted in Mueller, *A History*, 61. A. H. Newman suggested Broadus was “perhaps the greatest man the Baptists have produced.” A. H. Newman, in “Progress,” Vol. 3, no. 10, quoted in Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Life and Letters of John Albert*

Southern Baptist life, Broadus deserves further study. Nolan Howington agreed, saying that a preacher's "insights will be sharpened and his techniques improved by a careful reading of the sermons of John A. Broadus, regarded by many as the 'prince of expositors' in the last century."⁷ Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the preaching of John A. Broadus, giving special attention to his hermeneutic and its impact on his preaching.

Hermeneutics, Homiletics, and Broadus

John A. Broadus spent the bulk of his academic career at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he taught New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics. As a professor of New Testament interpretation and preaching, Broadus had a firm grasp on the fields of New Testament studies and Homiletics. As a preacher, Broadus had experience interpreting biblical texts and preaching from them. His thorough knowledge and consistent practice of biblical interpretation and preaching, which is evident in his works, provides the researcher with a unique opportunity to consider the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics from an historical perspective.

Hermeneutics and Homiletics

The influence of hermeneutics on the task of preaching and the task of preaching's dependence on hermeneutics is undeniable. The two tasks are virtually

Broadus (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1910), 10. Broadus delivered the Beecher Lectures at Yale in 1889. For details regarding Broadus and the Yale Lectures, see Mark Manly Overstreet, "The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John Albert Broadus (1827-1895)" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005), and David A. McCants, "The Lost Yale Lectures on Preaching by John A. Broadus," *The Southern Speech Journal* 36 (1970): 49-60. The only other Southern Baptist to deliver the Yale Lectures was John Claypool, who delivered the lectures in 1979 before being ordained in the Episcopal Church.

⁷Nolan Howington, "Expository Preaching," *Review and Expositor* 56 (January 1959): 56-65.

inseparable, as one should lead to the other. J. I. Packer made a similar argument, writing, “The Bible being what it is, all true interpretation must take the form of preaching. With this goes an equally important converse: that, preaching being what it is, all true preaching must take the form of biblical interpretation.”⁸ In other words, biblical interpretation should lead to biblical proclamation, and biblical proclamation must be grounded in sound biblical interpretation.

Contemporary scholars, both in the field of New Testament studies and the field of hermeneutics, recognize the inseparable relationship between biblical interpretation and biblical proclamation. First, biblical interpretation (hermeneutics) should lead to biblical proclamation (homiletics). New Testament scholar Grant Osborne argued the goal of hermeneutics is biblical preaching. He contended “that the final goal of hermeneutics is not systematic theology but the sermon. The actual purpose of Scripture is not explanation but exposition, not description but proclamation.”⁹ Similarly, Walter Kaiser argued:

Exegesis is never an end in itself. Its purposes are never fully realized until it begins to take into account the problems of transferring what has been learned from the text over to the waiting Church. To put it more bluntly, exegesis must come to terms with the *audience* as well as with what the author meant by the words he used.¹⁰

⁸J. I. Packer, “Preaching as Biblical Interpretation,” in *Inerrancy and Common Sense*, ed. Roger R. Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 187. Packer went on to explain these two statements: “The basis for the former thesis is that Scripture is the God-given record, explanation, and application of God’s once-for-all redemptive words and deeds on the stage of space-time history, and that its intended function is to ‘instruct . . . for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’ (II Tim. 3:15). To give this instruction is precisely, in the biblical sense of the word, to preach. The basis for the latter thesis is that preaching means speaking God’s own message in His name, that is, as His representative, and this is possible for fallen men, with their sin-twisted minds, only as they labor faithfully to echo, restate and reapply God’s once-for-all witness to Himself, which, as we said, is the sum and substance of Holy Scripture” (ibid.).

⁹Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 29.

¹⁰Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 149.

Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Patterson also indicated exegesis, which is grounded in sound interpretive principles, should result in biblical preaching. Although they did not explicitly state this, they implied it when they wrote, “Once you have done exegesis, you are ready to begin preparing your sermon or Bible study.”¹¹ They seem to assume the desired result of exegesis is preaching or teaching.

Second, biblical proclamation presupposes biblical interpretation. In order for a preacher to communicate the meaning of any given biblical text, he must first discern the meaning of that biblical text. Hermeneutics, therefore, is central to the task of preaching. James Earl Massey wrote, “The calling and task of the preacher make hermeneutical work an almost daily necessity, a regular demand that requires a studious mind, good research tools, adequate time and proper training to work with biblical texts. . . . A hermeneutic that values Scripture is therefore foundational for such preaching.”¹² Biblical interpretation governed by sound hermeneutical principles is at the core of biblical preaching, making hermeneutics a necessity.

The importance of hermeneutics as it relates to preaching is also evident in several of the classic definitions of biblical, or expository, preaching. Haddon Robinson defined biblical preaching as “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”¹³ His definition explicitly stated that expository preaching is grounded in “a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context.” The implication is that

¹¹Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 741.

¹²James Earl Massey, “Hermeneutics for Preaching,” *Review and Expositor* 90 (1993): 359.

¹³Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 21.

biblical preaching cannot take place without a careful study of the historical, grammatical, and literary elements of a text. Similarly, Stephen Olford defined expository preaching as “the Spirit-empowered explanation and proclamation of the text of God’s Word with due regard to the historical, contextual, grammatical, and doctrinal significance of the given passage, with the specific object of invoking a Christ-transforming response.”¹⁴ Again, the definition explicitly mentions “the historical, contextual, grammatical and doctrinal significance” of the text and suggests the historical, contextual, and grammatical elements of the text must be explained and proclaimed for expositional preaching to occur. These definitions not only state *that* the text should be properly interpreted, but *how* the text should be interpreted, revealing the homiletics who wrote them were keenly aware of the importance of hermeneutics in relation to preaching. Biblical preaching truly presupposes sound biblical interpretation, which means hermeneutics and homiletics are inseparable.

The Contribution of Broadus

Given the tight relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics, John Broadus is a natural historical figure to study when examining the topic. His experience teaching both biblical interpretation and preaching in the classroom make him an ideal figure to study. In addition to teaching for over three decades, Broadus served as a pastor for almost eight years and regularly preached around the country. As one who was engaged in biblical interpretation and biblical proclamation, Broadus understood the inseparable link between hermeneutics and homiletics. Examining the key works dealing with the theory of biblical interpretation and

¹⁴Stephen F. Olford and David L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B & H, 1998), 69.

preaching that were written by Broadus and then comparing those works with Broadus's actual interpretation and preaching will lead to a better historical understanding of Broadus and a greater appreciation of the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics.

Thesis

The primary research question driving this dissertation is, how did Broadus's hermeneutical presuppositions and principles influence his preaching? In order to answer this question, several secondary questions must be answered. First, what presuppositions undergirded Broadus's hermeneutic? Second, what implicit and explicit interpretive principles constitute Broadus's hermeneutic? Third, did Broadus utilize these interpretive principles in his exegetical work and his preaching ministry? To frame the question another way, does Broadus consistently employ the hermeneutical methodology he proposes in his exegesis and preaching? The answers to these questions will help answer the primary research question and place Broadus's hermeneutical presuppositions and principles in their rightful place.

The thesis of this dissertation is that John A. Broadus's hermeneutical presuppositions and principles guided his interpretation of Scripture and enabled him to present clearly the meaning of the biblical text in his preaching. Broadus is largely remembered as a preacher due to his contributions to the field of homiletics, and rightfully so, but his New Testament scholarship should not be overlooked.¹⁵

¹⁵Broadus's reputation as a preacher *par excellence* is even more remarkable considering the fact Broadus served as a pastor for less than eight years. Broadus did preach regularly after leaving the First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1858, but as William Cleaver Wilkinson noted, Broadus's preaching ministry was not central. Wilkinson wrote, "Dr. Broadus is distinctively a scholar, distinctively a teacher, and besides, tho 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." William Cleaver Wilkinson, *Modern Masters of Pulpit Discourse* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1905), 344.

Perhaps his abilities as a New Testament scholar are seen most clearly in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.¹⁶ These same interpretive skills were repeatedly used to discover the meaning of the biblical text and clearly explain that meaning in sermons. This dissertation identifies these interpretive principles and examines how they influenced Broadus's preaching.

Background

Personal Interest

I first encountered John A. Broadus in a preaching course as a Master of Divinity student at Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Georgia. Broadus's *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was listed in the bibliography of the course, so I selected the book to review for one of the assignments. I read the book and was struck by the enduring relevance of the book, which had been written over a century ago. Several years later, when I applied to the PhD program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and interviewed with the preaching faculty, I was given a reprint of Broadus's original work. The gift reminded me of the timelessness of his work, so I determined to read it again. After a second reading, my appreciation of Broadus continued to grow.

After being accepted into the PhD program at Southern, I took a seminar on preaching in American history. The course focused on various preaching movements and preachers throughout American history, including John A. Broadus. For the first time, I was exposed to the preaching of Broadus, reading several of his sermons. Several semesters later, I wrote a paper for the Evangelical Homiletics Society (EHS) on Broadus's statements concerning the use of biblical narratives as

¹⁶John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886).

illustrations in order to increase biblical literacy, which was included with the other papers that were presented at the conference. I had several encouraging conversations with EHS members throughout the conference about Broadus and his abiding influence on the field of homiletics.

The following semester, a fellow student wrote on Broadus, arguing Broadus was heavily influenced by Augustine and his view of rhetoric. I was asked to provide a formal response, which forced me to re-read Broadus's *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, to examine Broadus's views concerning rhetoric and its influence on homiletics, and to evaluate several of Broadus's sermons. After working on the response, I had a desire to study Broadus further. When I presented my response in class and expressed interest in studying Broadus further, Dr. Robert Vogel encouraged me to go to the archives in the James P. Boyce Centennial Library and examine the John A. Broadus Collections.¹⁷ After visiting the archives and looking at Broadus's unpublished sermon manuscripts, I determined to write on some aspect of John A. Broadus's preaching.

I read Archibald Thomas (A. T.) Robertson's biography to familiarize myself with Broadus's life.¹⁸ I also read *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, edited by Dockery and Duke, which included a chapter by Richard Melick on Broadus's contributions as a New Testament scholar.¹⁹ Melick emphasized Broadus's skills as a biblical interpreter, giving special attention to his exegesis and hermeneutic. He concluded, "The characteristics he displayed would suit all scholars well—in any

¹⁷The inventory of the collections is available at "John Albert Broadus Collections," James P. Boyce Centennial Library, accessed September 16, 2016, <http://archives.sbts.edu/special-collections/john-albert-broadus-collections/>.

¹⁸Robertson, *Life and Letters*.

¹⁹Richard Melick, "New Wine in Broadus Wineskins?," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, ed. David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 97-121.

era.”²⁰ While I appreciated Melick’s focus on Broadus’s scholarship, I could not help but wonder how his hermeneutic influenced his preaching and to what degree. Unfortunately, Melick did not discuss the relationship between Broadus’s hermeneutic and his homiletic. As I began to dig deeper, I discovered no one had written on Broadus’s approach to biblical interpretation and its influence on his preaching ministry. The discovery of a gap in research was the impetus for writing this dissertation.

History of Research

Although Broadus is a colossal figure in Baptist history and has made a lasting impact in the field of homiletics, few dissertations examine his preaching.²¹ Only nine dissertations have been written on Broadus, and many of these do not focus on his preaching.²² The dissertations written by William Earl Brown and Marty Bryan Light concentrate on Broadus’s evangelism, only addressing his preaching

²⁰Melick, “New Wine,” 121.

²¹Clyde E. Fant, Jr., and William M. Pinson, Jr., noted the lack of attention given to Broadus’s preaching in comparison to the attention given to his theory of preaching, writing, “For all the attention devoted to Broadus as a lecturer on homiletics, little attention has been given to his own personal preaching.” Although this was written over forty years ago, it is as true now as the day it was written. Clyde E. Fant, Jr., and William M. Pinson, Jr., “John A. Broadus,” in *20 Centuries of Great Preaching* (Waco, TX: Word, 1971), 5:53.

²²Shane B. Arnold, “Southern Baptists and Culture: An Examination of the Theological Responses to Culture as Seen in the Writings of James P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, Edgar Young Mullins, and R. Albert Mohler, Jr.,” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007); Jerry Paxton Ashby, “John Albert Broadus: The Theory and Practice of His Preaching” (Th.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1968); James Roland Barron, “The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists” (Th.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972); William Earl Brown, “Pastoral Evangelism: A Model for Effective Evangelism as Demonstrated by the Ministries of John Albert Broadus, Alfred Elijah Dickinson, and John William Jones in the Revival of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1863” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999); Robert L. Compere III, “A Study of the Revisions of John A. Broadus’s Classic Work, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*” (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013); Paul Huber, “A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1955); Marty Bryan Light, “The Evangelistic Contributions of John Albert Broadus” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005); Mark Manly Overstreet, “The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John Albert Broadus (1827-1895)” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005); David Alan Smith, “Introductory Preaching Courses in Selected Southern Baptist Seminaries in Light of John A. Broadus’s Homiletical Theory” (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995).

incidentally. Shane B. Arnold's dissertation addressed Broadus's theological responses to culture, not his preaching, and James Roland Barron's dissertation focused on Broadus's influence on Southern Baptists in general rather than his preaching in particular. Thus, four of the nine dissertations either do not address Broadus's preaching at all, or only do so incidentally.

Four of the remaining five dissertations focus on various aspects of Broadus's theory of preaching. Paul Huber's dissertation examined Broadus's theory of preaching from a rhetorical perspective, identifying the major authors who influenced his theory of preaching. Robert L. Compere's dissertation examined the various revisions of Broadus's *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, arguing the later versions of Broadus's work departed from the emphasis of the original but did not significantly alter the original content of the work or Broadus's theory of preaching. The dissertation on Broadus's Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching by Mark Manly Overstreet analyzed the notebooks which formed the basis of Broadus's lectures at Yale, which were given towards the end of his life, and concluded Broadus's approach to preaching remained consistent from the time *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was published in 1870 to the time the Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching were delivered in 1889. The dissertation by David Alan Smith focused on Broadus's influence on introductory preaching courses in Southern Baptist seminaries.

The only dissertation to give concentrated attention to Broadus's practice of preaching was Jerry Paxton Ashby's dissertation on Broadus's theory and practice of preaching. The goal of Ashby's dissertation was to determine whether Broadus's practice of preaching was consistent with his theory of preaching as outlined in *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*. When Ashby arrived at Broadus's section on biblical interpretation, he briefly discussed Broadus's principles for interpretation as outlined in his book and showed a few examples in his

preaching to illustrate each principle, but his discussion was limited.²³ A more thorough treatment of Broadus's hermeneutic and its influence on his preaching is necessary.

This dissertation expands on Ashby's work and provides an in-depth examination of Broadus's hermeneutic. Several aspects of Broadus's hermeneutic that were untouched by Ashby need exploration, such as the historical context in which Broadus engaged in biblical interpretation, the hermeneutical presuppositions undergirding Broadus's hermeneutic, and the legitimacy of Broadus's interpretive principles.²⁴ This dissertation sets Broadus in his historical context, identifies the main interpretive principles that guided his interpretation of Scripture, demonstrates his use of these principles in his exegetical works and sermons, and argues for the legitimacy of his hermeneutic.

Methodology

This dissertation identifies John A. Broadus's hermeneutic and its impact on his preaching. Therefore, much of the research focuses on primary sources. Broadus wrote or contributed to several books and articles related to Scripture and biblical interpretation.²⁵ These works reveal the presuppositions undergirding

²³Ashby listed each interpretive principle, provided a brief explanation of each principle, and then gave a couple examples from Broadus's sermons to demonstrate the principle, but it took Ashby only nine pages to cover all six principles. See Ashby, "John Albert Broadus," 37-46. Further, Ashby considered only Broadus's statements concerning biblical interpretation in his classic work on preaching, leaving his other writings untouched.

²⁴Ashby did not set Broadus in his historical context or examine how Broadus was similar to or dissimilar from other interpreters and preachers. Nor did he discuss the presuppositions undergirding Broadus's hermeneutic, which surely shaped Broadus's approach to interpreting the text. Ashby also failed to evaluate whether Broadus's approach to biblical interpretation was an acceptable approach. These are all important aspects that need to be considered.

²⁵His classic work on preaching outlined six principles for interpretation. See Broadus, *A Treatise*, 58-65. Additional works by Broadus related to the character of the Bible, the study of the Bible, and the interpretation of the Bible include John A. Broadus, "Hints as to Bible Interpretation," in *Hints on Bible Study*, by H. Clay Trumbull, et al. (Philadelphia: John D. Wattles, 1898), 97-108; John A. Broadus, "Advantages of the Study of the Bible by Books, with Illustrations" (Cleveland: Young Men's Christian Association, 1881); George W. Cable, et al., "A 'Symposium' on the Favorite

Broadus's hermeneutic and the interpretive principles which constitute his hermeneutic. These works form the foundation for this dissertation and allow the researcher to identify and analyze Broadus's presuppositions and hermeneutical principles.

Once Broadus's hermeneutic is established, the exegetical works of Broadus will be considered.²⁶ An examination of Broadus's exegetical works allows the researcher to determine whether or not Broadus employed the interpretive principles he encouraged others to use as they studied Scripture.²⁷ Finally, the researcher will evaluate Broadus's sermons to determine if they were developed from sound exegesis based on the hermeneutical principles he advocated.²⁸ Only three

Book of the Bible," *The Old and New Testament Student* 11, no. 1 (July 1890): 43-45; John A. Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, n. d.); John A. Broadus, review of *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, by Benjamin B. Warfield, *Baptist Quarterly Review* 9 (1887): 266-67; and John A. Broadus, *Three Questions as to the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, n. d.).

²⁶Broadus's commentary on the Gospel of Matthew will be considered, as will his commentary on the Gospel of Mark, which was published posthumously. See John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1905). His exegetical lecture notes on various books will also be considered. These notes were never published but can be found in the John Albert Broadus Papers collection in the archives of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. The collection contains exegetical lecture notes from the Gospel of John, 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter, Romans, Hebrews, and Daniel, as well as other various lecture notes.

²⁷For example, one of the explicit hermeneutical principles advocated by Broadus was grammatical interpretation. Broadus instructed his readers to "interpret grammatically," writing, "Endeavour to ascertain the precise meaning of the words and the phrases in the text." If possible, he suggested it should be "done in the original" (Broadus, *A Treatise*, 58-59). This dissertation will examine Broadus's exegetical works in order to discern whether or not Broadus sought to discover the precise meaning of words and phrases in the biblical text under consideration. From this research, one can determine the consistency, or lack thereof, between Broadus's teachings on hermeneutics and his practice of hermeneutics.

²⁸Another hermeneutical principle advocated by Broadus was "logical interpretation," or what could be called contextual interpretation. He wrote, "The connection of thought in which a text stands will of course throw light upon its meaning, and is usually indispensable to understanding it. This logical connection will sometimes really be the entire book to which the text belongs" (Broadus, *A Treatise*, 60). Broadus was essentially instructing his readers to know the context of each passage, both at the micro-level and the macro-level. I will analyze the sermons to see if Broadus demonstrated an awareness of the context of the passage under consideration by explicitly referencing the surrounding context or the book context. Since Broadus typically based his sermons on one verse, it will be interesting to see whether or not Broadus demonstrated an awareness of the context of his selected verse and interpreted the text in accordance with the context in his sermons.

works contain published sermons by John A. Broadus.²⁹ The James P. Boyce Centennial Library, however, houses several hundred sermon outlines, briefs, and manuscripts.³⁰ Analyzing these sermons allows the researcher to determine whether or not Broadus consistently employed the interpretive principles he taught and to consider whether or not these principles are still useful today.

Although the dissertation primarily depends on primary sources, it will also consider secondary sources. These secondary sources will allow the researcher to set Broadus in his historical context, to define key terms, and to examine the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics as a whole. They will also allow the researcher to evaluate the claims of other scholars in regards to Broadus's hermeneutic and homiletic and either dispute or verify those claims.

Summary of Content

The first chapter highlighted the importance of preaching from a historical study and explained the value of studying the preaching of John Albert Broadus. While dissertations have been written on Broadus's theory of preaching, research on his practice is lacking, and research on his hermeneutic is non-existent. Therefore, a study of Broadus's hermeneutic and his practice of preaching is warranted. The chapter also presented the research questions driving the dissertation and the thesis

²⁹John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886); John A. Broadus, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, ed. Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959); and Roger D. Duke, *John Albert Broadus: Prince of the Pulpit* (Mountain Home, AR: BorderStone Press, 2014).

³⁰The manuscripts are located in two different collections: the John Albert Broadus Papers and the John Albert Broadus Sermons and Lecture Notes collections. The sermons in the collections have been labeled as outlines, briefs, and manuscripts based on the length of the documents. An outline is any sermon that does not extend beyond one page and contains only the title, text, and main points of the sermon. A brief is any sermon that consists of two pages or more and contains the title, text, main points, and brief comments on each point yet falls short of a full manuscript. A manuscript is any sermon that includes the title, the text, an introduction, the main points, explanation and application of all the points, and a conclusion. Due to the brevity of the outlines, they will not be used to evaluate Broadus's hermeneutic.

of the dissertation. The remainder of the dissertation attempts to answer those questions and defend that thesis. The chapter has also described the background and methodology of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a brief biographical sketch of the life of John Albert Broadus. Although a detailed description of his life is impossible, a short summary of his life allows the reader to gain insight into Broadus's historical context, the major events that shaped his life and ministry, and his accomplishments as a preacher, professor, and Baptist statesmen.

Chapter 3 focuses on the presuppositions undergirding Broadus's hermeneutic. Given Broadus's connection with C. H. Toy and the accusation by some moderates that Broadus did not believe in the inspiration or inerrancy of Scripture, Broadus's views of Scripture and how that shaped his approach to interpreting and preaching the biblical text need to be clearly delineated. Careful attention to Broadus's writings and sermons reveals a commitment to the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture. This commitment shaped his approach to understanding and proclaiming Scripture.

Chapter 4 identifies the principles that guided Broadus's interpretation of Scripture. As professor of New Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Broadus understood the importance of sound interpretation. In his writings, Broadus often emphasized the importance of solid exegesis and provided interpretive principles to help guide the process. This chapter identifies and explains those principles.

Chapter 5 analyzes Broadus's exegetical works. Given the reputation of his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, much of the chapter focuses on his interpretation of Scripture using that commentary as a benchmark. The research examines his commentary on Mark as well. Finally, Broadus's exegetical notes

located in the archives of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library are referenced.

These writings provide further insight into Broadus's exegesis.

Chapter 6 examines Broadus's sermons. The chapter utilizes the published sermons of Broadus, but the primary focus is on those sermon manuscripts that have never been published. The sermon briefs and manuscripts of Broadus reveal his commitment to sound interpretation and biblical proclamation.

Chapter 7 summarizes the results of this study. The chapter highlights Broadus's presuppositions concerning Scripture and the principles that governed his interpretation of the Bible, his exegetical work and how it reflects his hermeneutic, and his sermons and how they reflect his hermeneutic and careful exegesis. The chapter also includes an evaluation of Broadus's hermeneutic and determines whether preachers today can emulate his approach to biblical interpretation and proclamation.

CHAPTER 2
BROADUS'S LIFE AND MINISTRY

Childhood and Education

John Albert Broadus was born on January 24, 1827 in Culpeper County, Virginia, to Edmund Broadus and Nancy Simms Broadus.¹ His father Edmund was involved in politics, serving as a state legislator for the duration of John's childhood. His mother Nancy cared for the family farm and reared her children.² John also had a brother, James Madison; two sisters, Martha Ann and Caroline Matilda; and three siblings who died in childhood.³ Broadus's family made a profound impact on him, particularly his father. Each day when Major Broadus came home, John would sit and listen to his father speak on a variety of subjects.⁴ In the evenings, he would tell his father what books he had been reading and ask questions related to the subject of the books. Mary Wallis, one of Broadus's cousins, noted that Major Broadus and John "sat and talked like two men."⁵ Broadus's mother also influenced him, teaching him to enjoy good books, music, and flowers, among other things.⁶ Perhaps the

¹ Andrew Broaddus, *A History of the Broaddus Family, from the Time of the Settlement of the Progenitor of the Family in the United States down to the year 1888* (St. Louis, MO: Central Baptist Press, 1888), 112-13.

² Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1901), 11-20.

³ Andrew Broaddus, *A History*, 113.

⁴ His father was known as "Major Broadus" due to his service in the Culpepper militia. See Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶ Robertson noted that less was known about Broadus's mother than his father, but he

greatest influence on a young Broadus was his sister, Martha. Robertson recalled, “She taught John a great deal at home. He often said that he owed more to her than to almost any other influence.”⁷ Broadus himself credited his father and his sister with playing a key role in his early formation and education.⁸

While Broadus’s family played a large role in shaping him educationally, he was also fortunate enough to have “real educational advantages in his childhood...He had a remarkably good teacher in the old field school, Mr. Albert Tutt, and in his teens he had one of the best high school teachers in the land, Mr. Albert G. Simms.”⁹ These two men helped lay the educational foundation for Broadus’s later academic pursuits. Broadus attended school until the fall of 1843, when Albert Tutt told him there was nothing further he could teach him. Broadus was also converted in 1843.

A. T. Robertson described his conversion:

While he was still at school, a protracted meeting was conducted at Mt. Poney Church (Culpeper Court-House), by Rev. Chas. A. Lewis, of Kentucky, and Rev. Barnett Grimsley. Mr. Broadus was converted at this revival. While under conviction and feeling unable to take hold of the promises, a friend quoted to him: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,” repeating, “in no wise cast out.’ Can’t you take hold of that, John?” Somehow the light dawned under this verse of Scripture.¹⁰

Broadus was baptized and joined New Salem Church shortly thereafter.

After finishing his secondary education in the fall of 1843, Broadus desired to pursue higher education, but he needed to obtain the funds to pay for his education. Broadus decided to teach in order to obtain the resources necessary to

observed Broadus’s tendency to quote his mother’s sayings and suggested John got “his wonderful pathos” from her. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 17-18.

⁷*Life and Letters*, 19.

⁸Andrew Broaddus, *A History*, 130.

⁹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 25.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 33.

pursue higher education. He began teaching classes at Rose Hill in Clarke County, Virginia, in January of 1844. The following January, he taught at the school at Woodley. During his time at the school at Woodley, Broadus contemplated pastoral ministry but initially concluded he was not “cut out” for ministry. In a letter to T. W. Lewis dated February 26, 1846, Broadus wrote:

You inquire if I never think about preaching. I answer, I do; but I always come to the conclusion that preaching is not my office. . . . I know that my mental capabilities are, in some respects, not inconsiderable, but I was not ‘cut out’ for a public speaker; I have not that grace of manner and appearance, that pleasant voice, that easy flow of words, which are indispensably necessary to him who would make impressions on his fellows by public speaking.¹¹

Broadus would change his mind several months later. In August of 1846, God used a sermon by A. M. Poindexter to call Broadus into the gospel ministry. Broadus described his call to ministry as follows:

But when the preacher had gained their full sympathy, the sudden appeal he made to consecrate their wealth to the highest ends of existence, to the good of mankind and the glory of Christ, was a torrent, a tornado that swept everything before it. Presently he spoke of consecrating one’s mental gifts and possible attainments to the work of the ministry. He seemed to clear up all difficulties pertaining to the subject; he swept away all the disguise of self-delusion, all the excuses of fancied humility; he held up the thought that the greatest sacrifices and toils possible to a minister’s lifetime would be a hundred-fold repaid if he should be the instrument of saving one soul. Doubtless the sermon had many more important results which have not fallen in the way of being recorded; but when intermission came, the young man who has been mentioned sought out his pastor, and with a choking voice said: ‘Brother Grimsley, the question is decided; I must try to be a preacher.’¹²

Following this call to ministry, Broadus decided to pursue higher education at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Broadus began studying at the University of Virginia in the fall of 1846.

During his time at the university, Broadus was a diligent student and an active

¹¹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 48-49.

¹²John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1886), 398-399.

member of the Jefferson Society. Broadus studied a variety of subjects during his studies, taking courses in mathematics, moral philosophy, and ancient languages among others.¹³ During the course of Broadus's studies at the University of Virginia, two important events transpired. First, Broadus met Maria Harrison, the daughter of Gessner Harrison, professor of ancient languages at The University of Virginia. Gessner Harrison instilled a love in Broadus for the ancient languages, particularly Greek, but he also introduced Broadus to his daughter, Maria. In the last session of Broadus's university studies, his health was poor, and Maria agreed to walk with him each afternoon. This was the beginning of a romance that would eventually result in marriage. Second, Broadus preached his first sermon. On June 4, 1847, he delivered his first sermon, taking Psalm 62:8 as his text. After four years of study, Broadus graduated from The University of Virginia with his Master of Arts on June 29, 1850.

Early Career and Pastoral Ministry

Following his graduation, Broadus moved to Bremo, Virginia to tutor in the house of General J. H. Cocke. Broadus had not abandoned his call to ministry, but he was "in no hurry to assume the heavy responsibilities of the pastorate."¹⁴ He taught in the home of General Cocke and continued to correspond with Maria Harrison. Their relationship continued to grow, and on November 13, 1850, John and Maria were married. Although Broadus was content teach in Bremo, his abilities, education, and experience placed him in high demand. He was offered a position as professor of ancient languages at Georgetown College, Kentucky, in 1851, but he declined due to his call to ministry. Additionally, Broadus was offered pastorates

¹³Francis H. Smith described Broadus's course of study at the University of Virginia by school year in the seminary magazine after Broadus's death. See Francis H. Smith, "Dr. John A. Broadus: As A University Student," *The Seminary Magazine* 8 (April 1895): 344.

¹⁴Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 75.

from several churches, which he also declined. When Broadus was offered a professorship at The University of Virginia and the pastorate of the Charlottesville Baptist Church, he saw an opportunity to both teach and preach, and he accepted the offer in September of 1851.

Broadus committed himself to his work at the University of Virginia and Charlottesville Baptist Church, but he was unable to sustain the heavy workload. After teaching ancient languages with Dr. Harrison at the university for two years, the pastorate grew too demanding, and Broadus was forced to resign from the university in the summer of 1853. He threw himself into the ministry at Charlottesville Baptist Church, where Alfred Dickinson observed, “No man ever had a happier pastorate than he had during the few brief years in which he served the church in Charlottesville. The conditions were all favorable, and there was nothing lacking for developing his rare gifts for this sacred office.”¹⁵ Robertson noted that Broadus “threw his whole nature into the work at Charlottesville,” visiting members, teaching, preaching, and holding prayer services.¹⁶

In 1855, Broadus was offered the office of chaplain at the University of Virginia. He wrestled with whether he should take the position or stay at the church in Charlottesville, but eventually he decided to accept the chaplaincy and resign from Charlottesville Baptist Church. The church decided to hire an associate pastor for two years, after which time Broadus would resume his pastoral duties. Broadus served as chaplain from 1855-1857, preaching to students and professors alike. Broadus had a difficult time as chaplain, writing, “My labors at the University have not been attended, thus far, with any very manifest and decided results. I often feel

¹⁵A. E. Dickinson, “Dr. John A. Broadus: As Pastor At Charlottesville, Va.,” *The Seminary Magazine* 8 (1895): 246-47.

¹⁶Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 118-26.

inclined to great despondency, especially of late.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, Broadus wrote, “Yet I really enjoy my position, with all its trials, for there are peculiar pleasures too. I humbly hope that, if spared, the Lord may bless my labors during next session more abundantly.”¹⁸ After serving as chaplain at the university for two years, Broadus resumed his pastoral ministry at Charlottesville in 1857.

Unfortunately, tragedy struck in the fall of 1857. Broadus’s wife, Maria, grew ill and died on October 21, 1857, “after only a week’s illness.” When Broadus told her she was dying, Maria responded, “Well, tell me about Jesus.”¹⁹ Maria left behind her husband, John, and three daughters: Eliza Somerville, Annie Harrison, and Maria Louisa. Broadus was overcome with grief, but several weeks later, Broadus reentered the pulpit of Charlottesville Baptist Church and preached from Matthew 12:20: “A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.” Broadus continued to serve the church in Charlottesville, and in January of 1859, he married Charlotte Eleanor Sinclair. She “made for him a happy home, ever welcoming his many friends as well as sharing in his interests and pursuits of whatever kind.”²⁰ Broadus seemed content preaching and serving there in Charlottesville, but change was on the horizon.

The Founding of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

While serving as chaplain of the University of Virginia and pastor of Charlottesville Baptist Church, Broadus participated in Southern Baptist efforts to

¹⁷Broadus to Miss Cornelia Taliaferro, University of Virginia, May 19, 1856, in Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 134.

¹⁸Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 135.

¹⁹Ibid., 146.

²⁰Ibid., 155.

establish a seminary. In 1857, the theological education convention of the Southern Baptist Convention appointed Broadus to serve on the Committee on the Plan of Organization, which was chaired by James Petigru Boyce.²¹ The purpose of the committee was “to propose the seminary’s curriculum, its confession of faith, and its plan of government.”²² Broadus was responsible for developing a curriculum that “embodied Boyce’s vision,” as outlined in his famous speech, “Three Changes in Theological Institutions.”²³ Broadus accomplished this by insisting on the adoption of an elective system of education modeled after The University of Virginia that would allow students to “choose which departments of the curriculum they would pursue.”²⁴

Other committee members included Basil Manly Jr. and James P. Boyce. Manly Jr. wrote the Abstract of Principles, which would serve as the seminary’s

²¹James P. Boyce, a young professor of theology at Furman University, had been laboring for several years to convince Southern Baptists of a need to establish a seminary in the South. In 1856, at the meeting of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, Boyce convinced Baptists in South Carolina of the need to establish a Southern Baptist seminary and persuaded them to pledge \$100,000 towards the establishment of the seminary. The following year, the theological education convention would accept South Carolina’s proposal and begin taking steps toward establishing a seminary. Boyce and Broadus would go on to develop a life-long friendship. For a more detailed summary of Boyce’s role in promoting the establishment of the seminary, see John Albert Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Sons, 1893), 111-54. Also see Thomas J. Nettles, *James Petigru Boyce: A Southern Baptist Statesman* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009), 124-81.

²²Gregory Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 26.

²³*Ibid.*, 26. The speech, which Broadus described as “epoch-making in the history of theological education among Southern Baptists,” identified three changes that needed to take place among theological institutions: “(1) A Baptist theological school ought not merely to receive college graduates, but men with less of general education, even men having only what is called a common English education, offering to every man such opportunities of theological study as he is prepared for and desires. (2) Besides covering, for those who are prepared, as wide a range of theological study as could be found elsewhere, such an institution ought to offer further and special courses, so that the ablest and most aspiring students might make extraordinary attainments, preparing them for instruction and original authorship, and helping to make our country less dependent upon foreign scholarship. (3) There should be prepared an Abstract of Principles, or careful statement of theological belief, which every professor in such an institution must sign when inaugurated, so as to guard against the rise of erroneous and injurious instruction in such a seat of sacred learning.” Broadus, *Memoir*, 142 and 121.

²⁴Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 24-28.

confession of faith and “bind the seminary to evangelical Baptist orthodoxy.”²⁵ Boyce organized the seminary’s structure, ensuring (1) the professor’s would teach in accordance with the Abstract of Principles, (2) the trustees would represent the states, and (3) the Southern Baptist Convention would retain control of the seminary.²⁶ The plans for the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina were beginning to take shape.

After the committee developed the plans for the organization of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, it was necessary to select faculty to teach at the seminary. Broadus was elected to serve as professor of New Testament Interpretation and Preaching, but he was initially reluctant to leave the church in Charlottesville and join the upstart seminary. He deliberated for days, consulted friends, and even received a paper from a voluntary committee of his church describing the negative consequences that would ensue should Broadus accept the professorship.²⁷ After much deliberation, Broadus declined the offer. He wrote to Boyce:

After more anxiety and difficulty than I ever before experienced, I have at length decided that I cannot leave here. If anything I can conceive could make me feel right to leave this post, it would be the Seminary; but I could not dare to go away.²⁸

When Broadus declined the position, E. T. Winkler, who had been elected to teach church history, church government, and pastoral theology, also chose to decline his

²⁵Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 31.

²⁶Ibid., 40-42.

²⁷Ibid., 43, and Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 149. Interestingly, Crawford Howell Toy was one of the members who signed the letter. Given Toy’s departure from orthodoxy and Broadus’s defense of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture in the aftermath of the Toy controversy, it is somewhat ironic Toy signed a letter urging Broadus to remain in Charlottesville.

²⁸Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 152.

appointment. Then, A. M. Poindexter turned down the appointment as general manager, which meant the seminary was unable to open in 1858, as originally planned.

Boyce refused to give up on the seminary, however, and continued to obtain money for the seminary and promote it as he traveled and spoke. In the early spring of 1859, Boyce asked Broadus to reconsider the position as professor of New Testament Interpretation and Preaching.²⁹ Broadus eventually changed his mind and agreed to accept the position. He wrote to Boyce:

With much difficulty and much distress, I have at length reached a decision. I tremble at the responsibility of the thing either way, and hesitate to write words which must be irrevocable. But . . . if elected, I am willing to go. May God graciously direct and bless, and if I have erred in judgment, may he overrule, to the glory of his name.³⁰

As history has revealed, Broadus did not err in judgment, and the seminary he helped found continues to train men for gospel ministry to the present day.

Broadus preached his last sermon at Charlottesville Baptist Church on Sunday, August 28, 1859. In the sermon, Broadus summarized his work in Charlottesville. The eight years spent at The University of Virginia and Charlottesville Baptist Church had prepared Broadus for what would become his life's work: teaching and training ministers of the gospel. His experience teaching Greek under Dr. Harrison shaped Broadus's teaching style and helped prepare him to teach New Testament Interpretation at the seminary in Greenville. Further, Broadus

²⁹Nettles, *James Petigru Boyce*, 148-55.

³⁰Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 159. In the letter, Broadus also expressed his excitement over the opportunity to work closely with Boyce, whom he viewed as a close friend and was confident he would love like a brother. He wrote, "Do not fear that I shall change my mind and, my dear Boyce, suffer me to say, that few personal considerations about the matter are so attractive to me as the prospect of being associated in a great work with you. I rejoice in a warm, mutual friendship now, and I trust we shall ere long learn to love each other as brothers. Pardon me for just saying what I feel."

preached 761 sermons during his time at the church and the university.³¹ He honed his preaching skills and developed his theory of preaching while serving as pastor, and he pulled from this experience as he taught preaching at the seminary. In short, Broadus's work at the university and the church during this time helped shape Broadus and laid the foundation for his future teaching endeavors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The seminary opened in the fall of 1859 with twenty-six students. Broadus eagerly began teaching New Testament Interpretation and Preaching, but health issues prevented him from teaching the full year. Although he was unable to teach for several months, the other faculty members picked up his teaching load and the work moved forward.³² The first commencement took place on May 28, 1860. When the seminary resumed in the fall of 1860, thirty-six students attended the seminary.³³ The future of the seminary seemed bright, but storm clouds loomed on the horizon. Due to major differences of opinion over the legitimacy of slaveholding, there was tension between the Northern States and the Southern States. South Carolina in particular was volatile, and there were threats of secession from the Union. Broadus's correspondence during this time reveals much confusion and uncertainty regarding the future of the state of South Carolina, the seminary, and the United States.³⁴

³¹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 166. For a full list of sermons preached and texts used, see John Albert Broadus, "The Day Book of Broadus," box 20, folder 6, John Albert Broadus Papers, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Archives, Louisville, KY.

³²Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 170.

³³Broadus, *Memoir*, 169-76.

³⁴As a native Virginian living in South Carolina, Broadus was often asked about his position concerning secession and how he viewed South Carolina's actions. In one letter, Broadus is jokingly addressed as "Rev. Dr. J. A. Broadus, Greenville, Empire of South Carolina" and asked how he would feel being considered a "foreigner" should South Carolina secede. Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 178. Broadus was not in favor of secession. He wrote, "I have at this hour no sympathy with secession, though of course it would be worse than idle to speak against it now, and though, equally of course, I mean to do my duty as a citizen here" (*ibid.*, 181).

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in the fall of 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. In the spring of 1861, Confederate troops fired upon and captured Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Both of these events took place during the second academic year of the seminary in Greenville, South Carolina and raised questions concerning the future of the newly established theological institution.³⁵

Ministry During the Civil War

The seminary resumed in the fall of 1861, but there was uncertainty regarding whether or not the students would be exempt from military service. Boyce wrote to the Secretary of War, seeking exemption for students training for the ministry. He inquired, “Allow me to ask you if the clause in the exemption bill of the Conscription Act by which ministers of the gospel are exempted does not also by fair construction exempt students of theology preparing for the Christian ministry.”³⁶ Unfortunately, “Boyce failed to obtain exemption for ministerial students,” and the seminary was closed in the fall of 1862 and did not reopen until after the war.³⁷

Due to the closure of the seminary, the professors looked for other opportunities to serve the Lord and support their families. During this time, Broadus served as the pastor of Cedar Grove Baptist Church. He preached regularly at the church from 1860 to 1867.³⁸ Robertson also noted that Broadus served as a pastor in “Williamston, and continued to fill in the other Sundays at various points” during this time.³⁹ After receiving a request to write something to encourage the soldiers,

³⁵Broadus, *Memoir*, 177-79.

³⁶Broadus, *Memoir*, 194.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 196.

³⁸For a detailed description of Broadus’s ministry at the church in Cedar Grove, see H. P. Griffith, “Dr. John A. Broadus: As a Country Pastor,” *The Seminary Magazine* 8 (1895): 349-53.

³⁹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 196.

Broadus penned a tract called “We Pray for you at Home,” which was intended to encourage and challenge the soldiers to pursue holiness and godly living throughout the war.⁴⁰ He began his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew during this period as well.

Aside from the pastoral opportunities during the Civil War, Broadus was also invited to preach the gospel to the soldiers during the war. In 1863, he was invited to spend the summer as a missionary in the Northern Army of Virginia.⁴¹ Broadus often preached three to four sermons a day to crowds reaching close to five thousand people.⁴² As a result of the preaching of Broadus and others throughout the camps of Lee’s army, over fifteen thousand soldiers professed faith in Jesus Christ.⁴³ Broadus intended to serve as a missionary for the duration of the war, but his health could not hold up and he was forced to leave his ministry to the soldiers due to the effects of the outdoor preaching on his weak throat.

Broadus returned to Greenville, assuming the pastorate of Clear Spring Church in addition to his pastoral work at Cedar Grove and Williamston. He also served as the “Corresponding Secretary of the Sunday-school Board at Greenville” from 1863 to 1866.⁴⁴ This kept Broadus occupied until the Civil War ended in 1865.

⁴⁰John Albert Broadus, *We Pray for You at Home*, quoted in Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, 190.

⁴¹For a general treatment of the gospel work in the Northern Army of Virginia, see J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp, or Religion in Lee’s Army* (Richmond, VA: B. F. Johnson and Co., 1887). For a specific treatment of Broadus’s work, see J. William Jones, “Dr. John A. Broadus: As Evangelist in Lee’s Army,” *The Seminary Magazine* 8 (1895): 353-58. Robertson also mentions Broadus’s summer with the Northern Army of Virginia. See Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, 198-209. For an evaluation of Broadus’s evangelistic efforts during this period, see William Earl Brown, “Pastoral Evangelism: A Model for Effective Evangelism as Demonstrated by the Ministries of John Albert Broadus, Alfred Elijah Dickinson, and John William Jones in the Revival of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1863” (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999).

⁴²Jones, “Dr. John A. Broadus,” 356-57.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 355.

⁴⁴Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 209.

With the end of the Civil War, Broadus and his fellow faculty members turned their attention back to the seminary. Boyce called the four faculty members together for a meeting at Greenville in the summer of 1865. Broadus described the atmosphere:

The prospect was sufficiently discouraging. The seminary had practically nothing. A large part of the subscriptions for endowment had, as we have seen, been paid in Confederate money and invested in Confederate bonds, and so had become an utter loss.⁴⁵

Despite the gloomy outlook, the men were resolved to keep the seminary alive. Broadus famously remarked, “Suppose we quietly agree that the seminary may die, but we’ll die first.”⁴⁶ The seminary reopened on October 1, 1865 with only seven students.⁴⁷ From the reopening of the seminary in 1865 to his death in 1895, Broadus taught at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina and, later, in Louisville, Kentucky.⁴⁸

Professor of Preaching and New Testament Interpretation

Broadus was unable to teach much prior to the Civil War due to health issues, but once the seminary resumed, Broadus took up the task of teaching New Testament Interpretation and Preaching with vigor. Broadus had only one student in his homiletics course after the seminary reopened, but he did not neglect his responsibility to teach the student how to prepare and deliver sermons. Since the

⁴⁵Broadus, *Memoir*, 198.

⁴⁶Broadus, *Memoir*, 200.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 201.

⁴⁸The devastation from the Civil War made it impossible for the seminary to remain in South Carolina. Baptists in South Carolina were unable to rebuild the endowment for the seminary, so the decision was made to relocate the seminary to Louisville, KY. For more details concerning the struggles after the Civil War, see Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 62-90; Broadus, *Memoir*, 198-217; and Nettles, *James Petigru Boyce*, 217-46. For more information about the move to Louisville, see Broadus, *Memoir*, 218-51 and Nettles, *James Petigru Boyce*, 247-316.

student was blind and unable to read, Broadus “tried to lay out a somewhat complete course, and give it to him in lectures.”⁴⁹ These lectures served as the basis for what eventually became his famous preaching textbook, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.⁵⁰

Broadus taught Homiletics and New Testament at the seminary until C. H. Toy was hired to teach Old Testament Interpretation in 1869, which freed up Basil Manly Jr. to teach homiletics and allow Broadus to focus on New Testament Interpretation. Broadus continued to battle health problems, so he decided to spend some time abroad.⁵¹ His book *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* was published while he was overseas and received favorable reviews.⁵² After a year of traveling, Broadus returned to Greenville and once again immersed himself in the work of the seminary.

From 1871 until the move to Louisville in 1877, Broadus worked alongside Boyce to raise funds for the seminary and promote the move from South Carolina to Kentucky. He also continued teaching at the seminary and preaching regularly when the opportunity arose.⁵³ In 1876, he delivered a series of lectures at Newton Theological Seminary on the history of preaching. These lectures were eventually converted into a book entitled *Lectures on the History of Preaching*.⁵⁴ In 1877, after

⁴⁹Broadus, *Memoir*, 201.

⁵⁰John Albert Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1870).

⁵¹Robertson details Broadus’s year abroad in Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 238-79.

⁵²J. L. M. Curry observed, “Your book has received more favorable commendations from the religious journals than any book of the kind ever did in America. I have seen notices in Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational journals.” J. L. M. Curry to J. A. B., Richmond, Virginia, December 28, 1870, in Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 254.

⁵³Broadus resumed teaching homiletics in 1872, after Basil Manly Jr. left the seminary to become president of Georgetown College. See Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 280-87.

⁵⁴John Albert Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: A. C. Armstrong

the move to Louisville, the seminary began to grow and become more stable. The seminary had eighty-eight students in the first year at Louisville, which was encouraging since the highest number of students to attend seminary in Greenville had been sixty-seven.⁵⁵ As Broadus established himself in Louisville he came “to be in great demand in Louisville as a preacher in the churches of all evangelical denominations From this period of Doctor Broadus’s life the demands grew incessant for preaching in all the great cities, for dedications, for Chautauquas, for supplies, for pastor.”⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Broadus remained committed to teaching at the seminary, and the number of students at the seminary continued to grow.

By 1882, the number of students had grown to one hundred and twenty. Broadus made the most of his opportunity to teach these young men. Robertson remembered these years with fondness, writing, “Oh, the rapture of the days when one could hear Broadus lecture in New Testament English or in Homiletics! It was worth a day’s journey to any man. He was a consummate scholar, of the widest reading and the most thorough assimilation.”⁵⁷ He continued to teach New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics at the seminary throughout the 1880s, and he published his highly acclaimed commentary on Matthew and a compilation of sermons during this time.⁵⁸

and Son, 1891).

⁵⁵Robertson, *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus*, 308.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 316. Chautauquas were part of an adult religious education movement which started at Lake Chautauqua in New York State in 1874. For a history of the movement, see *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Chautauqua Movement,” accessed February 13, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/chautauqua-movement>.

⁵⁷Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 336.

⁵⁸John Albert Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), and John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886).

Seminary President

In 1888, Broadus's close friend and co-laborer James P. Boyce died while traveling in Europe. Boyce had served as the President of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since its inauguration in 1859, but his death left a void in the leadership of the seminary. It also left a void in Broadus's life. Broadus was greatly affected by Boyce's death. Robertson recalled Broadus saying "that he never felt that he was the same man after Boyce was gone."⁵⁹ Broadus closed his memoir of Boyce with these words: "O Brother beloved, true yokefellow through years of toil, best and dearest friend, sweet shall be thy memory till we meet again!"⁶⁰

Broadus was selected to replace Boyce as president. F. H. Kerfoot remarked, "It is safe to say that no president ever protruded his presidency less than did Dr. Broadus."⁶¹ Nevertheless, Broadus took up his responsibilities as president and was quite successful. The seminary saw "a steady and rapid progress in every department," "the number of students increased year by year," and "the endowment rapidly increased."⁶² The school remained on solid footing while Broadus served as president.

Broadus continued to lecture and write during his presidency. In January of 1889, Broadus delivered the Yale Lectures on preaching. The lectures were well attended, but, unfortunately, they were never published.⁶³ In 1890, he lectured on

⁵⁹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 374.

⁶⁰Broadus, *Memoir*, 371.

⁶¹F. H. Kerfoot, "Dr. John A. Broadus: As Seminary President," *Seminary Magazine* 8 (1895): 385.

⁶²F. H. Kerfoot, "Dr. John A. Broadus," 390.

⁶³For more information concerning the "Lost Yale Lectures," see David A. McCants, "The Lost Yale Lectures on Preaching by John A. Broadus," *The Southern Speech Journal* 36 (Summer 1971): 49-60; Mark Manly Overstreet, "The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John Albert Broadus (1827-1895)" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005); and Mark M. Overstreet, "Now I Am Found: The Recovery of the 'Lost' Yale Lectures and Broadus's Legacy of Engaging Exposition," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*

the life of Christ at John Hopkins University. These lectures were published as *Jesus of Nazareth*.⁶⁴ Broadus was asked to write a catechism for children, which he completed in 1891.⁶⁵ In 1893, Broadus finished his memoir of his dear friend Boyce.⁶⁶ He also published a book that year harmonizing the gospel accounts.⁶⁷ Broadus would continue to write and lecture until his death in 1895.

Death and Legacy

Broadus maintained an intense schedule of preaching and teaching during his presidency, which took a toll on his health. In 1894, Old Testament professor John Sampey was unable to teach for five weeks, and Broadus assumed responsibility of his teaching schedule. This resulted in a severe strain on Broadus's health. He wrote, "I take his Old Testament hours for my New Testament class, and this is working me pretty hard. I have a bad cold, with sharp coughing and serious hoarseness, and shall be thankful if I can get through this spell of weather without breaking down."⁶⁸ Robertson observed, "In April it was clear that Doctor Broadus had become seriously ill."⁶⁹ Broadus's health improved somewhat in 1894, but he never completely recovered. On March 16, 1895, John A. Broadus passed away.

(Nashville: B & H, 2008), 156-75.

⁶⁴John A. Broadus, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1890).

⁶⁵John A. Broadus, *A Catechism for Bible Teaching* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1892).

⁶⁶Broadus, *Memoir*.

⁶⁷John A. Broadus, *A Harmony of the Gospels* (New York: Doran, 1893).

⁶⁸J. A. B. to Mrs. A. B. Mitchell, Louisville, KY, February 8, 1894, in Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 418.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 420.

Following Broadus's death, there was an outpouring of love and support. J. W. Warder said, "He seemed to me the greatest man we had."⁷⁰ Theodore Harris commented, "I am sixty-seven years old and have known a large number of great men, but John A. Broadus was the greatest man I ever knew."⁷¹ John D. Rockefeller wrote, "With all his great qualities of mind and heart, Dr. Broadus was a Christian gentleman of the highest type, charming and beautiful in his character as guest and friend."⁷² Rabbi Moses declared, "The glory of Louisville has departed from her with the departure of John A. Broadus."⁷³ Although Broadus had departed, he left behind many works that would influence future generations of preachers and New Testament scholars.

Broadus left behind many works revealing his competence in the fields of New Testament and homiletics. His former student, son-in-law, and Greek scholar A. T. Robertson wrote:

He was to have the Chairs of Interpretation of the New Testament (Greek and English classes) and of Homiletics. Thus the two sides of his nature that had been developed most were engaged in these two chairs. He undertook and carried to the end both of these great departments. It is certain that no one, to-day, could do it. And yet it is hard to tell in which he most excelled, New Testament Interpretation or Homiletics. He was first in both.⁷⁴

Broadus's lectures, articles, and books demonstrate his capabilities as an interpreter, a preacher of the biblical text, and a teacher of preachers.

⁷⁰H. W. Provence, "Dr. John A. Broadus: Students' Memorial Service," *The Seminary Magazine* 8 (April 1895): 403.

⁷¹Ibid., 404.

⁷²John D. Rockefeller, "Dr. John A. Broadus: A Letter from John D. Rockefeller," *Seminary Magazine* 8 (1895): 402.

⁷³Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 438.

⁷⁴Archibald Thomas Robertson, "Broadus as Scholar and Preacher," in *The Minister and His Greek New Testament* (repr., Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 133.

In the field of New Testament Interpretation, Broadus's most thorough work was his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.⁷⁵ He also wrote a commentary on the Gospel of Mark and contributed to the translation and expansion of a commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel by David Erdmann with C. H. Toy.⁷⁶ He wrote a harmony of the Gospels and a defense of the historicity of Jesus, both of which demonstrate his abilities as a New Testament scholar and his commitment to orthodoxy.⁷⁷ Although not published, many of his lecture notes also reveal his skills as an interpreter of the New Testament. Commenting on his unpublished lectures on Pauline theology, Tom Nettles observed his "unpublished work on Pauline theology is a model of exposition incorporating grammatical-historical exegesis supplemented by a doctrinal framework."⁷⁸ Broadus truly was an exceptional New Testament scholar.

In spite of his abilities as a New Testament scholar, Broadus is primarily remembered for his influence in the field of homiletics. His textbook on the preparation and delivery of sermons is truly a classic.⁷⁹ He also wrote a work on the

⁷⁵Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. David S. Dockery asserted that this commentary "best exemplifies his first-rate scholarship." David S. Dockery, "The Broadus-Robertson Tradition," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: B & H, 2001), 104.

⁷⁶John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1905), and John A. Broadus and C. H. Toy, *Samuel*, ed. John Peter Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1877). Toy would eventually resign from the seminary due to his views of Scripture. Broadus's relationship with Toy and what this reveals about Broadus's view of Scripture will be discussed in detail in chap. 3 when Broadus's view of Scripture is discussed.

⁷⁷Broadus, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, and Broadus, *Jesus of Nazareth*.

⁷⁸Tom Nettles, "John Albert Broadus," in *The Baptists* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publication, 2006), 2:306.

⁷⁹James Roland Barron observed, "Several people have estimated that Broadus's book has received the widest use of all textbooks in homiletics in the English language. For many years, it was the main textbook in homiletics in theological seminaries. It no longer dominates the scene in American seminaries, but it is still widely used." James Roland Barron, "The Contributions of John A. Broadus to Southern Baptists" (Th.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972), 166.

history of preaching.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, very few of his sermons have been published. To date, only three works have been published that contain sermons delivered by John A. Broadus.⁸¹ Several hundred of Broadus's sermon manuscripts, however, reside in the John Albert Broadus Papers and the John Albert Broadus Lectures and Sermon Notes collections in the archives of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.⁸² Broadus's works on preaching, as well as his sermons, reveal he possessed a clear understanding of the task of preaching and was prepared for the work of training future ministers of the gospel to preach the Bible with clarity and passion.

⁸⁰John Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893).

⁸¹Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*; John A. Broadus, *Favorite Sermon of John A. Broadus*, ed. Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959); and Roger D. Duke, *John Albert Broadus: Prince of the Pulpit* (Mountain Home, AR: BorderStone Press, 2014).

⁸²The inventory of the collections is available at "John Albert Broadus Collections," James P. Boyce Centennial Library, accessed September 16, 2016, <http://archives.sbts.edu/special-collections/john-albert-broadus-collections/>.

CHAPTER 3

BROADUS AND THE BIBLE

Introduction

In order to gain a proper understanding of Broadus's hermeneutic and his biblical exposition, one must begin with his view of Scripture. As David Dockery argued, "To have an accurate understanding of Broadus's exegetical method and his important and distinctive contributions to biblical exposition in the evangelical tradition, we need to examine his view on the inspiration of the Bible."¹ Broadus's commitment to biblical preaching and his insistence upon using a biblical text as the foundation of the sermon were founded upon his views of biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and authority. However, several scholars have suggested Broadus did not strictly adhere to the inspiration or inerrancy of Scripture, adding to the need to clarify his views concerning Scripture. This chapter will examine Broadus's views of Scripture by investigating the controversy surrounding the teaching of C. H. Toy, the response of John A. Broadus to Toy's views and resignation, and the writings of Broadus in regards to inspiration, inerrancy, and Scripture.

The Toy Controversy

Two movements in the latter part of the nineteenth century presented a significant challenge to Southern Baptists in general, and The Southern Baptist

¹David S. Dockery, "Mighty in the Scriptures: John A. Broadus and His Influence on A. T. Robertson and Southern Baptist Life," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 33.

Theological Seminary in particular. First, the higher critical movement began to gain traction in the United States.² It was during this time that Julius Wellhausen's famous work promoting the documentary hypothesis was published in English.³ The growing influence of higher critical methods and liberal theology during this time period precipitated the fundamentalist-modernist controversy that followed in the early twentieth century, but the early effects of this movement could be felt in the latter portion of the nineteenth century.⁴ Second, naturalistic scientific theories began to appear. Charles Darwin published his infamous *On the Origin of Species* during the second half of this century.⁵ The naturalistic theories called the veracity of the creation account into question and caused many believers to wrestle with the relationship between science and Scripture.

These two movements exerted an enormous amount of influence upon Crawford Howell Toy, a young professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dwight A. Moody observed:

Southern Baptists' theological tradition has been impacted by those twin features of modern thought—literary criticism applied to the Bible and

²For a history of higher criticism and liberal theology's rise in the United States, see Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); and Kenneth Cauthen, *The Impact of American Religious Liberalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962). My attention was drawn to these sources by Gregory Wills. See Gregory Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: 1859-2009* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 199.

³Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1885).

⁴The fundamentalist-modernist controversy began among Presbyterians but quickly spread to other denominations. See Bradley J. Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); D. G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), and George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford, 2006).

⁵Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

evolutionary science. We can't overestimate how greatly these two intellectual forces have altered the way people envision the world, its history and its meaning. Both of these burst on the Southern Baptist scene at about the same time, the last quarter of the last century. Literary criticism of the Bible and evolutionary theories about human origins first entered Southern Baptist theological discourse with Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor, Crawford Toy.⁶

C. H. Toy ultimately embraced higher critical methods and evolutionary theories, which led to his departure from orthodoxy.

Prior to discussing Toy's deviation from orthodoxy and embrace of higher critical methods and evolutionary views, as well as Broadus's response to them, the connection between John Albert Broadus and C. H. Toy must be established.

Broadus and Toy first crossed paths during Toy's studies at the University of Virginia. Toy recalled:

When I went to the University of Virginia, in 1852, he was tutor in Greek, and was regarded as an admirable Greek scholar. He was very kind to me personally (I had a letter of introduction to him), but he left the University before I entered the school of ancient languages, and I did not at that time come under his teaching.⁷

Although Toy did not study under Broadus, he did attend Charlottesville Baptist Church, where John A. Broadus served as pastor from 1851-1859. Toy professed conversion and was baptized by Broadus.⁸ Following his graduation from the University of Virginia, Toy taught at the Abemarle Female Institute in Charlottesville, which was founded by John Broadus.⁹ When Broadus resigned from

⁶Dwight A. Moody, "The Bible," in *Has Our Theology Changed? Southern Baptist Thought Since 1845*, ed. Paul A. Basden (Nashville: B & H, 1994), 30.

⁷This quote is taken from Archibald Thomas Robertson's biography of Broadus. Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1910), 112.

⁸"Crawford H. Toy," *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, ed. William Cathcart (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1881), 1159-61.

⁹Billy Grey Hurt, "Crawford Howell Toy: Interpreter of the Old Testament" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1966), 21.

the church in order to teach at the seminary, Toy affixed his signature to a statement urging Broadus to remain in Charlottesville.¹⁰ Toy would eventually follow Broadus to Greenville and study at the newly founded seminary.¹¹ Broadus delivered the charge at Toy's ordination service.¹² Toy even boarded with Broadus during the spring of 1860.¹³ Broadus was clearly close to Toy, as he later considered himself an "intimate friend" of Toy "from his [Toy's] youth."¹⁴

Following his ordination, Toy spent a year in preparation for missions work in Japan, but the Civil War interrupted his plans to become a missionary. Toy served as a private, and then as a chaplain, in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Following the Civil War, Toy studied "theology with Dorner, Sanskrit with Weber, and Semitics with Roediger and Dieterici" in Berlin, Germany from 1866-1868.¹⁵ Upon returning to the United States, Toy taught Greek at Furman University for a year. After teaching at Furman for one year, he accepted a position at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and taught alongside John Broadus, eventually becoming embroiled in a controversy over biblical inspiration.

¹⁰Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 149.

¹¹Pope A. Duncan, "Crawford Howell Toy (1836-1919)," in *Dictionary of Heresy Trials in American Christianity*, ed. George H. Shriver (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 430-31. Pope wrote, "When the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was founded at Greenville, South Carolina, in 1859, he followed his scholar-pastor, John A. Broadus, to that institution—Broadus as professor and Toy as student."

¹²Pope A. Duncan, "Crawford Howell Toy: Heresy at Louisville," in *American Religious Heretics*, ed. George H. Shriver (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 58.

¹³Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 173. This piece of information is revealed in a letter from Broadus to Miss Cornelia Taliaferro. In the letter, Broadus also praised Toy, writing, "Toy is among the foremost scholars I have ever known of his years, and an uncommonly conscientious and devoted man." J. A. B. to Miss Cornelia Taliaferro, Greenville, South Carolina, March 28, 1860, in Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, 173.

¹⁴John A. Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 262.

¹⁵Pope, "Crawford Howell Toy," 58-59. Dorner, Weber, Roediger, and Dieterici were well-respected scholars in their fields and served as professors at the University of Berlin in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.

Toy was hired to take some of the teaching load off Broadus. Broadus was in poor health in the spring of 1869, so the trustees decided to add “a new professor, Dr. C. H. Toy. . . so that Doctor Broadus could be relieved of homiletics, Doctor Manly taking homiletics and Doctor Toy Old Testament interpretation.”¹⁶ Toy gave an inaugural address, entitled “The Claims of Biblical Interpretation on Baptists,” upon his appointment as professor at the seminary.¹⁷ In the address, Toy seemed to hold an orthodox position concerning biblical inspiration.¹⁸ Whether or not Toy actually held to orthodox views concerning revelation at this point in his life, however, is a point of disagreement among scholars.

Billy Grey Hurt argued Toy held his unorthodox views of inspiration from the beginning, and these views were evident in his address. Hurt wrote, “He expressed the basic ideas in his Inaugural that ten years later were to contribute to his resignation from the Seminary. He expressed belief in the two-fold nature of Scripture, noting that Scriptural truths are to be known fully only when the expositor takes into full consideration the fact that the writers have set forth Scriptural truth clothed in outward fact.”¹⁹ Similarly, Paul House argued Toy held to

¹⁶Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 232.

¹⁷Crawford Howell Toy, *The Claims of Biblical Interpretation on Baptists* (New York: Lange and Hillman, 1869).

¹⁸For instance, he said, “A fundamental principle of our hermeneutics must be that the Bible, its real assertions being known, is in every iota of its substance absolutely and infallibly true.” *Ibid.*, 44. Later, he said, “There are circumstances, perhaps, which make it right that a servant of God should pass by the original utterances of the Holy Spirit, and accept, instead, the translations of men.” *Ibid.*, 56-57. Toy refers to the original manuscripts as containing “the original utterances of the Holy Spirit.” The tone of the address as a whole is one of reverence and respect for the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

¹⁹Hurt, “Crawford Howell Toy,” 125-26. Hurt provides an interesting summary and analysis of Toy’s inaugural lecture, “The Claims of Biblical Interpretation on Baptists,” on pp. 107-26. He suggested the reason Baptists did not react to Toy’s views was five-fold: (1) Toy gave no evidence of a radical departure from generally-held concepts, (2) Toy’s address evidenced sound scholarship, (3) Toy identified the historico-grammatical method of interpretation employed by biblical critics with the type of exegesis done by Sunday school teachers, (4) Toy’s address was somewhat ambiguous, and (5) Toy contributed to Baptist thought.

a dualistic view of Scripture from the outset, as evidenced in his inaugural address.²⁰ Hurt argued the unorthodox views were actually present, whereas House argued the methodology that led to unorthodox views was present.

Broadus, in contrast to Hurt and House, believed the views developed after Toy began teaching at the seminary. In his memoir of Boyce, Broadus provided a brief historical sketch of Toy's transition to unorthodoxy. He recounted:

During his first years as professor in Greenville, he made earnest attempts, upon one or another line of theory, to reconcile the existing views of geology and astronomy with Old Testament statements, and afterwards to bring the tenth chapter of Genesis into harmony with the current ethnological views. None of these attempts were entirely satisfactory to his own mind. . . . About that time appeared the most important works of Darwin, and Dr. Toy became a pronounced evolutionist and Darwinian, giving once a popular lecture in Greenville to interpret and advocate Darwin's views of the origin of man. About the same time he became acquainted with Kuenen's works on the Old Testament, presenting the now well-known evolutionist reconstruction of the history of Israel, and relocation of the leading Old Testament documents. These works, and kindred materials coming from Wellhausen and others in Germany, profoundly interested Dr. Toy. They reconciled Old Testament history with the evolutionary principles to which he had become attached in the study of Herbert Spencer and Darwin. If the Darwinian theory of the origin of man has been accepted, then it becomes easy to conclude that the first chapter of Genesis is by no means true history. From this starting-point, and pressed by a desire to reconstruct the history on evolutionary principles, one might easily persuade himself that in numerous other cases of apparent conflict between Old Testament statements and the accredited results of various sciences that conflict is real, and the Old Testament account is incorrect.²¹

Broadus viewed Toy's embrace of Darwin's theory of evolution and Kuenen's reconstruction of Israel's history as the impetus for his departure from orthodoxy, and he claimed Toy embraced these views after he began to teach at the seminary. Similarly, Bush and Nettles argued Toy approved the "full inspiration of the biblical text and infallibility" based on his comments in his inaugural address, meaning he

²⁰Paul R. House, "Crawford Howell Toy and the Weight of Hermeneutics," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3 (Spring 1999): 28-38.

²¹Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 260-61.

deviated from orthodoxy after delivering the address.²² Toy himself, in his resignation letter, admitted his “divergence from the prevailing views of the denomination” in regards to inspiration “gradually increased in connection with my studies, from year to year, till it has become perceptible to myself and others.”²³ This statement aligns with Broadus’s statements and seems to indicate his positions were orthodox when he became professor of Old Testament Interpretation but began to shift after personal study.

Regardless of when Toy began to embrace unorthodox views concerning the inspiration of Scripture, he clearly began teaching them by the fall of 1876. George William Gardner, a student at the seminary, took notes of Toy’s lectures on the Old Testament during the fall.²⁴ From the content of the lectures, Toy’s movement away from his earlier statements concerning the “infallibly true” Scriptures is evident. He suggested the first two chapters of Genesis provided separate and contradictory creation accounts. He believed Abraham was taught “monotheism from some existing human source in Chaldea.”²⁵ He rejected the view that Isaiah was the sole author of the book bearing his name, as well as rejecting the historical prophet Daniel as the author of the book of Daniel. His use of higher-critical methodology had led Toy to discover “discrepancies and inaccuracies” in historical accounts. Toy did not see this as a problem, though. The existence of

²²L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 1999), 213.

²³Crawford Howell Toy, “Letter of Resignation to the Board of Trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,” in Pope, “Crawford Howell Toy: Heresy at Louisville,” 79.

²⁴The lecture notes are housed in the Roberts Library at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

²⁵Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 211. Bush and Nettles provide an excellent analysis of Toy’s views as revealed in his lectures on Old Testament interpretation. See 209-12.

discrepancies and inaccuracies “does not even invalidate the documents as historical records, much less does it affect them as expressions of religious truths.”²⁶

According to Broadus, the other professors became aware of Toy’s views concerning the inspiration and accuracy of Scripture “near the end of the Seminary’s first session at Louisville.”²⁷ It is clear from his personal correspondence, however, that Broadus and Boyce had been concerned about Toy’s views for some time. Boyce wrote a letter to Broadus on June 20, 1876, in which he said, “In a postscript to a letter to Toy I broke into a gentle remonstrance and earnest entreaty on inspiration.”²⁸ The full scope of Toy’s views may not have been understood at this time, but “by inquiry of him, it was learned that he had gone very far in the adoption and varied application of the evolutionary theories above indicated.”²⁹ Broadus recalled Boyce’s early and earnest opposition to Toy’s views. Boyce knew Toy could not continue to teach his views without violating “the aims and objects of the seminary, and giving the gravest offence to its supporters in general. . . . From the first he saw all this clearly, and felt it deeply.”³⁰ At Boyce’s direction, Broadus attempted to intervene and influence Toy. Broadus stated:

Anxious to avoid anything that might look like an official inquisition, he laid these convictions before Dr. Toy through a colleague who had been the latter’s intimate friend from his youth. Dr. Toy was fully convinced that the views he had adopted were correct, and would, by removing many intellectual difficulties, greatly promote faith in the Scriptures. Besides opposing that opinion, it was urged upon his consideration that these ideas could not be taught in the Seminary, and moreover that the great majority of the students were quite unprepared for fitting examination of such theoretical inquiries, and

²⁶Toy, “Letter of Resignation.”

²⁷Broadus, *Memoir of James P. Boyce*, 261.

²⁸Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, 301.

²⁹Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 261.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 261-62.

needed to be instructed in the Old Testament history as it stands. He was entreated to let those theoretical questions alone, and teach the students what they needed. . . . It was fondly hoped by his colleagues that in quietly pursuing such a course he might ultimately break away from the dominion of destructive theories.³¹

Toy initially attempted to avoid teaching his views, but he “found it impossible to leave out those inquiries, or abstain from teaching the opinions he held.”³²

Therefore, Toy tendered his resignation to the trustees of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in May of 1879.

In his resignation letter, which Wills suggested was more of “an essay consisting of an extended defense of his views on inspiration,” Toy affirmed “the fact of Divine Inspiration,” but argued the Scriptures themselves “say nothing of the manner of its action.”³³ He went on to write:

As nothing is said of the mode of operation of the Divine Spirit, of the manner in which the divine saving truth is impressed on the mind, of the relation of the divine influence to the ordinary workings of the human intellect, we must, as to these points, consult the books of the Bible themselves and examine the facts. Against facts, no theory can stand, and I prefer, therefore, to have no theory, but submit myself to the guidance of the actual words of Holy Scripture.³⁴

As Wills noted, Toy seemed to miss the point of contention. Protestants were less concerned with the means of inspiration than they were with the results of inspiration. They were more concerned with what inspiration produced than they were with how inspiration worked. The end result of inspiration, a true and reliable text, was more important than the process of inspiration, whatever theory one may espouse. As Wills explained, “The traditional Protestant theory of inspiration, the

³¹Broadus, *Memoir of James P. Boyce*, 262.

³²Ibid.

³³Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 129; Toy, “Letter of Resignation.”

³⁴Pope, “Crawford Howell Toy.”

plenary verbal view, was concerned chiefly with the results of inspiration, not the manner of it.”³⁵ In other words:

The scripture was so inspired throughout that its every part and its every word, though written by human authors, was precisely what the Holy Spirit intended. The resulting Bible was therefore God’s very word, not in a general or spiritual sense only but also in its specific and historical statements.³⁶

Toy’s view was clearly in conflict with the traditional Protestant view of inspiration. Toy believed the authors were inspired with spiritual truth, but each author wrapped this spiritual truth in “his own language” and in “his own age.”³⁷ The result was a Bible with scientific and historical inaccuracies and discrepancies, which Toy believed was inconsequential, since “historical science” and “geological science” were both “outside of the domain of religion.”³⁸

Toy was convinced his views would assist believers, as he told Broadus prior to his resignation and as he reiterated to the trustees.³⁹ The majority of Southern Baptists, however, disagreed with Toy’s views, and the trustees believed Toy’s views were dangerous. Therefore, they overwhelmingly accepted his resignation. Toy would eventually go on to serve as Hancock Professor of Hebrew and other Oriental Languages and Dexter Lecturer on Biblical History at Harvard University, but his time at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary had officially ended.⁴⁰

³⁵Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 129.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Toy, “Letter of Resignation.”

³⁸Ibid., 82.

³⁹Broadus wrote that Toy was convinced his views “would promote truth and piety.” Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 262. In his resignation letter, Toy wrote that his views would be “helpful for Bible study” and would “bring aid and firm standing-ground to many a perplexed mind and establish the truth of God on a firm foundation.” Toy, “Letter of Resignation.”

⁴⁰David G. Lyon, “Crawford Howell Toy,” *Harvard Theological Review* 13 (January 1920):

In Response to the Toy Controversy

The faculty was saddened by the departure of Toy. Broadus wrote to his wife, “Alas! the mournful deed is done. Toy’s resignation is accepted. He is no longer professor in the seminary. . . . Poor bereaved three; we have lost our jewel of learning, our beloved and noble brother, the pride of the Seminary.”⁴¹ When Toy was leaving Louisville, Boyce threw his arm around Toy’s neck and said, “Oh, Toy, I would freely give that arm to be cut off if you could be where you were five years ago, and stay there.”⁴² Their response to Toy’s resignation reveals they cared deeply for him and felt genuine grief and sorrow over losing him.

The response of the faculty in general, and Broadus in particular, should not be interpreted as sympathy for Toy’s views. Broadus’s sorrow over Toy’s resignation was due to his long-standing relationship with Toy; it was not due to any sympathy he shared with Toy’s theological views. Broadus was obviously saddened by Toy’s departure from Southern, but he firmly believed Toy’s views were dangerous and attempted to refute them publicly. Following Toy’s resignation, Broadus and Boyce were slow to speak on the issue of inspiration because “they felt some delicacy about criticizing their friend in public.”⁴³ After several years, however,

13. Lyon’s article provides a brief but thorough synopsis of Toy’s life, including his career at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Harvard University. Interestingly, Toy’s views continued to change and develop after leaving The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Bush and Nettles wrote, “Once Toy had concluded that personal spiritual insight was finally more authoritative than the written words of Scripture, he rapidly found his insight leading him to find more and more errors in the Bible. From matters of science and history he began to move toward the rejection of theological concepts as well.” Bush and Nettles, *Baptists and the Bible*, 218. Further, Wills noted Toy joined a Unitarian church and may have moved beyond theism by embracing philosophical pragmatism. Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 132-33. In the end, the decision of the trustees to accept Toy’s resignation was vindicated by his departure from orthodoxy, from the Baptist tradition, and from (potentially) theism altogether.

⁴¹Robertson, *Life and Letters*, 313.

⁴²Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce*, 265.

⁴³Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 138.

they began to speak openly about their views of inspiration and to refute those who denied inspiration or an inerrant Bible.

In 1883, Broadus preached a sermon at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention titled “Three Questions as to the Bible,” in which he defended the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.⁴⁴ Interestingly, the sermon contained an explanation of the apostle Paul’s statements concerning baptism in 1 Corinthians, a passage to which Toy referred in his resignation letter. Toy pointed to Paul’s statements in 1 Corinthians 1 to emphasize the human nature of Scripture and the role of the personality of the human author in inspiration. He wrote:

In illustration of what I mean, I refer to 1 Corinthians i.14, 15, where Paul first says he had baptized nobody at Corinth but Crispus and Gaius; then, a while after, remembering himself, adds, that he had baptized also the household of Stephanus; and finally, coming to doubt his memory, declares that he doesn’t know whether he had baptized any other person. Here, if we indulge in arithmetical criticism, is a flat contradiction, but if we see simply the free play of the writer’s mind, under the ordinary conditions of human thought, there is no difficulty.⁴⁵

Toy’s statements downplayed the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration and cast suspicion on the reliability of Scripture. In his sermon, Broadus countered this argument by writing that Paul’s “very care in here saying that he does not certainly remember would give us all the greater confidence in the statements he makes without hesitation.”⁴⁶ He went on to say, “And must a man remember everything and know everything, in order that the particular things which he states may be true? Does inspiration demand omniscience?”⁴⁷ Citing Mark 13:32, Broadus

⁴⁴The sermon was eventually published as John A. Broadus, *Three Questions as to the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1883).

⁴⁵Toy, “Letter of Resignation.”

⁴⁶Broadus, *Three Questions*, 30.

⁴⁷Ibid.

argued Jesus did not know the day or hour of his return “in his human nature,” and asked, “Will any Christian infer that things which he did know and has stated are mixed with error? Then the same applies to what Paul has said.”⁴⁸ It is likely Broadus had Toy’s argument in mind when he developed this section of the sermon and intended to refute his argument.

In 1887, Broadus preached a sermon entitled “The Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible.”⁴⁹ In this sermon, Broadus once again affirmed the full inspiration of Scripture and the complete truthfulness of Scripture. He stated that whatever the Bible “undertakes to teach, its teachings are true,” and “whatever it intends to teach, that is paramount in authority.”⁵⁰ While dealing with the idea of progress, Broadus discussed the theory of evolution, which had been the impetus for Toy’s departure of orthodoxy. He said, “I do not know how much to believe about it. I am waiting for evolution to evolve itself. Let us not be over hasty to reconcile the Bible with the present theories of evolution.”⁵¹ Again, Broadus showed the soundness of his orthodoxy and revealed the distance between himself and Toy.

In 1892, Broadus published his *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.⁵² The third lesson in the catechism focused on Scripture as the Word of God. Unlike Toy, Broadus argued all of Scripture was inspired by God, which resulted in an error-free Bible. Toy taught the Bible contained contradictory statements and that historical

⁴⁸Broadus, *Three Questions*, 30.

⁴⁹This sermon was published as John A. Broadus, *The Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, n. d.).

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 1.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁵²John A. Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892).

and scientific statements in Scripture were often wrong. In the catechism, Broadus challenged both of these notions. First, in reference to apparent discrepancies between the biblical authors, Broadus wrote, “Most cases of apparent disagreement in the inspired writings have been explained, and we may be sure that all could be explained if we had fuller information.”⁵³ Therefore, every apparent disagreement has been explained or could be explained if more information was available. Second, in regards to the accuracy of historical and scientific statements, Broadus contended, “Some cases of apparent conflict with history or science have been explained quite recently that were long hard to understand,” and affirmed that those apparent conflicts which had not been explained could be explained if more information was available.⁵⁴ Based on the catechism alone, it is clear Broadus was not sympathetic with Toy’s views and was sound in regards to the doctrine of inspiration.

In addition to speaking and writing about the doctrine of inspiration, Boyce and Broadus sought to hire faculty members who affirmed the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Broadus asked Toy for a list of former students who had excelled in their studies of the Old Testament, hoping to find a replacement. Boyce was initially hesitant to hire any of the men Toy recommended due to Toy’s views of Scripture, but he eventually asked Broadus to find out what the men recommended by Toy believed concerning biblical inspiration.⁵⁵ E. C. Dargan, the eventual successor of Broadus, was one of the men Toy recommended. Broadus only “wanted to know two things about alumnus Edwin C. Dargan to judge his fitness for joining the faculty—his pursuit of scholarship since graduation, and whether his ‘belief in

⁵³Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵For a more detailed analysis of the process of replacing Toy, see Thomas J. Nettles, *James Petigru Boyce: A Southern Statesman* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009): 375-83.

inspiration has become in any respect relaxed.”⁵⁶ The emphasis placed on hiring faculty members who affirmed inspiration reveals Boyce and Broadus were not favorably inclined towards Toy’s views. Further, it shows they viewed Toy’s views as dangerous and sought to prevent their students from being exposed to such views.

Broadus and the Bible

As the Toy controversy reveals, Broadus was quite familiar with the higher critical views being promoted in Germany and introduced in America during the mid-to-late nineteenth century.⁵⁷ Additionally, he was familiar with the impact of these views on the doctrine of inspiration. Nevertheless, Broadus held the Scriptures in highest regard throughout his ministry. He remained committed to an orthodox view of Scripture, affirming the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture with unwavering resolve, although this view is not without its detractors.

Several scholars have suggested Broadus was not a staunch defender of inspiration or inerrancy. Thomas McKibbens noted Broadus “lived in a new era” when “biblical criticism had spread from Germany to America, terrifying many Baptists.”⁵⁸ He continued:

Afraid that the foundations of their religious experience were crumbling beneath them, some Baptist preachers moved subtly to take away the Bible as *source of truth* and to set up the Bible as *object of faith*. The mood was shifting from the free proclamation of truth to the fearful defense of truth. Some began to substitute preaching *from* the Bible with preaching *about* the Bible. The

⁵⁶Wills, *Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*, 141.

⁵⁷In his sermon “Three Questions as to the Bible,” Broadus traced the critical attacks on Scripture to Germany. He stated, “About fifty years ago, German infidelity began to spread in England and America, attacking the Bible partly by philosophy, and partly by philological and historical criticism. And it is this, in one form or another, which we have to encounter to-day.” Broadus, *Three Questions*, 17.

⁵⁸Thomas McKibbens, “John A. Broadus: Shaper of Baptist Preaching,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 40, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 22.

result was a new direction of faith: what one said about the Bible was becoming more important than what one experienced of Christ.

Baptists needed someone to steer them into a new day. He would have to earn the confidence of the very people who were most afraid of biblical scholarship. At the same time, he must rise to a position of respect among the leading biblical scholars of the theological world. Broadus stood between both worlds and spoke eloquently to each. With mind and heart all aglow, he showed through his life and preaching that intellectual rigor and evangelistic warmth could be woven out of the same cloth.

Broadus was less concerned that preachers teach a system of doctrines than that they proclaim the experience of Christ. Experience was to precede doctrine; only then could doctrine make sense and be held with conviction.⁵⁹

McKibbens did not explicitly state that Broadus did not follow the Baptist preachers who “set up the Bible as *object of faith*” and preached “*about* the Bible” rather than “*from* the Bible,” but he certainly implied Broadus was not in that category. Further, he argued that Broadus valued experience over doctrine, which would include the doctrine of Scripture. The whole tenor of McKibbens’ article seemed to suggest Broadus should be viewed as a moderate Baptist who valued experiencing Christ over doctrine and Scripture.⁶⁰

Raymond Bailey, like McKibbens, did not believe Broadus held to a high view of Scripture. He suggested Broadus “was not preoccupied with notions of inerrancy, acknowledging that the words of Scripture ‘often differ very widely from what the same words would mean in writing of today.’”⁶¹ He continued,

⁵⁹McKibbens, “John A. Broadus,” 22.

⁶⁰Ironically, Broadus emphasized the importance of doctrine and doctrinal preaching in his homiletical textbook. In his section on preaching doctrinal subjects, he declared, “Doctrine, i.e. teaching, is the preacher’s chief business. Truth is the life-blood of piety, without which we cannot maintain its vitality or support its activity. And to teach men truth, or to quicken what they already know into freshness and power, is the preacher’s great means of doing good.” Broadus, *A Treatise*, 68. This is not to suggest Broadus did not emphasize the centrality of the gospel or the necessity of experiencing Christ, but it should cause one to be hesitant to view Broadus as lax in regard to the importance of doctrine and doctrinal preaching.

⁶¹Raymond H. Bailey, “John A. Broadus: Man of Letters and Preacher Extraordinaire,” *Preaching* (November-December 1993): 59.

“Nonetheless, he began with the sense of grammar and a presumption of historicity unless mitigating factors were present.”⁶² Based on Bailey’s statements, one might conclude that Broadus did not affirm inerrancy and would have rejected the historicity of a biblical narrative if “mitigating factors were present.” These conclusions do not correspond to reality, as Broadus affirmed inerrancy and defended Scripture from higher critics, who attempted to deny the historicity of biblical narratives or the supernatural elements of Scripture.

Others have been even more outspoken concerning Broadus’s orthodoxy. Albert Henry Newman placed Broadus in an “intermediate position” between conservatism and modernist thought. He remarked that Broadus “combined in a remarkable degree deep devoutness and spirituality with interest in the critical work of German scholars.”⁶³ He continued, “While he warned his students against accepting the more radical results of the so-called higher criticism, he did not, so far as the writer is informed, denounce Biblical criticism as a wicked impertinence.”⁶⁴ Newman also suggested Broadus moved from conservatism towards more modernist views and influenced others to do the same. He noted that “the present faculty” of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary “were trained by Broadus” and were “conducting the institution in his spirit,” resulting in the seminary professors, the preachers who studied at the seminary, and the Southeast in general “becoming gradually assimilated in thought and attitude to the Northeast, though still distinctly more conservative.”⁶⁵ This “thought and attitude of the Northeast” was displayed in

⁶²Bailey, “John A. Broadus,” 59.

⁶³Albert Henry Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, 6th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 518.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 519.

“the older theological seminaries” of the North, which were filled with professors who were “outspoken in their acceptance of modernistic views of the Bible and of the evolutionistic philosophy.” Further, not a single “one of them. . . has among its professors a stalwart and aggressive advocate of the older conservatism.”⁶⁶ It was in this direction that Broadus was said to have moved the seminary, which suggests Broadus was favorably inclined to modernistic views of the Bible and evolutionary philosophy, although still more conservative than most seminaries and professors in the Northeast.

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark were even more direct in their assessment of Broadus. They described Broadus as an opponent of orthodoxy who was enamored with biblical criticism. They wrote, “Broadus was extremely impressed with the application of critical methods to biblical studies that was going on in European universities, especially in Germany.”⁶⁷ Broadus never studied in Germany, but his colleagues Crawford H. Toy and William H. Whitsitt had earned doctorates in Germany. For this reason, Finke and Stark concluded Toy and Whitsitt were each “an even more ardent opponent than Broadus of orthodoxy.”⁶⁸ In their view, Broadus was an opponent of orthodoxy, although to a lesser degree than Toy or Whitsitt.

Based on the statements of McKibbens, Bailey, Newman, and Finke and Stark, one would naturally conclude Broadus was not a defender of orthodoxy. Broadus was portrayed as a moderate who valued experiencing Christ over doctrinal truth, minimized inerrancy, embraced German criticism and evolutionary thought, and opposed orthodoxy. Why did McKibbens, Bailey, Newman, and Finke and Stark

⁶⁶Newman, *A History*, 518.

⁶⁷Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 179.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

claim his views of Scripture were less than orthodox? No defense is given for these claims, but they might have drawn these conclusions for a variety of reasons. One possible reason is Broadus's use of textual criticism in his commentaries. In the preface to his commentary on Matthew, Broadus wrote, "In all such cases of uncertainty about the Greek text, as would affect the translation or interpretation, I have intended to state the preferable reading with a confidence varying according to the evidence."⁶⁹ Throughout the commentary, he presented the evidence for the preferred text in the footnotes for "persons acquainted with text-criticism" and "other readers who feel curiosity in regard to the subject."⁷⁰ He even expressed his agreement with many of Westcott and Hort's conclusions, writing, "The general contributions to text-criticism made by Westcott and Hort are invaluable, and most of their judgments as to particular passages seem to me correct."⁷¹ He did not blindly accept their conclusions, though, as "in a number of cases" Broadus "felt bound to dissent, and to give the reasons as fully and strongly as the character and limits of this work allowed."⁷² Nevertheless, his employment of text-critical methods may have caused them to conclude he was an advocate of more highly critical forms of biblical criticism.

A careful reading of his commentary and other writings dispels the notion that Broadus blindly accepted highly critical forms of biblical criticism. His commitment to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture governed his use of text criticism and guarded him against arriving at unorthodox conclusions. He was aware

⁶⁹John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), xviii-xlix.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

of the tendency to view text criticism in a negative light, but he insisted it was not a threat to faith or orthodoxy. He wrote:

The solicitude, and even alarm, which some persons feel in regard to the encroachments of text-criticism, must be regarded as without cause. Instead of shaking faith in the Scriptures, these researches will ultimately strengthen faith. When the shock of abandoning a familiar expression has passed, one almost invariably begins to see that the true text is best. The general teachings of the New Testament as to doctrine and duty are now known to be established independently of all passages that contain doubtful readings.⁷³

Broadus believed the proper employment of text criticism strengthened faith and did not pose a threat to embracing the doctrines and duties contained in Scripture. It is a major stretch to conclude from his felicitous use of text criticism that Broadus advocated highly critical forms of biblical criticism and held to unorthodox views of Scripture.⁷⁴

Another possible reason for drawing the conclusion that Broadus held to a less-than-orthodox view of Scripture was his refusal to speculate as to the means of inspiration. Broadus was clear that he believed Scripture was inspired and that the results of inspiration were a true text without errors, but he did not defend any particular theory of inspiration. In his sermon *Three Questions as to the Bible*, he said, "I do not think it necessary to insist on any particular theory as to the nature and *modus operandi* of inspiration, and am not sure that it is wise to formulate any theory on that subject."⁷⁵ This statement, viewed in isolation, may have caused some

⁷³Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, xlix.

⁷⁴Broadus himself believed text criticism was grounded in a high view of Scripture and could be advocated by those who embraced biblical inspiration. He wrote, "We ought to be diligent in ascertaining the real text of Scripture. The highest views of Inspiration should lead to the greatest zeal for Text-criticism. Those who regard the sacred writings as thoroughly inspired should be deeply solicitous to learn what the inspired men actually wrote. . . . Let text-criticism go forward, as to the New Testament and the Old Testament, with the good wishes of all who care for the Bible, and with the special and hearty support of all who believe the Bible to be inspired." Broadus, *Three Questions*, 58-60.

⁷⁵Broadus, *Three Questions*, 26.

to doubt Broadus's commitment to an orthodox view of Scripture. The context of the quote makes it clear Broadus was not denying inspiration. He was not expressing doubt over the fact of inspiration. He firmly believed the Scriptures were inspired, as the rest of the sermon makes abundantly clear. Rather, he was refusing to speculate about the "mode of the fact."⁷⁶

Regardless of the reason for the conclusion, anyone who has argued Broadus did not affirm the inspiration, inerrancy, or authority of the Bible has missed the heart of Broadus. A close examination of Broadus's writings and sermons reveals a different picture than the one portrayed by these authors. Broadus was not sympathetic with Toy's views and held Scripture in the highest regard. He affirmed the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Scriptures and was a staunch defender of orthodoxy. The remainder of this section will defend the claim that Broadus believed the Scriptures were inspired by God, free from error, and authoritative in the life of believers and in the governance of Christ's church.

Broadus and Inspiration

Some of Broadus's most direct statements on the issue of inspiration are found in "Three Questions as to the Bible," a sermon preached at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1883. In the sermon, Broadus attempted to address questions surrounding the doctrine of inspiration. He saw the "fierce critical attacks upon the Old Testament" and the "general hostility to the supernatural" as "a denial of the full inspiration of Scripture."⁷⁷ In response, Broadus asked and answered three questions concerning the inspiration of Scripture. First, Broadus

⁷⁶Broadus, *Three Questions*, 26.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 9.

asked, “What writings are properly included in the Christian Scriptures?” He referenced 2 Timothy 3:16 and explained the “Scriptures” in that text referred to the Old Testament. Then, he stated that Jesus spoke of the Scriptures as “possessing divine authority” and used the term “in a technical sense” to refer to “some recognized body of writings.”⁷⁸ The Jews during Jesus’ time, and presumably Jesus, “understood the Scripture or the Scriptures to mean precisely our books of the Hebrew Old Testament.”⁷⁹ Based on Jesus’s affirmation of the divine authority of Scripture, the Hebrew Old Testament should legitimately be viewed as inspired Scripture. Broadus also affirmed the canonicity of the New Testament, arguing believers need to trust the testimony of early Christians and the expertise of scholars in discerning the apostolic origin of the New Testament. Therefore, the answer to Broadus’s first question is, “The Old and New Testaments are properly included in the Christian Scriptures.”

Second, Broadus asked, “To what extent are we to regard the Bible as Inspired?” Broadus began by affirming commonly agreed upon truths to defend the complete inspiration of Scripture. First, he stated “God speaks to us” through the Scriptures, which was “agreed upon by all those with whom we are concerned.”⁸⁰ Second, he stated that “God here speaks through men,” which was “also agreed” upon by those with whom Broadus was concerned.⁸¹ Broadus made sure to clarify this statement regarding the humanity of Scripture, writing, “The Scripture writings are thoroughly human. This is not saying that they are only human.”⁸² True, said

⁷⁸Broadus, *Three Questions*, 13.

⁷⁹Ibid., 14.

⁸⁰Ibid., 23.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., 24.

Broadus, the Scriptures are human, but they are not merely human. God was speaking through human authors to communicate divine truth. Broadus used the deity and humanity of Jesus as an analogy to defend the human and divine nature of Scripture. Then, Broadus asked this rhetorical question:

“It being agreed, then, that these Scripture speakers and writers speak to us for God, that he speaks to us in them, must we not suppose, must we not take for granted, unless the contrary appear, that they have said just what God wished them to say, that whatever they have really said is true?”⁸³

The logical answer to the question is, “Yes, one must take for granted the biblical authors said exactly what God wished for them to say unless the contrary appears.” Broadus believed the Scripture writers recorded exactly what God wanted them to record and affirmed inspiration.

Further, Broadus affirmed the full inspiration of Scripture. He explicitly stated, “The essential point is the fact that the Scriptures are fully inspired, and speak truly throughout.”⁸⁴ Broadus clearly stated that all of Scripture was inspired in the sermon and left his hearers with no doubt as to where he stood in regards to the scope of divine inspiration. The extent of inspiration was complete in scope, covering the entire canon of Christian Scripture. Later, he warned against limiting inspiration to certain sections of Scripture. He asked, “If we assume that the inspiration of the Bible is only partial, where are we to stop?”⁸⁵ Once a person admits errors in Scripture, he “must then select *ad libitum* what portions of the Bible’s teachings he will accept as true.”⁸⁶ The result is the devaluation of the authority of

⁸³Broadus, *Three Questions*, 25-26.

⁸⁴Ibid., 26.

⁸⁵Ibid., 56.

⁸⁶Ibid., 57.

Scripture and the elevation of human reason to a place of authority as the reader attempts to discern which passages are inspired and which are not. Broadus warned his hearers of partial inspiration and encouraged them to embrace the full inspiration of Scripture.

While Broadus affirmed inspiration, he refused to speculate about theories of inspiration. He declared, “I do not think it necessary to insist on any particular theory as to the nature and *modus operandi* of inspiration, and am not sure that it is wise to formulate any theory on that subject.”⁸⁷ The fact of inspiration was more important than the method of inspiration in Broadus’s thought. This statement may have caused some later writers to question Broadus’s views of inspiration, but the sermon as a whole demonstrated Broadus’s belief in the full inspiration of Scripture.

Third, Broadus asked, “How ought the inspired writings to be treated by us?”⁸⁸ Because Broadus believed the Old Testament and New Testament constituted Scripture and were inspired in their entirety, Broadus urged believers to “ascertain the real text” of Scripture, acquire “the best possible translations” of Scripture, “personally...study” Scripture, “teach Bible truth to others,” and live out “the Bible in our individual lives.”⁸⁹ Of particular interest is Broadus’s section on teaching the truth of Scripture to others. Because Scripture is inspired and true in all it affirms, preachers have a responsibility to infuse “Scripture thought” in their sermons and “make them chiefly the development and application of Scripture ideas.”⁹⁰ Thus, a clear connection between inspiration and preaching existed in Broadus’s thought.

⁸⁷Broadus, *Three Questions*, 26.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 58.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 58-67.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 63.

Based on this sermon, it is hard to argue Broadus rejected the full inspiration of Scripture or minimized its importance for preaching.

Another work that clearly revealed Broadus's view of inspiration is the catechism he developed for children. It is worth noting the catechism was one of the last things Broadus wrote, which indicates Broadus did not change his views from the time of the Toy controversy up to the time of the writing of the catechism. The third lesson of the catechism focused on the Word of God, or Scripture. In the second section of the lesson, "Inspiration and Authority of the Bible," Broadus asked, "Were the books of the Bible written by men?"⁹¹ He acknowledged men had written the Bible, but added, "These men were moved and guided by the Holy Spirit."⁹² He referenced 2 Peter 1:21 and 1 Corinthians 14:37 to defend the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration. In the first section of his lesson on the Word of God, Broadus had identified the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as Scripture, so Broadus's statements regarding the movement and guidance of the Holy Spirit upon the biblical authors should be understood to extend to the authors of all sixty-six books that constitute the Bible.

Broadus did not specifically address the inspiration of the New Testament in the catechism, but he did explicitly affirm the inspiration of the Old Testament. He asked, "What special proof have we that the entire Old Testament is inspired?"⁹³ He provided an answer similar to the one given in his annual convention sermon. He responded, "Christ and His apostles speak of "Scripture" or "the Scriptures," as inspired by God, and we know that they meant exactly what we call the Old

⁹¹Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

Testament.”⁹⁴ Those who regard the Old Testament as inspired by God are in good company, as Jesus and the apostles affirmed the inspiration of Scripture. Later, Broadus asked, “What great help must we all seek in studying the Bible?”⁹⁵ He answered, “We must pray that the Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible will help us to understand it.”⁹⁶ Broadus again affirmed the divine inspiration of Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to inspiration.

Throughout the catechism, Broadus referred to the biblical authors as the “inspired writers” of Scripture. He asked if the “inspired writers” received everything by direct revelation and responded that the “inspired writer” learned much “by observation or inquiry.”⁹⁷ He asked how Christians should respond when the “inspired writers” seemed to disagree in their statements and replied that any apparent conflicts in the “inspired writings” had been explained or could be explained if more information existed.⁹⁸ Note Broadus labeled the books of the Bible as “inspired writings,” which means the result of the inspiration of the biblical authors was the inspiration of the biblical text. Broadus asked if anyone had proved the “inspired writers” stated something untrue, to which he answered that no proof existed that the “inspired writers” had “made any mistake of any kind.”⁹⁹ A careful look at the catechism reveals Broadus believed the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors to record the exact words God intended, with the result that the Scriptures themselves were to be considered “inspired writings.”

⁹⁴Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

In addition to his convention sermon and his catechism, Broadus affirmed inspiration throughout his writings and sermons. In his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Broadus defended the complete inspiration of Scripture. Commenting on Matthew 3:17, Broadus contended the difference in wording as recorded by the writers of the Gospels actually confirms “the authenticity of the narrative,” since such variances “always occur in the independent testimony of different witnesses.”¹⁰⁰

Then, he wrote:

As to the complete inspiration of the Scriptures, we must accept it as one of the facts of the case that the inspired writers not unfrequently report merely the substance of what was said, without aiming to give the exact words. . . . While such facts as those should make us cautious in theorizing as to verbal inspiration, they do not require us to lay aside the belief that the inspiration of Scripture is complete, that the inspired writers have everywhere told us just what God would have us know.¹⁰¹

Again, Broadus was hesitant to speculate concerning theories of inspiration, but he considered the Scriptures completely inspired, so that the words recorded by the biblical authors are “just what God would have us know.”

Later, in his comments on Matthew 9, he affirmed inspiration and asserted that “every part of the Bible bears the impress of human thinking, only preserved by the Spirit from error and guided into all truth, so that the inspired writer says precisely what God would have him say.”¹⁰² Commenting on Matthew 10:20, Broadus explained the passage included a promise of inspiration reserved exclusively for the apostles and concluded, “This promise of inspiration was repeated by our Lord in the promise of the Comforter (John ch. 14 to 16); and that assures us that in

¹⁰⁰Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 58.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid., 195.

their writings also the apostles were inspired.”¹⁰³ Broadus considered Isaiah’s writings as inspired, as well as the writings of the Psalmists.¹⁰⁴ Throughout the commentary, Broadus referred to the inspired writers, the inspired writings, and the complete inspiration of Scripture, leaving no doubt he was an advocate of biblical inspiration.

Broadus also affirmed inspiration in various sermons. At the beginning of the sermon “Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible,” Broadus emphasized the need for an “agreed upon. . . starting point.”¹⁰⁵ This starting point was the inspiration of Scripture. He said, “Now, I address myself to people who believe that the Bible is the word of God; not merely that it *contains* the word of God, which wise persons may disentangle from other things in the book, but that it *is* the word of God.”¹⁰⁶ He did not try to argue with those who rejected the inspiration of Scripture but simply assumed inspiration and taught from that position. In another sermon, titled “The Holy Scriptures,” Broadus countered those who found no value in Scripture by pointing to the views of Jesus, “the founder of Christianity,” and the “inspired Apostles.”¹⁰⁷ Jesus and the apostles “declared that the Scripture cannot be broken” and “that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”¹⁰⁸ The implication was that his listeners should embrace the inspiration and profitability of Scripture because Jesus and the apostles taught these truths.

¹⁰³Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 226.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 289 and 574.

¹⁰⁵ Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority*, 1.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), 158.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

Broadus and Inerrancy

Broadus strongly affirmed inspiration, but he was no less committed to the inerrancy of Scripture. Although the term “inerrancy” was not in widespread use during Broadus’s lifetime, the truth which the phrase designates existed and was defended by Broadus. In his sermon “Three Questions as to the Bible,” Broadus advanced the view that Scripture is true and contains no errors. He argued that since the “Scripture speakers and writers speak for God,” it is natural to “suppose...they have said just what God wished them to say” and that “whatever they have really said is really true.”¹⁰⁹ Further, he argued that whatever they said should be held “to be true, thoroughly true, not only in substance but in statement.”¹¹⁰ Broadus was not only affirming the complete inspiration of Scripture, he was affirming the complete inerrancy of Scripture. Scripture was “true, thoroughly true” in all of its statements. He also said the Scriptures “speak truly throughout,” again emphasizing the complete truthfulness of Scripture.¹¹¹

The catechism Broadus developed also explicitly taught the inerrancy of Scripture. In the section on the “Inspiration and Authority of the Bible,” Broadus asked, “Does the Bible contain any errors,” to which he responded, “The Bible records some things said by uninspired men that were not true; but it is true and instructive that these men said them.”¹¹² In the “Advanced Questions” portion of the catechism, Broadus was even more direct in his affirmation of inerrancy. He asked, “Has it been proved that the inspired writers stated anything as true that was not

¹⁰⁹Broadus, *Three Questions*, 25-26.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

true?” His answer: “No; there is no proof that the inspired writers made any mistake of any kind.”¹¹³ In his answer to the question “Did the inspired writers receive everything by direct revelation,” Broadus explained the biblical authors “learned many things by observation or inquiry” but “were preserved by the Holy Spirit from error, whether in learning or in writing these things.”¹¹⁴ Based on the catechism, it is clear Broadus believed Scripture was free from error due to the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration.

Broadus was not unaware of the challenges to affirming inerrancy. He realized people often rejected the truth of inerrancy due to apparent contradictions in Scripture between biblical authors or apparent contradictions between Scripture and history or science. Nevertheless, Broadus was convinced these issues were no reason to reject biblical inerrancy. In regards to apparent contradictions in Scripture, Broadus posed this question: “What if inspired writers sometimes appear to disagree in their statements?” He answered, “Most cases of apparent disagreement in the inspired writings have been explained, and we may be sure that all could be explained if we had fuller information.”¹¹⁵ He continued by asking, “It this also true when the Bible seems to be in conflict with history or science?” He replied, “Yes, some cases of apparent conflict with history or science have been explained quite recently that were long hard to understand.”¹¹⁶ Ultimately, apparent contradictions in Scripture or challenging historical or scientific claims were no reason to reject inerrancy in Broadus’s mind. Many of the alleged contradictions or historical or

¹¹³Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

scientific challenges had been answered, and all could be answered if more information was available.

Broadus not only affirmed the concept of inerrancy in his 1883 annual convention sermon and his catechism, he also affirmed it in his preaching ministry and in his writings. In his sermon “The Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible,” Broadus made several statements which reveal he believed Scripture was true and contained no errors. First, he said it was his “persuasion...that the real meaning of the Bible is true.”¹¹⁷ Later, he added, “Wherever it undertakes to teach, its teachings are true.”¹¹⁸ While the primary thrust of the sermon was on the authority of Scripture, Broadus based the authority of the Bible on the fact that it was the Word of God and contained no errors.

Broadus also affirmed the inerrancy of Scripture in his commentary on Matthew. In one place, he defended the role of the Holy Spirit in inspiration and the resulting accuracy of the Bible. He asserted that every part of the Bible is “preserved by the Spirit from error and guided into all truth.”¹¹⁹ This statement reveals two things: (1) Broadus believed every part of the Bible is free from error, and (2) every statement in the Bible is true, as the Spirit guided the writers “into all truth.” In another place, Broadus acknowledged the biblical authors were subject to many “erroneous notions from which only the subsequent inspiration of the Comforter delivered them.” This statement suggests Broadus believed the biblical authors were delivered from all of their “erroneous notions” by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, resulting in an error-free Bible.

¹¹⁷Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority*, 1.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 195.

Broadus defended the accuracy of the Bible from critics in his commentary on Matthew as well. For example, commenting on Matthew 14:24, he wrote:

The ship (boat) was now in the midst of the sea. John (6:19) says they had gone ‘about five and twenty or thirty furlongs,’ from three to three and a half miles (the *stadion* being less than our furlong), when they saw Jesus walking, etc. From the probable place of feeding the five thousand across to Capernaum (Tel Hum), is about four and a half miles. The attempt of some critics to make out an error here, by insisting that ‘the midst’ must mean the mathematical middle, is simply puerile.¹²⁰

Broadus refused to concede the Scriptures contained errors and sought to refute critics who claimed otherwise. Later, he again defended the truthfulness of Scripture by challenging critics who suggested Jesus taught things that were untrue. He acknowledged “our Lord’s human mind was limited” in regards to knowledge, but he pointed out this was quite different than saying his teaching “was erroneous, and that he used error as a means of instructing and convincing others.”¹²¹ Other examples could be presented from the commentary, but these two sufficiently demonstrate Broadus’s commitment to inerrancy and his willingness to defend the truthfulness of Scripture for critics.¹²²

¹²⁰Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 327.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 460.

¹²²For several other examples, see Broadus’s comments on Matt 23:35 and why it is not necessary to conclude Matthew made a mistake (*ibid.*, 476-77); his extensive comments on Matthew 26:19 and how the passage does not contradict the account provided in the Gospel of John (*ibid.*, 524-25); and his comments on Matthew 27:9 and why Matthew was not necessarily wrong in attributing the quote to Jeremiah rather than Zechariah (*ibid.*, 558-59). Broadus also defended the inerrancy of Scripture in his commentary on Mark’s Gospel. After discussing Jesus’s identification of Abiathar as the high priest when David ate the shew bread from the altar in Mark 2:25-26 and the possible explanations of the passage, Broadus advised against viewing Jesus’s statement as wrong. He wrote, “In many similar cases what was long regarded by opposers as an error in the Bible narrative has been fully explained by modern exploration or research, and here also it is easy to suppose that some circumstance to us unknown would clear up the whole matter. Even in uninspired ancient writers it is unwise to insist that there must have been an error where our information is very scanty, and it is still more unwise in dealing with inspired writers.” See John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1905), 24-25.

Broadus and Authority

Broadus not only affirmed the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture; he also affirmed the authority of the Bible. Broadus's strongest statements on the sole authority of the Bible are found in his sermon "Paramount and Permanent Authority of the Bible." If the Scriptures are inspired and completely true in all they teach, Broadus reasoned, then "something else immediately follows, viz., the Bible is to us the highest authority for truth."¹²³ A few sentences later, he added, "But, whatever it intends to teach, that is paramount in authority."¹²⁴ Broadus did not reject other sources of authority. He identified the following sources of authority: reason, Christian consciousness, the tendency of the times, culture, the church, and individual inspiration. He was careful to elevate Scripture above all other "authorities" and warn against placing other authorities on the same level or above Scripture. He wrote, "Now, as to all these real or supposed authorities, we must take heed that we do not place them on a level with Scripture, or make them a ground for setting Scripture aside."¹²⁵ As the title of the sermon indicates, Broadus believed it was important to place the authority of Scripture above all other authorities. The authority of the Bible truly is paramount.

Broadus was particularly concerned with guarding against the rejection of the authority of the Bible due to current opinions and feelings. As an example, he pointed to the rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment by many during his own time. Broadus perceived an "extreme sensitiveness about human suffering" in connection "with a diminished sense of the awfulness of human sin and the holiness

¹²³Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority*, 1.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid., 3.

of God” ultimately “led many to shrink from the idea of eternal punishment.”¹²⁶ This was essentially replacing the authority of the Bible with the opinions of man.

Broadus contended:

The great principle, in all such inquiries, is that, while it is lawful to re-investigate the meaning of Scripture in the light of current opinion and feeling, it is not lawful to put anything as authority above God’s word. Many people fail to make this distinction, and glide insensibly from re-interpretation of the Scriptures, into setting the Scriptures aside.¹²⁷

Later, he warned, “There is great danger, when we do not find Scripture to suit us, that we shall unconsciously pass from the task of interpretation to the liberty of setting aside. . . . It is one thing to re-interpret the Bible, and another thing to set aside its authority.”¹²⁸ Nothing, including the thoughts and opinions of the present populace, should contend with the authority of Scripture or cause Christians to “set aside its authority.”

The sermon concluded with a plea for those listening to embrace the authority of the Scriptures and not depart from its teachings. He warned that even “slight” departures from Scripture, which may seem “a practical necessity,” can have devastating consequences. He listed three examples to prove his point: (1) the exaltation of one bishop over the others, who alone was designated “bishop,” and how this led to the Bishop of Rome, (2) the obscure references to the bread and wine by Justin Martyr which led to the formulation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and (3) the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” which permitted pouring in lieu of immersion if water was unavailable.¹²⁹ Then, he declared, “These things show us the

¹²⁶Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority*, 4.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 5.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 5-6.

importance which may attach to small beginnings in departure from the word of God.”¹³⁰ He also used an analogy from nature, comparing small departures from the Bible to a little channel being cut out of the Mississippi River which eventually “grows” and “widens” and becomes “a great crevasse.”¹³¹ He closed with these words: “Let us stop the beginnings [of] departure from the teaching of God’s word.”¹³² Clearly Broadus was convinced of the authority of the Bible and strongly desired others to embrace the authority of Scripture, as this sermon makes clear.

Another place where Broadus emphasized the authority of the Bible was in his catechism. Two statements in particular demonstrate his commitment to biblical authority. The first statement was given in response to the question “What authority has the Bible for us?”¹³³ Broadus answered, “The Bible is our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.”¹³⁴ His answer reveals his commitment to the sole authority of Scripture, as well as his belief that Scripture is sufficient to govern what Christians believe and how they behave. The second statement concurs with the first statement and explains how Christians should respond to the authoritative Scriptures. Broadus asked, “With what disposition ought we to study the Bible?”¹³⁵ Since the Scriptures are inspired, without error, and authoritative, how should Christians study the Bible? Broadus stated, “We ought to study the Bible with a hearty willingness to believe what it says and to do what it requires.”¹³⁶ This

¹³⁰Broadus, *Paramount and Permanent Authority*, 6.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching*.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid.

response only makes sense if the Bible is considered authoritative and the “all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.”

Broadus also strongly promoted the authority of the Bible in *The Duty of Baptists to Teach Their Distinctive Views*. The first distinctive listed by Broadus was the authority of the Bible. He wrote, “We hold that the Bible alone is a religious authority; and in regard to Christian institutions the direct authority is of course the New Testament.”¹³⁷ Not only did Broadus teach the authority of the Bible; he taught the sole authority of Scripture. Later, Broadus explained the conservative tendency of Baptists is based on “their recognition of the Scriptures alone as religious authority.” Their belief in the sole authority of the Bible and “the stress they lay on exact conformity to the requirements of Scripture” naturally leads to “an instinctive feeling that they must stand or fall with the real truth and the real authority of the Bible.”¹³⁸ As a Baptist, Broadus understood the significance of biblical authority and the pivotal role it played in Christian institutions.

Broadus, the Bible, Hermeneutics, and Preaching

Broadus’s commitment to a high view of Scripture shaped his ministry, both as a professor and a preacher. His belief in the divine inspiration, complete truthfulness, and sole authority of Scripture affected his interpretation of Scripture, as well as his proclamation of Scripture. First, Broadus’s approach to interpretation was affected by his view of Scripture. Because the Bible is the Word of God, Broadus was concerned with properly interpreting the Bible. As Vernon Stanfield noted,

¹³⁷John A. Broadus, *The Duty of Baptists to Teach Their Distinctive Views* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881), 6.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 18-19.

Broadus had a “high regard for the Bible” and “desired to interpret it rightly.”¹³⁹ His commitment to proper interpretation was evident in his treatise on preaching, as he pointed out common errors in interpretation and provided basic principles to help expositors correctly interpret Scripture.¹⁴⁰ Broadus’s emphasis on proper interpretation in his treatise on preaching, as well as his own practice of careful interpretation, was grounded in a high view of Scripture.

Second, Broadus’s approach to preaching was affected by his view of Scripture. Throughout his ministry, Broadus was committed to preaching the biblical text. Indeed, this was one of the distinguishing marks of Broadus’s preaching. E. C. Dargan, Broadus’s successor, wrote:

The preaching of Doctor Broadus was eminently Scriptural. It was based upon a profound personal belief in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible and upon the most careful and scholarly study of its content and meaning. He had no vagaries of doctrine, but cordially accepted the Bible as a true revelation of the mind and will of God and the guide of religious knowledge and duty. His reverence for the Word of God was one of the deepest feelings of his nature, and his rare powers of insight and expression as an interpreter, together with his accurate and fresh contact with the world of scholarship and of thought made a combination as fine as it is serviceable and powerful in the pulpit.¹⁴¹

Broadus’s high view of Scripture led him to ground his sermons in the truth of the biblical text. All of the sermons Broadus recorded as having preached in his “Day Book” are based on a text of Scripture.¹⁴² The selection and use of a biblical text in his sermons was the result of his views of the Bible. He also encouraged others to

¹³⁹Vernon Latrelle Stanfield, “Elements of Strength in the Preaching of John Albert Broadus,” *The Review and Expositor* 48, no. 4 (October 1951), 385.

¹⁴⁰John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1870), 33-65.

¹⁴¹Edwin C. Dargan, “John Albert Broadus – Scholar and Preacher,” *Crozer Quarterly* 2 (April 1925): 171-72.

¹⁴²John A. Broadus, “The Day Book of Broadus,” John Albert Broadus Papers, Box 20, Folder 6, Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

preach and teach God's Word. In his preaching textbook, he discussed the importance of preaching from a biblical text, since a sermon is a "discourse" in which there is "a development of the text, an explanation, illustration, application of its teachings."¹⁴³ Then, he declared, "Our business is to teach God's Word."¹⁴⁴ Broadus's use of biblical texts in every sermon he recorded, as well as his insistence that other preachers develop their sermons based on a specific biblical text, reveals his elevated view of Scripture.

Conclusion

Broadus was a man who was thoroughly orthodox in his views of Scripture, despite claims to the contrary. He defended the inspiration of Scripture, even though he refused to speculate about the mode of inspiration. He affirmed the inerrancy of Scripture, denying Scripture contained any errors or mistakes. He believed in the sole authority of Scripture, both in the life of the believer and the life of the church. These positions shaped his interpretative method and his preaching ministry, as Broadus resolved to interpret Scripture properly in his works and in his sermons. The following chapters will describe Broadus's approach to biblical interpretation and how it impacted his exegetical works and his sermons, but this chapter has demonstrated his approach to biblical interpretation was grounded in an orthodox view of Scripture.

¹⁴³Broadus, *A Treatise*, 22.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER 4
BROADUS AND BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Although Broadus is most well-known for his work in the field of homiletics, he was an excellent New Testament scholar and a skillful biblical interpreter. His commitment to sound biblical interpretation and his insistence that others correctly interpret Scripture was grounded in his orthodox view of Scripture. Since the Bible was God’s Word, Broadus believed proper interpretation was critical and central. He wrote, “To interpret and apply his text in accordance with its real meaning, is one of the preacher’s most sacred duties. He stands before the people for the very purpose of teaching and exhorting them out of the Word of God.”¹ The nature of Scripture, as the Word of God, necessitated careful and accurate interpretation and proclamation. Broadus went so far as to tell preachers it would “be better to have no text than one with which the subject has only a fanciful or forced connection.”² In other words, Broadus believed it was better for a preacher or teacher to fail to use a text in a sermon than to select a text and misinterpret or misrepresent the meaning of a God-breathed text in the sermon.

The need for proper interpretation was critical in Broadus’s opinion, especially as it related to the task of preaching. Broadus desired for others to

¹John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1870), 33.

²*Ibid.*, 22.

interpret Scripture correctly, and he strived for accuracy in interpretation in both books and sermons. To promote sound interpretation, Broadus provided specific suggestions to guide the hermeneutical process. These interpretive suggestions can be found in various sermons and writings, but the most extensive treatment of interpretation is found in his *Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.³ In his treatise, Broadus did not simply encourage others to interpret the Bible correctly. He provided examples of incorrect interpretations of Scripture. He listed the primary causes of incorrect interpretations. He delineated principles to promote sound interpretation. Broadus wanted to ensure his readers properly interpreted the biblical text, and his passion for correct interpretation is evident.

In order to understand Broadus's hermeneutical methodology, this chapter will examine various sermons and writings in which Broadus discusses hermeneutics. The first section will examine Broadus's thoughts on text selection and how it relates to biblical interpretation and proclamation. The second section will examine the causes and examples of errors in biblical interpretation provided by Broadus. The reasons for misinterpretation were listed to help preachers avoid making those same mistakes, and the examples were given to motivate preachers to seek an accurate interpretation of Scripture. The third section will identify the key presuppositions that undergirded Broadus's approach to interpretation. These presuppositions provided the foundation for the interpretive principles Broadus taught and sought to employ. The fourth section will highlight the specific principles Broadus advocated in his books and in his preaching. The chapter will conclude with a summary of Broadus's hermeneutic.⁴

³Broadus devoted an entire chapter to interpretation as it relates to biblical proclamation. See Broadus, *A Treatise*, 33-65.

⁴I am using "hermeneutic" to refer to the specific interpretive principles advocated by an individual. Whereas "hermeneutics" refers to the art and science of biblical interpretation in general,

Selecting a Text

In his treatise, Broadus warned against selecting a text and misrepresenting the text, saying it would be better to take no text than to take a text and misrepresent the meaning of the text. His goal, however, was not to encourage preachers to avoid selecting a text but to challenge them to select a biblical text and properly interpret that text. He wrote, “The primary idea is that the discourse is a development of the text, an explanation, illustration, application, of its teachings. Our business is to teach God’s word.”⁵ Even when addressing “subjects” and “aspects of subjects” that “are not presented in precisely that form by any passage of Scripture,” “the fundamental conception should be habitually retained, that we are about to set forth what the text contains.”⁶ The preacher’s business is to teach the Word of God, which means he must select a text, properly interpret that text, and preach the meaning of that text.

Broadus listed several advantages of preaching from a biblical text. First, preaching from a text allows preachers “to impart to them the teachings of God in his Word” and “not to guide the people by our own wisdom.”⁷ Preaching God’s Word “enables us to speak with confidence, and leads the people to recognize the authority of what we say.”⁸ If the preacher does not select a text and preach from a text, he has no authority. Second, preaching from a text “awakens interest at the outset.”⁹ Third,

“hermeneutic” is being used here to refer to a specific approach to hermeneutics advocated by an individual.

⁵Broadus, *A Treatise*, 22.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

preaching from a text helps the listeners “in remembering the train of thought,” as long as “the sermon is really evolved from the text.”¹⁰ Fourth, preaching from a text “affords opportunity of explaining and impressing some passage of Scripture.”¹¹ Over time, the hearers will be exposed to many passages of Scripture because the preacher has faithfully selected, interpreted, and proclaimed some passage in each sermon. Fifth, preaching from a text helps “prevent our wandering utterly away from Scriptural topics and views.”¹² Biblical preaching keeps the preacher tied to the topics and views of Scripture. Sixth, preaching from biblical texts allows “greater variety” than would “be gained than if the mind were left altogether to the suggestion of circumstances.”¹³ These six advantages were provided to encourage preachers to select a biblical text, properly interpret that text, and then clearly communicate the meaning of the text in their sermons.

Broadus was aware of objections to selecting a text, and he sought to address these objections in his treatise. It is interesting to note the first objection dealt with the misinterpretation of Scripture. Some objected to the use of a biblical text due to “the grievous laxity in the interpretation of texts which has so widely prevailed.”¹⁴ Because there was a widespread tendency to misinterpret Scripture, some objected to the use of texts in sermons. Broadus believed the solution was not to refrain from selecting a text but to interpret the text one selected accurately, as his chapter on interpretation makes clear. The second objection came from those who

¹⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 22-23.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 23.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

“have little or no reverence for Scripture, or appreciation of its riches.”¹⁵ Because they did not value Scripture as God’s Word, they believed the text placed “a restriction upon freedom of thought and flow of eloquence.”¹⁶ Broadus recognized this objection arose “chiefly from the critic’s want of reverence for the Bible,” as well as his “ignorance of the preacher’s true relation to the Bible.”¹⁷ A proper reverence for the Bible would lead to careful selection, accurate interpretation, and bold proclamation of a biblical text. The third objection was the “inconvenient restriction” that selecting a text placed on the sermon.¹⁸ “Some able and devout preachers” disliked “expository and even textual preaching” and wished that all their sermons could “be a philosophical discussion or an elaborate discourse upon a definite topic.”¹⁹ Broadus did not view the use of a biblical text as a restriction. Rather, the use of a text would help the preacher avoid wandering away from biblical ideas and subjections, and it would allow him to preach with variety and avoid falling into a rut.

After listing the benefits of selecting a text and answering objections to selecting a text, Broadus continued by providing rules for choosing texts from which to preach. First, Broadus believed preachers should avoid “obscure” texts. The text should “exhibit its meaning readily.”²⁰ There were exceptions, of course. Broadus told preachers to use an obscure text if “he can explain” it and “show that it teaches

¹⁵Broadus, *A Treatise*, 23.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

valuable truth” or if “many are known to feel interested” in the text and the preacher “is really able to make its meaning clear, and bring out useful lessons.”²¹ The key, said Broadus, was making sure the preacher could make “the passage instructive and useful.”²² “The preacher scarcely has time” to explain the meaning of the text just for the sake of explanation, since “it is his business to teach the people lessons of real utility, either as regards doctrine or practice.”²³ Note Broadus’s insistence that the preacher be able to explain the meaning of the text, which means he must properly interpret it, as well as his insistence that the preacher must also be able to demonstrate the utility of the passage in regards to doctrine or practice.

Second, Broadus warned against selecting texts “marked by grandeur of expression.”²⁴ These texts create “great expectations...at the outset,” and “it is of course very difficult” for the preacher to meet those expectations.²⁵ He did not say they “must be avoided,” but he encouraged preachers to use them to supplement simpler passages or to use them in a humble manner.²⁶ Third, Broadus encouraged preachers to avoid any “text that will seem odd.”²⁷ Any oddity or humor in a sermon should “be an incidental thing, and manifestly unstudied” and unplanned. Any “effort to be amusing,” or “anything odd that appears to have been calculated, is felt to be incompatible with a genuine seriousness and solemnity.”²⁸ Since the selection

²¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 25.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., 26.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

of an odd text is a calculated and deliberate choice, the “odd text must therefore have a bad effect.”²⁹

Broadus spent almost two pages identifying odd texts from which preachers have delivered sermons. One example in particular is noteworthy, since it has been ascribed to Broadus himself. In *Fundamentals of Preaching*, John Killinger asserted Broadus preached a sermon titled “Topknot Come Down” on “the biblical view of women’s hairstyles” from Mark 13:15, which begins, “Let the one who is on the housetop not go down.”³⁰ Killinger castigated Broadus for this “carnival pitch that teaches people to be distrustful of ministers.”³¹ As Nettles noted, however, this is “an absurd and demonstrably false anecdote” that “borders on sinfulness.”³² Had Killinger taken the time to read Broadus’s textbook on preaching, he would have discovered that Broadus would never have preached the sermon of which he is accused. Rather, Broadus used “Topknot Come Down” as an example of poor text selection and the inappropriateness of preaching from odd texts. He wrote:

The words “Let him that is on the house top not come down,” quoted in the form, “Top-not, come down,” and used for a sermon against a certain style of head-dress called a “top-knot,” would seem to be the very climax of absurdity; and yet many a passage has been mutilated and applied in a way fully as unwarrantable, though less ridiculous.³³

Broadus characterized this sermon as “the very climax of absurdity,” rendering it certain he would not have preached the sermon himself. He viewed this as a

²⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 26.

³⁰John Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 178. I am indebted to Thomas J. Nettles for pointing out this misrepresentation of Broadus in Thomas J. Nettles, “The Enduring Impact and Relevance of *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*,” in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 176.

³¹Killinger, *Fundamentals of Preaching*, 178.

³²Nettles, “The Enduring Impact” 176.

³³Broadus, *A Treatise*, 27.

mutilation of the text, the exact opposite of appropriate interpretation and proclamation. Given the tendency to misinterpret or misrepresent the meaning of the text, Broadus advised against selecting odd texts.

Fourth, Broadus suggested preachers “not avoid a text because it is familiar.”³⁴ Preachers should seek to preach from familiar texts. The reason they are familiar texts, Broadus argued, is because they are “manifestly good texts.”³⁵ Preachers should not shy away from these passages simply because they are well-known. Using an agricultural analogy, Broadus explained, “One may show skill, and add somewhat to the harvest, by cultivating out-of-the-way corners and unpromising ledges of rock; but the bulk of the crop, by which the family are fed, must come from the broad, open field.”³⁶ So, while it can be profitable to select texts that are less well-known, preachers should not avoid familiar texts. Fifth, Broadus warned against avoiding or neglecting “any portion of Scripture.”³⁷ The Old Testament in particular was prone to either being neglected or over-emphasized by those given to “their own wild ‘spiritualizing’ of everything in the Old Testament,” so Broadus encouraged preachers to select texts from both Testaments in order to avoid neglect or over-emphasis.³⁸

Sixth, Broadus encouraged preachers to avoid basing sermons on “spurious passages.”³⁹ He believed certain passages were undeniably spurious and should be

³⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 28.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*, 29.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸*Ibid.*, 30.

³⁹*Ibid.*

avoided.⁴⁰ Broadus knew some might be “shocked” at the errors “found in the common text of Scripture,” but he believed this was unwarranted, as “any such errors or uncertainties” would not “alter or modify any doctrine of Scripture.”⁴¹ It is important to note Broadus was not suggesting the biblical authors erred, thereby undermining his views of inspiration and inerrancy. Rather, he was suggesting the errors “found in the common text of Scripture” did not originate with the biblical authors and should be distinguished from Scripture. Seventh, Broadus advised against selecting a text in which “the sayings of uninspired men” are “recorded in Scripture,” unless “we know from other teachings of Scripture that they are true, or unless we propose to find instruction in the fact that those men made the statements given.”⁴² He recognized many texts contained words of uninspired men that were untrue. It is true that the words were spoken, but the words themselves do not communicate truth. Therefore, Broadus concluded, “Let all sayings of uninspired men be scrutinized, in the light of their connection and of Scripture in general, before they are used as texts.”⁴³ Finally, Broadus suggested preachers take their “pastoral labor” into account when selecting a text. They should consider “the present condition of the congregation,” “the character of the texts recently discussed,” and the topics and subjects which the congregation needs to hear and which will “deeply interest others.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰He identified Acts 22:10, 1 John 5:7, and Acts 8:37 as “spurious beyond question.” Broadus, *A Treatise*, 30.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., 31.

⁴⁴Ibid., 31-32.

The attention Broadus devoted to encouraging preachers to select a text for their sermon reveals his appreciation for Scripture, his view of the task of preaching, and his beliefs regarding proper interpretation. First, Broadus appreciated Scripture and understood the authority of the preacher was grounded in the text of Scripture. As long as the preacher based his sermon on the biblical text, he would be able to speak with authority. Unlike those who objected to the use of a biblical text due to their lack of reverence for Scripture, Broadus advocated selecting a biblical text and preaching from that text. Second, Broadus believed the task of preaching was concerned with teaching the Word of God. The sermon should develop, explain, illustrate, and apply a biblical text, since the preacher's main business "is to teach God's word."⁴⁵ A failure to preach from a text or to preach the actual meaning of the text was essentially a failure to preach. Whatever the speaker had done, if he had not preached from a biblical text or properly interpreted and communicated the meaning of that text, he had not preached. Finally, Broadus encouraged preachers to select and "to set forth what the text contains."⁴⁶ This involves properly interpreting the text so the preacher can actually set forth what the text contains. Further, Broadus viewed the misinterpretation of biblical texts in preaching as an abuse of the text, which is why he went on to show the common causes of error in interpretation and to provide interpretive principles to help preachers properly interpret the texts they selected and from which they preached.

⁴⁵Broadus, *A Treatise*, 22.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

Causes and Examples of Errors in the Interpretation of a Text

As Broadus noted in his chapter on text selection in his treatise, there was a “grievous laxity in the interpretation of texts” which had “widely prevailed” among preachers.⁴⁷ In order to help preachers avoid misinterpreting the biblical text, he included a section covering the three primary causes of error in interpreting a text: (1) misunderstanding the phraseology of the text, (2) disregarding the connection of the text, and (3) improperly spiritualizing the text. Then, he provided examples of how each cause led to the misinterpretation of a biblical text. The attention Broadus devoted to causes and errors of interpretation reveal his was passion for correct interpretation and his belief that errors in interpretation could and should be avoided at all costs.

Misunderstanding the Phraseology of the Text

First, Broadus identified the misunderstanding of the phraseology of the text as a common cause of error. This problem was compounded by the fact that “many of us have to interpret a translation.”⁴⁸ Since it is rare “that two words in different languages will contain precisely the same bulk of meaning in the same form, and carry with them the same atmosphere of association and suggestion,” interpreters must be even more diligent to note the individual words and unique phrases in a text when working from a translation.⁴⁹ Broadus did not discourage those who were unfamiliar with the original languages, though. He actually encouraged them to engage in “earnest efforts to ascertain the true meaning of the

⁴⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 23.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

text.”⁵⁰ He believed preachers could “have great success in the interpretation of Scripture,” even when working from translations, “through extensive, constant and devout reading of the Bible,” “through sympathy with its characteristic modes of thought and forms of expression,” through familiarizing himself with “the current of the general connection of his text,” through comparison “with various other passages in which the same or a kindred subject is treated,” and “by consulting the works of learned and really judicious expositors.”⁵¹ He held up Andrew Fuller as an example of someone who was unfamiliar with the original languages, worked from translations, and yet accurately interpreted Scripture.

Even those who were familiar with the original languages were not guaranteed accuracy in their interpretations. There was “the danger of being misled by superficial knowledge” or “hasty examination” of the text in the original languages.⁵² “A thorough acquaintance” with the original languages is necessary if preachers want to “understand the difficult passages,” argued Broadus, and not just a superficial knowledge or slight familiarity with the languages.⁵³ Nevertheless, Broadus did not disparage the study of Hebrew and Greek. He understood that “even the slightest knowledge of the originals is of service” in regards to interpreting “the great bulk of Scripture.”⁵⁴

Turning to the language of the text, Broadus encouraged preachers to focus on key words in a biblical text. Words like “flesh, soul, heart, fear, faith,

⁵⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 36.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

understanding, foolish, light, darkness, just, righteousness, salvation, grace, good man, wicked,” and others should be noted and studied.⁵⁵ Quoting Vinet, Broadus wrote, “The translator has translated for you the words; you must translate the ideas for yourselves.”⁵⁶ A failure to note these significant words and the phrases in which they are found often leads to misunderstanding the text.

Broadus also “observed that the language of the Scripture is, as a general thing, not philosophical but popular, not scientific but poetic, not so much an analytical language...as a synthetical language,” which naturally “leads to some peculiar forms of expression, which abound in the Bible, and are important for the interpretation of many texts.”⁵⁷ The poetic language of Scripture leads authors to “make absolute that which is relative” and “relative that which is absolute,” and “it generalizes that which is particular, and particularizes that which is general.”⁵⁸ Poetic language “delights in synonyms and parallelisms” and “classifies without scientific purpose.”⁵⁹ Biblical authors often use a “series of substantives or adjectives, which have been taken very improperly as the base of divisions in discourses.”⁶⁰ Therefore, preachers must consider the poetic language of Scripture and make sure they do not misinterpret the phraseology of the text.⁶¹

⁵⁵Broadus, *A Treatise*, 38.

⁵⁶Ibid. The quote was taken from Alexandre Vinet, *Homiletics; or the Theory of Preaching*, 2nd ed., trans. and ed. Thomas H. Skinner (New York: Ivison and Phinney, 1855), 111.

⁵⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 38.

⁵⁸Ibid., 39-40.

⁵⁹Ibid., 40.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Broadus provided examples from Scripture in which biblical authors made absolute that which was relative, made relative that which was absolute, and generalized that which was particular. He failed to provide an example of a biblical author particularizing that which was general. Again, Broadus relied on Vinet, taking much of the material from Vinet, *Homiletics*, 113-14. As an example of making absolute that which is relative, Broadus quoted Luke 14:12: “When thou makest a dinner or

Later in the chapter, Broadus provided examples of interpreters who failed to understand the phraseology of the biblical text and misinterpreted the passage as a result. According to Broadus, common passages where the phraseology of the text is misunderstood include Jeremiah 3:4, Ecclesiastes 12:1, Proverbs 8:17, Psalm 23:4, Romans 12:1, 1 Timothy 2:8, 2 Timothy 2:15, and Hebrews 7:25.⁶² He discussed each text and demonstrated how the failure to understand the phraseology led to a misunderstanding regarding the meaning of the passage. For example, Broadus quoted Hebrews 7:25, which says, “Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him.” He said the verse “is a favorite text” used to show “that Christ is able to save the worst sinners,” but “the real meaning of the phrase—as the connection also might show—is, save to the utmost, to the full extent of saving.” Noting the phraseology—in this instance, the meaning of the term “uttermost”—will help preachers avoid misunderstanding the text.

Disregarding the Connection of the Text

Second, Broadus pointed to the tendency of some preachers to disregard the connection, or the context, of the biblical text. Broadus warned, “In some cases, a sentence taken apart from its connection would give a positively wrong sense,” and “in others, it would be hopelessly ambiguous, or utterly vague.”⁶³ To Broadus, the

a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; . . . but call the poor, the maimed,” etc. Then, he commented, “This is stated as an absolute prohibition of inviting friends, kindred, neighbors, and a command to invite exclusively the other class. We know very well that our Lord did not mean to be thus understood, nor does any one ever thus interpret” (Broadus, *A Treatise*, 38-39). As an example of making relative that which is absolute, Broadus quoted Luke 18:14: “This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.” Then, he explained, “We understand, as it was intended we should, that the publican was justified, while the Pharisee, contrary to all popular expectation, really was not justified” (Broadus, *A Treatise*, 40). As an example of generalizing that which is particular, Broadus cited Exod 20:16: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

⁶²Broadus, *A Treatise*, 50-53.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 41.

need to pay attention to the connection was so obvious it seemed “needless to insist on this. No man of sense, in dealing with any other book, would think of interpreting a single sentence here or there, in entire disregard of its connection.”⁶⁴ Yet, Broadus felt it necessary to address this error due to the common tendency among preachers to ignore the context of Scripture in interpretation and preaching.

Broadus identified three reasons that preachers tended to ignore the connection of a biblical passage: (1) it made it easier for preachers to practice “the long-continued and wide-spread practice of allegorizing,” (2) their “exclusive use of short texts” did not “furnish them material enough for a sermon,” which led them “to make some additional application of the words which the connection does not admit, or even to break a sentence away from its connection, and give it an entirely new application, which would make it a striking text,” and (3) the division of the Bible into chapters and verses led “both preachers and hearers to think of every chapter and every verse as a sort of separate whole.”⁶⁵ As a result, Broadus said, “Thousands of sermons are preached in which the connection and real meaning of the text is just as completely, though not often so manifestly, disregarded and violated.”⁶⁶ By pointing out this error, Broadus hoped to encourage preachers to avoid disregarding the connection of the biblical text and misinterpreting it.

Broadus seemed quite familiar with the tendency of preachers to disregard the connection of a text, as he provided numerous examples of preachers who failed to note the connection of the text and misinterpreted the passage. He listed Colossians 2:21, Hebrews 6:1, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Mark 9:8, Isaiah 1:5-6, Isaiah 63:1-

⁶⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 41.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 41-43.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 45.

3, and 1 Kings 18:21 as passages that are often preached without considering the connection. Consider his comments on Colossians 2:21:

“Touch not, taste not, handle not.” These words have been a thousand times blazoned on banners, and quoted by impassioned orators, as a precept of Holy Writ, against the use of intoxicating drinks. The slightest attention to the connection would show, that in the first place, they are not spoken with any reference to that subject, and in the second place, that they are given by the apostle as an example of ascetic precepts to which we ought not to conform.”⁶⁷

Preachers must not disregard the connection of the text, or an error in interpretation is sure to follow.

Improperly Spiritualizing the Text

The third cause of error in interpretation listed by Broadus was the improper spiritualization of the text. Broadus did not deny spiritual truths or concepts were often communicated using temporal or physical things. As he stated, “We have no other means of representing spiritual things than by metaphors derived from things temporal.”⁶⁸ Indeed, “our very conceptions of the unseen world depend upon images furnished by the world in which we now live.”⁶⁹ This does not mean, however, that preachers can assign whatever spiritual sense they wish to physical objects. Giving preachers free reign to spiritualize everything in Scripture necessarily leads to misinterpreting the text, as preachers ignore or manipulate the natural reading of the text in search of the spiritual sense of the passage.

⁶⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 55. It is interesting to note Broadus was not opposed to promoting temperance, as Robertson noted in his biography of Broadus. Broadus’s father had been involved in the Sons of Temperance, and Broadus followed in his father’s steps. See Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1910), 49. Broadus was not against advocating for abstinence, but he was against using Colossians 2:21 to teach abstinence. “There are many passages of Scripture which enjoin Temperance, but this is certainly not one of them” (Broadus, *A Treatise*, 53).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

Broadus traced the tendency to spiritualize the language of Scripture “widely and wildly” to Philo and “the Alexandrian Jews,” who had “long been engaged in this sort of speculation.”⁷⁰ Broadus accused “most of the great Fathers” with being “grievously infected with this evil.”⁷¹ Their example led many preachers “to bring out the ‘spiritual sense’ of the plainest narratives and precepts in a fashion wholly unwarranted and often painfully absurd.”⁷² Broadus had little patience for preachers who ignored the plain sense of the text and engaged in spiritual speculation. His rebuke was excoriating:

It is so easy and pleasant, for men of fertile fancy, to break away from laborious study of phraseology and connection, to cease plodding along the rough and homely paths of earth, and sport, free and rejoicing, in the open heaven; the people are so charmed by ingenious novelties, so carried away with imaginative flights, so delighted to find everywhere types of Christ and likenesses to the spiritual life; it is so common to think that whatever kindles the imagination and touches the heart must be good preaching, and so easy to insist that the doctrines of the sermon are in themselves true and Scriptural, though they be not actually taught in the text,—that preachers often lose sight of their fundamental and inexcusable error, of *saying that a passage of God’s Word means what it does not mean*. So independent, too, one may feel; so original he may think himself. Commentaries, he can sneer at them all; other preachers, he has little need of comparing views with them. No need of anything but the resources of his own imagination, for such preaching is too often only building castles in the air.⁷³

Note the strong condemnation of wild spiritualizing by Broadus. He called it “their fundamental and inexcusable error” and compared it to building “castles in the air.”

In order to help preachers avoid this error, Broadus attempted to provide some direction to assist in determining “what is and what is not allowable” with

⁷⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 46.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 47.

⁷³Ibid.

“respect to spiritualizing.”⁷⁴ He asserted, “Whatever in the Old Testament is used by New Testament writers as having a spiritual sense, is of course beyond question.”⁷⁵ Some scholars, Broadus noted, insisted “that nothing whatever is to be understood allegorically, save by distinct New Testament authority.”⁷⁶ Broadus thought this approach was “too strict a rule” in theory, but in practice “we can never feel safe in going beyond this rule.”⁷⁷ He added, “Anything not thus used in the New Testament can only be spoken of as possibly, or at most as probably, having an allegorical meaning.”⁷⁸ Preachers could confidently spiritualize a text if there was biblical warrant for doing so. If not, the preacher could suggest the spiritualization of the text as a possibility, although with much less authority.

Broadus also warned against “pressing the figure too far” in “*figurative passages*, which really have a spiritual meaning.”⁷⁹ He knew preachers were prone to “fancying a spiritual sense in aspects or details of the figure which are not really within the scope of the inspired writer.”⁸⁰ This was especially true in regards to the parables of Jesus. Preachers tended to spiritualize every detail in the parables, so Broadus felt compelled to discourage the practice of viewing all the “details of the story as separately significant.” Some of the details were significant, but preachers “must avoid extremes, exercise sound judgment, and constantly keep in mind that

⁷⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 47.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid. Broadus used the terms “spiritualizing” and “allegorizing” interchangeably. Both terms were intended to describe the action of assigning spiritual meanings or spiritual significance to physical, temporal objects or occurrences.

⁷⁷Ibid., 47-48.

⁷⁸Ibid., 48.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

the parable is an illustration, and founded on some resemblance or analogy which is at best only partial.”⁸¹

Broadus sought to reinforce the danger of spiritualizing every text by providing examples of wild spiritualization. Amos 6:1, Ezekiel 2:9, Jonah 1:6, and Proverbs 18:24 were used to illustrate the error of spiritualization. His example from Jonah clearly illustrates the type of spiritualization against which Broadus warned. In the passage, the captain of the ship asks Jonah, “What meanest thou, O sleeper” (Jonah 1:6). Apparently Broadus heard preachers apply the text to those who were “spiritually asleep,” because he asked, “How *can* a preacher tell us that these words refer to sinners as spiritually asleep?”⁸² The words from the text were directed towards Jonah, who was literally asleep in the boat. They were not intended to communicate truth to people who were spiritually asleep. Therefore, Broadus concluded, “As to any properly allegorical meaning hidden in the words, it is a sheer figment, and must be proven, not recklessly assumed.”⁸³ These examples were intended to drive preachers away from spiritualizing any text in which it was not clear that the biblical author intended to convey a spiritual sense from the text.

Broadus exerted much effort in identifying the causes of error in interpretation and providing examples of errors in interpretation in order to push preachers to be more careful when interpreting the biblical text. He knew many preachers were unaware of their erroneous interpretations and the cause of those errors. He hoped identifying the causes would help preachers avoid making the

⁸¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 49.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 56.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 57.

mistakes he identified. Speaking specifically about disregarding the connection of a text, Broadus wrote:

The considerations presented may explain how it is that many devout and sometimes able brethren have been led to do otherwise, and censure of their course is not proposed; but when a man's attention has been distinctly called to the matter, he is solemnly bound to give heed to it in practice. How shall one reconcile it with the responsibility of his position, to stand before men in God's name, and say that a passage of the blessed Bible means anything else than what he is satisfied, from the phraseology and connection, that it really does mean?⁸⁴

Broadus extended grace to those who were unaware of their errors, but once they had been exposed to the error of their ways, he insisted they avoid the errors. The examples he presented were also intended to encourage careful interpretation of Scripture. The readers did not have to agree with Broadus's interpretation of the passages under consideration, but he did urge them "to form the habit of carefully studying every text, even the most familiar and apparently obvious" and to determine "that he will never say a passage of God's holy and precious Word means so and so, without personal, honest, patient effort to ascertain the fact."⁸⁵ Broadus desired to see the Word properly interpreted and proclaimed, and identifying causes of error and providing examples of errors in interpretation was a means to help Broadus accomplish that end.

Broadus's Hermeneutical Presuppositions

Before discussing the hermeneutical principles advocated by Broadus, it is necessary to examine the presuppositions that undergirded his approach to hermeneutics. Every interpreter possesses certain presuppositions that influence his or her hermeneutical methodology. As Grant Osborne wrote, "Every person brings

⁸⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 43.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 57-58.

to the task a set of ‘preunderstandings,’ that is, beliefs and ideas inherited from one’s background and paradigm community.”⁸⁶ John Albert Broadus was no different. He grounded his interpretive methodology in five presuppositions. These presuppositions are not explicitly stated as such, but they are certainly present in his writings. The five presuppositions are: (1) objectivity, (2) singularity, (3) intentionality, (4) spirituality, and (5) Christocentricity.

Objectivity

The first presupposition undergirding Broadus’s hermeneutic is the principle of objectivity. Broadus did not believe the meaning of the text was subjective or dependent upon the reader. He believed the meaning existed apart from the reader, and the interpreter’s goal was to discover the meaning of the text. Although he wrote prior to the “reader response” interpretive movement, Broadus was aware of the tendency of interpreters to import their own preconceived ideas into the text.⁸⁷ He wrote:

We come to it [Scripture] knowing beforehand what things we like and what things we dislike, and if we find in the passage something not in accordance with the ideas we have been reared in, or that now have possession of our minds, we say, ‘Well, of course it can’t mean that,’ and then we begin to search for some other meaning.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 29. Osborne described these “preunderstandings,” or presuppositions, in a fairly positive light. “Preunderstandings,” or presuppositions, can be “our friend” by providing “a set of understandings by which we can make sense of what we read.” He did warn against the tendency of some interpreters to allow their preunderstandings to become “prejudice, a set of a prioris that place a grid over Scripture and make it conform to these preconceived conceptions” (ibid., 29). He did not believe they prevented readers from discerning the meaning of a text, though.

⁸⁷For a brief historical sketch of the movement away from author-centered hermeneutics towards a more reader-centered approach to interpretation, see Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 465-521.

⁸⁸John Albert Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Stodder and Houghton, 1886), 110-11.

He recognized the danger of allowing personal beliefs to influence the interpretive process negatively and warned against it. In another place, Broadus acknowledged that virtually every interpreter possesses “certain doctrinal views, certain established prepossessions, certain constitutional tendencies to prefer this or that way of regarding and presenting any point of religious truth.”⁸⁹ Then, he concluded, “It is doubtful whether any of us ever does approach a Scripture lesson with entire willingness that it shall mean what it wishes to mean.”⁹⁰ Broadus believed the tendency to allow ideas or views to drive the interpretive process was universal, affecting every interpreter.

Broadus viewed the failure to allow the Scripture to “mean what it wishes to mean” as a serious problem, calling it a “grave fault.”⁹¹ Broadus compared preachers who impose their preconceived ideas on the text to a “politician who labors to explain the Constitution in some unnatural way to suit himself,” “a lawyer who deals likewise with the language he is reading from a law book,” and “a business man who perverts the terms of a written contract.”⁹² Likewise, preachers are even “more blameworthy. . . if we know beforehand what we want this passage to mean, and then put screws to it that it may be forced into suiting our views and wishes.”⁹³ He believed interpreters had to resist the urge to import their own views into the text if sound interpretation is to occur.

⁸⁹John A. Broadus, “Hints as to Bible Interpretation,” in *Hints on Bible Study*, by H. Clay Trumbull, et al. (Philadelphia: John D. Wattles, 1898), 99.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 99-100.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 100.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Ibid.*

Rather than letting the views of the interpreter drive the interpretive process, Broadus challenged interpreters to “be willing to let the Scripture mean what it wants to mean.”⁹⁴ He exhorted interpreters to “make earnest and prayerful efforts to form the habit of submitting our preferences to the real meaning of the inspired Book we are undertaking to interpret.”⁹⁵ Only by doing this could interpreters “represent the text as meaning precisely what it does mean.”⁹⁶ These statements make it clear that Broadus believed the biblical text conveyed meaning, the meaning of the text existed independent of the interpreter, and the goal of interpretation was to discern the actual meaning of the text. This is why Broadus often referred to the “real meaning” of the text or the need to let the text mean “precisely what it does mean.”⁹⁷

Singularity

Second, the principle of singularity undergirded Broadus’s hermeneutic. He did not believe a text possessed multiple meanings. Broadus actually chided those who attached multiple meanings to a single expression, writing:

Some commentators and ministers think they put honor upon the Bible by making a certain expression mean several different things at the same time,—things which are hopelessly and mutually exclusive. That is not sensible.⁹⁸

He conveyed similar sentiments in his treatise on preaching. He wrote, “The plan of taking up in succession several different senses and making a practical application of

⁹⁴Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 110.

⁹⁵Broadus, “Hints,” 100.

⁹⁶Broadus, *A Treatise*, 33.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁹⁸Broadus, “Hints,” 107.

each, cannot be approved.”⁹⁹ If the context of a passage opened the text up to “more than one meaning,” Broadus encouraged preachers to “avoid it as too ambiguous for our purpose, or to indicate that we take the more probable sense, and confine attention to its lessons as thus understood.”¹⁰⁰

The practice of presenting “several different senses” of the text and applying each sense should be avoided, wrote Broadus. Instead, preachers should strive to “bring to bear upon men’s minds as a part of God’s Word, only what the text really means, as best we can ascertain it.”¹⁰¹ An interpreter “is verily guilty before God if he does not honestly strive to understand that which he interprets, and give forth its real meaning and no other.”¹⁰² The text has one meaning, according to Broadus, and that is the “real meaning.” Interpreters are required to communicate that one, real meaning “and no other,” or they are guilty before God of distorting His Word. It is clear from these comments that Broadus believed each text possessed one meaning, the goal of interpretation was to discover that one meaning, and the goal of preaching was to communicate that one meaning. Anything less was considered deficient.

Intentionality

The third presupposition that affected Broadus’s hermeneutic was the principle of intentionality. More specifically, Broadus believed the intention of the author governed the meaning of the text. He emphasized the need to consider the

⁹⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 45.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid., 34.

intention of the author when interpreting a passage in several of his writings. In one place, Broadus said, “We must take good account of the state of the writer’s mind, when he says these things.”¹⁰³ This was stated as a general truth to be considered when interpreting any passage of Scripture. In another place, he wrote, “We must inquire what the sacred speaker or writer designed by the figure; so much it means, but beyond that, as a part of Scripture, it means nothing.”¹⁰⁴ Here, Broadus was discussing the need to consider the intention of the author when interpreting figurative language. The key to understanding the meaning of figures in Scripture was to consider the intention of the author. Apart from the author’s intention, the text possessed no meaning. Therefore, accounting for the author’s state of mind was critical for sound interpretation in general, and figures of speech in particular.

Broadus also provided a strong warning against taking a passage in a sense other than the one intended by the author. He wrote, “If we take the passage in a sense entirely foreign to what the sacred writer designed, as indicated by his connection, then, as we use it, the phrase is no longer a passage of Scripture at all.”¹⁰⁵ When an interpreter understood a passage in a sense entirely foreign to the intention of the biblical author, Broadus essentially argued the interpreter was twisting Scripture to the point where it was no longer Scripture. Only by interpreting the text in relation to the intention of the author could an interpreter or preacher properly understand the meaning of the text.

In order to aid readers in understanding “the state of the writer’s mind,” Broadus provided several questions for interpreters to ask as they read the text and

¹⁰³Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 112.

¹⁰⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 48.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 34.

considered the intention of the author.¹⁰⁶ First, “what is he thinking about?”¹⁰⁷ This question was intended to help the interpreter consider the subject the author has chosen to address. Second, “what is he aiming at?”¹⁰⁸ This question was intended to push the interpreter to consider the purpose or reason the author wrote the text. Third, “how is he feeling, when he uses this language?”¹⁰⁹ This question was intended to encourage the interpreter to consider the emotions behind the text. Then, Broadus concluded with this encouragement: “You will find that the more care you exercise, when reading the Scriptures, in trying to enter into sympathy with the thought and feeling of the sacred writer, the better you will be prepared to see what he really means.”¹¹⁰ By asking the questions he listed, Broadus believed the interpreter could gain a better understanding of the state of the writer’s mind and be better prepared to discern the meaning of the text.

Not only did Broadus insist on considering the intention of the author when seeking the meaning of the text, he also encouraged considering the intention of the author when applying the text. A specific principle “may be presented by the text in one application,” Broadus wrote, “and we may with perfect propriety make other applications of it.”¹¹¹ The other applications, however, must be consistent with the meaning the author intended to convey. Preachers who wished to “extend the application of the text” must ensure they apply the text “in a direction not foreign

¹⁰⁶Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 112.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 44.

but akin to the sacred writer's specific design."¹¹² So, Broadus viewed the intention of the author as crucial for properly understanding a passage of Scripture, as well as properly applying a passage of Scripture.

Spirituality

The principle of spirituality was the fourth presupposition underlying Broadus's hermeneutic. In order for a person to truly understand the meaning of the text, they must be a believer and possess the Spirit of God. In his Yale lecture on "The Young Preacher's Outfit," Broadus encouraged young preachers to "seek the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Spirit."¹¹³ The "indwelling and perpetual aid of the Holy Spirit" was necessary "in our every-day thought and activity," "in all our studies," and "in every stage of preparation for preaching a sermon, beginning with the selection of text and topic, which should be made with special prayer."¹¹⁴ Although Broadus did not specifically mention the interpretive stage of sermon preparation, his comment on depending on the aid of the Holy Spirit "in every stage of preparation for preaching a sermon" must necessarily include the interpretive stage.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which produces "strong and symmetrical Christian character" in believers, enables a Christian to think in spiritual terms and gain a true understanding of the text.¹¹⁵ Apart from the Holy Spirit and the vibrant spirituality He produces, a person is incapable of truly

¹¹²Broadus, *A Treatise*, 44.

¹¹³John Albert Broadus, "The Young Preacher's Outfit," John Albert Broadus Papers, Box 21, Folder 2, Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 3.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 3.

understanding Scripture, argued Broadus. He noted that those who are “utterly destitute of spirituality often sadly fail to understand, and some can even ridicule, when, if they had proper spiritual sympathies, they would as soon think of ridiculing their mother’s last words on her dying-bed.”¹¹⁶ Broadus recognized that those who misunderstand, reject, or even ridicule Scripture generally lack spirituality or spiritual sympathy.

Since spirituality was necessary for proper interpretation, Broadus urged interpreters to “cultivate spiritual sympathy with the Bible” since “it is a spiritual book.”¹¹⁷ This exhortation was not intended to minimize or downplay the natural elements of Scripture. Broadus admitted the Bible “is full of rich historical color,” “abounds in curious facts and striking characters,” and “has an immense wealth of allusion to phenomena of nature and of human life.”¹¹⁸ Scripture deals with natural and human affairs. Nevertheless, Scripture “is pervaded by a supreme and controlling spirituality.”¹¹⁹ For this reason, interpreters must seek to develop spiritual sympathies, for “spiritual sympathies, genuine and ever freshly cherished,” Broadus asserted, “are indispensable.”¹²⁰ Only by cultivating spiritual sympathies could interpreters hope to understand the true meaning of a biblical text.

Christocentricity

Finally, the principle of Christocentricity impacted Broadus’s approach to hermeneutics. Broadus believed every text must be understood in relation to the

¹¹⁶Broadus, “Hints,” 108.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 107.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 107-08.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 108.

¹²⁰Ibid.

person and work of Jesus Christ. Broadus emphasized the centrality of Christ in Scripture. He is the central figure of biblical history, according to Broadus. In his catechism, Broadus asked, “Who is the central figure of the Bible history?” He answered, “The central figure of the Bible history is Jesus Christ, the Hope of Israel, the Saviour of mankind.”¹²¹ In his sermon “Three Questions as to the Bible,” Broadus defended the inerrancy of Scripture by comparing them to Jesus. The Scriptures, which were recorded by men who were inspired, were both human and divine. Likewise, Jesus was human and divine. Since Jesus was human and divine, yet without sin, so the Scriptures were human and divine, yet without error, Broadus preached. Then, he said, “The divine-human Saviour is the central theme of what we may call the divine-human writings.”¹²² In another place, Broadus affirmed that Jesus was “the chief theme of Scripture.”¹²³ Broadus understood Jesus to be the central figure and the central theme of Scripture.

Since Jesus was the central figure and central theme of Scripture, Broadus declared it was impossible to understand Scripture apart from Him. He wrote, “Jesus Christ himself is not only the chief theme of Scripture, but the guarantee of its authority, the interpreter of its meaning.”¹²⁴ Broadus believed Christ was the lens through which Scripture should be interpreted, and a failure to interpret Scripture in light of Christ was a failure to properly interpret Scripture. This was particularly true as it relates to the Old Testament. Broadus explained:

¹²¹John A. Broadus, *A Catechism of Bible Teaching* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892).

¹²²John A. Broadus, *Three Questions as to the Bible* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1883), 27.

¹²³George W. Cable, et al., “A Symposium on the Favorite Book of the Bible,” *The Old and New Testament Student* 11 (July 1890): 45.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 44-45.

The holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are never half understood except as they are seen in light of Christ Jesus. They all pointed forward to Christ Jesus; they all found their fulfillment, the key to their interpretation, in Christ Jesus. The Old Testament history is not merely a history of some wandering patriarchs and of a strange, wayward people of wonderful powers and wonderful propensities to evil. It is not merely a history of Israel. The Old Testament is a history of redemption, of God's mightiness and mercies, and of a chosen nation, all along toward the promised, long-looked-for time when God's Son should come to be the Saviour of mankind. We cannot understand the Old Testament, except we read it in its bearing upon Christ, as fulfilled in him.¹²⁵

The Old Testament, Broadus declared, cannot be understood apart from Christ. He is the key to properly interpreting and correctly understanding it.

The principles of objectivity, singularity, intentionality, spirituality, and Christocentricity laid the foundation for Broadus's hermeneutic. The hermeneutical methodology Broadus advocated was grounded in these presuppositions. The specific hermeneutical principles he advocated in his treatise on preaching were intended to aid interpreters at arriving at the real, singular meaning of the text as intended by the biblical author using their spiritual sympathies and understanding the text in relation to Christ. Only then could an interpreter discern the meaning of a biblical text.

Broadus's Hermeneutical Principles

Broadus listed specific principles that he believed should govern the interpretation of a biblical text. Whether or not he implemented these principles in his own writings and sermons is an issue to which we will turn shortly. At this point, it is necessary to identify the hermeneutical principles that Broadus believed should govern the interpretation of a biblical text. In his classic work on preaching, Broadus provided preachers with the following six principles to help them properly interpret

¹²⁵Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 160-61.

Scripture: (1) grammatically, (2) logically, (3) historically, (4) figuratively, (5) allegorically, and (6) consistently.¹²⁶

Interpret Grammatically

First, Broadus challenged preachers to interpret the text grammatically. He argued an understanding of the grammar and syntax of a passage was crucial for proper interpretation. Broadus wrote, “Endeavor to ascertain the precise meaning of the words and phrases used in the text.”¹²⁷ Broadus believed words and phrases conveyed meaning, and the interpreter must commit to ascertaining the meaning of the words and phrases used by the biblical author in order to understand the meaning of the text as a whole.

Broadus encouraged preachers to study the text in the original languages in order to gain a better understanding of the text. Studying words and phrases is necessary for proper interpretation, and this “is best done in the original,” Broadus asserted, “because our version will often have the same word where the Hebrew or Greek is different, and the same Greek or Hebrew word will be used in important passages where our version renders differently.”¹²⁸ By studying the biblical text in the original languages, interpreters would be able to identify different Greek or Hebrew words that have been translated with the same English word, as well as the same

¹²⁶Broadus’s comments on interpretation were not meant to be exhaustive. Broadus called the six principles “brief rules,” which he hoped would prove beneficial to preachers wishing to properly interpret Scripture. See Broadus, *A Treatise*, 58. Broadus directed those wishing to learn more about hermeneutics to the following “good treatises on interpretation”: Patrick Fairbairn, *Hermeneutical Manual* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1859); Samuel Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1843); Joseph Angus, *The Bible Hand-Book* (Philadelphia: J. Fagan & Son, 1885); E. P. Barrows, *Companion to the Bible* (New York: American Tract Society, 1867); and Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (London: A. & R. Spottiswoode, 1828).

¹²⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 58.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 59.

Greek or Hebrew word that has been translated with different English words, thereby aiding them in the interpretive process.

It should be noted Broadus did not restrict the use of the original languages to sermon preparation alone. Broadus encouraged the preachers to read the Bible in the original languages as a general habit. This emphasis on studying the language of the original texts was consistent with Broadus's career as a professor of New Testament. As a New Testament scholar, Broadus obviously possessed a great appreciation for the Greek New Testament. He also valued the Hebrew Old Testament. In his Yale lectures, Broadus encouraged preachers to spend time reading Greek and Hebrew each day. He asked, "Can you not read at least a page or two of Hebrew and of Greek every day?" The assumed answer to the question was yes. Later, he said, "Now I urge this rapid reading of some Hebrew and some Greek as an everyday practice. Keep it up for years until these languages become thoroughly familiar."¹²⁹ Broadus believed preachers should make it a habit to read the original languages daily and familiarize themselves with the original languages.

Broadus also recommended various tools to help interpreters "ascertain the precise meaning of the words and phrases used in the text." Preachers should use "Concordances of the Hebrew and Greek," "Lexicons of those languages," "the best translations," and "the best accessible Commentaries" to gain a better understanding of the meaning of words and phrases in the biblical text. Broadus was convinced a thorough and exacting study of words and phrases was necessary to discern the real meaning of the text. He stated, "This grammatical study of the text can scarcely be made too minute or protracted."¹³⁰ Broadus understood the importance of studying

¹²⁹John A. Broadus, "The Minister and His Bible," 3, in John Albert Broadus Papers, Box 21, Folder 6, Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 3.

¹³⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 59.

the words and phrases of a biblical text. It was impossible to discern the meaning of the passage as a whole if the interpreter had not grasped the meaning of the individual words that comprise the passage. Therefore, he challenged interpreters to diligently study the words and phrases of each biblical text.

Interpret Logically

Second, Broadus encouraged preachers to interpret the text logically. Broadus used the terms “logically” and “connection” to communicate the idea of interpreting a passage in context. It is hard to overstate how important interpreting a passage in context was to Broadus. Throughout his various writings and sermons, Broadus repeatedly emphasized the need to interpret a passage in context. In his treatise on preaching, he wrote, “The connection of thought in which a text stands will of course throw light upon its meaning, and is usually indispensable to understanding it.”¹³¹ Broadus believed the context would aid in understanding the meaning of any biblical text, and in many passages, it would be impossible to understand the meaning apart from the context, since “the connection of thought” is “indispensable to understanding it.” In fact, Broadus believed the need to interpret a passage in context was a universally agreed upon principle. In an address on the benefit of studying the Bible by books, he said, “Everybody will agree that you ought to look at the connection of a passage of Scripture.”¹³² Broadus could not conceive of a person who would dispute the claim that sound interpretation required the interpreter to consider the connection of the passage.

¹³¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 60.

¹³²John A. Broadus, “Advantages of the Study of the Bible by Books, with Illustrations,” (Cleveland: Young Men’s Christian Association, 1881), 11.

Unfortunately, Broadus knew many teachers failed to study biblical texts in their connection, or context. He lamented, “One of the gravest and commonest faults among Sunday-school teachers and pupils consists in treating the lesson as an independent whole, without regard to its connection in the book and in the Bible.”¹³³ The problem was compounded by the fact that lessons were printed separately, and the teachers could not see what had come before or what came after. Yet, “even with the Bible before one’s eyes,” Broadus said, “there is a grievous tendency to indolent neglect of the connection.”¹³⁴ This was not limited to Sunday school teachers and their lessons. Even preachers “have in many cases done great mischief” by failing to interpret a passage within its context. Broadus believed the way Bibles were printed contributed to the problem. He wrote:

We are peculiarly prone to neglect the connection in dealing with Scripture, because we have the Bible printed—most unfortunately, I think—in little scraps of broken sentences, set before us as if they were separate paragraphs—which is not done in any other book in the world—and broken up also in larger portions which are called chapters, where the connection is often completely severed, and yet we cannot help imagining there must be a new subject at the beginning of a new chapter.¹³⁵

The danger of interpreting a passage apart from its context was real, both for teachers and preachers. For this reason, Broadus insisted interpreters consider the context of each passage.

To illustrate the need for considering the context of a passage, Broadus used a personal example from his childhood.¹³⁶ After hearing a sermon in which the

¹³³Broadus, “Hints,” 101.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 111.

¹³⁶Broadus used this illustration in multiple places to emphasize the importance of connection in biblical interpretation. See Broadus, “Hints,” 102, and Broadus, “Advantages,” 11.

preacher disregarded the context of the biblical text, Broadus's father said to young Broadus, "I can prove to you out of the Bible that there is no God." His father then proceeded to open the Bible to Psalm 14, cover some of the words with his finger, and have Broadus read the words, "beginning with a capital letter, like a complete sentence, 'There is no God.'"¹³⁷ Broadus was puzzled until his father "lifted his finger and said, 'How is that? "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.'" 'Now,' he said, 'don't you see you must always attend to the connection.'"¹³⁸ Broadus never forgot this lesson from his father, and he used the illustration to demonstrate the importance of noting the connection of the biblical text to others.

The biblical text should be studied within two contexts, argued Broadus.

First, the context of the book as a whole needed to be considered. Broadus explained:

This logical connection will sometimes really be the entire book to which the text belongs. There are very few sentences in Hebrews, or in the first eleven chapters of Romans, which can be fully understood without having in mind the entire argument of the Epistle. . . . Few things are to be so earnestly urged upon the student of Scripture, as that he shall habitually study its books with reference to their whole connection. Then he can minutely examine any particular text with a correct knowledge of its general position and surrounding.¹³⁹

In another place, Broadus wrote, "The lesson stands in relation to the whole book of which it forms a part, and cannot be precisely and soundly interpreted without reference to the general contents and aim of that entire book."¹⁴⁰ By studying the book as a whole, the interpreter would be better prepared to examine the various components that comprise the whole and to "precisely and soundly" interpret the passage.

¹³⁷Broadus, "Hints," 102.

¹³⁸Broadus, "Advantages," 11.

¹³⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 60.

¹⁴⁰Broadus, "Hints," 103.

Broadus provided extensive instructions on reading books of the Bible in their entirety in his address “Advantages of the Study of the Bible by Books.”¹⁴¹ One of the concepts he reiterated was the need to consider the context of the entire book. He told his audience that each biblical book “must be read as a whole if we would understand them well. You cannot understand any book if you read it only by fragments—I mean the first time you read it.”¹⁴² Later, when asked to recommend a commentary, Broadus refused to offer a specific commentary. He encouraged them to use commentaries, but he urged them to “read the Bible itself in its own connection, and commentaries to help.”¹⁴³ Broadus encouraged reading Scripture in connection before using a commentary, which is significant. In his mind, reading the biblical text and its connection was more useful for understanding the meaning of the passage than utilizing biblical commentaries. Broadus did not reject the use of commentaries; he encouraged them. Yet he knew recognizing the context of the book of Scripture was even more important than using good commentaries.

Second, the immediate context of each biblical text needed to be considered. Broadus wrote, “Often the connection is only some sentences before and after.”¹⁴⁴ Paying careful attention to the verses preceding and following the biblical text under consideration would assist the interpreter. Sometimes the interpreter would need to go beyond the sentences before and after. Broadus contended, “In a narrower sense there is a context, which will embrace from a few verses to a few chapters, before and after the text, and of which the preacher should not only have a

¹⁴¹Broadus, “Advantages,” 1-15.

¹⁴²Ibid., 2.

¹⁴³Ibid., 15.

¹⁴⁴Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 111.

general knowledge, but should make special examination.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly, he wrote, “The connection of the lesson may be only a few preceding and following sentences, or a chapter or two.”¹⁴⁶ So, not only should the interpreter consider the context of the book, he should consider the immediate context of the passage. This ranged from a few verses to a few chapters, but it was essential for the interpreter to “make special examination” of these sections.

Studying the immediate context of the passage should follow studying the context of the book in its entirety, Broadus suggested. The interpreter should move from a study of the whole to a study of the parts. Broadus summarized:

If we read the Bible by books, first taking each book as a whole, then seeing how it is divided up, then taking the several divisions and treating them, and so coming down to details, we shall learn in that way, and learn for ourselves how to interpret the several parts of Scripture with reference to their connection.

By starting with the book, then moving to the section, and finally moving to the details of the passage, interpreters would be able to note the connection of the text and properly interpret it.

Again, it is hard to overstate the weight Broadus placed on interpreting a text within its context. In one discourse, after emphasizing the importance of studying the connection, Broadus declared, “You see how important it is that we should learn to study every particular expression of Scripture in its connection.”¹⁴⁷ Ignoring this principle would lead to errors in interpretation, so Broadus challenged preachers to avoid this “grievous tendency” to neglect the connection of a passage and to interpret passages within their context.

¹⁴⁵Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 60.

¹⁴⁶Broadus, “Hints,” 103.

¹⁴⁷Broadus, “Advantages,” 11.

Interpret Historically

Third, Broadus emphasized the need to interpret the text in a historical fashion. Given the gap between the writing of the text and the interpretation of the text, it was necessary to consider the historical context of each biblical passage. One of the greatest challenges of interpreting Scripture is bridging the gap that exists between the writing of the text and the interpretation of the text.¹⁴⁸ Broadus knew this and reminded interpreters “that the Bible is a very old book” and must be interpreted accordingly.¹⁴⁹ This was particularly important when considering the words of the text. Just like a reader would not expect the words of Homer, the words in *Arabian Nights*, or the words on a Mesopotamian or Egyptian monument to mean the same thing now that they meant when originally inscribed, the reader should not expect every biblical word to mean the same thing now that it did when originally uttered or written.¹⁵⁰ Broadus remarked, “You need to remember that this was written a long time ago, far away from here, among a people whose ideas and favorite expressions were in some respects quite peculiar, or at any rate, quite different from my own.”¹⁵¹ It was critical for the interpreter to be aware of the differences in language and expression that existed or proper interpretation would be impossible.

¹⁴⁸In a section on the challenges of Bible interpretation in their textbook on hermeneutics, William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. wrote, “One word summarizes some of the greatest challenges (and frustrations) the Bible interpreter will face—distance. Consider first the distance of *time* that exists between the ancient texts and our modern world. The writings and events recorded in the Bible span many centuries, but more than 1900 years have passed since its last words were written. Simply put, the world has changed in substantial ways since then. Further, most of us lack essential information about the world as it was when the Bible was written. We may be at a loss to understand what a text means because it involves subjects beyond our time span.” See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. and exp. ed. (Dallas: Word, 2004), 13.

¹⁴⁹Broadus, “Hints,” 103.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 104.

Broadus's comments were not intended to deny or downplay the timelessness of Scripture. He clarified:

Now as to the main substance of the numerous and distinct books which we recognize as inspired, they appeal very strikingly to those elements of human nature and conditions of human thought and action which are essentially universal and unchangeable.¹⁵²

Broadus affirmed the timelessness of the main substance of the biblical text, but “as to the details of conception and expression, as to the precise color and tone, these books often differ very widely from what the same words would mean in a writing of today.”¹⁵³ Therefore, interpreters needed to recognize the distance between the writing and interpreting of the text and how this has affected the meaning of the words. By doing this, they will be able to interpret Scripture more accurately.

Historical interpretation involved more than simply recognizing that the meaning of words changed over time, though. Broadus asserted that a “general historical knowledge” was crucial for proper interpretation.¹⁵⁴ Specifically, interpreters needed to consider “facts of Geography,” “Manners and Customs,” and “the opinions and state of mind of the persons addressed in a text.”¹⁵⁵ First, “observing facts of Geography” in biblical texts, particularly biblical narratives, “would throw light on the text.”¹⁵⁶ Many biblical narratives mention geographical locations, and a knowledge of these locations will greatly aid the interpreter. Second, being aware of the “Manners and Customs of the Jews” or “other nations who appear

¹⁵²Broadus, “Hints,” 104.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 61.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

in the sacred story” can assist the interpreter.¹⁵⁷ Given the distance between the interpreter and the events recorded in the text, it is necessary to consider the manners and customs of the people being described. Third, considering “the opinions and state of the mind of the persons addressed in a text” is helpful. Although Broadus did not use the term, he was basically encouraging interpreters to consider the occasion of the writing or the specific views or issues a biblical author was addressing. Broadus knew many texts were written to address “errors or evils” that “existed among them which the inspired teacher is here aiming to correct,” and he contended these errors or evils could usually “be gathered from the book itself.”¹⁵⁸

As an example of how this would aid interpretation, Broadus pointed to the teachings of Paul and James on justification. He argued that a careful consideration of “the theoretical and practical errors at which they are respectively aiming to correct” would resolve any issues in interpretation between the two biblical authors. In fact, Broadus was convinced “that almost everything in the New Testament, as well as much in the Old, is really controversial in its specific design, and that we must constantly inquire what errors or evil practices are aimed at.”¹⁵⁹ For this reason, a general understanding of the historical nature of the biblical text and a specific examination of the errors or evils which the author was addressing would greatly aid the interpreter in discerning the meaning of the text.

¹⁵⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 61.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 62.

Interpret Figuratively

Fourth, Broadus suggested preachers interpret the Bible figuratively whenever the text contains figurative language. This is not to suggest that Broadus did not understand the need to interpret the text in a plain or literal fashion. In fact, Broadus knew Scripture should generally be interpreted in a literal fashion. In his treatise on preaching, Broadus stated, “In the language of Scripture, as in all other language, the presumption is in favor of the literal sense.”¹⁶⁰ In another place, he wrote, “We...cannot fail to see that they appeal constantly to the plain good sense of a thoughtful and sober mind.”¹⁶¹ The majority of Scripture was intended to be understood in a literal manner, and “the presumption” should be “in favor of the literal sense” when interpreting a biblical text.

Many passages contain figurative language, however, and the biblical author used this language to communicate spiritual truth. Broadus proclaimed:

There is very much in Scripture that is clearly figurative; and very much more which might so readily be thus understood, in light of other Scripture usage, that we ought to be careful about building important theories upon its literal sense.¹⁶²

According to Broadus, it was necessary to differentiate between texts that were intended to be understood literally and texts that were understood figuratively. It was a mistake to “insist on the literal meaning of what is plainly a figure of speech,” he said.¹⁶³ In order to avoid this mistake, Broadus instructed, “Wherever it is clear, from the nature of the case, from the connection, or from precisely similar expressions in other passages, that the literal sense is not designed, then we must

¹⁶⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 62.

¹⁶¹Broadus, “Hints,” 106-107.

¹⁶²Broadus, *A Treatise*, 62.

¹⁶³Broadus, “Hints,” 107.

understand figuratively.”¹⁶⁴ Following these instructions would help interpreters identify figurative language and appropriately interpret it.

Broadus made sure to clarify that figurative language could still be used to communicate literal truth. He asserted, “Remember that language may be highly figurative without being fictitious. Only ascertain what the figures of Scripture were designed to mean, and that meaning is as certainly true as if stated in plain words.”¹⁶⁵ The biblical authors used figurative language to communicate real spiritual truths. Therefore, interpreters needed to “interpret the Bible upon principles of common sense” in order to differentiate between literal language and figurative language.¹⁶⁶ Once they determined how the author was communicating truth, they could interpret accordingly.

Interpret Allegorically

Fifth, Broadus advocated interpreting the Bible allegorically whenever the text allows for an allegorical interpretation. In his treatise on preaching, Broadus warned against improper spiritualizing, or allegorizing.¹⁶⁷ He observed that many preachers simply assigned spiritual meaning or significance to physical objects or occurrences without any basis for doing so. Yet Broadus realized there was a time for allegorizing, a time “where that is clearly proper.”¹⁶⁸ The interpreter “cannot take it for granted that any passage has an allegorical, or so-called ‘spiritual’ sense,”

¹⁶⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 62.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Broadus, “Hints,” 106.

¹⁶⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 45-49. Broadus used the terms “allegorizing” and “spiritualizing” interchangeably in the section. Later, when encouraging interpreters to interpret allegorically when the text allows it, Broadus again used the terms interchangeably (ibid., 63-64).

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 63.

though.¹⁶⁹ Broadus contended, “There must be good reason to think so.”¹⁷⁰ Only when the interpreter could provide a sound reason for interpreting allegorically should he do so.

Broadus provided two instances in which it was acceptable to interpret allegorically. First, “whatever the New Testament so uses, is certainly allegorical.”¹⁷¹ If the New Testament uses an Old Testament person, event, or object to convey spiritual truth, the interpreter can confidently follow its lead. Second, “whatever else is precisely similar to matter so used in the New Testament, is very probably allegorical.”¹⁷² Broadus was less confident that the second situation required an allegorical interpretation, but he suggested it was “very probably allegorical.” Beyond these two instances, though, “we have surely no right to go.”¹⁷³

Later, Broadus seemed to narrow the use of allegorical interpretation in preaching even further. Only when the New Testament uses something allegorically can the interpreter do the same with confidence. He wrote:

It would seem to be a good rule as to preaching, that while probable allegorical meanings may be adduced, as probable, in the progress of a discourse, no allegorical meaning shall be taken as a *text*, which does not result from an interpretation having clear warrant in Scripture usage.¹⁷⁴

Notice Broadus allowed the preacher to note “probable” instances of allegory “in the progress of a discourse.” Nevertheless, the only time preachers could confidently

¹⁶⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 63.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*

¹⁷²*Ibid.*

¹⁷³*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*

interpret something in an allegorical fashion was when they had biblical warrant for doing so.

Broadus listed two reasons for being cautious when interpreting allegorically. First, “the rage for ‘spiritualizing’ causes many to overlook, or practically neglect, the exceedingly varied and valuable lessons as to Divine Providence and human duty which are afforded by passages in their natural sense.”¹⁷⁵ As an example, Broadus pointed to Joseph. He wrote:

Those who insist on making Joseph a type of Christ, are apt never to hold up before their hearers his interesting and impressive example, of steadfast faith in God amid crushing adversity and sudden prosperity, of resistance to powerful temptation because yielding would be to ‘sin against God,’ of wise affection in dealing with his kindred, and the like.¹⁷⁶

The natural sense of most biblical passages would yield “varied and valuable lessons as to Divine Providence and human duty,” argued Broadus, and interpreters should generally seek to understand and explain the natural sense.

Second, Broadus argued “many passages which can be interpreted only, so far as we have warrant to go, in a natural sense, may yield copious instruction as to properly spiritual things, in that the principle they contain, or the analogy they present.”¹⁷⁷ These passages “may be by us applied or extended to something spiritual—this being done on our own responsibility, yet sustained by manifest propriety, and by other passages.”¹⁷⁸ Broadus did not mean these applications should be presented as interpretation. He clarified, “we may derive illustration. . . of

¹⁷⁵Broadus, *A Treatise*, 63-64.

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 64. Broadus discussed “types” several times in his section on allegorical interpretation. It seems Broadus also used the term “type” to discuss the action of ascribing spiritual significance to physical people, objects, and events, much like he used the terms “allegorical” and “spiritualize.”

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*

spiritual things from perhaps everything in Scripture history, prophecies and proverbs, as we may from profane history and from nature; but we have no more right to present the former as interpretation, than the latter.”¹⁷⁹ Broadus seemed to allow for allegorizing or spiritualizing in regards to application and illustration, but he was very strict in regards to interpretation. Only when the New Testament used a text in an allegorical manner could the preacher do so with confidence in his sermon.

Interpret Consistently

Finally, Broadus believed the Bible should be interpreted consistently. In other words, no text should be interpreted in such a way that it contradicts the plain teaching of Scripture in another place. This concept is often referred to as the “analogy of faith,” but Broadus refused to use this phrase, as he believed it “was derived from a misunderstanding of the Greek in Romans 12:6.”¹⁸⁰ He believed the phrase “ought to be abandoned, even if there be no technical phrase to substitute.”¹⁸¹ Yet, Broadus agreed with the concept associated with the phrase and encouraged preachers to “interpret in accordance with, and not contrary to, the general teachings of Scripture.”¹⁸²

Broadus’s statements on interpreting in a way that is consistent with the teachings of Scripture are connected to his view of Scripture. He believed the Bible was true and contained no errors; its “teachings are harmonious, and can be

¹⁷⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 64.

¹⁸⁰Ibid.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid.

combined into a symmetrical whole.”¹⁸³ In other words, the biblical authors did not contradict themselves or other biblical authors. All of Scripture’s “teachings are harmonious,” and Broadus challenged preachers to interpret accordingly.

The need to interpret Scripture according to its general teachings was particularly helpful when dealing with a passage that could be interpreted multiple ways. Broadus explained:

If a passage may have two senses, owing to the ambiguity of some word or construction, to the doubt whether some expression is figurative, etc., then we must choose one which accords with what the Bible in general plainly teaches, rather than one which would make the Bible contradict itself.¹⁸⁴

Even “less probable” grammatical constructions should be accepted, “provided it be grammatically possible, and sustained by some corresponding usage of the language,” if this “would perfectly accord...with the acknowledged general teachings of Scripture.”¹⁸⁵ The interpretation which recognizes the harmony of Scripture should always be preferred, according to Broadus.

Broadus was aware of the danger of abusing this principle, though. He warned, “It is a gross abuse of this principle—though one often practiced—to force upon a passage some meaning which its words and constructions do not grammatically admit of, in order that it may give the sense required by our system.”¹⁸⁶ The principle is helpful when weighing multiple interpretive options, argued Broadus, but it should not be used to force a passage to mean something it does not mean in order to align with a theological system.

¹⁸³Broadus, *A Treatise*, 64.

¹⁸⁴Ibid.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

Broadus mentioned two tools to assist preachers in applying this interpretive principle properly. First, Broadus identified biblical theology as a useful tool. He contended, “In order to apply this principle with propriety and safety, it is manifestly necessary that we should bring to bear no narrow and hasty views of Scripture teaching, but the results of a wide, thoughtful, and devout study of Biblical Theology.”¹⁸⁷ Studying Biblical Theology would allow the preacher to become familiar with the general teachings of Scripture and interpret particular passages in light of the overall teachings of the Bible. Second, Broadus identified cross references as a useful tool. He argued, “The careful examination of Scripture ‘references’ in studying a text, is a matter of great importance.”¹⁸⁸ It would aid the preacher “in the historical” details “by showing how the same subject was presented under different circumstances,” “in determining whether expressions of the text ought to be taken as figurative, or as allegorical,” and in finding “useful material for the body of the sermon, suggesting to us new aspects, proofs, illustrations, or applications of the subject treated.”¹⁸⁹ Therefore, preachers should utilize Biblical Theology and references when interpreting a text so they can ensure their interpretation of the text is consistent with the general teachings of Scripture.

Broadus and Application

At this point, one additional element of Broadus's hermeneutic needs to be examined: his view of application and how it relates to biblical hermeneutics. Many contemporary scholars argue that exegesis and application should both be included

¹⁸⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 65. Broadus did not use the term “Biblical Theology” in a technical sense to refer to a specific theological discipline. He was encouraging interpreters to consider the totality of Scripture and its doctrinal teachings when interpreting an individual passage.

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

under the heading “hermeneutics.” For example, Walter Kaiser argued, “The exegetical process and the hermeneutical circle have not been closed or completed until the exegete comes to terms with his own and his intended audience’s response to the text.”¹⁹⁰ Likewise, Grant Osborne contended, “Hermeneutics encompasses both what it meant and what it means. . . . Hermeneutics is the overall term while ‘exegesis’ and ‘contextualization’ (the crosscultural communication of a text’s significance for today) are the two aspects of that larger task.”¹⁹¹ Kaiser and Osborne view application as a sub-category of hermeneutics rather than a distinct category.

Other scholars make a sharper distinction between hermeneutics, or exegesis, and application. Brian Shealy wrote, “Hermeneutics is the set of rules for biblical interpretation, and application is the practical implementation of those meanings yielded by interpretation to shape human lives. Application as I learned it has well-defined limits, being controlled by the meanings produced through use of hermeneutical principles.”¹⁹² Daniel Doriani also saw a line between hermeneutics and application, although he believed the line was “thin and permeable.”¹⁹³ According to Shealy and Doriani, application is based upon and connected to hermeneutics and exegesis, but it should still be considered separately.

While there is disagreement among contemporary interpreters over whether or not application should be considered under the head of hermeneutics, interpreters in the nineteenth century seemed to view application as distinct from

¹⁹⁰Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 149-50.

¹⁹¹Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 21.

¹⁹²Brian A. Shealy, “Redrawing the Line Between Hermeneutics and Application,” in *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, ed. by Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 166.

¹⁹³Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2001), 22.

hermeneutics. Milton Terry, whose classic work on interpretation was referenced by Broadus, viewed application as separate from hermeneutics. He defined hermeneutics as “the science of interpretation” and exegesis as “the application of these principles and laws” of hermeneutics.”¹⁹⁴ The goal of hermeneutics, according to Terry, was “to remove the supposable differences between a writer and his readers, so that the meaning of the one may be truly and accurately apprehended by the others.”¹⁹⁵ In other words, the goal was to arrive at a proper understanding of the meaning. Only after 600 pages of hermeneutical and exegetical discussion did Terry address the issue of application, writing:

In all our private study of the Scriptures for personal edification we do well to remember that the first and great thing is to lay hold of the real spirit and meaning of the sacred writer. There can be no true application, and no profitable taking to ourselves of any lessons of the Bible, unless we first clearly apprehend their original meaning and reference. To build a moral lesson upon an erroneous interpretation of the language of God's word is a reprehensible procedure. But he who clearly discerns the exact grammatico-historical sense of a passage, is the better qualified to give it any legitimate application which its language and context will allow.

Accordingly, in homiletical discourse, the public teacher is bound to base his applications of the truths and lessons of the divine word upon a correct apprehension of the primary signification of the language which he assumes to expound and enforce. To misinterpret the sacred writer is to discredit any application one may make of his words. But when, on the other hand, the preacher first shows, by a valid interpretation, that he thoroughly comprehends that which is written, his various allowable accommodations of the writer's words will have the greater force, in whatever practical applications he may give them.¹⁹⁶

These two paragraphs make it clear that, for Terry, exegesis precedes application and should be considered a distinct category.

¹⁹⁴Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1885), 17-19. Similar definitions are provided by several of the other works referenced by Broadus. See E. P. Barrow, *Companion to the Bible* (New York: American Tract Society), 521, and Samuel Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics: Developed and Applied* (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1843), 1.

¹⁹⁵Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 17.

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 600.

A careful reading of Broadus indicates he would have agreed with Terry. While Broadus certainly believed that “to interpret and apply his text in accordance with its real meaning” was “one of the preacher’s most sacred duties,” he did not seem to place application underneath the heading of interpretation. While application was essential for preaching, it was not properly part of interpretation. Given this distinction, Broadus did not discuss application in his chapter on biblical interpretation. Instead, he dedicated a chapter specifically to address the issue of application.

Broadus did not discuss application in his chapter on interpretation, but this does not mean he saw no connection between interpretation and application. The preacher was to practice “application proper, in which we show the hearer how the truths of the sermon apply to him.”¹⁹⁷ The truths of the sermon, which were derived from exegesis based on the hermeneutical principles advocated, were intended to be applied. Yet Broadus believed that application went even farther than “application proper.” Preachers should not only show the hearers how the truths of the sermon applied to them (application proper), they should also make “frequent practical suggestions as to the best mode and means of performing the duty urged” and engage in “persuasion” and “exhortation.” For Broadus, application in preaching involved three things: (1) showing the listeners how the truths of the text apply to their lives, (2) showing the listeners how to obey the truths of the text, and (3) persuading listeners to obey the truths of the text. While not a part of hermeneutics, application was connected to hermeneutics because it required the preacher to know the truths of the text, which could only be discerned by properly interpreting the biblical text.

¹⁹⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 197.

Summary of Broadus's Hermeneutic

Broadus's high view of Scripture drove him to strive for accurate interpretation. He warned against misinterpreting a text due to misunderstanding the phraseology of the text, disregarding the connection of the text, and improperly spiritualizing the text. In order to aid preachers in interpreting the text, he provided six principles for interpretation: (1) interpret grammatically, (2) interpret logically, (3) interpret historically, (4) interpret figuratively, (5) interpret allegorically, and (6) interpret consistently. Although not exhaustive, Broadus believed these six principles of interpretation would help preachers avoid faulty interpretations and allow them to discern the meaning of the text accurately.

The interpretive principles were based on several presuppositions. First, Broadus believed the meaning of the text was objective, not subjective. Second, he believed the text possessed one meaning, not multiple meanings or senses. Third, he believed the meaning of the text was conveyed by the intention of the author. In other words, the meaning of the text was inseparably connected to the meaning the author intended to communicate by speaking or writing the words he chose to use. Fourth, Broadus believed accurate interpretation was connected to the spirituality of the interpreter. Only those with spiritual eyes could properly interpret a text. Fifth, he believed Jesus Christ was the central figure of Scripture and every text must be understood in relation to Him. It remains to be seen whether Broadus's interpretations of Scripture were consistent with these presuppositions and principles, but these are certainly the presuppositions Broadus held and the principles he advocated.

CHAPTER 5

BROADUS AND BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

Introduction

Prior to examining the sermons of Broadus, it will be helpful to look at his writings in the field of New Testament studies. Broadus was the professor of New Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from the time of its inception until his death in 1895, and he wrote and lectured extensively on the New Testament. His published works and his unpublished lectures notes provide insight into Broadus's exegesis.¹ By analyzing his exegetical works, one can evaluate whether or not Broadus consistently employed the hermeneutical principles to interpret Scripture that he advocated in his other writings. This chapter will analyze Broadus's most thorough exegetical work, his commentary on the Gospel of

¹I have used the term "hermeneutics" to refer to art and science of biblical interpretation, particularly the use of sound principles to guide the interpretive process. Here, I am using the term "exegesis" to refer to the implementation of hermeneutical principles in order to discern the meaning of the biblical text. This usage is consistent with Walter Kaiser's usage of the two terms in his work *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. He wrote, "While hermeneutics will seek to describe the general and special principles and rules which are useful in approaching the Biblical text, exegesis will seek to identify the single truth-intention of individual phrases, clauses, and sentences as they make up the thought of paragraphs, sections, and, ultimately, entire books. Accordingly, hermeneutics may be regarded as the *theory* that guides exegesis; exegesis may be understood in this work to be the *practice* of and the set of *procedures* for discovering the author's intended meaning." Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 47. Jerry Vines and David Allen used the two terms in very similar ways. After discussing hermeneutical theory and answering key hermeneutical questions, they wrote, "Theory without practice is useless and practice without theory is unserviceable and unproductive. The previous discussion on hermeneutical theory was dedicated to the above maxim. One's approach to biblical exegesis rests upon certain theoretical considerations which are foundational to that approach." Jerry Vines and David Allen, "Hermeneutics, Exegesis, and Proclamation," *Criswell Theological Review* 1, no. 2 (1987): 319. Robert L. Thomas also defined hermeneutics as "a set of principles" and exegesis as "an implementation of valid interpretive principles." Robert L. Thomas, "Biblical Hermeneutics: Foundational Considerations," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 13 (Fall 2008): 33. For an interesting review and critical analysis of other definitions of hermeneutics and exegesis, see Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 20-27.

Matthew, as well as his smaller commentary on the Gospel of Mark and his miscellaneous unpublished lecture notes in order to determine Broadus's consistency.

Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

Broadus's commentary on the Gospel of Matthew is his most extensive exegetical work, consisting of 597 pages of commentary.² The commentary was well-received after it was published, with J. H. Thayer describing it as "probably the best commentary in English on that Gospel."³ Although the commentary was published in 1886, it was still used in the classroom at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the late 1940s, long after its publication.⁴ Based on the quality of the commentary, Henry Turlington declared Broadus one of the best New Testament scholars in the history of the seminary. He said, "I think John A. Broadus was probably the best of our New Testament expositors at Southern, at least from what I have used in his *Commentary on Matthew*."⁵ Richard Melick, in his chapter on Broadus's New Testament scholarship, described the commentary as a "major exegetical work" and used the commentary to evaluate his abilities as a New Testament scholar.⁶ Given the thoroughness of the work and the accolades it received, one can reasonably conclude Broadus's commentary on the Gospel of

²John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, An American Commentary on the New Testament (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886).

³J. H. Thayer, *Books and Their Uses*, quoted by Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1910), 357.

⁴J. Estill Jones, "The New Testament and Southern," *Review and Expositor* 82, no. 1 (Winter 1985): 22.

⁵Ibid. Jones provided this statement from his personal correspondence with Turlington.

⁶Richard Melick, "New Wine in Broadus Wineskins?," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy*, ed. David S. Dockery and Roger D. Duke (Nashville: B & H, 2008), 102.

Matthew is representative of his exegetical work and deserving of further study. This section will demonstrate Broadus's consistency in utilizing the hermeneutical principles he advocated by providing numerous examples of each principle from the commentary.

Grammatical Interpretation

Broadus recognized the significance of grammar and syntax as it relates to sound interpretation, as evidenced by the emphasis he placed on words and phrases in his commentary. He knew that, unless an interpreter understood the meaning of the words in any given text and how those words related to each other, they would never be able to discern the meaning of the text. Throughout his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, Broadus emphasized the meaning of specific words in their context, as well as the importance of the relationship between phrases and clauses in the text.

In the introduction, before he even started commenting on the verses, Broadus began defining key words. He noted the following about the word “gospel”:
“The Greek word so rendered, which signifies ‘a good message,’ ‘good news,’ ‘glad tidings,’ is found a few times in Matthew and Mark (*e. g.*, Matt. 4:23; 26:13; Mark 8:35; 16:15) as denoting, in general, the good news of Christ’s reign, and of salvation through him.”⁷ At the outset, Broadus wanted to establish the meaning of the word “gospel” so his readers would understand how it was used in Matthew’s gospel. This focus on defining words and showing how the words were used by other New Testament authors is common in the commentary.⁸

⁷Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 1.

⁸An additional example of this can be found in his explanation of *skandalon* in Matthew 5:28-29. Broadus discussed this noun, as well as the verbal form derived from the noun, and the various shades of meaning before concluding Matthew used the verbal form of the word in a figurative sense to communicate the idea of “causing to sin.” See *Ibid.*, 109-10.

Another interesting example of Broadus's grammatical analysis is found in his comments on Matthew 4:17. Broadus examined the Greek word for "preach" that Matthew used, as well as other Greek words translated "preach" in English. He wrote, "The Greek word here used (*kerusso*) has the same sense, to proclaim as a crier or herald does, and in general to proclaim, publish, declare. This is the word always used by *Matthew* where the Common English Version has 'preach,' except in 11:5."⁹ Given Broadus's passion for preaching and position as professor of preaching at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Broadus was naturally inclined to examine the Greek word for "preach," identify other Greek words translated into English as "preach," and explain how these words are similar and dissimilar. By defining words and discussing the Greek text, Broadus demonstrated his commitment to grammatical interpretation.

His commitment to grammatical interpretation can also be seen in his awareness of the syntax of the text, as demonstrated in his comments on Matthew 17:20. The disciples asked Jesus why they could not cast out the demon from the possessed boy, to which Jesus responded, "Because of your unbelief." He then followed up with an illustration of a mustard seed and mountain moving. Jesus' response and the illustration are connected by the word "for." Broadus noted the relationship between the two thoughts, explaining, "For gives a proof of the preceding statement. Your failure must have been on account of your weakness of

⁹Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 76. He went on to say that *kerusso* "elsewhere in N. T. . . . is always rendered 'preach,' except in Luke 12:3; Rev. 5:2, 'proclaim,' and in Mark 1:45; 5:20; 7:36; 13:10; Luke 8:39 'publish.' But it will not do to infer that 'to preach' is always in N. T. an official function, as these facts have led some to do, because the English word is also used (in other N. T. books) to translate various other words, which carry no suggestion of a herald or other official. Thus *euangelizomai*, to bear a good message, bring good news (comp. *euangelion*, 'gospel,' introductory note to 1:1), used once by Matt. (11:5), and not at all by Mark or John, is a favorite word with Luke and Paul, and often rendered in Com. Ver. by 'preach,' or 'preach the gospel.' *Laleo*, to talk, speak, a very common word in that sense, is rendered 'preach' in Mark 2:2; Acts 8:25; 11:19; 13:42; 14:25; 16:6."

faith, *for* a very minute faith can work a very great miracle.”¹⁰ The conjunction “for” connected the two thoughts in the text, showing how the illustration of the mustard seed and the mountain proved the earlier statement made by Jesus that the disciples could not cast out the demon due to their unbelief. More examples could be furnished, as the entire commentary is based on a grammatical and syntactical analysis of each word and phrase, but these examples demonstrate Broadus’s ability to interpret the text grammatically, as well as his determination to do so.

Logical Interpretation

In his writings and sermons, Broadus repeatedly stressed the need to familiarize oneself with the connection, or context, of a biblical text. This involved the near context, consisting of the sections preceding and following the text under consideration, as well as the far context, which could extend well beyond the preceding and following sections to the book as a whole. Broadus’s commentary on Matthew is replete with examples of contextually-informed interpretation.

In Matthew 1:21, Broadus used the context of the entire book of Matthew to explain the word “save.” He noted the various uses of the term in Matthew’s gospel, writing, “It is applied to physical dangers (8:25), death (24:22; 27:40, 42), disease (9:21, 22; James 5:15), and to sin and its consequences, which is the common use.”¹¹ Since the verse goes on to specify that Jesus will save His people “from their sins,” it is obvious the term is being used in the fourth sense. Broadus’s knowledge of the book in its entirety allowed him to identify the various ways the term was applied before commenting on Matthew’s specific use.

¹⁰Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 376. The bold type is used in the original.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 10.

Broadus also considered the immediate context of passages. Two examples will demonstrate this clearly. The first example demonstrates how logical interpretation can help avoid errors in understanding the text. In the Olivet discourse, Jesus used the imagery of eagles gathering around a carcass (Matt 24:28). Broadus believed “the meaning of the saying as here applied seems to be, that things will come to pass when the occasion for them exists. When Jerusalem is ready for destruction, the Roman armies will gather and destroy it; when the world lies awaiting the final appearance of Christ to judgment, he will come.”¹² He pointed out that Calvin and some of the Fathers understood “the children of God as gathering to Christ and feeding on him” but rejected the idea as “repulsive in itself, and out of harmony with the connection, in which (“Bible Comm.”) Christ comes not in grace, but in judgment.”¹³ Since the section of the Olivet discourse under consideration focused on Christ’s coming judgment and not His grace, Broadus rejected Calvin and the Fathers interpretation. His awareness of the logical connection of the text was the specific reason that Broadus adopted his view and rejected Calvin and the Fathers view.

The second example demonstrates how logical interpretation can inform the interpreter and assist in determining meaning. In Matthew 6:27, Jesus instructed believers not to worry because a believer could not “add one cubit unto his stature.” Broadus noted interpreters were divided regarding the meaning of the term “stature.” Some believed it referred to height, its more common usage, while others believed it referred to age, a more uncommon usage. Broadus believed the term “stature” should be understood as “age,” since it is “more appropriate to the connection.” He

¹²Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 489.

¹³Ibid.

concluded, “The object of the sentence is to show that it is in vain to be anxious about food. (vs. 25f) Now few men are anxious to obtain food that they may increase their stature, but all men that they may prolong their life.”¹⁴ Broadus chose to associate the term “stature” with its less common usage due to the context of the passage itself, which reveals his awareness of the context and his commitment to interpret texts in a manner that is consistent with that context.

Historical Interpretation

Broadus was also convinced Scripture should be interpreted in light of history. This involved studying the cultures and customs of the ancient world, as these could often provide illumination for the interpreter. It also included reading and referencing extra-biblical sources in order to gain insight into the historical context of the biblical passage under consideration. Throughout his commentary, Broadus included additional information about people, places, objects, and customs to aid the interpreter.

Broadus often provided additional information about people using historical sources. In his section on Matthew 14, Broadus provided extensive details about Herod the tetrarch. Broadus explained that Herod’s “mother was a Samaritan,” that “he and his brother Archelaus (2:22) had spent their youth at Rome,” that Herod had divorced his first wife and married his step-brother’s wife Herodias, that Herod “was not naturally a cruel man” but was “self-indulgent and unscrupulous,”

¹⁴Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 149. Aware that some would object to this interpretation because the term “cubit” is usually associated with size and not age, Broadus wrote, “It is objected that ‘cubit’ is nowhere in Scripture found in this metaphorical application to the duration of life; but it is supported by the analogous expression in Psa. 39:5, ‘Thou has made my days as hand-breadths; and mine age is as nothing before thee’; also by the expression of a Greek poet, ‘For a cubit’s time we enjoy the bloom of our youth’; compare also (Achelis) Job 9:25, and the Greek phrases ‘a span of life’ and ‘a finger-long day.’” This shows Broadus was aware of both interpretations and recognized the objections to his view. Nevertheless, Broadus was convinced the connection of the passage called for the interpretation of “stature” as “age.”

and other details about the ruler.¹⁵ This thorough examination of people extended beyond individuals to groups. Broadus discussed the Samaritans in his comments on Matthew 10:5. He provided information concerning their origins, their location, and the animosity that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews.¹⁶ These examples reveal the importance of historic individuals and people groups, as Broadus sought to convey information about them to inform his interpretation of the text.

Broadus also provided extensive information about biblical geography. He described Galilee in great detail, seeking to correct the notion that it was “a poor country, with a degraded population” and that it contained so many Gentiles that Jesus “was a ‘Foreign Missionary,’ as habitually preaching to the heathen.”¹⁷ He described the location of the cities listed in Matthew 11:21 and provided details about each one.¹⁸ Almost every time a location is mentioned in the Gospel, Broadus discussed the geography of the area or pointed the reader to another section in the commentary where he had previously discussed the geography of the region.

Another historical element Broadus considered and discussed was biblical objects described in the text, especially when the object would seem foreign to his readers. For example, Broadus described the “mill” in his comments on Matthew 24:41. “The lower millstone, say twelve inches in diameter, is placed on the ground and perhaps fixed in it;” wrote Broadus, “the upper stone is turned by a peg near the outer edge.”¹⁹ Broadus went on to describe how two women would have used the

¹⁵Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 314.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 218-19.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 247. Broadus discussed the probably locations of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, and Sidon and provided a few details about each city.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 495.

mill. His description of the mill and explanation of how two women were required to use the mill were insightful, shedding light of the passage and showing the distinction between mills powered by people and mills powered “by an ass” or “by water.”²⁰

Broadus also provided background information on biblical customs and traditions. In his discussion of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17, Broadus argued Matthew utilized the Old Testament and Jewish records to develop the genealogy of Jesus. He demonstrated the existence of Jewish records by pointing to Paul’s knowledge of his tribal connection in Philippians 3:5, as well as references in Josephus’s writings to “his priestly and royal descent” and references in Eusebius’s writings to the existence of Jewish records.²¹ The Jewish tradition of preserving family lineage made it possible for Israelites to trace their family history, so Broadus discussed the tradition and how it enabled Matthew to include the genealogy of Jesus in his gospel.

Broadus even used the historical context to correct those who challenged the truthfulness of Jesus’ statements. For example, Broadus defended Jesus’ use of the phrase “take up his cross” in Matthew 16:24. Broadus noted that “a Jewish Rabbi of to-day has said that the saying here ascribed to Jesus is an anachronism.”²² Broadus proved this statement false by pointing to the eight hundred rebels who were crucified by Alexander Janneus “more than a hundred years before our Lord’s ministry.”²³ Plus, “even under Antiochus Epiphanes, many Jews were crucified.”²⁴

²⁰Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 495.

²¹Ibid., 2.

²²Ibid., 366.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

Based on these two historical examples of widespread crucifixion, Broadus argued, “The Jews had long been familiar with the punishment of crucifixion.”²⁵ Again, his knowledge of history helped Broadus defend Scripture and interpret Scripture consistently.

Figurative Interpretation

Broadus was committed to a literal approach to Scripture, but this should not be confused with a “literalistic” approach to Scripture that leaves no room for figurative language. Broadus recognized that biblical authors often utilized figurative language to communicate literal truth, and he encouraged interpreters to identify figurative language and interpret it as such. His commentary on the Gospel of Matthew is full of examples of an interpreter recognizing and properly interpreting figurative language.

One such example of Broadus’s ability to recognize figurative language and interpret it properly is found in his comments on Matthew 4:6. He wrote, “The expression, **in their hands they shall bear thee up**, as a mother or a nurse supports a child (Num. 11:12; Deut. 1:31; Isa. 49:22; Acts 13:18, margin; 1 Thess. 2:7), is of course figurative, referring to providential protection.”²⁶ Broadus recognized the figurative language in the passage and knew Matthew used it to communicate the literal truth that God providentially protects His children.

Another example is found in Broadus’s explanation of Matthew 23:24, where Jesus said the Pharisees strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Broadus said, “**The gnat and the camel** are put in contrast as extremes in regard to size; the latter is

²⁵Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 366.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 66. The bold type is used in the original.

obviously a strong hyperbole, for the camel was the largest animal familiarly known to the Jews.”²⁷ Broadus recognized this figurative, hyperbolic language was meant to teach the Pharisees were “very scrupulous about the minutest matters of ceremonial observance” while simultaneously neglecting “the highest ethical duties enjoined by the law.”²⁸ Again, Broadus recognized figurative language while still embracing the literal truth conveyed by the imagery.

Allegorical Interpretation

Broadus warned against rampant spiritualizing in his homiletics book. This sentiment is evident in his commentary as well. Broadus was very cautious about improper allegorizing, as his comments on the Parable of the Ten Virgins demonstrate (Matt 25:1-13). He explained the meaning of the parable in a simple and straightforward way: “It teaches. . . that the only way to be ready when Jesus comes is to be ready always.”²⁹ He chided those who tried to assign spiritual meaning to every element of the parable, writing, “To find some separate spiritual meaning in the lamps, the vessels, the oil, and the sellers of oil, etc., seems here worse than idle.”³⁰ A similar warning is given in regards to the Parable of the Hidden Treasure.³¹

²⁷Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 473. The bold type is used in the original.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 500.

³⁰Ibid., 501.

³¹Ibid., 305. Broadus wrote, “It seems idle to seek any special spiritual meaning in the rehidings, or in the field, as that it means ‘the church,’ or the Scriptures (Origen), or Christ, because of Col. 2:3.”

In spite of his caution concerning allegorizing, Broadus was aware of the fact that biblical authors often used physical people, objects, and events to communicate spiritual truth. When an interpreter can confidently determine a biblical author intended to communicate spiritual truth using people, objects, or events, he should not be afraid to interpret the text in an allegorical or spiritual fashion. An example of this is found in Broadus's explanation of Matthew's citation of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15. Commenting on this citation, Broadus wrote, "Hosea clearly refers to the calling of Israel out of Egypt, the nation being elsewhere spoken of as God's 'son.' (Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9; comp. Wisdom 18:13) But there is an evident typical relation between Israel and Messiah."³² Broadus went even further, however, finding "resemblance in minute details": "his temptation of forty days in the desert, resembles Israel's temptation of forty years in the desert, which itself corresponded to the forty days spent by the spies."³³ Broadus argued Matthew interpreted Hosea 11:1 typologically and that this interpretation was valid.³⁴

Simpler examples can be found in Broadus's interpretation of the parables. While cautious to avoid idle speculation, Broadus knew Jesus used parables to illustrate "moral and spiritual truths by comparison of things physical and social, the material for this abounding in actual analogies between the two spheres of existence."³⁵ In the Parable of the Sowers, Broadus identified the seed as the "word

³²Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 23.

³³Ibid.

³⁴He made a similar argument in Matt 21:42. "But there is a typical relation between the history of Israel and the Messiah (see on 2:15), and our Lord shows us in this passage a prophecy at the same of himself." Ibid., 443.

³⁵Ibid., 283. Later, Broadus argued, "Everything in nature has its moral analogies; Jesus has set us the example of perceiving these and using them for religious instruction." This comment was directed towards Jesus' use of parables, where He communicated moral and spiritual truth using natural things. Ibid., 491.

of the kingdom,” which was “our Lord’s own teaching.”³⁶ In the Parable of the Talents, Broadus argued the talents “represent whatever God gives us to use and improve,” not just money.³⁷ As a whole, however, Broadus was cautious to assign spiritual meanings to physical people, objects, or events, preferring to take a more literal approach.

Consistent Interpretation

Broadus believed Scripture was inspired and contained no errors. Therefore, no passage should ever be interpreted in such a way that it contradicts the plain teachings of Scripture in other places. In short, Scripture should be interpreted consistently. If two passages seemed to disagree, Broadus believed further study was necessary, because Scripture was inspired and contained no errors. Throughout the commentary, Broadus regularly addressed perceived contradictions in order to prove the consistency of Scripture.

In dealing with the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, Broadus felt compelled to discuss the genealogy of Jesus provided in Luke’s gospel and discuss the differences between the two genealogies. Broadus noted there was “an obvious discrepancy between the two genealogies (comp. Luke 3:23 ff.) which has always attracted attention, and to explain which, we find various theories suggested.”³⁸ Broadus presented two possible solutions to the differences in the genealogies: (1) Matthew was tracing Joseph’s lineage, whereas Luke was tracing Mary’s lineage, and (2) Matthew was giving the line of succession to the throne and Joseph was the next

³⁶Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 290.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 503.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 6.

heir due to the failure of the direct line, whereas Luke gave Joseph's private genealogy from the younger line of David since the older line failed to produce an heir.³⁹ Although Broadus favored the former solution, he concluded, "We are little concerned to show which of them is best, and under no obligation to prove that either of them is certainly correct; for we are not attempting to establish from the Genealogies the credibility of Matthew's gospel."⁴⁰ The goal was not to present an irrefutable argument but to show Matthew's genealogy does not necessarily contradict Luke's genealogy.

In another place, after discussing the chronological differences between the Gospel writers, Broadus stated, "But there is here no real contradiction between John and the other Evangelists. None of them could record the whole of Jesus' public life, and each must select according to his particular design."⁴¹ One final example is found in Broadus's treatment of the various accounts of the resurrection. Broadus acknowledged, "The five narratives of our Lord's resurrection and appearances differ much as to the details, but only in the way common when there are several independent and brief accounts of the same series of events."⁴² He went on to argue that the supposed contradictions "can all be harmonized by reasonable suppositions" and attempted to list several possible explanations.⁴³ He concluded that, although he did not find any of the suppositions "entirely satisfactory," each one was "possible," and "it will not do to say that Matt. is here in irreconcilable conflict with the other

³⁹Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 6-7.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 7.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 71.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 583.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 583-84.

Gospels.”⁴⁴ Numerous other examples could be provided, but these examples show Broadus was committed to the inerrancy of Scripture and the principle of consistency, where each passage must be interpreted in light of other passages and in such a way as to avoid contradictions.⁴⁵

Summary

These examples demonstrate that Broadus did not simply encourage others to interpret Scripture according to sound principles of interpretation. Rather, he embodied the sound interpretation that he encouraged and utilized the principles he taught to govern his own interpretation of Scripture. While it has yet to be demonstrated that his other exegetical works are based on the same principles, it is clear that Broadus’s commentary on the Gospel of Matthew was guided by the interpretive principles that he advocated in other works.

Commentary on the Gospel of Mark

Broadus’s commentary on the Gospel of Mark is less known and less recognized than his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew.⁴⁶ The commentary was published posthumously and was comprised of lesson notes Broadus had prepared

⁴⁴Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 584.

⁴⁵One powerful example is Jesus’ treatment of the law in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:17). Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the law, a statement which many critics had “vainly attempted to bring...in conflict with what Paul teaches concerning the law.” Broadus went on to explain why the two are consistent with each other: “The latter [Paul] treats of the law not as a rule of life, but as a means of justification; and he declares, not only that the law cannot justify now that Christ is come, but that it never was able to justify, and hence the necessity for Christ’s work. ‘The law of the Lord is perfect,’ said the Psalmist, *i. e.*, free from defect or blemish, and precisely adapted to the object for which it was given; while yet for a higher and more spiritual dispensation its principles might be developed into greater completeness. This as to moral precepts, the subject of which our Lord proceeds to speak (*e. g.*, v. 31f., and comp. 19:8).” The two are not inconsistent; they are merely speaking about the law in different ways. *Ibid.*, 99.

⁴⁶John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1905).

for Sunday school teachers.⁴⁷ While less thorough than his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, it is still an excellent source to consider when evaluating Broadus's exegesis. A careful examination of the commentary will show Broadus's interpretation of Scripture was governed by the principles he taught, much like his interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew.

Grammatical Interpretation

Broadus's commentary on the Gospel of Mark is essentially a phrase by phrase explanation of the text. As he walked through the text of the Gospel of Mark, Broadus often defined significant words. In his comments on Mark 1:14-15, Broadus identified "two important words" that needed "careful explanation, *kingdom* and *repent*." His explanation of "kingdom" was particularly helpful. He noted:

It requires several English words to give the meaning of the Greek word translated 'kingdom.' 1. Kingship, the possession of royal authority (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 11:15). 2. Reign, the exercise of royal authority. 3. Kingdom, the subjects of royal authority (Matt. 12:25); or the territory over which royal authority is exercised (Matt. 4:8).⁴⁸

In Mark 1, Broadus argued "the prominent thought is that the reign of God, the Messianic reign, so long thought of as coming, is near at hand."⁴⁹ In similar fashion, Broadus defined the word "repent" and how Mark used it in the passage. The definition and discussion of these terms reveals the importance of grammatical interpretation to Broadus.

Since the commentary on Mark was originally intended for Sunday school teachers, it contained less Greek than the commentary on Matthew. Even then,

⁴⁷Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, v.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

Broadus could not completely refrain from discussing the Greek text. In his discussion of the cleansing practices of the Jews in Mark 7, Broadus felt compelled to discuss the different Greek words for wash.⁵⁰ In his discussion of Mark 14:56, he noted the “imperfect tense” of the verbs and how that revealed it took the religious leaders “some time” to bring false witnesses before the council.⁵¹ His love for Greek, and his attention to individual words, reveals his commitment to grammatical interpretation.

Broadus also explained the relationship between words and phrases. Commenting on Mark 10:44-45, Broadus explained verse 45 provided the reason the disciples were instructed to be servants in verse 44. He wrote, “**For** gives a reason why it shall be so among them, viz., because it is so with him, and his followers must be like him (comp. 8:34).”⁵² Broadus explained how the conjunction functioned in the sentence, demonstrating his knowledge of the syntax of the passage and showing how this helps the interpreter understand the text. These examples show Broadus understood the importance of grammar and interpreted the biblical text grammatically.

Logical Interpretation

Broadus also understood the importance of interpreting a passage within its context. The context was generally the verses surrounding the passage under consideration, but it could extend beyond the immediate passage to the book as a

⁵⁰Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 56. He wrote, “**Wash** is here in Greek *nipto*, a word applied only to washing some part of the person, as hands or feet; another word *louo* is applied only to washing the whole person, bathing (Acts 16:33; John 13:10); and a third word, *pluno*, is applied only to washing garments, nets, etc.—the Greek being well supplied with such terms, and using them with accuracy.” The bold type is used in the original.

⁵¹Ibid., 125.

⁵²Ibid., 84-85. The bold type is used in the original.

whole. In his commentary on Mark, Broadus often considered the context when interpreting the text. In his comments on the beginning of Mark 2, Broadus connected the healing of the lame man with the calling of Levi. Although the calling of Levi was “a separate event...its significance closely related to the foregoing— authority to forgive sins, mission to save sinners.”⁵³ Broadus recognized that these seemingly separate events were connected to each other, since both events focused on Jesus’ ability and mission to save sinners.

Another example is found in Broadus’s description of the resurrection of Jairus’s daughter. Jesus said the child was sleeping, which might lead some to conclude the girl was not dead. Broadus made sure his readers avoided this error, saying, “That the child really was dead, is evident from the whole tone of the narrative.”⁵⁴ While the wording may lead one to conclude the girl was simply sleeping, the context of the passage ruled out that interpretation. These examples show Broadus considered the context of each passage and interpreted the passage in light of that context.

Historical Interpretation

Broadus recognized the benefits of studying history, especially as it related to biblical interpretation. He knew knowledge of historical figures, locations, events, and customs can assist the interpreter in grasping things that would be confusing otherwise. Therefore, he included historical information throughout his commentary on the Gospel of Mark, discussing people, places, significant events, and unique customs.

⁵³Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 22.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 44.

Broadus discussed several historical figures and people groups in his commentary on Mark. He defined the Herodians as “partisans of the Herod family, who still wished instead of a Roman procurator to have in Judea a native prince of the Herod family, under Roman protection and control.”⁵⁵ He explained the differences between the school of Shammai, “a small and strict section of Pharisees in the time of Christ” who only warranted “divorce in the case of adultery,” and the school of Hillel, “the far larger and more popular section” who allowed for divorce “if anything in the wife’s appearance, character, or behavior displeased the husband.”⁵⁶ These people played a part in the biblical narrative, and Broadus provided additional information to assist the interpreter in understanding the stories of Scripture.

Broadus also provided background information on geographical locations. He located Capernaum “at Tel Hum,” which “was on the northwestern shore of the lake.”⁵⁷ He explained that the Sea of Galilee was about four and a half miles wide.⁵⁸ He described the geographical location of Tyre and Sidon and remarked that the cities were famous for their commerce and manufacturers.⁵⁹ He traced the history of Jericho from the time of the conquest to the time of Jesus.⁶⁰ Broadus had travelled to Israel, so he used personal examples as well. When commenting on the storm in Mark 6, Broadus recalled a time when “the present writer” was on the lake and it turned into a “wild, indescribable fury.”⁶¹ The geographical information provided

⁵⁵Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 99.

⁵⁶Ibid., 78.

⁵⁷Ibid., 16.

⁵⁸Ibid., 54

⁵⁹Ibid., 59.

⁶⁰Ibid., 85. He also provided extensive information about the city in the “Side-lights” section of Mark 10. Ibid., 87.

was intended to help the readers of the commentary understand the flow of the Gospel of Mark and follow along in their minds.

Broadus described biblical objects that may have been unfamiliar to his readers. An excellent example is his description of lamps in biblical times. He noted the lamps were typically made from “earthenware,” although wealthy people had lamps made from “brass, silver, gold, and bronze.”⁶² He detailed the shape of the lamps, writing, “The shape of the common lamp was that of a small plate or saucer, with the edge turned up at one side to hold the wick.”⁶³ He explained that the lamps used “olive oil” and “gave a light that was superior to the candles ‘of other days,’ but that would seem very dull and smoky to those accustomed to modern gas or kerosene.”⁶⁴ His description was vivid and thorough, and descriptions like this helped the reader visualize the objects and stories, undoubtedly making the Bible come alive.

Broadus discussed manner and customs from biblical times as well. He explained why tax collectors were hated: they represented “the hated heathen rulers” and they often “exacted wrongfully.”⁶⁵ He provided the background for Palm Sunday, connecting the waving of the palm branches and the shouting of “Hosanna” to the Jewish feast of Tabernacles and noting the practice shifted “from a supplication that Jehovah would save into an acclamation, and is here employed as a joyful recognition that Jehovah’s salvation was at hand, since Messiah had come.”⁶⁶ He briefly described

⁶¹Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 54.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 38.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 90.

the Roman practice of scourging.⁶⁷ All of these historical details were insightful and aided interpreters in understanding and explaining the biblical text.

Figurative Interpretation

Broadus also recognized the propriety of interpreting figuratively, but only when the biblical authors used figures of speech to communicate truth. Otherwise, Scripture should be interpreted literally. When the biblical authors used figures of speech, however, Broadus was quick to recognize them. In his comments on Jesus's use of leaven to describe the teaching of the Pharisees, Broadus wrote, "Our Lord, as he so often did, is teaching by a figure. Spiritual truth has always to be conveyed through analogies or metaphors."⁶⁸ Given this view, it is not surprising that Broadus found similar figures of speech throughout the Gospel of Mark.

Broadus asserted the baptism of the Holy Spirit predicted by John the Baptist was a figure and was drawn "from his employment," since immersing people under water was a central part of his ministry. He went on to write, "What a blessed thing to be baptized into the Holy Spirit, our whole being encompassed and pervaded by his blessed influence."⁶⁹ He explained Jesus' use of "the cup" as "a frequent Scripture image for receiving some providential allotment, usually one of suffering."⁷⁰ He argued Jesus' use of "my body" in relation to the Lord's Supper was "obviously a figure of speech," and "the idea of understanding that the bread really became the Saviour's body. . . could never have entered into the minds of the

⁶⁷Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 131.

⁶⁸Ibid., 64.

⁶⁹Ibid., 14.

⁷⁰Ibid., 84.

apostles.”⁷¹ All of these were figures of speech and should be interpreted as such, contended Broadus.

Allegorical Interpretation

Broadus was careful to avoid rampant spiritualizing in his commentaries, but he realized there were times when it was appropriate to find allegorical, typological, or spiritual truth in Scripture. For example, Jesus told Jairus not to fear but to believe in Mark 5:36. Broadus contended the statement was only intended for Jairus, “but the general teachings of Scripture fully warrant our applying it to every spiritual blessing, and to every temporal object which he shall see to be really most for our good and for his glory (1 John 5:14).”⁷² Broadus took the truth of the text and spiritualized it, making it applicable to “every spiritual blessing” and “every temporal object.”

Other examples demonstrate the same willingness to find spiritual or typological significance in biblical statements. When Jesus healed the blind man at Bethsaida, Broadus observed, “In the steady, persevering effort to see, he gained, by God’s blessing, the power to see. So as to the improved perception of spiritual truth.”⁷³ The passage is clearly about physical sight, but Broadus believed the passage could be applied to spiritual sight as well. When Jesus discussed the opposition to John the Baptist’s ministry, noting the Old Testament predicted this opposition, Broadus commented:

There being no direct *prediction* that the forerunner should be ill treated, we have to suppose that it refers to the ill treatment of Elijah by Ahab and Jezebel

⁷¹Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 116.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 43.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 66.

(1 Kings 18:10; 19:1-3) as a sort of *type* of the ill treatment of John the Baptist by the quite similar pair, Herod Antipas and Herodias.⁷⁴

The historical record of Elijah's mistreatment at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel was to be interpreted as a type, indicating Broadus was willing to attach spiritual or typological significance to events that extended beyond their immediate context.

Consistent Interpretation

Broadus argued the Bible should be interpreted consistently. Each passage should be considered and interpreted within the teachings of Scripture as a whole.⁷⁵ No passage should ever be interpreted in such a way that it contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture in other places. This was particularly necessary when interpreting the gospels, as there exist apparent conflicts between the gospel writers. While it was sometimes necessary to "explain what really needs explaining," Broadus insisted that "when there are apparent discrepancies of statement, or minute differences of language in reporting the same discourse or occurrence, it is very undesirable to spend much time upon these."⁷⁶ From the outset, Broadus encouraged interpreters to interpret Scriptures consistently.

Broadus often compared the gospel narratives as recorded by the different authors, being sure to clear up any apparent contradictions. He explained the focus on one blind man in Mark's gospel as opposed to two blind men in Luke's gospel by supposing "that one of the two was less conspicuous and famous," so Mark only

⁷⁴Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 72.

⁷⁵Nevertheless, the emphasis should be placed on the passage under consideration, argued Broadus. This principle could pose a particular problem in the Gospels, since there is much overlap between the gospel writers. Broadus warned against "spending so much time" on parallel passages in other gospels so "as to neglect the lesson." Yet he went on to encourage teachers to explain the parallel passages whenever necessary. *Ibid.*, x.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*

focused on the more prominent blind man.⁷⁷ He observed that Matthew said Jesus withdrew “through sadness at hearing of the death of John the Baptist,” whereas Mark said that Jesus withdrew because “Jesus and his followers could not even eat their food in quiet” and desired rest.⁷⁸ He concluded, “The two reasons are entirely compatible.”⁷⁹ All of these examples demonstrate Broadus sought to interpret Scripture consistently.

Summary

Many similarities exist between Broadus’s commentary on Mark and his commentary on Matthew. While the commentary on Matthew was more thorough than the commentary on Mark, which is to be expected given the audience of the commentary, the comments on Mark were governed by the interpretive principles that Broadus taught and advocated.

Unpublished Lecture Notes

In addition to his published commentaries, Broadus’s lecture notes are an invaluable source for considering his exegesis.⁸⁰ As a professor New Testament interpretation, Broadus lectured on various New Testament books throughout his teaching career. Although his notes on the various books are not exhaustive or thorough, they do provide insight into his exegesis and application of hermeneutical principles. This section will seek to provide examples of Broadus utilizing his

⁷⁷Broadus, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 39.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 51.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰These lecture notes have never been published. They are located in the John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Boxes 19-21, Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

hermeneutical principles in his lecture notes, thus demonstrating his commitment to the principles identified in this dissertation.

Grammatical Interpretation

In his notes on the Gospel of John, Broadus noted “Word” was a Greek philosophy term that “signified both reason and speech. He who is here meant is, so to speak, both God’s thought and God’s expression of thought to mankind.”⁸¹ In his exegetical lecture notes on 1 Peter, Broadus discussed the use of “δοκιμιον,” which means “approval” or “the result of proving.”⁸² Broadus noted it was “commonly used. . . for means of proving, sometimes for process of proving, and also for result of proving.”⁸³ Broadus opted for the third option, the “result of proving,” adding that the “various applications must depend on usage” and the “sense in each case” must “be determined by the connection.”⁸⁴ In virtually every exegetical work Broadus wrote, he was careful to define words and discuss the relationship between words and phrases, often employing his knowledge of Greek to discern the meaning of the text.

Logical Interpretation

Lecturing on 1 Corinthians 1:10-11, Broadus noted Paul’s “general exhortation to union” in verse 10 was followed by the “reason for this exhortation” in

⁸¹John A. Broadus, “Gospel of John Notes,” 47, box 19, folder 8, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸²John A. Broadus, “Notes on Exegetical Lecture of 1 Peter,” box 19, folder 10, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

verse 11. Once the existence of divisions was established, Broadus argued, Paul was able to move to his “arguments and appeals against divisions.”⁸⁵ His discussion of the section showed an awareness of the flow of the author’s thought and the context of the section as a whole. In his exegetical lecture notes on Romans, Broadus discussed the two uses of εἰς in Romans 7:10. He wrote, “Notice εἰς the design and the result. Difference not at all in the preposition, but in the connection. The law was designed to give life, i. e., suited to do so if obeyed. Though God did not expect it actually to give life.”⁸⁶ The same preposition was used, but two separate uses were assigned based on the context, which shows Broadus's familiarity with the context and his willingness to let the context shape how he interpreted the passage and which usage he assigned to the preposition.

Historical Interpretation

When trying to decide on the figurative or literal use of the phrase “fought with beasts” in 1 Corinthians 15:32, Broadus remarked that “such savage persecution by the Roman authorities does not begin till 7 years later.”⁸⁷ Since the Roman persecution did not become severe until after 1 Corinthians was written, Broadus concluded the phrase was intended to be understood figuratively. His knowledge of history, notably Roman history, clearly impacted his interpretation here. In his notes

⁸⁵John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians Notes,” box 19, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸⁶John A. Broadus, “Notes on Romans 7:7ff,” box 19, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸⁷John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians Notes,” box 19, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

on the Gospel of John, Broadus discussed the water pots in John 2 as pots “cut out of stone, large and solid,” holding “18 to 27 gallons.”⁸⁸

When discussing the woman at the well in John 4, Broadus noted the animosity between Jews and Samaritans, explaining the Jews sometimes “took the route beyond the Jordan. . . to avoid the hated and hostile region” of Samaria.⁸⁹ In his notes on the Gospel of John, Broadus encouraged students to “make themselves familiar with 1 and 2 Maccabees and with Josephus, especially Antiquity Books xii to xx, the most valuable section of his works.”⁹⁰ Here, Broadus was encouraging students to study history, since it was so valuable to interpreting Scripture. Again, Broadus understood the importance of historical interpretation and used his knowledge of history to interpret Scripture.

Figurative Interpretation

There are few examples of Broadus interpreting Scripture in a figurative manner in his lecture notes. This is probably due to the purpose of the notes, since they were exegetical in nature, as well as the biblical texts examined in the books, as most of the lecture notes were on epistles and contained less figurative language. One striking example is his comments on 1 Corinthians 15:32 in regards to Paul’s fight with “beasts” in Ephesus. Broadus concluded this language was “probably

⁸⁸John A. Broadus, “Gospel of John Notes,” box 19, folder 8, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸⁹John A. Broadus, “Gospel of John Notes,” box 19, folder 8, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹⁰Ibid.

figurative.”⁹¹ This was the exception rather than the norm, though, as Broadus generally interpreted the Bible in a plain, literal fashion.

Allegorical Interpretation

There are no examples of allegorical interpretation in Broadus's exegetical lecture notes. The lack of allegorical interpretation is likely due to the biblical texts which Broadus covered in his notes, as well as his approach to interpretation in general. The exegetical lecture notes primarily deal with epistolary literature, and Broadus's general approach was to understand each biblical text in a literal, straightforward manner. Therefore, it is not surprising that his lecture notes do not contain any specific examples of allegorical interpretation.

Consistent Interpretation

In his lecture notes, Broadus often cross-referenced other passages that supported or shed light on the passage he was discussing. For example, in his notes on 1 Corinthians, Broadus explained the food that had been offered to idols “was not changed” and that “food commends us nothing,” which Jesus Himself taught in Matthew 15:11.⁹² Later, he examined Paul's unwillingness to accept support in 1 Corinthians 9:1-14 and pointed out various passages that explained why Paul refused to accept financial support, even though he had the right to accept it.⁹³ His comments on the other passages, as well as 1 Corinthians 9, helped provide a unified

⁹¹John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians Notes,” box 19, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹²John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians Notes,” box 19, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹³Ibid. Broadus argued Paul supported himself as “an example of industry, 2 Thess. 3:9” and as “an example of benevolence, Acts 20:35.”

explanation for why Paul refused financial support from many of the churches in which he served.

In his lecture notes on Daniel, Broadus explained the apparent “chronological difficulty” of Daniel’s statement that the Babylonian captivity took place in “the 3rd year of Jehoiakim” as opposed to Jeremiah’s statement that it was in the “4th year of Jehoiakim.”⁹⁴ Broadus preferred the simple explanation that Jeremiah was referring to the “sole reign of Nebuchadnezzar which was in the 4th year of Jehoiakim’s reign,” whereas Daniel was referring to the “3rd year of Nebuchadnezzar’s coregency” with Jehoiakim.⁹⁵ He interpreted the text in a consistent manner, and this is evident even in his rough lecture notes.

Summary

Although the lecture notes were not complete or thorough, they do provide insight into Broadus’s hermeneutic. The lecture notes reveal Broadus consistently employed the hermeneutical principles that he advocated in his writings. Although examples of each of the principles has been provided, there were numerous others that could have been provided, particularly for the principles of grammatical, logical, and consistent interpretation.

Conclusion

From this survey of Broadus’s exegetical works, it becomes clear Broadus was a practitioner of his own hermeneutical methodology. He did not simply encourage others to employ sound hermeneutical principles when interpreting

⁹⁴John A. Broadus, “Notes on Daniel,” box 19, folder 16, John Albert Broadus Papers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹⁵Ibid.

Scripture. Rather, he employed those principles in his own exegesis and embodied faithful biblical interpretation. The numerous examples of each principle from the various exegetical works of Broadus support this conclusion. It remains to be seen whether these principles will be evident in Broadus's sermons, but from his exegetical works, it is clear Broadus was capable of employing sound interpretive principles to properly discern the meaning of the biblical text.

CHAPTER 6

BROADUS AND BIBLICAL PROCLAMATION

Introduction

John Broadus was one of the homiletical giants of the nineteenth century. A. T. Robertson heard “Beecher and Phillips Brooks, Maclaren, Joseph Parker and Spurgeon, John Hall and Moody, John Clifford and David Lloyd George,” yet he declared, “At his best and in a congenial atmosphere Broadus was the equal of any man I have ever heard.”¹ E. C. Dargan agreed, “As a preacher John A. Broadus was one of the greatest of his age and country.”² Similarly, Vernon Stanfield argued, “During the last half of the nineteenth century in America, no Baptist preacher enjoyed greater popular fame than did John Albert Broadus. By his Seminary colleagues, by denominational leaders, by competent critics of preaching, and by appreciative congregations, he was ranked as one of the leading preachers of his time.”³ Given the accolades he has received as a preacher, it is surprising his practice of preaching has not received much attention. This chapter will take a small step to correct this situation by briefly summarizing Broadus’s theory of preaching; analyzing his sermons to see if they were representative of the theory he espouses,

¹Archibald Thomas Robertson, “Broadus as Scholar and Preacher,” in *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, reprint (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 118.

²Edwin Charles Dargan, “John Albert Broadus—Scholar and Preacher,” *The Crozer Quarterly* 29 (April 1925), 171.

³John A. Broadus, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, ed. Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 1.

particularly in the area of interpretation; and evaluating his homiletical practice as a whole.

An Overview of Broadus's Theory of Preaching

A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons is a classic work, containing John A. Broadus's thoughts on the subject of preparing and delivering sermons. He organized the book around four of the five canons of classical rhetoric: materials of preaching (invention), arrangement of a sermon (arrangement), style, and delivery of sermons (delivery).⁴ The only canon missing is memory, which is understandable given Broadus's appreciation for extemporaneous preaching.⁵ This section will provide a brief overview of each section to familiarize the reader with Broadus's theory of preaching as represented in his perennial textbook on preaching.⁶

The Source of the Sermon

The first section was titled "Materials of Preaching" and focused on the source for preaching material. From where does a preacher draw his material? For Broadus, the answer was simple: the Bible. He stated, "The primary idea is that the discourse is a development of the text, an explanation, illustration, application of its

⁴For a thorough examination of how rhetoric influenced Broadus's approach to preaching, see Paul Huber, "A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus" (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 1955). For a brief summary, see Roger Duke, "John A. Broadus, Rhetoric, and a *Treatise*," in *John A. Broadus: A Living Legacy* (Nashville: B & H, 2009), 68-96. For a specific example of how Richard Whately's theory of argument, as presented in his *Elements of Rhetoric*, influenced Broadus, see Robert Allan Vogel, "Richard Whately's Theory of Argument and Its Influence on the Homiletic Theory and Practice of John Albert Broadus" (master's thesis, Portland State University, 1986).

⁵For Broadus's views on extemporaneous preaching and its superiority to reading or quoting a manuscript from memory, see John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Co., 1870), 367-400.

⁶No summary of the final section, "Conduct of Public Worship," will be provided in this chapter. The section contains brief comments on various elements of corporate worship but does not directly address the issue of preaching.

teachings. Our business is to teach God's word." Thus, the sermon should be based on a biblical text.⁷

Once a text was selected, the text must be interpreted, argued Broadus. He contended, "To interpret and apply his text in accordance with its real meaning, is one of the preacher's most sacred duties. He stands before the people for the very purpose of teaching and exhorting them out of the Word of God."⁸ Only after careful study of a text could a preacher communicate the author's intended meaning.⁹

Next, the preacher must classify the subject of the text. There were four broad subjects discussed by Broadus: doctrinal subjects, subjects of morality, historical subjects, and experimental subjects.¹⁰ In addition to these four subjects, Broadus mentioned occasional sermons like funerals, educational gatherings, denominational meetings, and sermons to children. Identifying the general subject helps the preacher identify the main theme and provides the sermon with unity, according to Broadus. The preacher must also gather material for the sermon. The material could come from multiple places: materials possessed beforehand, materials

⁷Broadus listed six advantages of preaching from a biblical text: (1) "It constantly recalls the fact just mentioned, that our undertaking is not to guide the people by our own wisdom, but to impart to them the teachings of God in his Word;" (2) "If the text is well chosen, it awakens interest at the outset;" (3) "It often aids the hearer in remembering the train of thought, having this effect wherever the sermon is really evolved from the text;" (4) "It affords opportunity of explaining and impressing some passage of Scripture;" (5) It tends to prevent our wandering utterly away from Scriptural topics and views;" and (6) Greater variety will be gained than if the mind were left altogether to the suggestion of circumstances, for then it will often fall back into its old ruts; and this variety is attained just in proportion as one restricts himself to the specific thought of each particular text." Broadus, *A Treatise*, 23. Broadus also provided eight rules for selecting a text. For a discussion of these rules, see chap. 4 of this dissertation.

⁸Broadus, *A Treatise*, 33.

⁹For an examination of Broadus's hermeneutical presuppositions and the hermeneutical principles he advocated, see chap. 4.

¹⁰Broadus, *A Treatise*, 67-68.

that arise from the study of the text, materials that originate from the preacher, or materials borrowed from other people.¹¹

In the last few chapters of the section, Broadus discussed special materials of preaching: explanation, argumentation, illustration, and application. First, the materials for the sermon should include explanation. Broadus contended the explanation of “the Scriptures would seem to be among the primary functions of the preacher.”¹² Second, the sermon should also contain argumentation. Broadus wrote, “Argument, as to the truth and value and claims of the gospel, as to the peril and guilt of their position, is one of the means by which we must strive to bring them, through the special blessing of the Spirit, into some real, some operative belief.”¹³ Third, the materials of preaching should include illustrations. Broadus stated, “The importance of illustration in preaching is beyond expression. In numerous cases it is our best means of explaining religious truth, and often to the popular mind our only means of proving it.”¹⁴ Finally, the materials of preaching must include application. From Broadus’s perspective, “Application in a sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion, or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be done.”¹⁵

The first section makes it clear Broadus believed preaching revolved around the Word of God. The preacher must select, interpret, classify, explain, argue, and apply the biblical text. He devoted twice as many pages to this section

¹¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 95-116.

¹²*Ibid.*, 119. According to Broadus, explanation of the text must include pulpit exegesis—which involved presenting “results and not processes” of exegesis—and description. Explanation of subjects must include definition and exemplification.

¹³*Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 183. Broadus encouraged preachers to discover illustrations through observation, invention, science, history, literature and art, and Scripture.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 197.

than he did to any of the other sections in his treatise, revealing the centrality of the Word to the task of preaching in Broadus's theory of preaching.

The Structure of the Sermon

The second section was titled "Arrangement of a Sermon" and focused on the organization of the sermon. "The effective arrangement of the materials" was "scarcely less important than their intrinsic interest and force," said Broadus. Effective arrangement benefits the speaker, benefits the audience, and assists in memorization.¹⁶ The main parts of the sermon were identified as the introduction, the plan and divisions, and the conclusion.¹⁷

Broadus also discussed different types, or "species," of sermons in this section. The three main types of sermons were subject-sermons, text-sermons, and expository sermons. Subject-sermons were sermons on subjects that were taken from the biblical text, but the sermon was not organized or arranged based on the text. It was "divided and treated according to its own nature, just as it would be if not derived from a text."¹⁸ In contrast, the text-sermon takes the divisions "from the text."¹⁹ An expository sermon "is occupied mainly, or at any rate very largely, with the exposition of Scripture."²⁰ The expository sermon goes beyond a text-sermon, in which "the leading ideas of the passage are brought out," by making sure the "details are suitably explained, and made to furnish the chief material of the discourse."²¹

¹⁶Broadus, *A Treatise*, 209-15.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 217-52.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 253.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 265.

²¹*Ibid.*, 271.

The second section focused on the arrangement of the materials for preaching. Broadus clearly believed the materials for preaching were most important, but he also valued arrangement, noting it was “scarcely less important” than the “intrinsic interest and force” of the materials.

The Style of the Sermon

The third section was titled “Style” and focused on “one’s manner of expressing his thoughts,” which Broadus stated was “obviously a matter of very great importance.”²² Thankfully, preachers could improve their style through “the study of language,” “the study of literature,” and “careful practice, in writing and speaking.”²³

Broadus also discussed the key properties of style in the section: perspicuity, energy, and elegance.²⁴ Perspicuity is “the most important property of style,” argued Broadus. This is particularly true in regards to preaching. Broadus declared, “A preacher is more solemnly bound than any other person, to make his language perspicuous. This is very important in wording a law, in writing a title-deed, or a physician’s prescription, but still more important in proclaiming the Word of God, words of eternal life.”²⁵ The second property of style was energy, which included concepts such as “animation, force, and passion.”²⁶ Broadus wrote, “The chief requisite to an energetic style is an energetic nature. There must be vigorous

²²Broadus, *A Treatise*, 284.

²³*Ibid.*, 288-96.

²⁴This classification is not original with Broadus. He acknowledged his indebtedness to George Campbell and Richard Whately for the classification of perspicuity, energy, and elegance. See footnote #1 in *ibid.*, 301.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 302. Broadus encouraged preachers to be perspicuous, or clear, by using intelligible words and phrases that “exactly express” their thoughts, by carefully crafting sentences and paragraphs, and appropriately using “brevity or diffuseness” in their sermons.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 319.

thinking, earnest if not passionate feeling, and the determined purpose to accomplish some object.” Without this, “the man’s style will have no true, exalted energy.”²⁷ Energy also depended upon “the choice of terms, the construction of sentences, conciseness, and the use of Figures.”²⁸

The final property of style was elegance. Broadus believed preachers should strive to achieve a balanced elegance in the pulpit, avoiding “embellishment” without neglecting “native beauty, and even some ornament of style.”²⁹ Elegance could be achieved by using “the most energetic terms:” avoiding “harsh or disagreeable combinations:” using “the figures which give energy to style,” as these will often “impart elegance;” pursuing “simplicity.”³⁰ Broadus ended the section with a chapter on imagination as it relates to style. Imagination was the faculty of the mind that allowed preachers to arrange, analyze, produce images, and realize and depict biblical truth.³¹

Aside from the section on the materials for preaching, this was the section to which Broadus devoted the most time. Broadus was clearly committed to the centrality of Scripture in preaching and believed solid biblical content was essential to the task of preaching. Nevertheless, he also realized the importance of style as it relates to preaching. He compared style to a sword, writing, “Style is the glitter and polish of the warrior’s sword, but is also its keen edge. It can render mediocrity acceptable and even seductive, and truth may lie unnoticed for want of its aid.”³²

²⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 319-20.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 320.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 345-46.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 347-51.

³¹*Ibid.*, 357-59.

³²*Ibid.*, 285.

Given the power of style, Broadus challenged preachers to communicate with clarity, passion, and polished elegance.

The Delivery of the Sermon

The fourth section was titled “Delivery of Sermons” and focused on the communication of biblical truth. First, Broadus discussed three methods of preaching: reading, recitation, and extemporaneous preaching. The first method of preaching was writing out a full manuscript and then reading the manuscript. While the approach has its advantages, Broadus cautioned against reading from a manuscript since it “almost inevitably” lead to “greater coldness of manner” and “is more injurious to the voice.”³³ The second method was recitation from a manuscript. Again, Broadus acknowledged the benefits of reciting a sermon from memory, but he realized this approach limited the preacher’s freedom in the moment of preaching, as “the mind is apt to be all in shackles.”³⁴ Plus, this approach is time-consuming and often results in “the painful dread of failure.”³⁵ Therefore, Broadus advocated the third approach: extemporaneous preaching. Although the term “extemporaneous” suggests speaking without preparation, this was not what Broadus had in mind. Broadus admitted the term usually denotes “speaking ‘off hand’” but expanded the term to include “cases in which there has been preparation of the thought, however thorough, but the language is left to be suggested at the moment.”³⁶ This approach even included writing out a manuscript and then preaching from the thoughts

³³Broadus, *A Treatise*, 374-75.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 379.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 380.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 383.

contained in the manuscript, as long as no effort was made to repeat the exact wording of the manuscript. Broadus believed this approach combined the best of the other approaches while avoiding most of the downfalls. Extemporaneous preaching allowed preachers to study and prepare thoroughly without being dependent on the completed manuscript, which is why Broadus advocated the approach.

Next, Broadus discussed the preacher's voice. He declared, "The voice is the speaker's great instrument. Nothing else in a man's physical constitution is nearly so important."³⁷ He highlighted the importance of the pitch, volume, power, and melody of a preacher's voice and provided several suggestions for improving the voice, like singing, reading, having conversations, and engaging in vocal exercises. He also provided four hints for managing the voice when preaching: (1) do not begin on too high a key, (2) do not suffer the voice to drop in the last words of a sentence, (3) never fail to take breath before the lungs are entirely exhausted, (4) look frequently at the remotest hearers, and see to it that they hear you, and (5) let there be variety; of pitch, of force, and of speed."³⁸ Many of these suggestions can still be found in preaching textbooks today.³⁹

Finally, Broadus discussed the preacher's "action," or his non-verbal communication. This included "expression of countenance, posture and gesture."⁴⁰ Broadus recognized that "in many cases a gesture is much more expressive than any number of words," so he encouraged preachers to be expressive, maintain good posture, and use effective gestures. While Broadus believed the content of the

³⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 407.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 414-16.

³⁹For a good example, see Hershael York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* (Nashville: B & H, 2003), 241-44.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 421.

message was most important, he wanted preachers to make sure their actions did not detract from the gospel that was being presented, so he provided instructions for natural, non-distracting gestures in the pulpit.

Summary

Broadus's theory of preaching was very thorough, covering every element of sermon preparation and delivery, but it is clear the driving force behind his theory of preaching was the centrality of Scripture. The Bible was the source of the sermon, the fountain from which his materials were drawn, and it was imperative that each passage was properly interpreted. The arrangement of the sermon served the text, helping the preacher communicate the text in a powerful and memorable way. The style of the sermon was only important in so far as it helped the preacher communicate the life-changing truths of the gospel. The extemporaneous approach to preaching was deemed the best approach because it allowed the preacher to study the text and freely deliver the sermon by the empowerment of the Spirit. Given the Word-centered approach Broadus espoused, one would expect his sermons to be based on the biblical text and contain examples of sound biblical interpretation. The next section will seek to establish the fact that Broadus's sermons reflect his commitment to Scripture and sound interpretation and are consistent with his theory of preaching.

An Analysis of Broadus's Sermons

Broadus emphasized the importance of proper interpretation in his treatise, but did he utilize the principles advocated in his treatise when he preached? A careful analysis of Broadus's sermons is necessary to answer this question and to determine whether or not his hermeneutic played a major role in shaping his preaching. Before analyzing his sermons, two questions must be answered. First, is it

possible to evaluate Broadus's preaching based on his manuscripts? Second, does the lack of evidence of some of the principles in certain sermons indicate Broadus did not utilize sound hermeneutical principles or accurately interpret the text?

First, is it possible to assess Broadus as a preacher based on his sermon manuscripts? As Wayne McDill noted, "A sermon only exists when it is preached. . . . Though we refer to outlines and transcripts or manuscripts as 'sermons,' technically they are not sermons."⁴¹ Given this distinction, none of Broadus's sermons actually exist. The only evidence of Broadus's practice of preaching is his manuscripts. Although the manuscripts cannot fully convey the powerful preaching of Broadus, they do provide insight into his practice of preaching. Commenting on the sermons in *Sermons and Addresses*, A. T. Robertson noted, "These fail to catch the power of his public speech, but they do adequately portray his habits as a preacher."⁴² Therefore, an evaluation of Broadus as a preacher based on his sermon manuscripts is possible.

Second, if some of the principles are not evident in a large percentage of sermons, does this indicate Broadus was inconsistent and did not employ the hermeneutical principles he advocated? The answer to this question is an unequivocal no. Broadus actually indicated the sermon was not the place to parade exegesis. He differentiated between "pulpit exegesis, or exposition," and the exegesis done in sermon preparation, writing, "Pulpit exegesis, or exposition, is in certain respects a different thing. We have here, save in exceptional cases, to present results

⁴¹Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: B & H, 2006), 201.

⁴²Robertson, *The Minister*, 119.

and not processes.”⁴³ An examination of Broadus's commentaries and sermons bears out his commitment to this principle.

For example, Broadus's commentary includes grammatical and historical notes on Matthew 8:11. Broadus observed the phrase “sit down” literally meant “recline.” He wrote, “Wherever in the N. T. ‘sit,’ ‘sit down,’ etc., are used with reference to eating, or where the phrase is ‘sit at meat,’ etc., the Greek always has some word denoting ‘to recline.’”⁴⁴ He also discussed the Greco-Roman custom of eating and Rabbinical views of the Messianic reign.⁴⁵ Yet Broadus's sermon manuscript on Matthew 8:11 does not contain any grammatical discussions or historical explanations.⁴⁶ The omission of these principles in the sermon manuscript does not mean Broadus was not aware of the grammar and the historical context of the passage. He simply chose not to include them in the sermon. Comparing the notes in his commentary with the other unpublished sermon manuscripts based on other Matthean texts yields similar results.⁴⁷

⁴³Broadus, *A Treatise*, 119-20.

⁴⁴John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 179.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 179.

⁴⁶John A. Broadus, “Matthew 8:11,” box 1, folder 50, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁴⁷John A. Broadus, “Matthew 6:6,” box 1, folder 49, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY; John A. Broadus, “Matthew 13:33,” box 1, folder 51, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY; John A. Broadus, “Matthew 14:22-33,” box 1, folder 52, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY; and John A. Broadus, “Matthew 18:3,” box 1, folder 53, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

A comparison of his commentary on the Gospel of Mark and his sermon manuscripts from the Gospel of Mark also demonstrate the distinction between exegesis done in preparation for the sermon and “pulpit exegesis.” His sermon on Mark 9:24 contains no evidence of thorough grammatical study, but his commentary makes it clear Broadus was familiar with the grammar of the text in the original languages.⁴⁸ In his commentary, Broadus warned against making “nice distinctions” between the terms “heart,” “soul,” “mind,” and “strength” in Mark 12:30, as “the accumulation of terms in this case is designed to strengthen the expression,” yet his sermon did not address Mark’s use of these terms and their cumulative effect.⁴⁹

Based on the comparisons between his exegetical works and his sermon manuscripts, one can conclude that Broadus did not include all of his exegetical processes or conclusions in his sermon, even though he had thoroughly interpreted the text. According to Broadus's theory of preaching, the sermon was not the place to parade exegesis but to present the results of sound exegesis. His sermon manuscripts reveal his commitment to this principle. Therefore, evidence of exegesis in sermons strongly indicates careful interpretation of Scripture, whereas lack of evidence means Broadus was consistent with his approach to preaching and does not prove he did not interpret the text according to the principles he advocated in his writings.

In summary, the sermon manuscripts are unable to present the power of Broadus’s preaching, but they do supply the preacher with ample material to evaluate

⁴⁸John A. Broadus, “Mark 9:24,” box 1, folder 56, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, and John A. Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1905), 73.

⁴⁹Broadus, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, 102, and John A. Broadus, “Mark 12:30,” box 1, folder 57, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

his preaching ministry. Further, while the failure to mention exegetical processes in the sermon does not prove Broadus did not properly interpret the text, the inclusion of exegetical comments in the sermon provides incredibly strong evidence that Broadus relied on sound interpretive principles to prepare and deliver sermons. This section will analyze the published and unpublished sermon manuscripts of John Broadus in an effort to determine to what extent his hermeneutic affected his preaching.⁵⁰

Grammatical Interpretation

Broadus encouraged preachers to interpret the text grammatically. According to Broadus, every preacher should “endeavor to ascertain the precise meaning of the words and phrases used in the text.” No grammatical study could “be made too minute or protracted,” he said.⁵¹ Given Broadus’s familiarity with the original languages and proficiency in Greek, it is not surprising that many of his sermons reveal careful attention to the grammar and syntax of the biblical text. Out of the 203 sermons examined, 109 sermons demonstrate a commitment to grammatical interpretation. In other words, a study of Broadus’s sermon manuscripts reveals he specifically addressed the issue of the grammar and syntax in over half of his sermons (53.69 percent).

The evidence of grammatical interpretation took a variety of forms. In several of his sermons, Broadus utilized his knowledge of the original languages by referencing the Greek text or defining Greek words or discussing the Greek verb. For

⁵⁰This analysis is based on 203 of Broadus’s sermons. All of the sermons by Broadus that have been published were included, as well as an additional 172 sermons located in the John Albert Broadus Collections in the Archives of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. See table A1 in the appendix for a full list of sermon manuscripts and the hermeneutical principles evident in each one.

⁵¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 58-59.

example, Broadus preached a sermon from Matthew 18:3 in which he encouraged Christians to be like little children. He cross-referenced Paul's instructions to be like little children in 1 Corinthians 14:20 and connected it to Matthew 18:3, saying, "The apostle Paul (I Cor. XIV, 20) bids us be children in malice. (The orig. is *κακος*, wickedness in genl.)"⁵² In another sermon preached from Romans 13:11-14, Broadus challenged believers to "walk devoutly, becomingly" and identified the Greek word underlying this exhortation as "ευσχημονως."⁵³ An additional example can be found in a sermon manuscript on Ephesians 3:14-21.⁵⁴ In the sermon, Broadus explained the *iva* clause found in Ephesians 3:16.⁵⁵ One of the strongest examples can be found in his sermon "Let Us Have Peace with God."⁵⁶ Broadus was aware of the textual variants for the verb *ἔχωμεν* in Romans 5:1. In some manuscripts, the verb is in the subjunctive. In others, the verb is an indicative.⁵⁷ Broadus noted that "the best authorities for the text make it an exhortation, 'Let us have peace with God,'" so Broadus took the verb to be a subjunctive and developed his sermon on the

⁵²John A. Broadus, "Matthew 18:3," box 1, folder 53, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁵³John A. Broadus, "Romans 13:11-14," box 1, folder 110, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁵⁴John A. Broadus, "Ephesians 3:14-21," box 2, folder 23, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁵⁵Ibid. In his manuscript, Broadus wrote, "Explain terms – that (in order that, *iva*,)." While it is impossible to know how detailed his explanation was, it is clear that Broadus had engaged in grammatical interpretation and was bringing the results of his study into his sermon.

⁵⁶John A. Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 7th ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1886), 85-96.

⁵⁷For a good treatment of this issue, see Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 548-55. Like Broadus, Longenecker argued the verb should be understood as a subjunctive rather than an indicative.

subjunctive mood of the verb.⁵⁸ Each of these examples demonstrate that Broadus had studied the text in the original language and was familiar with the grammar of the text from which he was preaching.

In other sermons, Broadus simply provided a definition or explanation of a biblical term. Broadus explained the various ways the word “kingdom” is used in a sermon on the Lord’s Prayer from Matthew 6:9. He said, “The Greek work which is rendered ‘kingdom’ in the text requires three English words to convey its meaning. Primarily the word means ‘kingship,’ the condition of being a king, the possession of royal power. Then secondarily it means ‘reign,’ the exercise of royal power. As a final derivation it means what we call ‘kingdom,’ subjects or territory over whom or in which this royal power is exercised. Kingship, and reign, and kingdom. . . . Now the leading thought here is evidently that which we express by the word ‘reign.’”⁵⁹ Broadus did not use the Greek word in the sermon, but he did provide the various ways the Greek word could be translated and the sense in which it was used in Matthew 6. In a sermon manuscript on Galatians 4:18, Broadus devoted a significant amount of time to establishing the meaning of the word “zeal.” He discussed the origin of the word zeal, the common use of the word zeal at the time, and the biblical notion of zeal.⁶⁰ Preaching from Colossians 3:1-8, Broadus exhorted his listeners to “mortify therefore your members” and defined “mortify” as “to be deadened, entirely subdued, i. e. not indulged at all.”⁶¹ These examples reveal

⁵⁸Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 93.

⁵⁹John A. Broadus, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, ed. Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 69.

⁶⁰John A. Broadus, “Galatians 4:18,” box 2, folder 17, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. Broadus defined biblical zeal as “any warm or heated passion” and noted the term can be used in a positive or negative way in Scripture.

⁶¹John A. Broadus, “Colossians 3:1-8,” box 2, folder 34, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern

Broadus's commitment to grammatical interpretation and the role it played in his preaching, as Broadus helped his readers understand the biblical terms and what they meant.

Broadus also focused on specific words and phrases to show how they impacted one's understanding of the text. For instance, in his sermon on Hosea 14:1-7, Broadus noted the shift in Hosea's emphasis and language. Broadus observed that Hosea shifted from addressing the people of Israel to speaking on behalf of God, as he changed "from them to him," which was "common in the prophets, especially Hosea."⁶² This shift in focus affected the division of Broadus's sermon, as he started a new heading following the transition "from them to him" in the text. In a sermon on Hebrews 1:1-3, Broadus discussed the phrase "brightness of his glory." Did it refer to Christ's pre-existent state or His incarnation? Broadus argued, "This may refer to pre-existent state, but if so, must be with reference to his being the designed and specifically appropriate medium of manifestation of God to man. But the terms more naturally refer to his position as incarnate. God was manifest in the flesh. The word was made flesh."⁶³ Again, it is clear that Broadus had studied the grammar of the text, and this grammatical study had shaped his interpretation and proclamation of the text.

Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁶²John A. Broadus, "Hosea 14:1-7," box 1, folder 43, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁶³John A. Broadus, "Hebrews 1:1-3," box 2, folder 52, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

Logical Interpretation

Broadus repeatedly emphasized the importance of context in his writings. He believed there were “few things...to be so earnestly urged upon the student of Scripture, as that he shall habitually study its books with reference to their whole connection.”⁶⁴ This hermeneutical principle is very evident in the sermons of Broadus. 123 of the 203 manuscripts mentioned the logical connection of the sermon’s text to the surrounding context (60.59 percent).

An excellent example of Broadus’s awareness of the context and its impact on his interpretation and proclamation of Scripture is found in a sermon on 1 John 5:10-11. In the sermon, Broadus discussed the notion that the one who believes in Jesus “hath the witness in himself,” a phrase found in verse 10. He presented “the commonly received opinion. . . that ‘the witness in himself’ means another and a different witness or testimony from that which is written or recorded in the Scriptures.”⁶⁵ Broadus rejected this interpretation:

Because it is certainly not in accordance with the context, and does not agree with the antithesis or contrast drawn by the apostle in the next words to wit: “He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” The fair inference from this then is, that to have the witness in ourselves is to believe “the record that God gave of his son.” Again. The “witness” or testimony or record alluded to in the whole context cannot we think be a “witness” or testimony internally wrought by the Spirit of God.⁶⁶

For Broadus, the context was the decisive factor in determining the meaning of the phrase found in verse 10, which reveals his commitment to logical interpretation.

⁶⁴Broadus, *A Treatise*, 60.

⁶⁵John A. Broadus, “1 John 5:10-11,” box 18, folder 9, John Albert Broadus Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

Another good example of Broadus's commitment to logical interpretation can be found in his sermon on Isaiah 55:6-7. Broadus contended the invitation to "seek the Lord" in Isaiah 55:6-7 was grounded in the promise of a suffering servant made in Isaiah 53.⁶⁷ He preached:

The invitations in which this chapter abounds, are closely connected with something preceding. In the 53 chapter, the prophet describes, with a power and pathos that has touched the hearts of men in all ages, the expiatory sufferings of Christ. After this, he passes to two successive subjects related thereto. 1) The success which should attend Messiah's causes, prosperity of Christ, glory of Redeemer himself, etc. 2) The results of his atonement to men, pouring forth invitations. Had no savior ever been given or promised, invitation to return to God would have been useless, almost a mockery. But because of Christ's sufferings, these invitations can be given.⁶⁸

Broadus was convinced the invitations issued in chapter 55 of Isaiah were grounded in the promise of Christ's expiatory sufferings in Isaiah 53, revealing his knowledge of and commitment to studying biblical texts in their immediate context.

Many of Broadus's sermons show this commitment to logical interpretation, particularly in the introduction. Broadus commonly referenced the logical connection of the sermon's text to the preceding verses at the beginning of the sermon. In a sermon on worship from John 4:24, Broadus began, "Jesus was tired. The little that we know of the history just before, yet enables us to see cause why He should have been tired. He had been, for long months, engaged in active efforts to save men's souls—to lift men out of their sluggishness and worldliness toward God. That is hard work for mind and heart."⁶⁹ In a sermon from 1 Corinthians 14:24-25, Broadus placed the text of the sermon in the context of Paul's

⁶⁷John A. Broadus, "Isaiah 55:6-7," box 1, folder 35, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Broadus, *Favorite Sermons*, 1.

discussion of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 at the outset.⁷⁰ Many other sermon introductions contain similar remarks about the context of the passage under consideration.

Historical Interpretation

Broadus also noted the value of historical knowledge as it relates to interpretation. He knew “there is often important aid to be derived from general historical knowledge,” including “facts of Geography” and “Manners and Customs.”⁷¹ Several of Broadus’s sermons reveal his knowledge of history and his willingness to use history to influence how he interpreted the biblical text. In 43 of the 203 sermon manuscripts examined, Broadus revealed his knowledge of the historical context of the passage from which he was preaching and communicated said information to his audience (21.18 percent).

Several examples illustrate the role history played in Broadus’s interpretation and proclamation of Scripture. One of the strongest examples of historical interpretation can be found in a sermon on Ezekiel 33:30-32. In the introduction of the sermon, Broadus set Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry in context. He said, “Ezekiel continued to prophesy (himself has shown) as many as 23 years. . . . Precisely one half delivered before the destruction of Jerusalem, i. e. in 8 years from 595 to 588.”⁷² Broadus summarized Ezekiel’s prophecies during this time period, then noted the destruction of the temple in 588 marked a shift in Ezekiel’s ministry.

⁷⁰John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians 14:24-25,” box 2, folder 4, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁷¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 61.

⁷²John A. Broadus, “Ezekiel 33:30-32,” box 1, folder 42, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

From the time of the destruction of the temple onward, Ezekiel's prophecies took a different tone, "many of them consolatory."⁷³ His prophecies contained "beautiful images of peace and prosperity promised after return, especially with remoter reference to spiritual blessings, under reign of Messiah," Broadus explained.⁷⁴ After providing the historical background of Ezekiel and his ministry, Broadus situated the text from which he was preaching during the time period "subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem."⁷⁵ With the historical context established, Broadus proceeded to the main body of his sermon. The pains which Broadus took to convey the historical setting clearly, which took up two and a half pages of his manuscript, reveal his commitment to historical interpretation.

Another good example can be found in his sermon "One Jesus." In the sermon, Broadus explained the backgrounds of Festus, the governor of Caesarea, and Herod Agrippa, the king of "the northeastern portion of his ancestor's dominions."⁷⁶ Festus, a high-ranking Roman official, spoke casually of "one Jesus" when talking to Herod Agrippa, but Broadus declared, "Jesus is the most important personage in human history. The obscure and insignificant one, of whom Festus spoke so carelessly, has founded this world's most wonderful empire. The carpenter of Nazareth is a king of men."⁷⁷ Providing the background of the Roman leaders and their elevated status in the eyes of the world allowed Broadus to contrast them with Jesus, the one who seemed "obscure and insignificant" in the eyes of the world but who was in reality "a king of men."

⁷³John A. Broadus, "Ezekiel 33:30-32."

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Broadus, *Favorite Sermons*, 51.

⁷⁷Ibid.

Figurative Interpretation

Broadus recognized the need to interpret certain passages figuratively. While “the presumption is in favor of the literal sense” in most cases, there are times that “the literal sense is not designed” and the interpreter “must understand [the passage] figuratively.”⁷⁸ Many of the passages from which Broadus preached did not contain figurative language, but when they did, Broadus was sure to identify it as such. 19 of the 203 sermons contained references to the figurative nature of the text (9.35 percent).

In a sermon on Hosea 14:1-7, Broadus noted the figurative nature of the language employed in the text. Hosea compared God’s grace to the dew which causes vegetation to grow. He said:

Cannot appreciate the figure, save in such a land as Palestine – where rains infrequent, sun burning, vegetation greatly refreshed during part of the year by copious dews from some time after spring rains cease and before autumn rains commence. Such, according to the figure, the influence of Divine grace upon them that penitently come to him, invigorating, beautifying, fructifying. And the figure extended with great poetic beauty. Under the influence of this heavenly dew, Israel shall combine rapid growth of lily with deep rooted firmness of cedar – a spreading tree, beautiful as this olive and fragrant as cedar-groves of Lebanon – giving refreshment by its shade to the springing corn and the growing vine which might else be withered by the burning heat.⁷⁹

It is clear that Broadus not only recognized figurative language when it was found in a text, but he appreciated the figurative nature of Scripture and saw the beauty in it.

Another sermon manuscript, based on Revelation 7:9-17, demonstrated his awareness of the figurative nature of certain passages. In the sermon, Broadus explained that many of Scripture’s descriptions of heaven are figurative. He said, “Representations Scriptures give of the future existence of blessedness, of necessity

⁷⁸Broadus, *A Treatise*, 62.

⁷⁹Broadus, “Hosea 14:1-7.” The wording is rough but original. Broadus often used abbreviations and shorthand rather than full sentences in his manuscripts.

figurative, highly, if not purely figurative. They are just pictures, drawn by a divinely-guided hand, admitting of no addition, offered for our contemplation and delight.”⁸⁰ Broadus acknowledged the language in the text from which he was preaching should be understood figuratively, although those figures were intended to communicate divine truth.

Allegorical Interpretation

Broadus believed certain passages should be interpreted “allegorically, where that is clearly proper.” He was careful to avoid embracing a “spiritual sense” just “because the notion suits our fancy, or would promote our convenience.” Instead, the interpreter should only interpret a passage allegorically if there is “good reason to think so.”⁸¹ The only way to be certain a passage contained a spiritual sense was if “the New Testament” uses the passage in an allegorical fashion. Given these restraints, it is not surprising that Broadus rarely interpreted a text allegorically. Only 9 of the 203 sermons contained traces of allegorization, or spiritualization (4.43 percent).

One notable exception was a sermon manuscript on Isaiah 6:1-2. The sermon contains quite a bit of spiritualizing, particularly when dealing with the wings of the seraphim. Commenting on the wings, Broadus said, “With twain they covered their faces. This pair, I understand, to represent humility and meekness. How essential these in a Christian minister! With twain they covered their feet. These, it seems to me, represent uprightness and integrity. As necessary to a herald

⁸⁰John A. Broadus, “Revelation 7:9-17,” box 2, folder 86, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸¹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 63.

of the cross as the former pair. With twain they did fly. These we understand to be love – love to God and man.”⁸² Then, when discussing the train of God’s glory, Broadus suggested, “This train I understand to mean the redeemed church of God, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”⁸³ This interpretive approach stood in stark contrast to Broadus’s usual approach to interpretation, where he employed a more literal hermeneutic.

Apart from the sermon on Isaiah 6, most of Broadus’s sermon manuscripts reveal a commitment to the plain meaning of the text. As a matter of fact, Broadus often warned against allegorization or spiritualization in his sermons. In a sermon on Matthew 14:22-33, Broadus warned that Scripture had “no double sense” and spiritualizing the text was “unwarranted and a great evil.”⁸⁴ In another sermon, Broadus exhorted, “Now I entreat you, don’t listen to the commentaries, so many of which tell you that this means spiritual bread. I am weary of that everlasting spiritualizing. Spiritual things are far above temporal things, but there are many references in the Scriptures to our temporal and material wants, and why should we lose their meaning, and sustaining power, because we go on allegorizing everything.”⁸⁵ So, while Broadus occasionally spiritualized a text, this was not his normal approach to interpretation.

⁸²John A. Broadus, “Isaiah 6:1-2,” box 18, folder 9, John Albert Broadus Papers, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴John A. Broadus, “Matthew 14:22-33,” box 2, folder 52, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸⁵Broadus, *Favorite Sermons*, 70.

Consistent Interpretation

Broadus believed Scripture was inspired and inerrant. As a result, each passage of Scripture is true and in harmony with the rest of Scripture. Broadus sought to interpret each text in a manner consistent with other passages on the same subject. This element of interpretation was most evident in Broadus's sermon manuscripts, as he consistently tried to show how each text fit with other biblical texts on the same topic. 141 of the 203 sermons referenced other biblical texts and showed how they were consistent with the text from which Broadus was preaching (69.45 percent).

A strong example of Broadus's strong commitment to consistent interpretation is found in his sermon on Matthew 18:3. The text urged Christians to become like little children, but Broadus pointed out that Scripture also exhorts Christians not to be like children in Ephesians 4:14. He said, "Sufficiently obvious to the one who reflects, that to be like children, only in certain respects. . . . not surprised to find Scripture elsewhere urging not to be like children."⁸⁶ In the remainder of the sermon, Broadus traced out the ways in which Christians should be like children and the ways in which Christians should avoid being like children.⁸⁷ Broadus wanted his listeners to know the Scriptures did not contradict each other and were compatible.

Another example of consistent interpretation is found in a sermon on Mary, the mother of Jesus. Broadus countered the Catholic notion that Mary is to be

⁸⁶John A. Broadus, "Matthew 18:3," box 1, folder 53, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁸⁷Broadus encouraged his listeners to be like children: (1) "in spirit with which embrace the religion of the gospel," (2) "humility," and (3) "be children in malice." He exhorted them to avoid being like children in "ignorance" and "instability." Both the encouragements to be like children and the warnings to avoid being like children made sense in their context.

worshipped. Although the angel said she was blessed among women and Mary herself all generations would call her blessed, this does not establish her as an object of worship. Broadus explained that “Elizabeth was called” blessed among women, as was “Jael, who killed Sisera. The meaning of Mary’s own saying is, all generations shall call me happy, shall felicitate me, shall recognize that my portion is a happy one. There is no foundation for calling her ‘the Blessed Virgin Mary,’ as an act of worship.”⁸⁸ By utilizing other biblical texts that call women “blessed,” Broadus was able to rule out the possibility of Mary being an object of worship. Many other examples could be cited. Over two-thirds of Broadus’s sermons utilize other passages to demonstrate the text from which he was preaching was consistent with other biblical texts.

Summary

Based on the sermon manuscripts analyzed, it is clear that Broadus embodied the hermeneutical principles and homiletical practices he espoused. Virtually every sermon contained traces of at least one of the hermeneutical principles advocated by Broadus, and several sermon manuscripts contain every single principle he defended. Only nine of the 203 sermons contained no direct evidence of the hermeneutical principles Broadus taught (4.43 percent). At least one hermeneutical principle was evident in the remaining 194 sermons (95.56 percent). One cannot read the sermons of Broadus without detecting his love for Scripture and his commitment to rightly interpreting it.

⁸⁸Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 126.

Homiletical Characteristics of Broadus's Sermons

As a whole, Broadus's practice of preaching was consistent with his theory of preaching, particularly as it relates to sound biblical interpretation. Yet more needs to be said about his preaching in general. What were the distinguishing features of Broadus's preaching? How should one describe his practice of preaching? After analyzing the published and unpublished sermons of Broadus, three distinct characteristics were evident throughout his sermons: (1) they were grounded in the biblical text, (2) they were focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ, and (3) they were filled with practical applications.

Based on the Biblical Text

The first characteristic of Broadus's preaching is his commitment to the biblical text. In virtually every sermon, Broadus based his message on the text of Scripture. The reason the preacher "stands before the people" is "for the very purpose of teaching and exhorting out of the Word of God. He announces a particular passage of God's Word as his text with the distinctly implied understanding that from this his sermon will be drawn—if not always its various thoughts, yet certainly its general subject."⁸⁹ Since the very task of preaching involved "teaching and exhorting out of the Word of God," Broadus grounded his entire preaching ministry in the Scriptures.

Broadus preached from a specific biblical text, no matter the occasion. A striking example is his sermon "Ministerial Education," preached before the Missouri Baptist Education Society in 1881.⁹⁰ The sermon was based on 2 Timothy 2:15,

⁸⁹Broadus, *A Treatise*, 33.

⁹⁰Broadus, *Sermons and Addresses*, 198-215.

where Paul exhorted Timothy, “Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.” Broadus explained several key words in the text and referenced the surrounding context while encouraging those present to embrace ministerial education as a means of obeying this text. Even on special occasions, Broadus made sure to ground his messages in Scripture.

Centered on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

The second characteristic of Broadus’s preaching is his focus on the person and work of Christ. Broadus discussed the person and work of Christ in 139 of the 203 sermons examined (68.47 percent). This reflects Broadus’s presupposition that Jesus Christ is the central figure of Scripture and that Scripture cannot be understood apart from Him. This presupposition drove Broadus’s preaching and is more evident in the sermon manuscripts than any of the other hermeneutical principles espoused by Broadus except for the principle of consistency.

Broadus was convinced that the central message of the preacher was the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a sermon on 1 Corinthians 4:5, Broadus emphasized the need for ministers to preach Christ. This was “the object of the ministry.”⁹¹ There is “nothing proper for preaching, which has no relation to him.”⁹² Broadus went on to say, “We preach: 1. His exalted nature. 2. His beautiful example. 3. His atoning death – the love it exhibited – its efficacy. A sufficient saviour. 4. His gracious invitations and promises. 5. His sublime teachings – including commandments, Christ Jesus the

⁹¹John A. Broadus, “1 Corinthians 4:5,” box 2, folder 9, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹²Ibid.

Lord. 6. As the only Savior.”⁹³ The task of every minister of the gospel is to teach Christ.

Broadus not only advocated preaching Christ, he did it. His sermon on Hebrews 1:1-3 is a beautiful example of Christ-centered exposition.⁹⁴ One of the most soul-stirring statements about the joy of Christ is found in a sermon titled “Christian Joy.” Broadus asked, “My Christian brother, can you not rejoice that you have faith in Christ and enjoyment of religion, communion with God and hope of glory?”⁹⁵ Then, he answered his own question:

You have faith in Christ. You have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. You have found him who was exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins. You have found him who was lifted up to draw all men unto him. You know him who is the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely. You have traced out something of the unsearchable riches of Christ. You have found the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price. You have learned that there is a balm in Gilead, that there is a great Physician there; he has checked your fearful, mortal malady, and you shall live. You have looked to the brazen serpent, you are healed. You have sprinkled your doorpost with the blood of God’s atoning Lamb, and the angel of destruction will pass you by. You have fled to the city of refuge, and the destroyer cannot come near you. You have laid your sins by faith on your substitute and he has borne them away into the wilderness. You have bathed in the fountain that was opened in the house of King David for sin and for uncleanness, and the defilement of guilt has been washed away. You have brought to Jesus the writing that bound you as a servant of sin, and he has annulled it by nailing it to his cross. In a word, you believe on the Saviour, and to you that believe he is precious.⁹⁶

⁹³Broadus, “1 Corinthians 4:5.”

⁹⁴John A. Broadus, “Hebrews 1:1-3,” box 2, folder 52, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY. Broadus introduced the sermon by saying that Jesus is “the centre of attraction in the Christian system – the focus of its light and heat.” He then proceeded to preach the following points: “I. Christ in his pre-existent state, the Son of God as he was from eternity,” “II. Christ the manifestation of the invisible God,” “III. Christ, the atoning Saviour,” and “IV. Christ, the mediatorial King.”

⁹⁵Broadus, *Favorite Sermons*, 79-80.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 80.

Broadus found joy in Jesus Christ, and his sermons sought to elevate Jesus so that others could experience the joy that comes with knowing Christ.

Filled with Practical Applications

The third characteristic of Broadus's preaching is his consistent use of application. While Broadus did not consider application part of hermeneutics, he did view application as central to the task of preaching. Once the meaning of the text had been discerned through careful interpretation, the preacher's task was to communicate the meaning of that text and apply it to those listening. For Broadus, application meant three things: (1) showing the listeners how the text applied to their lives, (2) showing the listeners how to obey the truths of the text, and (3) exhorting the listeners to obey the text. Throughout his sermons, Broadus consistently did these three things. 202 of the 203 sermons contain at least one of these types of application (99.50 percent).

The most important element of application, according to Broadus, was urging and exhorting the hearers to obey the text.⁹⁷ Many of Broadus's sermons conclude with strong exhortations to respond to the truths presented from the text. In urging his listeners to respond in faith like Ruth, Broadus preached, "God invites – He who died says 'come' – the Spirit and the Bride say 'come' – many that have heard the invitation themselves, many that love you, say 'come.' . . . Will not you be concerned, will you not be decided, to seek now the pardon of your sins, the saving of your soul?"⁹⁸ In another, Broadus concluded by exhorting his listeners not to be Esau, saying:

⁹⁷Broadus, *A Treatise*, 198. He wrote, "But the chief part of what we commonly call application is *persuasion*. It is not enough to convince men of truth, nor enough to make them see how it applies to themselves, and how it might be practicable for them to act it out—but we must 'persuade men.'"

⁹⁸John A. Broadus, "Ruth 1:16," box 1, folder 6, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture

Fierce as may be the desires, earth-born and earth bound, which impel us to neglect everything future for present gratification, yet let us pause, let us ponder – it is not long the struggle must be sustained – earthly life is comparatively short, it will soon be over – I will not ruin myself eternally for mere earthly enjoyment – I will deny myself and take up my cross and follow Jesus – I will ask God to help me that I may subordinate all desires and all efforts to the great work of saving my soul; for “what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”⁹⁹

These examples make it clear that Broadus was not merely interested in communicating the meaning of the text. He understood the importance of applying the text and exhorting his listeners to obey.

One of the most powerful examples of Broadus’ exhortative appeals can be found in his sermon “No Man Cared for My Soul.”¹⁰⁰ In Psalm 142:4, David remarked that no one cared for his soul, but Broadus noted that was not true of David, nor was it true of his listeners. He explained that God, the holy angels, and other men had cared for their souls, but he closed with this exhortation:

But there is one being, O my friend, who does not care for your soul – one who knows too your condition and professes to desire your good – a being of noble powers and warm sympathies, but who cares not at all for your soul. I do not mean Satan – but, Hear, O hearers, and give ear, O earth, it is yourself. You have not cared for you soul.

You have cared for your body – food, adornment, health – but not for your soul. Will you care for it now? What are its wants? It is immortal, and must have a sure hope of immortal blessedness, an anchor entering in to that within the veil, provision for eternity. It is lost, and must have salvation – salvation is attainable, if sought on the right day – and “now is the accepted day.”

Now, then, while so many beings care for your soul, while God invites, while angels wait, while Christians feel, and weep, and pray, now begin, in good

Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

⁹⁹John A. Broadus, “Hebrews 12:16,” box 2, folder 61, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

¹⁰⁰John A. Broadus, “Psalm 142:4,” box 1, folder 29, John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes, Archives and Special Collections, James P. Boyce Centennial Library, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.

earnest, to seek your salvation. “For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?”¹⁰¹

Broadus did not simply tell them they should care for their souls; he urged and exhorted them to take care of their souls that day.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Broadus’s practice of preaching was consistent with his theory of preaching, especially as it relates to sound interpretation. His sermon manuscripts reveal his deep commitment to the hermeneutical principles advocated in his textbook on preaching, as most of the manuscripts contained evidence of at least one hermeneutical principle being utilized. The manuscripts also revealed Broadus’s commitment to biblical, gospel-centered preaching that contains practical applications and urgent exhortations. Every sermon was based on the biblical text, over two-thirds of the sermons centered on the person and work of Jesus, and almost every sermon contained at least one of the types of application discussed by Broadus in his textbook. If someone is looking for a preacher who modeled Broadus's theory of preaching, they need to look no further than Broadus himself.

¹⁰¹Broadus, “Psalm 142:4.”

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

John Albert Broadus is a monumental figure in Baptist history. Tom Nettles summarized Broadus’s enduring legacy as follows:

The variety of contributions that he made to Baptist life and the work of the Kingdom of God, the friendships he cultivated unbounded by age, education, or cultural attainments, the world-wide conversation he respectfully maintained in erudite involvement, the impeccable proportion and fitness of style and content in his preaching, the global witness and multifarious attainments of his students, and the ageless impact of his diversified scholarly contributions give him an ongoing witness even among those who will never know they have benefitted from his stewardship of gifts.¹

Although Broadus made a “variety of contributions. . . to Baptist life and the work of the Kingdom of God,” he is primarily known as a preacher and a teacher of preachers. This dissertation has shown that his theory and practice of preaching was based on a high view of Scripture and governed by sound hermeneutical principles that were grounded in solid presuppositions concerning the nature of Scripture and the centrality of Christ. Each of these three elements (his view of Scripture, his hermeneutical presuppositions, and his hermeneutic) have been examined and analyzed in this dissertation.

Broadus’s theory of preaching, as well as his actual practice of preaching, were based on a high view of Scripture. In spite of the attempts by moderate Baptists and liberal Christians to claim Broadus as their own, this dissertation has

¹Tom Nettles, “John Albert Broadus,” in *The Baptists* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publication, 2006), 3:285-87.

demonstrated that Broadus held the Scriptures in highest regard. He was convinced the Scriptures, in their totality, were breathed out by God. Consequently, Broadus also believed in the inerrancy of Scripture. Since God inspired the Scriptures and cannot lie, the Scriptures must be true in their entirety. Further, since the Scriptures were inspired by God and contained no errors, their teachings were authoritative and binding for Christians. Broadus's views concerning the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Bible resulted in a commitment to Christian preaching that correctly interpreted and powerfully applied the biblical text. These views are even more striking considering the historical context in which Broadus lived. In spite of the growing influence of German higher criticism in North America and the departure from orthodoxy by a beloved colleague, John Albert Broadus remained committed to a high view of Scripture.

The hermeneutical presuppositions undergirding Broadus's hermeneutic were also pivotal in shaping his approach to biblical interpretation and proclamation. Five presuppositions were evident in Broadus's writings and sermons: objectivity, singularity, intentionality, spirituality, and Christocentricity. First, Broadus believed the meaning of the text was objective and existed apart from the reader. The goal of the interpreter was to discover the meaning, not determine the meaning. Second, Broadus was convinced each biblical text possessed one meaning, not multiple meanings. Interpreters should strive to discern the singular meaning of the text. Third, Broadus connected the meaning of the biblical text to the intention of the author. The author intended or willed to convey a specific meaning, and interpreters should seek to understand that meaning. Fourth, Broadus recognized the spiritual nature of the Bible and insisted interpreters must possess spiritual sympathies in order to interpret Scripture properly. Finally, Broadus insisted that Jesus Christ was the central figure of biblical history and Scripture could not be understood apart from Him. Interpreters must interpret Scripture in light of the person and work of

Jesus Christ if they are to truly understand it. These presuppositions were the soil in which Broadus's hermeneutical principles were planted.

Broadus's hermeneutic was essentially a grammatical-historical approach to interpretation. His hermeneutic was comprised of six principles: interpret grammatically, interpret logically, interpret historically, interpret figuratively, interpret allegorically, and interpret consistently. First, sound interpretation required the interpreter to analyze the grammar of the biblical text. Understanding the meaning of the words in the text and the syntactical structure of the text were crucial for interpreters to consider when examining any biblical passage. Second, proper interpretation required the interpreter to consider the context of the passage. Interpreters must examine the author's arguments in the section prior to the one under consideration, as well as the author's arguments in the book as a whole, if they want to understand the text.

Third, solid interpretation required the interpreter to investigate the historical context of the passage. Geographical knowledge of biblical locations, as well as the manners and customs of various peoples and nations, were essential in helping interpreters properly understand Scripture. Fourth, accurate biblical interpretation involves comprehending the distinction between literal and figurative language. While Broadus believed the text should generally be interpreted in a literal fashion, he knew biblical authors often used figurative language and encouraged interpreters to recognize and interpret figurative language as such.

Fifth, proper interpretation occasionally required allegorical interpretation. While Broadus used the term "allegorical" in his treatise on preaching, he was not suggesting preachers allegorize the biblical text by randomly assigning meanings to words or objects that were foreign to the mind of the biblical author. He used the terms "spiritual" and "typological" interchangeably with the term "allegorical" to describe the need for interpreters to discern the spiritual meaning of the biblical text.

Sixth, accurate interpretation required consistent interpretation. If the interpreter was to understand the meaning of a text, he or she consider the Scriptures as a whole. No individual text should be interpreted in a manner inconsistent with other biblical texts. Although not necessarily comprehensive, these six principles composed Broadus's hermeneutic, for which he advocated in his writings.

The hermeneutical principles that Broadus advocated shaped his exegesis and his preaching. His exegetical works demonstrate his commitment to careful interpretation. The commentaries and lecture notes of Broadus are full of examples of the hermeneutical principles that he championed in his treatise on preaching. Broadus's hermeneutic also shaped his preaching. His sermon manuscripts also reveal his commitment to the proper interpretation of Scripture. Although Broadus encouraged preachers to avoid parading their exegesis in the pulpit, Broadus's sermons were full of exegetical details. In short, Broadus embodied the careful exegete that he desired other preachers to be, both in his exegetical works and in his sermons.

The goal of this dissertation has been to delineate Broadus's hermeneutic and show the impact it had upon his preaching, but the significance of the dissertation is not restricted to historical details. The study of John Albert Broadus's hermeneutic and homiletic provides valuable lessons to contemporary scholars and homileticians in several areas. First, the issue of foundational beliefs and key presuppositions must be considered. Every biblical preacher possesses foundational beliefs about Scripture that affect their approach to preaching, as well as key presuppositions that affect their approach to interpretation and preaching. Preachers should consider their own foundational beliefs and presuppositions, as well as the foundational beliefs and presuppositions of other preachers.

Second, this study raises the issue of the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics. Broadus believed proper interpretation was essential

for powerful preaching, to the extent that he provided interpretive principles to aid preachers in accurately interpreting the Scriptures in his treatise on preaching. Therefore, any study of preaching must address the issue of biblical interpretation and the methods preachers can and should use to understand the meaning of the biblical text from which they will preach. The study reveals the need for preachers to identify their own approach to biblical interpretation and opens up an avenue for further study in regards to the hermeneutic of other historical figures.

Third, the study of the hermeneutic and homiletic of Broadus brings up the issue of redemptive-historical, or Christ-centered, preaching. Broadus was convinced that Jesus Christ was the central figure of biblical history and that Scripture could not be understood apart from His person and work. This conviction was evident in his writings and his sermons. The various works on Christ-centered preaching in contemporary homiletical literature demonstrate the on-going relevance of this topic.² Broadus provides a historical example of how one committed to a grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture can consistently preach Christ from all of Scripture.

As the previous three points indicate, the study of John A. Broadus's hermeneutic and homiletic is not simply an exercise in historical inquiry. It opens up avenues to consider contemporary issues in the field of homiletics. Preachers are challenged to think about their foundations beliefs and presuppositions, their

²For example, see Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005); Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999); Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007); Timothy Keller, *Preaching* (New York: Viking, 2015); Julius J. Kim, *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015); Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor* (Nashville: B & H, 2016).

approach to biblical interpretation, and the central role that Christ and the gospel play in relation to contemporary discussions in the field of preaching.

This study has focused on the hermeneutic and homiletic of John A. Broadus, yet other elements of the life, ministry, and preaching of Broadus could be explored with greater depth. For example, the pastoral ministry of John Albert Broadus has never been thoroughly examined. Broadus is known as a New Testament scholar, a preacher, and a teacher of preachers, but he was also a pastor. He spent almost a decade as the pastor of Charlottesville Baptist Church in Charlottesville, Virginia, and a thorough study of that aspect of his life and ministry is worthy of further consideration. A thorough study of the appeals in Broadus's sermons is also worthy of further consideration. Broadus did not hesitate to plead with his listeners to respond to the message of the gospel, often quite passionately. One final area that might be explored more thoroughly is the role arrangement played in the preaching of Broadus. Many of the sermon manuscripts in the John Albert Broadus Collections were skeletal outlines and provided no insight into Broadus's hermeneutic, so they were not analyzed. These skeletal outlines do, however, reveal a significant amount of information concerning sermonic arrangement and how Broadus's organized his sermons. Other issues related to Broadus's interpretation and proclamation of Scripture could be studied as well.

The goal of this work has been three-fold: to identify the foundational beliefs and presuppositions that shaped Broadus's hermeneutic, to state the principles that comprised Broadus hermeneutic, and to demonstrate the impact those principles had on his preaching. A secondary goal, however, was to draw attention to the preaching of John Albert Broadus. Broadus has been recognized for his work as an educator and a homiletician, yet his actual preaching has received little attention. Broadus desired for his students to be men "mighty in the Scriptures," and he taught and wrote to this end. More than that, he modeled what it

meant to be a man “mighty in the Scriptures,” as he properly interpreted the biblical text and proclaimed Christ from all of Scripture. May God-called men follow in his steps by seeking to be “mighty in the Scriptures” as they interpret the biblical text with accuracy and preach Christ with passion.

APPENDIX
ANALYSIS OF BROADUS'S SERMON MANUSCRIPTS

In order to draw conclusions concerning the influence of Broadus's hermeneutic upon his practice of preaching, this dissertation analyzed 203 of his sermon manuscripts. Table A1 presents the findings from all the sermons analyzed. The sermons were taken from four different sources and have been abbreviated as follows: John Albert Broadus Sermon and Lecture Notes Collection (JABSALN), John Albert Broadus Papers (JABP), *Sermons and Addresses* (SA), and Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus (*FSJAB*). The two numbers following the manuscripts from the two Broadus collections (JABSALN and JABP) represent the box number and folder number, respectively.

The hermeneutical principles advocated and utilized by Broadus have each been assigned the following numbers for quick reference: grammatical (1), logical (2), historical (3), figurative (4), allegorical (5), and consistent (6). The table also includes a column that shows the homiletical characteristics evident in each sermon. The homiletical characteristics have each been assigned the following numbers: based on the biblical text (1), centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ (2), and filled with practical application (3). The data in the table is consistent with the analyses presented in the dissertation and further strengthens the claims that Broadus's hermeneutic governed his preaching.

Table A1. Analysis of Broadus's Sermon Manuscripts

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Genesis 2:8	"Garden"	JABSALN 1, 1	4	1, 2, 3
Genesis 3:9 and 4:9	--	JABSALN 1, 2	--	1, 3
Genesis 5:24	"Enoch"	JABSALN 1, 3	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Judges 7:20	"Gideon"	JABSALN 1, 5	2, 3	1, 3
Ruth 1:16	--	JABSALN 1, 6	2	1, 2, 3
1 Samuel 2:30	--	JABSALN 1, 7	2	1, 3
1 Samuel 3:18	"What Seemeth Him Good"	JABSALN 1, 8	2	1, 3
1 Samuel 17:8-11	"David and Goliath"	JABSALN 1, 9	2	1, 3
1 Samuel 30:24-25	--	JABSALN 1, 10	2	1, 3
1 Kings 18:21	--	JABSALN 1, 11	2	1, 2, 3
1 Kings 19:4-12	"Elijah in the Wilderness"	JABSALN 1, 12	2, 3, 6	1, 3
Ezra 7:10	--	JABSALN 1, 13	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Nehemiah 3:10	--	JABSALN 1, 14	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Job 7:9-10	"A. A. K.'s Funeral"	JABSALN 1, 15	6	1, 2, 3
Psalms 2:12	"Kiss the Son"	JABSALN 1, 16	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
Psalms 8:3-4	"What is man?"	JABSALN 1, 17	2	1, 2, 3
Psalms 19	"The works and word of God"	JABSALN 1, 18	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Psalms 19:7-11	"Evidences of Christianity"	JABSALN 1, 19	3, 6	1, 2, 3
Psalms 31:5	"Into thine hand I commit"	JABSALN 1, 20	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Psalms 40:8	"Delight in the Will of God"	<i>FSJAB</i>	2, 6	1, 2,, 3
Psalms 48:12-14	--	JABSALN 1, 21	4	1, 2, 3
Psalms 73:24-26	"Guide, Support, Portion"	JABSALN 1, 22	2	1, 2, 3
Psalms 102:1-2	"Funeral"	JABSALN 1, 24	1, 2	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Psalm 119:54	--	JABSALN 1, 25	4, 5, 6	1, 3
Psalm 119:136	“Rivers of Water”	JABSALN 1, 26	2, 6	1, 3
Psalm 122:1	--	JABSALN 1, 27	1, 3	1, 2, 3
Psalm 130:3-4	--	JABSALN 1, 28	6	1, 2, 3
Psalm 142:4	“No Man Cared for My Soul”	JABSALN 1, 29	2	1, 2, 3
Proverbs 3:17	“The Pleasures of Piety”	<i>FSJAB</i>	--	1, 3
Proverbs 22:6	“Train Up a Child”	JABSALN 1, 30	--	1, 3
Proverbs 27:1	“Ignorance of the Future”	JABSALN 1, 31	--	1, 2, 3
Ecclesiastes 12:13-14	“The Conclusion of the Whole Matter”	JABSALN 1, 32	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Isaiah 6:1-2	--	JABP 18, 109	5	1, 3
Isaiah 6:1-8	“Isaiah’s Vision at the Temple”	JABSALN 1, 33	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Isaiah 50:10-11	“Walketh in Darkness”	JABSALN 1, 34	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
Isaiah 55:6-7	“Seek the Lord”	JABSALN 1, 35	1, 2	1, 2, 3
Isaiah 55:8-9	--	JABSALN 1, 37	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Isaiah 57:19-21	“Peace”	JABSALN 1, 38	6	1, 2, 3
Jeremiah 6:16	“Good Way”	JABSALN 1, 39	6	1, 2, 3
Jeremiah 13:15	“Be Not Proud”	JABSALN 1, 40	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Ezekiel 33:11b; 33:32	--	JABSALN 1, 41	2	1, 3
Ezekiel 33:30-32	--	JABSALN 1, 42	2, 3	1
Hosea 14:1-7	--	JABSALN 1, 43	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
Amos 4:12	“Prepare to Meet Thy God”	JABSALN 1, 44	--	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Haggai 1:7	“Consider Your Ways”	JABSALN 1, 45	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Zechariah 12:10	“Pierced and They Shall Mourn”	JABSALN 1, 46	6	1, 2, 3
Malachi 3:7	“Means of Grace”	JABSALN 1, 47	--	1, 2, 3
Matthew 1:21	“Jesus: Savior”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1	1, 2, 3
Matthew 6:6	“Secret Prayer”	JABSALN 1, 49	2, 6	1, 3
Matthew 6:9	“The Lord’s Prayer”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 7:7	“Ask and It Shall Be Given You”	<i>SA</i>	1, 2	1, 2, 3
Matthew 7:13-14	“The Two Roads of Life”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 8:11	“Recognition in Heaven”	JABSALN 1, 50	4, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 11:28-30	“Come Unto Me”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 13:33	“Leaven”	JABSALN 1, 51	2	1, 3
Matthew 14:22-33	--	JABSALN 1, 52	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 15:21-28	The Prayer of the Woman of Canaan”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Matthew 18:3	“Like Little Children”	JABSALN 1, 53	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Mark 8:36	“What Shall It Profit”	JABSALN 1, 55	--	1, 2, 3
Mark 9:24	“Help My Unbelief”	JABSALN 1, 56	2, 6	1, 3
Mark 12:30	“Love to God”	JABSALN 1, 57	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Mark 12:31	“Thy Neighbor as Thyself”	JABSALN 1, 58	1	1, 3
Mark 16:15	--	JABSALN 1, 59	1, 6	1, 3
Luke 2:14	“Christmas”	JABSALN 1, 62	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Luke 4:1-13	“Temptation of Christ. Discourse 1”	JABSALN 1, 63	1, 6	1, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Luke 4:1-13	“Temptation of Christ. Discourse 2”	JABSALN 1, 64	1, 2	1, 3
Luke 9:28-36	“The Transfiguration”	JABSALN 1, 66	1, 6	1, 3
Luke 12:48	“Much is Given”	JABSALN 1, 67	--	1, 3
Luke 12:50	“Baptism to Be Baptized With”	JABSALN 1, 68	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Luke 17:32	“Remember Lot’s Wife”	JABSALN 1, 69	2, 3, 6	1, 3
Luke 18:1	--	JABSALN 1, 71	1, 2	1, 3
Luke 23:39-43	“The Penitent Robber”	JABSALN 1, 73	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Luke 24:34	“The Resurrection of Our Lord”	<i>FSJAB</i>	3, 6	1, 2, 3
John 1:4, 5	“The Light of Life”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
John 1:45-49	“Nathanael”	JABSALN 1, 75	2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 3:1	--	JABSALN 1, 76	1, 2, 6	1, 3
John 3:3	“New Birth”	JABSALN 1, 77	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
John 3:17	“Salvation”	JABSALN 1, 78	--	1, 2, 3
John 3:18	“The Sin of Unbelief”	<i>FSJAB</i>	6	1, 2, 3
John 3:36	“Believeth on the Son Has Everlasting Life”	JABSALN 1, 79	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 4:24	“Worship”	<i>SA</i>	2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 4:34-38	“Some Laws of Spiritual Work”	<i>SA</i>	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 5:36-47	“Honor from God Only”	JABSALN 1, 80	2	1, 2, 3
John 6:67-69	“To Whom Shall We Go?”	JABSALN 1, 81	2	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
John 9:27	“Will Ye Also Be His Disciples?”	JABSALN 1, 82	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 10:11	“The Good Shepherd”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
John 11:16	“Thomas”	JABSALN 1, 83	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
John 12:21	“Wish to See Jesus”	JABSALN 1, 84	2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 12:23	--	JABSALN 1, 85	2, 3, 6	1, 3
John 14:6	“I am the Way”	JABSALN 1, 86	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 15:15	“Not Servants, But Friends”	JABSALN 1, 87	6	1, 2, 3
John 16:23, 24	“In Jesus Name”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
John 17:3	“Know God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou Hast Sent”	JABSALN 1, 88	1, 6	1, 2, 3
John 17:9	“The Saviour Praying for Us”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2	1, 2, 3
John 17:15	“Keep Them from the Evil”	JABSALN 1, 89	2, 6	1, 3
John 21:15	“Loving Jesus Christ”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 2	1, 2, 3
Acts 1:14	“The Mother of Jesus”	<i>SA</i>	3, 6	1, 3
Acts 2	“Pentecost”	JABSALN 1, 90	2, 3, 6	1, 3
Acts 2:41-42	“Baptism”	JABSALN 1, 91	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 3
Acts 5:1	“Ananias and Saphira”	JABSALN 1, 92	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Acts 7:22	“Moses”	JABSALN 1, 93	1, 6	1, 3
Acts 9:11	“Behold, He Prayeth”	JABSALN 1, 94	2, 6	1, 3
Acts 10:1-2	“Cornelius”	JABSALN 1, 95	2, 3	1, 2, 3
Acts 16:1-3	“Timothy”	JABSALN 1, 96	1, 3, 6	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Acts 16:13-15	“Lydia”	JABSALN 1, 97	2	1, 3
Acts 17:22	“Superstitious”	JABSALN 1, 98	1, 3	1, 2, 3
Acts 25:19	“One Jesus”	<i>FSJAB</i>	3, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 2:14-15	“Conscience – Sermon 1”	JABSALN 1, 101	1, 2	1, 3
Romans 2:14-15	“Conscience – Sermon 2”	JABSALN 1, 102	6	1, 2, 3
Romans 5:1	“Let Us Have Peace with God”	<i>SA</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 6:21-22	“Service of Sin and of God”	JABSALN 1, 104	6	1, 2, 3
Romans 7:24-25	“How the Gospel Makes Men Holy”	<i>SA</i>	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 8:3-4	“Incarnation and Atonement”	JABSALN 1, 105	6	1, 2, 3
Romans 8:3-4	“For what the law could not do”	JABSALN 1, 106	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 8:14	“The Holy Spirit”	JABSALN 1, 108	6	1, 3
Romans 9:3	“Intense Concern for the Salvation of Others”	<i>SA</i>	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Romans 12:9	--	JABSALN 1, 109	1	1,3
Romans 13:11-14	“Augustine – Night and Day”	JABSALN 1, 110	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 14:7-8	“Funeral Sermon for G. W. Riggan, D.D”	<i>SA</i>	6	1, 2, 3
Romans 14:12	“Give Account”	JABSALN 1, 111	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Romans 15:4	“Comfort of the Scriptures”	JABSALN 1, 112	6	1, 2, 3
1 Corinthians 1:1-2	“The Church”	JABSALN 2, 1	1, 6	1, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
1 Corinthians 2:2	“For I Determined”	JABSALN 2, 2	2, 3	1, 2, 3
1 Corinthians 10:12-13	“Lessons for the Tempted”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3
1 Corinthians 11:20-34	“Lord’s Supper”	JABSALN 2, 3	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3
1 Corinthians 14:24-25	--	JABSALN 2, 4	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 3
1 Corinthians 16:22 and Ephesians 6:24	“Love to the Lord Jesus Christ”	JABSALN 2, 5	1, 2	1, 2, 3
2 Corinthians 4:5	“We Preach Not Ourselves”	JABSALN 2, 9	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Corinthians 6:1	--	JABSALN 2, 10	1, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Corinthians 9:15	“Unspeakable Gift”	JABSALN 2, 11	1, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Corinthians 10:5	“Casting Down Imaginations”	JABSALN 2, 12	1, 2	1, 2, 3
2 Corinthians 12:10	--	JABSALN 2, 13	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Galatians 1:23	“Paul a Monument to the Glory of God”	JABSALN 2, 14	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Galatians 3:24	“The Law Our Schoolmaster”	JABSALN 2, 15	1, 2	1, 2, 3
Galatians 4:12	“Be As I Am”	JABSALN 2, 16	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Galatians 4:18	“Zeal”	JABSALN 2, 17	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Galatians 6:7-8	“Sowing and Reaping”	JABSALN 2, 18	1	1, 2, 3
Ephesians 2:13	--	JABSALN 2, 20	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Ephesians 2:18	“Access to the Father”	JABSALN 2, 21	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Ephesians 3:14-21	“Paul’s Prayer for the Ephesians”	JABSALN 2, 23	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Ephesians 3:18	“The Apostle Paul as a Preacher”	<i>SA</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Philippians 1:21	“To Live is Christ”	JABSALN 2, 25	3, 6	1, 2, 3
Philippians 1:27	“With One Mind Striving Together”	JABSALN 2, 26	1, 6	1, 3
Philippians 3:7-8	“Knowledge of Christ”	JABSALN 2, 28	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Philippians 3:17	“Religious Experience of Paul”	JABSALN 2, 30	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Philippians 4:4	“Christian Joy”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 6	1, 3
Philippians 4:8	--	JABSALN 2, 31	2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Colossians 1:9-20	--	JABSALN 2, 32	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Colossians 2:13-23	--	JABSALN 2, 33	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Colossians 3:1-8	--	JABSALN 2, 34	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Colossians 3:8-11	--	JABSALN 2, 35	2, 6	1, 2, 3
Colossians 3:20-4:6	--	JABSALN 2, 36	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Colossians 4:7-18	--	JABSALN 2, 37	1, 2, 3	1, 3
1 Thessalonians 5:9	“The Hope of Salvation”	JABSALN 2, 38	1, 6	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
1 Thessalonians 5:18	“The Habit of Thankfulness”	SA	1, 6	1, 3
2 Thessalonians 3:1	“Free Course”	JABSALN 2, 40	1, 3	1, 2, 3
1 Timothy 1:12	--	JABSALN 2, 43	2, 6	1, 3
1 Timothy 1:15	“Faithful Saying”	JABSALN 2, 44	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
1 Timothy 2:4	--	JABSALN 2, 45	1, 2	1, 2, 3
1 Timothy 6:12	“Fight the Good Fight of Faith”	JABSALN 2, 46	4, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Timothy 2:15	“Ministerial Education”	SA	1, 2	1, 3
2 Timothy 2:19	“Name the Name of Christ”	JABSALN 2, 48	--	1, 2, 3
2 Timothy 3:15	“The Holy Scriptures”	SA	1, 3	1, 2, 3
Titus 2:11-14	“Soberly, Righteously, and Godly”	JABSALN 2, 50	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Titus 3:3-8	“Renewing of the Holy Ghost”	JABSALN 2, 51	2	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 1:1-3	“Brightness of His Glory”	JABSALN 2, 52	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 1:14	--	JABSALN 2, 53	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 2:10	“Perfect Through Suffering”	JABSALN 2, 54	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 4:11	“From Egypt to Canaan”	JABSALN 2, 55	5	1, 3
Hebrews 7:25	--	JABSALN 2, 57	2, 3, 6	1, 3
Hebrews 7:25	“He Ever Liveth to Intercede”	SA	1, 2, 6	1, 3
Hebrews 9:14	“Purge Your Conscience from Dead Works”	JABSALN 2, 58	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	1, 2, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
Hebrews 10:34	“A Better and Enduring Substance”	JABSALN 2, 59	4, 6	1, 3
Hebrews 12:4	“Striving Against Sin”	JABSALN 2, 60	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 12:16	“Esau and His Birthright”	JABSALN 2, 61	3, 5, 6	1, 2, 3
Hebrews 12:22-25	“Ye Are Come Unto Mt. Zion”	JABSALN 2, 62	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3
James 1:5	“If Any Lack Wisdom”	JABSALN 2, 65	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
James 1:26-27	“Pure Religion and undefiled”	JABSALN 2, 66	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3
James 2:23	“The Friend of God”	JABSALN 2, 67	3, 6	1, 2, 3
James 3:1-12	“The Tongue”	JABSALN 2, 68	1, 2, 6	1, 3
James 4:8	“Draw Nigh to Him and He Will Draw Nigh”	JABSALN 2, 69	1, 2	1, 3
1 Peter 1:8-9	“Not Having Seen”	JABSALN 2, 70	1, 6	1, 3
1 Peter 1:10-12	“Prophets Searching, Angels Desiring to Look Into”	JABSALN 2, 71	1, 2, 6	1, 3
1 Peter 1:15	“Be Ye Holy”	JABSALN 2, 72	1, 2, 6	1, 3
1 Peter 3:15	“Reason of the Hope”	JABSALN 2, 73	1	1, 3
1 Peter 5:5	--	JABSALN 2, 74	1, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Peter 1:4	“Promises”	JABSALN 2, 75	5, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Peter 1:12	“Put You Always in Remembrance”	JABSALN 2, 76	2, 6	1, 2, 3
2 Peter 3:15-16	“Some Things Hard to Be Understood”	JABSALN 2, 77	1	1, 3

Table A1. Continued

<i>Text</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Hermeneutical Principles</i>	<i>Homiletical Characteristics</i>
1 John 1:7	“Necessity of the Atonement”	<i>FSJAB</i>	6	1, 2, 3
1 John 1:8-10	“Sin and Forgiveness”	<i>FSJAB</i>	2, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 2:6	“Walk as He Walked”	JABSALN 2, 79	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 2:14	“Young Men”	JABSALN 2, 80	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 4:10	“Propitiation”	JABSALN 2, 81	1, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 4:16-21	“God is Love”	JABSALN 2, 82	2, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 5:10-11	--	JABP 18, 68	1, 2, 6	1, 2, 3
1 John 5:19	--	JABSALN 2, 83	1, 6	1, 2, 3
2 John	--	JABSALN 2, 84	1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3
Revelation 5:13-14	--	JABSALN 2, 85	1, 2, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
Revelation 7:9-17	“Scene in Heaven”	JABSALN 2, 86	1, 2, 3, 4, 6	1, 2, 3
Revelation 19:10	“Worship God”	JABSALN 2, 87	1, 6	1, 2, 3
Revelation 22:1	“Second Coming of Christ”	JABSALN 2, 88	2, 6	1, 3
Revelation 22:17	“The Great Invitation”	<i>FSJAB</i>	1, 6	1, 2, 3

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ABSTRACT

A MAN “MIGHTY IN THE SCRIPTURES”: THE HERMENEUTIC OF JOHN A. BROADUS AND ITS IMPACT ON HIS PREACHING

Howard Jared Bumpers, PhD
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Chair: Dr. Hershael W. York

This dissertation examines the hermeneutical presuppositions and principles of John A. Broadus and their impact on his theory and practice of preaching. Chapter 1 establishes the importance of studying preaching from a historical perspective and states the thesis of the dissertation. Chapter 2 provides a brief biographical sketch of the Southern Baptist pastor and professor John Albert Broadus. Chapter 3 focuses on the hermeneutical presuppositions that undergirded Broadus’s hermeneutic, particularly his view of Scripture. Chapter 4 identifies the principles that constituted Broadus’s hermeneutic and guided his exegesis.

Chapter 5 analyzes Broadus’s exegetical works in order to demonstrate he consistently employed the hermeneutical principles that he advocated. Chapter 6 briefly summarizes Broadus’s homiletical theory and then analyzes the sermons of Broadus to show the impact that his hermeneutic had on his preaching. The final chapter summarizes the key points of the dissertation and considers the value of Broadus’s approach to hermeneutics and homiletics for contemporary preaching.

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