# John A. Broadus, Rhetoric, and *A Treatise On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*

**by**

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There is much known and written about John A. Broadus the man, the pastor, the New Testament scholar, seminary co-founder and seminary president, denominational statesman, Yale lecturer, and Southern gentleman. But not as much is known about his study of the classics and how they impacted his life. Even less is understood about one specific influence of this classical and personal education, this particular dynamic helped form him into such an outstanding pulpit orator—*classical rhetoric*. This study caused Broadus to "baptize" rhetoric and bring it into Southern Baptist life similarly to what St. Augustine had done.[1] This chapter will seek to demonstrate how this influence affected Broadus as a preacher and as a writer in *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons.*

## Broadus as Classicist

John Albert Broadus was the fourth and youngest son of Major Edmund Broadus and Nancy Sims Broadus. His older siblings aided in young John's education: "To their instructions was added the teaching of other tutors. From an uncle, Albert G. Sims, he received a careful and accurate grounding in the rudiments of learning."[2] This proved to be a resource upon which he would draw for the rest of his days. "His 'graduation' from his uncle's school was somewhat unusual. He returned home unexpectedly and when Major Broadus inquired the reason the son replied, 'My uncle says he has no further use for me,'"[3] indicating that the young boy had learned all his uncle had to teach. The uncle reassured the father that "he had taught John 'all that he knew.'"[4]

Young Broadus continued his formative education in the mid 1840s. This time of personal study gave him a love for the classics that would change his mode and method of learning. It was also during this time when he discovered his love for the ancient Greek language. He had considered the ministry and an expertise in the Biblical languages would certainly be needed for such a vocation. He had resolved to do what was needed for the task. It was during this same period that he solidified his plans to enter the University of Virginia.[5]

Young John did indeed enter the University of Virginia in the fall of 1846. Since his early education was marred by fits and starts, the next four years were spent in diligent and disciplined study. However, "As a student . . . at the University of Virginia, he was a member of the debating society and enjoyed speaking whenever he had opportunity. During this period his study of Latin and Greek acquainted him with the works of Greek and Roman rhetoricians."[6] He received the Master of Arts degree in 1850. Soon he was destined to become one of the best known alumni of his day from this prestigious southern university.[7] His reputation, education, and Christian character illuminated many personal abilities. These brought the young preacher varied vocational opportunities.

When he finished his university course, Broadus rejected various job offers in order to study Biblical languages and other theological disciplines. He went to a private school as tutor in Fluvanna County, Virginia. There he preached in small churches as well as studying church history, theology, sermons, and the Bible. Eventually, he took a position as tutor of Latin and Greek at the university and became pastor of the Baptist Church at Charlottesville, Virginia. He soon resigned from the University of Virginia in order to pastor the church full time.[8]

It was during his pastoral tenure that Broadus had to face a rather tough personal decision: "In 1858 he was asked to become a [founding] member of the first faculty of the new Southern Baptist Theological Seminary."[9] Initially, he turned down the offer to become a

professor. This was due to his love of preaching and the pastorate.[10] This invitation pushed Broadus upon the horns of a personal dilemma: "But there [sic] ensued months of struggle with himself over the decision, and he finally agreed to become a member of the first faculty of the Seminary when it opened in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1859."[11]

Broadus's was trained both personally and formally as a classicist. He knew and employed the ancient languages, disciplines, and theories and brought them to his students. These were worked out in the classroom before he ever began to write his famous *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.[12] He taught preaching for some ten years before ever compiling and assembling his tome on homiletics.[13] There came a time in the seminary's life when he was no longer able to teach preaching. Broadus's expertise required that he move into administration and other teaching roles. He later reflected on the need to assemble a textbook for his students:

> The desire thus arose to prepare . . . a work which should be [a] full range of topics, and should also attempt to combine the thorough discussion of principles with an abundance of practical rules and suggestions. . . . [T]he author determined, before the subject should fade from his mind, to undertake the work he had contemplated.[14]

Here the *Treatise* had germinated and had begun its incubation.

Broadus began to assemble the *Treatise* and "once carefully rework[ed] . . . his lectures on homiletics for a blind student."[15] As with most professors who must convert classroom notes into a textbook, it was a very difficult task of selection. Broadus had preached and taught employing the historic *Canons of Rhetoric.*[16] He employed the classical rhetoricians as his personal mentors. He credited the use of the *Canons*[17] in his *Preface* to his *Treatise*: "The author's chief indebtedness for help has been to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, and to

[contemporaries] Whately and Vinet."[18] The *Canons*, giants of classical rhetoric, and contemporary teachers of oratory all served him well in classroom as well as pulpit.

In addition to the classical rhetoricians, Broadus drew upon another who had adapted rhetoric for preaching. This was none other than St. Augustine. Broadus borrowed heavily from the great theologian and rhetorician. All of the ancient influences shaped Broadus's use of rhetorical theory as well as praxis. He was careful to credit his ancient mentor: "Augustine says, *Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat*, 'Make the truth plain, make it pleasing, make it moving.'"[19] Even a cursory reading of Broadus's *Treatise* demonstrated how these words were his subtext throughout.

## Broadus's Use of the *Canons of Rhetoric*

Aristotle "systematized" the *Canons of Rhetoric* by the end of the fourth century B. C. E. His system would forever serve as rhetorical paradigm. It came to be "fleshed out" later by Cicero and Quintilian.[20] Aristotle's system simply stated what rhetoric should entail:

> [T]he *classical system* of rhetoric [where] there are three principal kinds of public speech: the *legal speech*, which takes place in the courtroom and concerns judgment about a *past action*; the *political speech* in the legislative assembly, concerned with moving people to *future* actions; the *ceremonial speech* in a public forum, intended to strengthen shared beliefs about the *present* state of affairs. In the classical system, these three situations constitute the entire domain of rhetoric (emphasis added).[21]

Broadus understood well that rhetoric could be adapted for preaching. This undoubtedly was a focus early in his personal study of Greek and Latin, modern foreign languages, and contemporary sermons. Most contemporary sermons were built upon a learned "eloquence" or rhetoric as it was then known.[22]

Studying the *Canons* was considered essential to become an effective orator in the nineteenth century. Everyone who trained in public address knew "classical rhetoric divides the process of preparing a persuasive speech into five stages:"[23]

1. *Invention*, the search for persuasive ways to present the information and formulate arguments
2. *Arrangement*, the organization of the parts of a speech to ensure that all the means of persuasion are present and properly disposed
3. *Style*, the use of correct, appropriate, and striking language throughout the speech
4. *Memory*, the use of mnemonics and practice
5. *Delivery*, presenting the speech with effective gestures and vocal modulation

This five-part composing process remains a cornerstone of the study of rhetoric (emphasis added).[24]

Without this elementary knowledge one would not be considered as a properly trained orator.

Rhetoric in its classical iterations had a sustained impact on all of Broadus's preaching and teaching praxis. It was because of this influence that he organized his *Treatise* around the *Canons*: "The textbook written by Broadus reflects both his interest in and knowledge of public speaking. . . . Aware that memory is no longer considered in the traditional classical sense, he does not discuss it separately, but only in reference to delivery."[25] For this present discussion then, the *Canons* classically known as *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (elocution or style), *pronuntiatio* (delivery), and *memoria*[26] will be considered generally and, in turn, from Broadus's *Treatise*.

Broadus on *Invention*

The ancient rhetor selected elements from personal education as well as experience to craft the speech for each occasion. For Aristotle, this was at the heart of persuasion process and

event. He observed: "Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion."[27] At the center of these observations was the canon of *invention*. George Kennedy also affirmed Aristotle here: "Invention is commonly defined as the process of determining what to say in a discourse. This process includes both *the choice of a subject* and *the accumulation of materials* which will enable a speaker to transform the subject into a living speech" (emphasis added).[28] This was the essence of Broadus as he prepared any address.

Broadus did not have to "invent" his means of persuasion. He possessed these in abundance: the Scriptures, formal education, wide reading, and life experiences. All of these served as sources of invention for him. He declared: "The chief materials of a sermon are in the great mass of cases not really *invented* at the time of preparation; they are the results of previous acquisition and reflection. . . . [T]he young preacher is not aware that he is drawing upon all that he has thought, felt, and seen, all that he has read and heard, since his childhood."[29] All that a young minister possessed was his intellectual library for preparation in Broadus schemata.

In the *Treatise* Broadus quoted contemporary pulpit orators to demonstrate that invention must be ongoing for the serious pulpit minister.[30] This was one juncture where his classical training became apparent. He was convinced education helped to define, expose, and illumine all of life's experiences. Unmistakably the Bible was his primary source for invention. He argued for this undeniable truth in the *Treatise*:

> The *Scriptures* themselves should at every period of his life be a preacher's chief study. When we meet a young brother who has just become convinced that it is his duty to preach, and who is inquiring about preparation for the work, our first word ought to be, the Bible. . . . Young ministers . . . are often sadly deficient as to this general knowledge of the Bible. . . . And every stage of culture and experience, as life goes on, presents fresh occasion and new facilities for studying the Bible.[31]

Broadus recognized the study of Scripture as paramount to the well-equipped pulpit orator. They were the prism through which all of human existence should be understood and interpreted.

Broadus had no personal affection or affinity for rules *per se.* However, he did quote Kidder who "'mentions some . . . practical suggestions in reference to *invention* in the form of rules:

> (1) Address your mind to the *invention* of thoughts, not words. Words may be employed, but only as auxiliaries. . . .
>
> (4) Pursue *invention* in every variety of circumstance, in the study and out of it. . . .
>
> (5) Make an early selection of subjects in order to secure the advantages of the repeated and incidental action of the *inventive* powers. . . .
>
> (6) Use former studies and preparations as helps to *invention* rather than as substitutes for it'" (emphasis added).[32]

Broadus's use of the Bible as his primary source kept him from having to employ invention in its classical sense. Scripture was his ready "textbook for invention." He grieved at the dearth of basic Bible knowledge of those would-be young Gospel preachers. He lamented: "Young ministers . . . are often found sadly deficient as to this general knowledge of the Bible; while the best Sunday Schools, as well as the most admirable family instruction, have usually but laid the foundation for such knowledge as the preacher should make haste to gain."[33] This "dearth of basic Bible knowledge" seemed to cause him acute personal grief.

Broadus strenuously desired that young men who were "called to preach" should "[Study the Bible i]n the originals, if possible, in the English version at any rate; by the rapid reading of large portions, by the thorough study of a given book, by the minute examination of particular passages . . . [so in] every way, . . . [they would] continually, . . . keep up, freshen, [and] extend . . . [a personal] acquaintance with the precious Word of God."[34]

Broadus drew his invented materials from another source as well. This was the discipline of Systematic Theology. Here his love and passion were particularly observable: "*Systematic Theology* is of unspeakable importance to the preacher, indispensable if he would be in the best sense instructive, and exert an abiding influence over his hearers. . . . Exegesis and Systematic Theology properly go hand in hand. Neither is complete, neither is really safe, without the other."[35] These were symbiotic for the preacher's task in Broadus's idealized construct.

All of these sources taken together; a working knowledge of the Scriptures, an education informed by personal experience and wide readings, and a working knowledge of Systematic Theology served Broadus as means of invention. He used the Bible for his content and rhetorical invention as his method while both were underwritten by formal education, current events, and life experiences. The integration of exegesis and interpretation of Scripture intersected with rhetorical method of invention. These were the crossroad intersections where Broadus did his best work to prepare a sermon and prepare lectures for the classroom.

Broadus's synthesized methods of invention were plain, straightforward, and quite adaptable for the veteran or neophyte. Everything in life was a tool for use in sermon preparation and delivery. Broadus meticulously captured life experiences in his personal journal. He recorded relevant thoughts, insights, and observations as they came to mind. Well ahead of a particular address Broadus chose the apt materials with care. The Biblical text and experiential observations were both adopted with delicate thought. As all sources came together, his applications and adaptations of ancient rhetorical techniques proved quite effective. It enlivened his pulpit manner as well as his classroom teaching of homiletics.

Broadus on *Arrangement*

Broadus's oratorical acumen proved the necessity and importance of the canon of arrangement. However, he did not treat arrangement as meticulously as other canons such of

invention, style, or delivery. He used an eclectic approach as he drew upon the ancient principles for his modern day iterations needed to teach homiletics.[36] He drew from two classic rhetorical treatises. These were *De Inventione* by Cicero and *Institutio Oratoria* by Qunitilian. However, "he says far less on arrangement than is found in either of these classical works."[37] Here Broadus more closely aligned with his contemporaries' use of rhetorical theory. He gleaned what met his needs. Concerning this eclecticism, Huber observed: "The influences he reflects originate from both classical and modern sources, but in giving his [*Treatise*] readers the ideas of others he not only reveals selectivity in his choices, but also offers many conclusions that appear to be based upon his own thinking and experiences."[38] Huber further demonstrated that "almost half of the information given on arrangement . . . concerns organization of various kinds of sermons. In dealing with 'sermon types' and arrangement, he particularly bases his recommendations upon his own experiences as a teacher and preacher."[39]

Broadus employed the metaphor of a general arraying his army for the larger battle rather than the lieutenant deploying individual soldiers in the field. Dargan and Broadus commented on this stratagem: "[T]he speaker's task may be compared to the organization of an army, and then the concentration of its several divisions upon one objective point."[40]

At this juncture Broadus borrowed from a contemporary orator's understanding of how arrangement should be seen. He knew that any composition should have order. Order holds the discourse together. To vindicate his theory he cited Vinet's use of Pascal: "'Good thoughts,' says Pascal, 'are abundant. . . . ' I will not go so far as to say that a discourse without order can produce no effect. . . . But we may affirm . . . the power of discourse is proportional to the order in which [arrangement] reigns in it."[41] All of the *Canons* are important but none was more so to Broadus than that of arrangement.

Although Broadus did not give prevalence to arrangement, nonetheless he gave some extended comments about its appropriation. He demonstrated how "(1) Arrangement is of great importance *to the speaker himself*. . . . (2) Still more important is good arrangement as regards the *effect on the audience*. . . . And finally, it causes the discourse to be *more easily remembered*."[42] These three practices governed his sermonic assembly.

Broadus argued passionately that these three arrangement mechanics would serve as a primary rhetorical device. He exhorted the readers of the *Treatise* that order and arrangement made the sermon more persuasive. When "motives and . . . appeals to feeling[s]" are used "order is of great importance."[43] Always sympathetic to the congregation, he put their needs first. He continued: "[T]he hearers feelings will be much more powerfully and permanently excited, when appeals are made in some *natural order* (emphasis added)."[44]

As he closed his discussion on arrangement, Broadus summarized by utilizing another contemporary colleague: "Coquerel says that the lack of [the arrangement] method is the most common fault of preaching, and the most inexcusable, because [it is] usually the result of insufficient labor. 'A man cannot give himself all the qualities of the orator; but by taking the necessary pains, he can connect his ideas, and proceed with order in the composition of discourse.'"[45] Although arrangement was not as relevant for Broadus, nevertheless, it did serve its purpose in his overall schemata and possessed a high level of credence by him.

Broadus on *Style*

Broadus took greater pains concerning his discussions about rhetorical style. This was somewhat juxtaposed to his rather short treatment of arrangement. When he began the discussion of style in the *Treatise*, he was greatly concerned with its nature, value, and improvement for the apprentice orator. The three perceived characteristics most important for style were *perspicuity*, *energy*, and *elegance*. Here his *Treatise* demonstrated an extremely pedagogical nature. It was

broken down into minute detail with many examples to serve the reader.[46] Huber picked up Broadus's subdivisions of style here: "He begins his discussion of style by giving what is essentially a conventional definition."[47] Broadus's classical education showed forth here.

Huber captured Broadus's essence with one sharp observation: "In effect . . . *style* is an orator's characteristic manner of expressing his thoughts whether in writing or speaking. What was emphasized here is the idea that expression or style is invariably the result of the learning, experiences, and interests of a given individual" (emphasis added).[48] There were some reverberations of Broadus's discussions with that of invention. There, Broadus demonstrated how the preacher could use the Bible, Systematic Theology, and a wide variation of personal interest readings to gather sermonic materials. Here, he synthesized invention with that of style. This was clearly seen when he declared that "the idea that expression or style is invariably the result of the learning, experiences, and interests of a given individual."[49]

Broadus understood invention and style as symbiotic tools for the young minister. The novice should know both in their classical sense and apply them to contemporary circumstances. Broadus left the young minister the right and privilege to develop his own style through learning, experiences, and personal interests. He understood that "the most important property of style is perspicuity. Style is excellent when, like the atmosphere, it shows the thought, but itself is not seen."[50]

What then was this perspicuity? Broadus again borrowed from a contemporary protégé for insights. Shedd's, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology,* shined light on the subject:

> The thoughts which the religious teacher presents to the common mind should go straight to the understanding. Everything that covers up and envelops the truth should be stripped off from it, so that the bare reality may be seen. . . . When the style is *plain* . . . the hearer experiences the sensation of being touched: and this sensation is always impressive. . . .

> The preacher should toil after this property of *style*, as he would toil after virtue (emphasis added).[51]

For Broadus nothing was more important than to bring clarity and plainness to the pulpit. If a congregation could not understand what was declared, what then was the point?

Broadus continued his synthesis of the classical with the contemporary. Quintilian's *The Institutio Oratoria* demonstrated an understanding of perspicuity's character of plainness. He was so impressed that he made it central to his preaching. The address must flood the mind like the sun according to Quintilian. He declared: "We must take care, not that it shall be possible for him [the hearer] to understand, but that it shall be utterly impossible for him not to understand."[52] Broadus drew illumination to lighten the eyes of his young students from Quintilian's classical description.

Broadus spoke at length of his understanding about the rhetorical canon of style. Energy was the essence of style for him. Energy contained three components and among them was "*Animation*, or liveliness, [which] serves to stimulate [the] attention" of the hearers. He used "The term *force* . . . especially with reference to arguments, and the kindred word for power . . . applied both to arguments and to motives." Both must be wedded: "*Passion*—which in its milder and more tender forms we call *ethos*, and in its highest form the sublime." These employed in concert would have their "effect upon the feelings, often by means of the imagination: and both force and passion aim at last to influence the will."[53]

Broadus shared a homespun anecdote in the *Treatise* that illustrated well how this energy of style should be delivered. He recounted: "There is a homely story of a preacher who suggested to a sleepy hearer that snuff might keep him awake [during his sermon], and was asked in return, 'Couldn't you put a little snuff into your sermons.'"[54]

These descriptions of style were quite a departure from the sermons of Broadus's day. Dignity was the hallmark of the age. Animation, force, or passion that evoked any sort of emotional feeling was not very well known among the contemporary pulpit orators. His use of these three ideals of energy was balanced. He argued that "the chief requisite to an energetic style is an energetic nature. There must be vigorous thinking, earnest if not passionate feeling, and the determined purpose to accomplish some object, or the man's style will have no truly exalted energy."[55] This "truly exalted energy" was best understood by Broadus as God's Holy Spirit applying the preacher's message to the hearts of the hearers.

However, Broadus cautioned the extremes of energy if it was left unchecked or an end unto itself. To prove his point he cited contemporary Austin Phelps: "'*Energy* and enthusiasm co-exist in character: they must co-exist in *style* . . . [and] that true *energy* is founded in self-possession.' Extravagance and vehemence by going too far defeat the ends of a true eloquence."[56] So then, an excess of exuberance declared a lack of eloquence or even proper training of the classically trained orator.

Perhaps the most unique element of style was elegance for Broadus. He defined "elegance . . . as 'the product of imagination alone or in combination with passion, and operating under the control of good taste.'"[57] Broadus contended that elegance was secondary to perspicuity and energy but was nonetheless an asset of style that should be used with a bit of discretion and measure.[58] He noted similarly that, "A corresponding evaluation of elegance [was] formulated by Whately in his popular *Elements of Rhetoric*. He believes that 'when the two excellences of style are at variance, the general rule to be observed by the orator is to prefer energetic to the elegant.'"[59] Perspicuity then, was the thing for Broadus.

As Broadus concluded his discussions around the issues of style in general and elegance in particular he mused: "One must habitually think his thoughts into clearness, and must acquire

wide and easy command of the best resources of language, if he would be able to speak simply, and yet really say something."[60] He understood this to be the chief work of the New Testament apostles when they preached and taught the Gospel. As he was wont to do throughout the *Treatise*, he called upon a fellow theologian to mark his point well:

> For the Apostles, poor mortals, were content to take lower steps, and to tell the world [the Gospel] in plain terms. . . . [T]he Apostles' preaching was therefore mighty . . . because [it was] plain, natural and familiar, and by no means above the capacity of their hearers: nothing being more preposterous, than for those who were professedly aiming at men's hearts, to miss the mark by shooting over their heads.[61]

The preacher had to think clearly in order to preach clearly. It was an absolute must for Broadus!

Rhetorical style, therefore, consisted at its core foci of perspicuity, energy, and elegance. It was only one of the paramount dynamics that made the pulpit come alive. For Broadus, all of the *Canons of Rhetoric*, *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (elocution or style), *pronuntiatio* (delivery), and *memoria*,[62] each had its unique place in his "puzzle of rhetoric." None of the canons, however, was more important to Broadus than was the canon of delivery.

Broadus on *Delivery*

Broadus's left his lengthy discussion of delivery until last in the *Treatise*. He presented three chapters explaining factors involved in the delivery of speeches and sermons. This was plain in the layout of his tome: "[H]e wrote his [*Treatise*] text in an era dominated by the influence of elocutionists, he might have devoted greater attention to delivery."[63] Here he jettisoned the Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle had not given much space to this particular canon. Broadus chose, however, to follow neither extreme: "Although he . . . [was] aware of the views of hosts of previous writers, his approach . . . [was] determined by the purpose of his text."[64] For

the students and pastors who would read his book, he knew they would face new circumstances or "audience situations"[65] that required them to constantly adapt in their ongoing preparation and delivery.

For Broadus, "everything old was new again." His adaptation of an address or sermon to a particular audience's need was not innovative. This technique had been employed down through the rhetorical tradition. This is also a major focus for communications theorists today. This theory is presently known as *audience analysis*. "**Audience analysis** *means*" that the speaker discovers all that can possibly be known about the people he is "*talking to or will be talking to so that* [he] *can adapt material to their interests, needs, attitudes, fund of knowledge, beliefs, values, and backgrounds*."[66] Kenneth Burke, in his *Rhetoric of Moves* offered another take: "[A speaker] persuade[s] a man only insofar as [he] can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying ways with his."[67] This was Broadus's method and he regularly employed it throughout his preaching and teaching career.

Broadus coupled audience analysis with listener's receptivity in his delivery. They were both of utmost concern to him, so crucial to his thinking. He reminded his readers of their collective dual responsibility. He exhorted:

> We are willing to grant . . . that there is not much good preaching; but we beg leave to remark that the proportion of good preachers is quite as great as the proportion of good listeners. . . . One great point of excellence in a preacher, especially to the restless hearers of the present day, will be that he is easy to listen to. . . . Let all preachers strive to be so clear, so sprightly, so earnest and magnetic, that men may hear with ease and pleasure and profit; nay, let them solemnly strive so to speak, in love of their hearers and in the fear of God, that men cannot choose but hear.[68]

There was "anointed" hearing as well as "anointed" preaching in Broadus's understanding.

In the *Treatise*, Broadus discussed the differing views on the major types of delivery. "Reading, reciting, extemporaneous speaking,--which is the best method of preaching."[69] His response was: "It is a question affecting not only one's manner of delivery, but his whole method of preparation, and in fact all his habits of thought and expression."[70] Broadus well understood that the end result would be fashioned by the means to that end for a particular address.

**Broadus as Extemporaneous Preacher**

Broadus set out in his *Treatise* to show an extemporaneous model for preaching. In the "AUTHORS' PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION,"[71] he gave one particular rationale for this chosen style:

> Special pains have been taken, at the proper points of the Treatise, to give practical suggestions for extemporaneous speaking. Most works confine their instruction as regards the preparation of sermons to the case of writing out in full; and many treat of delivery, as if it were in all cases to be reading or recitation. The effort has here been to keep the different methods in view, and to mention, in connection with matters applicable to all alike, such as apply to one or another method in particular.[72]

Throughout his *Treatise* Broadus favored the extemporaneous method above all the others.

Broadus referred to this extemporaneous model of oratory as "FREE SPEAKING."[73] He felt compelled to explain further exactly what he meant by his new idea:

> The technical meaning of this expression requires to be *defined.* Primarily, of course, it denotes speaking without preparation, simply from the promptings of the moment. The colloquial expression for this is "off hand," the image being that of shooting without a rest. . . . This popular phraseology is suggestive. . . . [W]e insist that *free speaking*, after the discourse has been written in full as preparation, but without any

effort to repeat the language of the manuscript, shall be called *extemporaneous speaking* (emphasis added).[74]

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Broadus became known for this favored method.

The master orator was quick to offer a strong caveat concerning his preferred extemporaneous delivery before commending its advantages. One of the primary dangers to him was that one might learn to depend on this method without the proper preparation that could be given to memory, recitation, or the reading of an entire manuscript. He also warned, "Really to extemporize [sic] the matter of preaching is as impracticable as is it is improper. And it is utterly unfair to represent the advocates of extemporaneous preaching as meaning that men shall preach without preparation."[75] For Broadus, there were three primary foci when it came to preaching regardless of the delivery mode. These were preparation, preparation, and preparation.

Broadus advocated this very strongly, "Consider then, the advantages [of extempore]:"[76] The extemporary method enabled a person to think more quickly than would be possible if the manuscript was fully written. In a context where time was of the essence the speaker was able to spend his strength on more difficult parts of the address. This method also had the advantage in that the most-noble thoughts came to the speaker while he was engaged in the task of speaking. New thought might come illuminating the whole of the prepared material in the mind of the speaker as he preached. There might even be a level of inspiration that might come "in the moment" of the spoken word. And in addition to all of this, the preacher could watch for the effect of the message on the face of the audience.[77]

Broadus honed his extempore skills throughout his life. During the Civil War he served as a combination missionary and chaplain to General Lee's Armies of Northern Virginia. Broadus recounted that, "For three months of that summer [1863] I preached as a missionary in General Lee's army. . . ."[78] He reflected that "it was the most interesting and thoroughly

delightful preaching I was ever engaged in."[79] During that time there was much confusion because of the war. With all of the goings and comings he scarcely had time to prepare or study. Broadus remembered that "it is very difficult here to think up an unfamiliar discourse."[80]

Broadus exhibited a certain remiss of preparation time in a letter addressed to his wife on Monday July 6th. It concerned him greatly that he was forced to use old material. His heart was no doubt discouraged due to the great loss just suffered at Gettysburg. He confessed to her that, "I haven't got use to the tent, and am constantly making acquaintances. A good many soldiers in attendance both times [I preached] yesterday. . . . You [may] perceive that I am taking my old sermons. . . . The sermons were not particularly good or particularly bad. God grant that they may do some good."[81] He had taken his text from Proverbs 3:17, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness."[82] Dr. J. Wm. Jones later recalled that he employed that particular text on various other occasions.[83]

Broadus also possessed a natural ability to bring to the preaching event the rhetorical mode of *pathos*. He was swept away by personal emotion like unto Jesus himself when he said, "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . I would have gathered thy children together . . ." (Matt. 23:37 KJV). Pathos may have been Broadus's greatest natural trait. Fant and Pinson observed that:

> The qualities displayed by Broadus will serve any preacher well; *kindness*, *urbanity*, *understanding*, and *sympathy* abounded in this Virginia gentleman. He once said. "If I were asked what is the first thing in effective preaching, I should say *sympathy*; and what is the second thing [sic], I should say *sympathy*; and what is the third thing, I should say *sympathy*." His deep awareness of the needs of people led him to meet the immediate, personal needs of others (emphasis added).[84]

He employed the character of Christ himself to identify with the people to whom he preached.

Throughout his career this grand pulpit master coupled pathos with his favorite rhetorical method--extempore. The Yale lectures he delivered in 1889 may have been the academic high water mark of this Southern gentleman. The addresses were comparable in notoriety to those of Henry Ward Beecher according to his son-in-law, A. T. Robertson.[85] However, the problem for posterity was this: his use of the extempore style left no complete manuscripts [of the lectures] from which later generations might draw. Fant and Pinson wrote concerning his extempore method: "But as [was his] usual [practice], Broadus had not written them out in full, preferring to speak from notes according to his custom when lecturing. He also expected to incorporate some of them into his *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*."[86] But, he would be denied this privilege because of his death.[87]

Even before communication theory appeared as an academic discipline Broadus employed audience analysis to his addresses.[88] He possessed a gift for the extempore and was received well by all who heard him. His freedom from the contemporary use of manuscripts allowed him to look directly at his audience and establish eye contact.[89] Stanfield observed that "he assiduously cultivated this habit and developed the ability to make each person in the audience feel that he was talking directly to him."[90]

In addition to this controversial mode, Broadus developed a conversational manner. His preaching was a "conversation" with the people. He also encouraged his students to "talk like folks talk."[91] He perfected this even to the point where his sermons were referred to as "enlarged conversations."[92] In his quiet delivery he used very few hand gestures. His voice was not terribly strong. Broadus could balance between the conversational style on the one hand and being loud enough to be heard on the other. Stanfield further observed: "It [Broadus's voice] was marked by a soft richness, fine flexibility, and often expressed deep *pathos*. He articulated carefully and there was a good distribution of emphasis (emphasis added)."[93]

Broadus's new delivery brought both critics as well as those who would imitate him. Most of his contemporaries "equated 'real preaching' with soaring in the oratorical stratosphere."[94] He was even accused of "ruining the preachers of the South"[95] by this newly minted controversial mode and conversational manner. The students whom he influenced the most recognized his genius and "tried to imitate his tones, his genuine *pathos*, his platform manner, failing to realize that they had only a few of his external characteristics and not the [inner] qualities of his success (emphasis added)."[96]

Perhaps Broadus's method of delivery was most appreciated by the congregations that were blessed to hear him. Audiences have always delighted in preachers who looked at them in the eye and spoke to them directly.[97] This new method was even accepted by the academe of the day. "His Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, which were delivered in this manner, were enthusiastically received by the students and faculty [alike] at Yale University."[98] Since this unique method of preparing and delivering sermons gained wide acceptance from the unlearned soldier to the scholar, "it must be listed as an important element of strength in his preaching."[99]

Many other preachers and orators have been men of renown. But Stanfield declared: "It was, however, the total impact of *man* and *message* that made John A. Broadus such a tremendously popular preacher to his own generation (emphasis added)."[100] Broadus's audience sensed a "reality"[101] that had not been experienced before. Perhaps it is best sensed by "One listener [who] summarized and made articulate what many felt about Broadus's [method of] preaching."[102] He observed: "It was not so much what he said. It did seem that almost anyone might have said what he was saying. But it was the man behind the message. He spoke with the authority of one who tested and knew the truth."[103]

## Gleaned Observations of Broadus

In his critique of the electronic media, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman cited "Marshall McLuhan's [often quoted] aphorism 'the medium is the message.'"[104] Vernon L. Stanfield, longtime professor of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, once observed: "GRADUALLY, an art or science evolved to assist in the publication of the Christian message. That science came to be called homiletics."[105] Broadus embodied both of these communication truths. To have known Broadus was to experience a genuine preacher: in manner, in mode, in deportment, in character, and in speech. He elevated this science of homiletics to a new height of artistic oratory for his era and following generations

For the succeeding generations who would not have the blessing of hearing him, Broadus left a rich literary legacy: *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* with all of its iterations and succeeding revisions. His *Treatise* was his classical gift to Southern Baptists as well as the church-at-large. A strong case can be made that the effectiveness of the church rises or falls on the strength of her pulpits. Broadus certainly contributed to the pulpit's lasting efficacy. Stanfield articulated this quite strongly when he stated:

> Perhaps no book on homiletics has been able to achieve the comprehensiveness, the timelessness, and the simplicity of *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons.* Based on solid principles and tested procedures, and drawing upon the very best literature related to the art of sermon preparation . . . [all its revisions and] edition[s] will be indispensable tool[s] for . . . [every] new generation of preachers.
>
> Christian history has shown that the strength of the church is directly related to the strength of the pulpit. When the message from the pulpit has been uncertain and faltering, the church was weak; when the pulpit was given a positive, declarative

message, the church has been strong. The need for effective preaching has never been greater.[106]

This comment was almost prophetically germane for the twenty-first century. Broadus's life and work has left a powerful legacy for that effective preaching.

Broadus: Ancient Influences, Contemporary Practices, and the Man as Pulpit Orator

There are three undeniable as well as admirable traits Broadus possessed that will forever live in the memory of any serious student who considers him in even the most general of ways. These are the ancient and classical influences on his life, his contemporary practices of oratory, and his character of life. The Southern Baptist Convention has yet to produce one who embodied all that a Christian scholar, educator, pulpit orator, denominational statesman, and Southern gentleman should be that could equal John A. Broadus—"Preacher Extraordinary."[107]

Early in his youth Broadus found one of his lifelong loves in education. That love and devotion was easily synthesized with his commitment to the ministry. Both simultaneously enhanced his unique and natural endowment for oratory, public address, and preaching. From his earliest learning experiences at his uncle's, Albert G. Sims's "school," he developed a voracious mind of inquiry. This would whet his later appetite with a love for the Biblical Languages—both Greek and Hebrew—Classical Greek, Latin, German, as well as French. Also during his formal education he discovered the ancient texts of Classical Rhetoric. He especially became familiar with the *Canons of Rhetoric*,[108] *De Inventione* by Cicero, *Institutio Oratoria* by Qunitilian, as well as Aristotle's definition of Rhetoric. There is absolutely no doubt that the influence of Augustine also had a great impact on Broadus as rhetorician. A strong case could be argued that a single quote of the great church father and theologian was the prism through which most of Broadus public address, preaching, teaching homiletics, and writing of the *Treatise* could be

seen: "Augustine says, *Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat*, 'Make the truth plain, make it pleasing, make it moving.'"[109]

Broadus was not only a renaissance man and classicist; he drew on contemporary scholarship from varied disciplines to incorporate into his writing and teaching. He was well-read in current events and world affairs and would have been considered a "life-long learner" by those today. He synthesized the ancients with the contemporaries for his discipline of homiletics. In the *Treatise* he incorporated upwards of fifty current "Homileticians . . . Rhetoricians and Other Writers"[110] demonstrating well he was not chained to a particular person or school of thought. His use of the extemporary method juxtaposed to that of memory and reading of the written manuscript allowed him an ability "to be in the moment" much more than the other ministers of the day. This was where Broadus was best. He had the uncanny ability to sense the ethos and pathos of those to whom he spoke. These sparked in him and emoted from him those selfsame traits. This natural ability created a spiritual symbiosis that allowed him and the congregation to "feed off" one another and to create a level of immanence in the "preaching event" time and again.

Broadus would craft each sermon and each lecture for its own particular session. His rhetorical skills allowed him to understand another dynamic that would come to be known in Communication Theory as Audience Analysis.[111] He always endeavored to spend at least two hours before an address to custom apply his work to that event even if he had preached it before. He possessed an insatiable desire to be fresh every time he spoke.

Above all Broadus was in his heart of hearts, a man of great moral conviction. As a young man he wrestled within himself whether or not he would take up the vocation of the Gospel ministry. He would also be thrown on the "horns of a dilemma" later in his career. Would he accept the invitation to be one of the founding four professors of the new Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary forming in Greenville, South Carolina? He truly loved the work of pastor, so it was indeed an agonizing decision for him. It would, however, be a great opportunity to "enlarge his borders." He had mastered more than one discipline, so his expertise was exactly what this new theological venture needed. And once he had committed himself to a task, there was no stopping him or no turning him around regardless of the circumstances or personal costs. This principle was best demonstrated in 1866 after the Civil War when the four founders came back together to carry on the work of the seminary. At the meeting Broadus spoke with conviction: "Suppose we quietly agree that the seminary may die, but we'll die first."[112]

The essence of Broadus's preaching may have been captured best by Vernon Latrelle Stansfield's work, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus.* Broadus was completely devoted to his call to the ministry of proclamation. He never wavered and gave himself body, mind, and spirit to the task all of his days; even through personal reversals, health issues, and other life circumstances. Broadus was one who could speak to the cultured and refined as well as the plowman or store merchant. He was able to relate to the people of every socio-economic strata of society. And this he did well with ethos and pathos. Broadus was not satisfied only to deliver a sermon that was eloquent rhetorically; he had a deep unction to move his hearers to the point of decision. He preached with the conviction of a lawyer trying to convince a jury to acquit a man on trial for his life. Lastly, Broadus gave himself to the study of preachers and preaching. This he had taken up long before he ever began to teach preaching.[113] He practiced his craft all the days of his life and applied the ancient art of rhetoric to his artistry early on.

John A. Broadus was one man that could never be replaced. He was a great orator and pulpit speaker. He may have been one of the greatest orators of the later half of the nineteenth century. He was a man who was also "mighty in the Scriptures." He, like St. Augustine, brought Classical Rhetoric "right into the church-house!" He left his fingerprints on The Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary as well as the Southern Baptist Convention. But of all of the accolades that could be piled high, none was better than: "JOHN ALBERT BROADUS: PREACHER EXTRAORDINARY!"[114]

[1]Reader's Note: For an introductory discussion and analysis of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* please refer to; Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, eds., *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Marin's Press, 1990), 381-422.

[2]Vernon Latrelle Stanfield, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, (New York: Harper Bros. Pub., 1959), 2

[3]Stanfield, 2-3.

[4]Ibid., 4.

[5]Ibid., 3.

[6] Paul Huber, "A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus," (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1956), 3.

[7]Stanfield, 4.

[8]Stanfield, 4.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., 4-5.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Reader's note: In the remainder of this chapter Broadus's *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* will be referred to as *Treatise*.

[13]John Albert Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1871; reprint, from the Collection of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: University Library Scholarly Publishing Office, n.d.), iii.

[14]Broadus, *Treatise*, iii.

[15]Stanfield, 4.

[16]Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, eds., *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Marin's Press, 1990), 3-7.

[17]*Canons of Rhetoric* will be referred to as *Canons* throughout the remained of the chapter.

[18]Broadus, *Treatise*, vi.

[19]Broadus, *Treatise*, 20-21.

[20]Bizzell and Herzberg, 3.

[21]Ibid.

[22]See: Broadus's pp. 20ff. for a fuller discussion of the "Nature of Eloquence" and the synonymous usage of *eloquence* with *rhetoric.*

[23]Bizzell and Herzberg, 3.

[24]Ibid., 3-4.

[25]Huber, 3.

[26] Laura Sells, "Greco Roman Rhetoric," [Internet online]; available from <http://www.voxygen.net/rhetciv/GrecoRoman%20Rhetoric.htm> (5 April 2005).

[27]George A. Kennedy, trans., *Aristotle: On Rhetoric; A Theory of Civic Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36.

[28]Huber, 10.

[29]Broadus, *Treatise*, 118-119.

[30]See: Broadus's *Treatise* p. 118ff for a more in-depth discussion.

[31]Broadus, *Treatise*, 121.

[32]Daniel P. Kidder, *A Treatise on Homiletics* (New York: Phillips & Hunt), 152; quoted in Dargan & Broadus, 119-121.

[33]John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, rev., Edwin Charles Dargan with revised bibliography by C. S. Gardner, vol. 2 in *The Selected Works of John A. Broadus* (New York: Hodder and Stroughton, 1898; reprint, Cape Coral, FL: Founder's Press, 2001), 122. Hereafter referred to as Broadus, *TREATISE*–Dargan rev.

[34]Broadus, *Treatise*—Dargan rev., 123.

[35]Broadus, *Treatise*, 122-123.

[36]Huber, 45.

[37]Ibid, 45.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Huber, 45.

[40]Broadus, *Treatise*—Dargan rev., 259.

[41]Adolphe Vinet, *Homiletics*, Translated by Thomas Skinner, (New York: Ivison & Phinney, 1855), 264-265; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*, 242.

[42]Broadus, *Treatise*, 243-247.

[43]Ibid., 246.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Coquerel, *Observ. sur la Pred.*, 163; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*, 245.

[46]Huber, 78.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Broadus, *Treatise*, 339.

[51]William T. G. Shedd, *Homiletics and Pastoral Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 63-69; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*, 340.

[52]Quintilian, *The Institutio Oratoria*, Broadus's personal translation from the original language, VIII, 2, 23, 29; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*, 341.

[53]Broadus, *Treatise*, 357.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Broadus, *Treatise*—Dargan rev., 381.

[56] Austin Phelps, *English Style in Public Discourse*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 208 & 217; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*—Dargan rev., 381.

[57]John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1871; reprint, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan University Library, n.d), 403-404, 405 (page references are to the reprint edition); quoted in Huber, 111.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Richard Whately, *Elements of Rhetoric*, (New York: Shelton & Co., 1917), 378; quoted in Paul Huber, "A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus," (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1956), 111.

[60]Broadus, *Treatise*, 392.

[61]Henry Rogers, *Reason and Faith and Other Miscellanies*, (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, & Co.), 219; quoted in Broadus, *Treatise*, 393.

[62]See Kennedy's *Aristotle: On Rhetoric* and Bissell & Herzberg's *The Rhetorical Tradition* for an in-depth discussion of the classical *Canons of Rhetoric*.

[63]Huber, 123.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Larry A. Samovar, *Oral Communication: Speaking Across Cultures*, 11th ed. (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2000), 67.

[67]Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*; quoted in Samovar, 67.

[68]John A. Broadus, "One Responsibility of Hearers—Good Listening," *Western Recorder* (March 1888); available from <http://www.bereabaptistchurch.org/articles/BroadusJohnA/OneResponsibility.html> (25 May 2005).

[69]Broadus, *Treatise*, 406.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Broadus, *Treatise*—Dargan rev., Author's Preface to the First Edition, n.p.

[72]Ibid.

[73]John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, new and rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 325.

[74]Ibid., 326.

[75]Ibid., 326-327.

[76]Broadus, *Treatise*–Dargan rev., 458.

[77] Ibid., 458-462.

[78]J. W. Jones, "Seminary Magazine," April 1895, quoted in Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, (1901; reprint, Harrisburg, Va., Gano Books Sprinkle Publications, 2003), 198.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, (1901; reprint, Harrisburg, Va., Gano Books Sprinkle Publications, 2003), 200.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid.

[83]J. Wm. Jones, [The Southern Baptist Theological] *Seminary Magazine*, April 1895; quoted in Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, (1901; reprint, Harrisburg, Va., Gano Books Sprinkle Publications, 2003), 208-10.

[84]Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, (1901; reprint, Harrisburg, Va., Gano Books Sprinkle Publications, 2003), 353-354; quoted in Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr., *20 Centuries of Great Preaching*, vol, 5 of *An Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1971), 51.

[85] Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr., *20 Centuries of Great Preaching*, vol, 5 of *An Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Waco, Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1971), 52.

[86]Ibid. For a more in-depth discussion of the Yale Lectures see: Mark M. Overstreet, "The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John A. Broadus (1827-1985)" Ph. D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005.

[87]Ibid.

[88]For a fuller discussion of *Audience Analysis* see, Larry A. Samovar, *Oral Communication: Speaking Across Cultures*, 11th ed. (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2000).

[89]Stanfield, 12.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Ibid.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Ibid., 13.

[98]Ibid. For a more in depth discussion of the Lyman Beecher Lectures see: Archibald Thomas Robertson, *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, (1901; reprint, Harrisburg, Va., Gano Books Sprinkle Publications, 2003), 375-80; or Mark M. Overstreet, "The 1889 Lyman Beecher Lectures and the Recovery of the Late Homiletic of John A. Broadus (1827-1985)" Ph. D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2005.

[99]Stanfield, 13.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Claude W. Duke, "Memorial Address of Dr. John A. Broadus," in *Review and Expositor* (April, 1927): 172, quoted in Vernon Latrelle Stanfield, *Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, (New York: Harper Bros. Pub., 1959), 13.

[104]Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message," [Internet online]; available from <http://www.marshallmcluhan.com/main.html> (19 August 2006), quoted in Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (New York: Viking Penguin Books, Ltd., 1985), 8-9.

[105]John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed., rev. Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 9.

[106]Ibid., Introductory comments in the front dust cover.

[107]Stanfield, 1.

[108]See Endnotes 16 & 17 above for a fuller discussion of the *Canons of Rhetoric*.

[109]Broadus, *Treatise*, 20-21.

[110] Paul Huber, "A Study of the Rhetorical Theories of John A. Broadus," (Ph. D. diss., University of Michigan, 1956), 182-186.

[111]See the prior discussion in Larry A. Samovar, *Oral Communication: Speaking Across Cultures*, 11th ed. (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2000), 67ff.

[112]Tom J. Nettles, *The Baptists: Key People Involved in Forming a Baptist Identity*; *Volume II Beginnings in America* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, Geanies House, 2006), 300.

[113]Stanfield, 5-12.

[114]Ibid., 1.