

Partisan Misrepresentation.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.—Ex. xx: 16.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

—Prov. xviii: 21.

We are on the eve of a campaign that will be in one respect peculiar: there is a singular lack of well-defined issues of national moment, and the prospect is that men, rather than principles, will be the theme of discussion to an unusual extent. The tendency to misrepresentation will be strong, and to decry it is the preacher's urgent duty. The sentiment that "Religion must not meddle with politics" is, in such a case, especially false. Religion must "meddle" with disobedience to God's laws, wherever it is found.¹ Three forms of this misrepresentation may be indicated: 1. The suppression of facts essential to a right estimate of character. This is, perhaps, the most usual and most dangerous form of the evil. "No lie is so dangerous as a half-truth." 2. The accepting of unverified rumor for fact. He who does this becomes an indorser of the rumor. A premium is thereby placed upon slander. It is a matter of common observation that a false

charge will travel faster and survive longer than the refutation. This ought not so to be. 3. Direct fabrication of known falsehood. This is most apt to occur immediately preceding the election, when denial comes too late. The "Morey Letter" is a prominent instance.

The evils of such misrepresentation are lasting and obvious: 1. It defiles the individual, blunts his sense of honor and justice, numbs his conscience, and weakens his moral influence over his fellows. 2. It is a crime against one's country. There are few things more degrading to a nation than a "mud-slinging" campaign. It confounds patriotism with the basest passions. It lowers the morals of officeholders by banishing self-respecting men from the political arena. No one can shield himself behind assumed calamities in the event of his party's defeat. The end does not justify the means. 3. It is a sin before God. In the thunders of Sinai it was condemned. Ananias and Sapphira were slain to enforce upon us the fact of God's awful wrath against it. Christ himself was the victim of partisan misrepresentation.

AROUND THE EDITOR'S TABLE.**The Poetic Element in Preaching.**

IN INTERVIEW WITH S. P. SPRECHER, D.D.,
OF SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

—"My style has changed radically in the last twenty years. When I began preaching, you will remember, poetic images and warm coloring abounded greatly in my sermons. These pleased the people and drew crowds; but I soon discovered that they did not make permanent impressions. Something was wanting. I sent away the people talking about the sermon, but not about their sins. I knew that this was not preaching in any true sense of the word. Flowers are pretty, but they are poor substitutes for bread and meat."

—"Certainly; poetry, figures of speech, illustrations rightly handled, are immensely effective in a sermon; but they must be kept subordinate.

The light of an electric lamp may reveal to me the beauty of the diamond, but again its glare may so blind me or attract my vision that I lose sight of the diamond."

—"In this way I wrought the change in my style: I would fix my attention more upon the thought which I desired to impress upon my hearers, and less upon the language which was to clothe the thought. I read heavy books of theology, of philosophy, of science. In writing or speaking I was on my guard against introducing an illustration, however beautiful, for its own sake."

—"No, I never take a manuscript into the pulpit. Indeed, I make it a point not to write before preaching, but after preaching. Writing before preaching bothers me. I write in or-